THE OFFERING OF THE LORD

Het Offer des Heeren

English translation of the edition of A.D. 1570

Translated by Liam A. Vinetti

THE OFFERING OF THE LORD
(Het Offer des Heeren)

By Anonymous

Translated by Liam A. Vinetti

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This book is called: The Offering of the Lord, because of the contents concerning some offered children of God, who have brought forth, out of the good treasure of their hearts, confessions, epistles, and testaments, which they confessed with the mouth and sealed with the blood, for the comfort and strengthening of the slaughter-lambs of Christ who are appointed unto death, to the praise, glory, and honor of Him who is able to do all in all, whose power endures from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

There are also added here many songs, confessions, and letters which have never yet been in print.

Item, there is also added here a little songbook, treating of the Offering of the Lord.

Printed in the year M.CCCCC.LXX.

Translator's Note

This is believed to be the first complete English translation of *Het Offer des Heeren* as printed in 1570, translated from the diplomatic reprint edited by S. Cramer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1904), as digitized by the Digital Library of Dutch Literature (DBNL). The marginal Scripture references of the 1570 edition have not been carried over; Scripture citations made in the text itself are translated. Where the 1570 text is genuinely uncertain, the most defensible reading is given.

Preface

I wish the good-willed reader salvation, understanding, and wisdom.

Whereas, beloved reader, the most merciful God and Father, through His unsearchable grace and kindness, now in these last perilous times, has portrayed before the eyes of their consciences His blessed only and eternal Son Jesus Christ, who for so many hundred years has been unknown; and has awakened some who lay dead in all sins and ungodliness, and called them into that new blameless life; and has delivered some poor, miserable, bewildered, strayed, lean, hungering sheep, through the preaching of His wholesome word, in the power of His Holy Spirit, out of the hands of the faithless shepherds, and out of the jaws of the rending wolves, and led them out of the dry unfruitful pastures of human teaching and commandments into the green fat pastures, upon the mountain of Israel, and set them under the hand and keeping of their only and eternal Shepherd Jesus Christ, who has taken them, with His red and precious blood, for a free possession, cleansed them, and bought them: so now all the gates of hell lift themselves up against all those who are sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb.

That poor, innocent, peaceable, defenseless little Lamb is, through the envy of the serpent, hated, persecuted, and killed in His elect members, with sword, water, and fire, and so forth. And as it has been from the beginning, so it is still; and such shall also (as it appears, according to the mention of Scripture) not cease, until the time that the dishonored, despised, cast-out little Lamb shall again appear in greater honor and glory.

And now that the cross of Christ, especially in our times, lifts itself up and shows itself over all God-fearing children of God, who are born again, from that powerful seed of the holy Word, in the inward man: so it has seemed good to us, dear reader, to gather confessions, epistles, and testaments left behind by some offered children of God (for the comfort and strength of all lovers of the truth), wherein one may mark and understand how powerfully God still works in His elect, and comforts, strengthens, and stands by them in need: as we also abundantly find by many examples, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

First: when Abraham had gone out of his father's land, he was often comforted by God. Lot was delivered by God out of the destruction of Sodom. God comforted Jacob, and gave him courage, when he fled before Esau his brother. The sorrow of Joseph God changed, in Egypt, into great fortune and prosperity. When Moses was still a fugitive in Egypt, and kept the sheep, he was comforted by God. God strengthened Joshua, and spoke to him: I will not forsake you. God fed Elijah in the wilderness, when he fled before Jezebel. After Tobias and Sara had prayed, they were comforted by God. The Jews at Bethulia, who were besieged by Holofernes, God delivered very wonderfully, through Judith. Likewise God protected very powerfully the three young men in the fiery oven. God also stood by Daniel in the den of lions, so that they did not devour him. And God freed Susanna from great shame and from death. God delivered the apostles out of the prison, and Paul out of the peril of the sea, and so forth of many various others, who would be too long to recount.

Thus, dear reader, take example from these foregoing, and take courage with David, saying: I fear me not for many hundred thousands who set themselves round about against me. Arise, Lord, and help me, my God, for You strike all my enemies on the cheeks, and break in pieces the teeth of the ungodly. Sirach also says: Children, look upon the old times, and know that no one has been put to shame who hoped in the Lord; and who has remained in His fear, and been forsaken? Or who has called upon Him with trust, whom He despised?

Therefore, beloved reader, fear your God with the whole heart and with the whole soul; seek Him out of all your powers; watch night and day; knock before the throne of His grace, that He may yet preserve you with His fatherly hand in all misery, graciously stand by you in all pressure and need, and faithfully keep you in His way, Word, and truth, so that you do not strike your foot against the stone, and thus do not fall, become broken, and come to shame in your faith, confession, and life: but that you keep the treasure entrusted to you free and pure until the day, and thus, with all pious saints, may obtain the promised land, inheritance, kingdom, life, and crown.

That the merciful dear Father grant you and us all, through His blessed Son Jesus Christ, in the power of His eternal and Holy Spirit, to His eternal praise and glory. Amen.

Item, the reader will also please to know that here, newly, after each one's confessions, letters, or testaments, songs have been added, taken and selected out of the foregoing matter, here and there, that which seemed to us to be the principal or the most instructive; wherein the text has been kept as near (for the sake of the verse of the rhymes) as one has known how to bring it at the very best.

There are also newly added here confessions and letters of various persons, up to six, with each one's song beside them. Thus you now have abundance of both, whether to read or to sing, according as it may suit, remembering the words of the apostle, who says: He who is in distress, let him pray; and he who is of good courage, let him sing psalms.

So please take this small labor in good part, and receive it from us in love, which we hope shall be for edification. Farewell.

The confession and end of Stephen

This is the confession and end of Stephen, as the apostles have left it to us in writing, Acts 6 and 7.

Stephen, full of faith and power, did wonderful and great signs among the people. Then there arose some of the school that is called that of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those of Cilicia and of Asia, who disputed with Stephen, and they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit that spoke. Then they set out some men, who were to say: We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and ran upon him, and took him, and brought him before the council, and set false witnesses there, who were to say: This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the ordinances which Moses has given us. And they all looked upon him who sat in the council, and they saw his face as the face of an angel.

Then the high priest said: Is it so? He said to them: You men, brothers and fathers, hear. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was still in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in the land of Haran, and said to him: Depart out of your father's land, and out of your kindred, and come into the land that I will show you. Then he went out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran; and from there, when his father was dead, God brought him over into this land where you now dwell, and gave him no inheritance in it, no, not a foot's breadth, and yet promised him to give it, that he should possess it, and his seed after him, when he yet had no child. But God spoke thus to him: Your seed shall be a stranger in a strange land, and they shall be burdened with bondage, and evilly handled, four hundred years. And I will judge that people whom they shall serve, said God. And after that they shall go out, and serve me in this place. And he made with him the covenant of circumcision. And he brought forth Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day. And Isaac brought forth Jacob. And Jacob brought forth the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs were envious of Joseph, and sold him into Egypt. And God was with him, and delivered him from all his distress, and gave him such grace and wisdom before Pharaoh the king of Egypt, that he made him a prince over Egypt, and over his whole house. And there came a dear time, and a great distress over the whole land of Egypt and Canaan, so that our fathers found no food. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers thither the first time; and the second journey Joseph was made known by his brothers, and Joseph's kindred was made known to Pharaoh. Joseph sent out, and had his father Jacob fetched, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. And Jacob came into Egypt, and died there, he and our fathers, and they were carried over into Shechem and laid in the grave that Abraham had bought for money from the children of Hamor at Shechem.

When now the time of the promise drew near, of which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew, and multiplied in Egypt, until another king arose, who knew nothing of Joseph.

This one oppressed our kindred, and handled our fathers evilly, and commanded that the young children should be cast away, so that they should not remain alive. In that time Moses was born, and was acceptable before God, and was nourished three months in his father's house. After that, when he had been cast away, Pharaoh's daughter took him, and brought him up for a son. And Moses was taught in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in works and in words. When he was forty years old, it came into his heart that he would visit his brothers, the children of Israel; and when he saw one suffering wrong, he defended him, and avenged it for him who suffered wrong, and struck down the Egyptian. But he supposed that his brothers would understand that God would give them salvation by his hand. But they did not understand it. The next day he came to them when they were quarreling, and did his utmost to make peace between them, saying: You men, you are brothers; why do you do one another harm? But he who did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying: Who has set you for a ruler and a judge over us? Will you also murder me, as you murdered the Egyptian yesterday? But Moses fled from this word, and became a stranger in the land of Midian; there he brought forth two sons.

And after forty years the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the wilderness on Mount Sinai, in a flame of the burning thorn bush. When Moses saw this, he wondered at this sight. As he went thither to look, this voice of the Lord came to him: I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Moses became trembling, and dared not look upon it. But the Lord said to him: Draw off your shoes from your feet, for the place where you stand is a holy land. I have seen the harm of my people in Egypt, and have heard their sighing, and have come down to deliver them. And now come, and I will send you into Egypt. This Moses, whom they denied, saying, Who has set you for a ruler and a judge? this same one God sent for a ruler and deliverer, by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. This one led them out, and did wonders and signs in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is the Moses who said to the children of Israel: God shall raise up for you a prophet out of your brothers, like me; him you shall hear. This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke with him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the living word, to give it to us. Whom our fathers would not obey, but they thrust him from them, and turned with their hearts to Egypt, and said to Aaron: Make us gods that go before us, for we do not know what has happened to this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to that idol, and they rejoiced in the works of their hands. Therefore God turned, and gave them over to this, that they served the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: You house of Israel, have you ever offered me, in the forty years in the wilderness, any offering or beast? And you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, what images have you made to worship? Therefore I will cast you away on the other side of Babylon.

Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, as he had ordained it for them, when he said to Moses that he should make it after the pattern that he had seen; which

our fathers also received, and brought it with Joshua into the land that the heathen possessed, whom God cast out before the face of our fathers, until the days of David, who found grace before God, and desired that he might find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. And Solomon built him a house. But the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: Heaven is my throne, and the earth is the footstool of my feet; what house will you then build me, says the Lord, or which is the place of my rest? Has my hand not made all this?

You stiff-necked, and uncircumcised of heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers did, so do you also. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? And did they not kill those who beforehand announced the coming of the Righteous One, of whom you have now become betrayers and murderers? You who have received the law by the ministry of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard this, it cut their heart through, and they gnashed their teeth at him. But because he was full of the Holy Spirit, he looked up to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said: Behold, I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. But they cried aloud, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and thrust him out of the city, and stoned him. And the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of the young man who was called Saul, and stoned Stephen, who cried and said: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. He kneeled down, and cried aloud: Lord, do not reckon this sin to them. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Here ends the confession of Stephen.

A song made from the confession of Stephen
To the tune of Vanden eersten Psalm, Ofte het was een Clercxken, het ginc ter scholen.

The dark world cannot bear
The clear light of God's word and law;
The scribes set many snares
To bring the pious into the net.

Stephen,
Full of faith and power,
Did great wonders and signs
Among a people, who watched for this,
That they might bring him into distress.
And some rose up against him,
Seized with great hate and envy,

Disputed with him,
But they could
In no way withstand Stephen's spirit.

Thus they held counsel
And brought forth some men
Who would say: Against the faithful
Moses and God he speaks aloud.
The people were stirred up with the scribes,
And he was brought before the Council;
False witnesses took up the matter,
Who said thus of him:
This man speaks without ceasing
Blasphemous words against the Law,

And this holy place of the Lord,
For we heard him say this openly.

That this Jesus of Nazareth
Shall soon destroy this place,
And the law of Moses of old
He shall altogether change.
They all looked sharply at him,
Who sat there in the court;
But fair shone his face during the accusation,
Yes, as the face of an angel.
"Is this so?" said the High Priest;
Whereupon
Stephen laid open the Scripture
From Abraham to Christ,
Thereafter he rebuked them very harshly.
As to hearts, uncircumcised of ears,
Who always stubbornly resist
The Holy Spirit with their customs,
As did their fathers full of envy.
These have harshly persecuted the Prophets,
Delivering them unto death,
All who beforehand made known
The honorable coming of the Righteous One.
Whom they betrayed and hanged
On the cross with great sorrow,
They who had received God's Law
Through the ministry of angels kept it not.
When God's friend thus showed them this,
Then their hearts were enraged,
And they gnashed, rising in anger,

With their teeth at sweet Stephen.
But he, being full of God's Spirit,
Looked upward to the pleasant Heaven,
And God's glory there in the firmament,

And Jesus standing at God's right hand.
He has sweetly opened his mouth:
"I see the heavens opened,
And the Son of man," has he said,
"Standing at God's right hand."

They cried out
loudly and stopped their ears,
Fell upon him with one accord,
Thrust him out of the city with fury,

And stoned the man of God mightily.
"Lord Jesus,
receive my spirit,"
Cried he, and kneeling down,
He lifted his voice for least and greatest,
That
the Lord would forgive them this sin.
Thus the precious
man
has fallen asleep,
And rests in the Lord his refuge,
A fair example to all Christian lads,

Who walk on the right street.

The confession of Michael Sattler

This is the confession of Michael Sattler, which he testified with his blood at Rottenburg on the Neckar.

After manifold dealing on the day of his departure from this world, since the articles were many, Michael Sattler desired that they should be read over to him again, and that he should be heard upon them again. Against this the bailiff (as stadtholder of his lord) set himself, and would not allow it. Michael Sattler thereupon asked for leave to speak. When the judges had taken counsel upon it, the answer fell thus: so far as his opposing party will allow it, the judges are content. Thereupon the town clerk of Ensisheim, as advocate of the aforesaid stadtholder, spoke thus: Prudent, honorable, and wise lords, he has boasted of the Holy Spirit; if that is so, it does not seem to me needful to allow him this, for if he has the Holy

Spirit, as he boasts, that Spirit will well tell him what has been dealt with. Upon this Michael Sattler answered: You servants of God, I am hoping it will not be refused me, for the said articles are now unknown to me. The town clerk answered: Prudent, honorable, and wise lords, although we are not bound to do this, yet we will allow it him for satisfaction, so that it may not be thought of his heresy that wrong is done him, or that one desires to cut him short; so the articles shall be read to him again by mouth.

These are the articles

1. First, that he and his adherents have acted against the emperor's mandate.

2. Second, he has taught, held, and believed that in the sacrament there is not the body and the blood of Christ.

3. Third, he has taught and believed that infant baptism is not profitable unto salvation.

4. Fourth, they have rejected the sacrament of the oil.

5. Fifth, they have despised and scorned the mother of God and the saints.

6. Sixth, he has said: One shall not swear to the magistracy.

7. Seventh, he has begun a new unheard-of use of the Lord's Supper, laying bread and wine in a dish, and has eaten the same.

8. Eighth, he has gone out of the order, and has taken a wedded wife.

9. Ninth, he has said, if the Turk should come into the land, one should offer him no resistance. And that if war were right, he would rather march against the Christians than against the Turks; which indeed is a great thing, the greatest enemy of our holy faith marching against us.

Upon this Michael Sattler desired to speak apart with his brothers and sisters. That was allowed him. When he had spoken with them a little while, he began, and answered unafraid, thus: Upon the articles, concerning me and my brothers and sisters, hear a short answer.

First, that we should have acted against the imperial mandate, that we do not grant; for the same contains that one shall not adhere to the Lutheran teaching and seduction, but only to the Gospel and the Word of God. That we have kept, for I do not know that we have acted against the Gospel and the Word of God; I appeal for this to the words of Christ.

Second, that in the sacrament there is not the essential body of Christ the Lord, we grant; for the Scripture says: Christ has ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father, from where He is to come to judge the living and the dead; from which it follows, since He is in heaven and not in the bread, that He cannot be eaten bodily.

Third, concerning baptism we say: Infant baptism is not useful unto salvation, for it is written that we live by faith alone. Item: Whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. So Peter says: Which now also saves you in baptism, which is signified by the same, not the putting away of the uncleanness of the flesh, but the covenant of a good conscience with God, through the resurrection of Christ.

Fourth, we have not rejected the oil, for it is a creature of God; what God has made is good and not to be rejected; but that the pope, bishops, monks, and priests have wanted to make it better, of that we hold nothing, for the pope has never made anything good. But that of which the epistle of James speaks is not the pope's oil.

Fifth, we have not scorned the mother of God and the saints; but the mother of Christ is to be praised above all women, for to her the grace has come that she bore the Savior of all the world; but that she is the mediatrix and advocate, of that the Scripture knows nothing, for she must await the judgment with us. Paul says to Timothy: Christ is our mediator and advocate with God. Concerning the saints, we say that we are the saints who live and believe; this I testify with the epistles of Paul to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Ephesians, and in other places he always writes: To the beloved saints. Therefore we who believe are the saints; but the departed in the faith we hold for the blessed.

Sixth, we hold that one shall not swear to the magistracy, for the Lord says: You shall swear no oath, but your words shall be: Yes, yes; no, no.

Seventh, when God called me to testify His Word, and I had read Paul, and besides considered the unchristian perilous state in which I had been, looking upon the pomp, pride, usury, and great whoredom of the monks and priests, I betook myself, and took a wife according to the command of God; for Paul well prophesies of this to Timothy: It shall happen in the last days that one shall forbid marriage, and food which God has created to be used with thanksgiving.

Eighth, if the Turk should come, one should offer him no resistance, for it is written: You shall not kill. We will not defend ourselves against the Turk and our other persecutors, but with earnest prayer hold on to God, that He may ward them off and resist them. But that I have said, if war were right, I would rather march against those who are called Christians, who persecute, capture, and kill the pious Christians, than against the Turks. The cause: the Turk is a true Turk, and knows nothing of the Christian faith, and is a Turk after the flesh; but you will be Christians, and boast yourselves of Christ, yet you persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks after the spirit.

In conclusion: You servants of God, I admonish you to consider why you are set by God, to punish the wicked, and to defend and protect the pious. Since, then, we have not acted against God and the Gospel, you shall find that neither I nor my brothers and sisters have acted against any magistracy with words or works. Therefore you servants of God, if you have not heard or read the Word of God, send for the most learned, and for the divine

books of the Bible, of whatever language they are, and let the same confer with us in the Word of God; and if they prove to us with the Holy Scripture that we err and are in the wrong therein, we will gladly stand off from it and recant, and also gladly suffer the judgment and punishment of our charge. But if no error is proved to us, I hope to God you will convert and let yourselves be taught.

At that reasoning the judges laughed, and thrust their heads together. The town clerk of Ensisheim spoke: Yes, you honorless, desperate villain and monk, should one dispute? Yes, the hangman shall dispute with you; believe me that. Michael said: What God wills, that shall happen. The town clerk spoke: It were good that you had not been born. Michael answered: God knows what is good. The town clerk: You arch-heretic, you have led the pious people astray; if they would yet now leave off from their error, and betake themselves to grace. Michael: Grace is with God alone. There one of the prisoners also spoke: One shall not depart from the truth. The town clerk: You desperate villain and arch-heretic, I tell you this: if there were no hangman here, I would hang you myself, and think to do God a service thereby. Michael: God will judge well. Thereupon the town clerk spoke some words with him in Latin, not knowing what. Michael Sattler answered him upon it: Indica. So the town clerk admonished the judges, and spoke: He does not leave off from this chatter this day; therefore you, lord judge, will proceed in the judgment; that I will have thus set for law. The judge asked Michael Sattler whether he also set it for law. He spoke: You servants of God, I am not sent to judge the Word of God; we are sent to testify of it; therefore we will consent to no law, for we have no command of it from God; but if we may not be released from the law, we are ready to suffer for the Word of God whatever is laid upon us to suffer, and may be laid upon us, all upon the faith in Christ Jesus our Savior, so long as we have a breath in us, unless we are shown otherwise by the Scripture. The town clerk said: The hangman will well prove it to you; he shall dispute with you, you arch-heretic. Michael: I appeal to the Scripture.

After that the judges rose, and went into another room, and were there a good hour and a half, and concluded the judgment among them.

Meanwhile some in the room dealt wholly unmercifully with Michael Sattler, and scorned him; among whom one spoke: What have you foreseen for yourself and others, that you have led them astray thus? Also here with a sword drawn, that lay upon the table, saying: Do you see? with that one shall dispute with you. But Michael answered to no words concerning his person, but bore it all willingly. One of the prisoners spoke: One shall not cast the pearls before the swine. When Michael was also asked why he had not remained a lord in the cloister, he answered: After the flesh I was a lord, but it is better thus. He also used no more words than are noted here, and those same unafraid.

When now the judges came again into the room, the judgment was read, sounding thus: Between the stadtholder of His Imperial Majesty and Michael Sattler it has been acknowledged for law, that one shall give Michael Sattler into the hands of the hangman; he

shall lead him to the place, and cut off his tongue; thereafter cast him upon a wagon, and there twice tear his body with glowing tongs; thereafter, when one brings him before the gate, give five grips after the same measure.

This was so done. Thereafter, as a heretic, he was burned to powder. His fellow brothers were executed by the sword; the sisters were drowned; but his wife, after much praying, admonishing, and threatening, in great steadfastness, was also drowned after some days. Done the 21st day in May, in the year 1527.

Translated out of the High German into Low German.

A song made from the confession of Michael Sattler
To the tune of In Oostlandt willen wy varen, Ofte: O Rat van auontueren.

When one wrote fifteen hundred
And twenty-seven years,
Then was
Sattler separated
From the wicked worldly crowd,
At Rottenburg in Germany,
There on the Neckar's shore;
They had shame done to him
And many kinds of scorn,
But he remained standing fast on God's word.
Being led before the court,
He spoke freely to the Lords,
Saying: You,
God's servants,
To consider this I admonish you:
Why you (God's messengers)
Are appointed by God the Lord:
To root out the evil,
And the pious against the wicked
To protect — mark that well.
The Council.
You act with your companions
All against the Emperor's Placard.
Sattler.
We do not admit it duly,
For in that same [placard] stands:
One shall
Shun Lutheran doctrine,

Cleave to God's word alone,
And trust the Gospel;
That we have all upheld,
And nothing else to my full knowledge.
So
if we then with our lives
Against the fine Gospel
Nor against God have offended,
You shall find it well:
That we, brothers by name
And sisters, are not against the government,
As is fitting,
Neither with word nor deed together
Have done anything anywhere.
Therefore, you God's envoys,
Have you not read God's word,
Nor heard it proclaimed,

Then look to the learned men,
And to the biblical books,
In whatever tongue they may be;
Let them search out
In God's word at every corner,
And discuss it well with us.
If they testify therefrom
That we have wrong in any point,
Gladly
will we bow
And recant our error,
Also bear the punishment of the accusation;
But if no error shall
Be proved against us in the accusation,
I hope you will please to make amends,
And let yourselves all be taught.
The Council mocked his words
And put their heads together;
Then spoke the scribe of the cities,
Named Ensisheim by name:
"Yes, you infamous villain
And desperate monk, you —
Should one achieve anything with you?
Yes, the

hangman without wavering
Shall dispute with you."
Michael has at the same time
Spoken well:
"We are ready
To suffer for the Lord's word,
Whatever may be laid upon us,
Wholly on the praised faith
In Christ our sweet Saviour,
As long as breath shall be —
Unless one turn us from this
With the Scripture."
The sentence of death is given;
Thus stepped the hangman lightly
forth,
To take Sattler's life;
First he cut off his tongue anon.

Thereafter with glowing tongs
He tore his body seven times;
Then fire came on with force,

So that he turned to ashes,
Who was an especially good example.
The brothers, his fellow members,
Were punished with the sword,
And let into the water
The worthy sisters were drowned.
They then went at his wife
With entreaty and threats,
But they
could not bring her away
From the faith by anything;
Thus she was also drowned in the end.
Brothers, sisters,
do not fear
Sword, water, gallows, or fire;
For God lets His people be no orphans

When cross comes or danger.
Thus

arm yourselves well
With the Lord's, yea, God's word;

Stand piously against the enemy;
He shall well be beaten
If you go forward without looking back.

The testament of Anneken Esaias

Here begins the testament that Anneken Esaias bequeathed to her son, the 24th day of January, in the year 1539, delivered in the morning at nine o'clock, as she prepared herself to die for the name and the testimony of Jesus, and therewith took leave of her son at Rotterdam.

Esaias, receive your testament.

Hear, my son, the instruction of your mother; open your ears to hear the speech of my mouth. Behold, I go today the way of the prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and drink the cup which they have all drunk. I go the way, I say, which Christ Jesus, the eternal Word of the Father, full of grace and truth, the Shepherd of the sheep, He being the Life, has walked through Himself and not through another, and has had to drink this cup. As He spoke: I must drink a cup, and be baptized with a baptism; how distressed I am until that hour is accomplished. Having passed through, He calls His sheep, and His sheep hear His voice, and follow Him where He goes, for this is the way to the true fountain. This way the royal priests have passed through, coming from the rising of the sun, as it stands in the Apocalypse, and have entered into the times of the eternities, and have had to drink this cup.

This way the dead have trodden, who lie there under the altar, who cry, saying: Lord Almighty God, when will You avenge the blood that is shed there? And shining robes were given them, and it was answered them: Wait a little, until the number of your brothers is fulfilled, who shall yet be killed for the testimony of Jesus. These also have drunk the cup, and have gone up to keep the eternal holy Sabbath of the Lord.

This is the way which the twenty-four elders have walked, who stand there before the throne of God, and cast their crowns and harps before the throne of the Lamb, falling upon their faces, saying: Lord, to You alone be praise, glory, power, and strength, who shall avenge the blood of Your servants and ministers, and shall keep the victory through Yourself. Great be Your name, You who were, are, and shall come, Almighty.

This way also those marked of the Lord have walked, who have received the sign Tau in their forehead, who are chosen out of all generations of men, who have not been defiled with women (understand that), and follow the little Lamb wherever it goes.

Behold, all these have had to drink the cup of bitterness; and all who yet are lacking to the number and the fulfilling of Zion, the bride of the Lamb, which is the new Jerusalem, which descends from above out of heaven, a dwelling-city and throne of God, in which the glory of the great King shall be seen, at the time when one shall keep and celebrate that festival of booths, in the days of eternal rest and joy. Behold, all these have not been able to come thereto; they have first borne the judgment and chastisement in their flesh. For Christ Jesus, the eternal Truth, has been the first, as it is written: The Lamb that has been slain from the beginning. So Paul comes and says: Thus it has pleased the Father, that all whom He has foreseen from eternity, those He has called, chosen, and justified, and has made them conformed to the image of His Son.

Our blessed Savior also speaks: The servant is not better than his Lord, but it is enough for him that he be like his Lord and Master. Peter also testifies, saying: It is time that the judgment begin at the house of God. If it then begins at us, what end will it take with those who have not believed the Gospel of God? For scarcely shall the righteous be saved; where then will the sinner and the ungodly appear? It stands yet in Proverbs 11: If it is repaid to the upright here on earth, where then shall the sinner and the ungodly be revealed?

Behold, my son, here you hear that no one comes to the life except through this way. Therefore enter in through the narrow gate, and take upon you the chastisement and instruction of the Lord, and bow your shoulders under His yoke, and bear it lovingly from your youth on, with great honor and joy, giving thanks: for He takes or receives no son whom He does not chastise. Paul says further: If you forsake the chastisement of which they have all become partakers, then you are bastards, and no children, and shall be shut out from the inheritance of the children of God.

If then you have desire and longing to go into the portions of the holy world, and into the inheritance of the saints, then gird up your loins, and tread after them. Search the Scripture, and it shall show you their goings. The angel, speaking to the prophet, said to him: There is a city full of all goods, and the entrance of this is but one man's footstep broad; on the one side stands a fire, and on the other side a great water. How could you receive the city for an inheritance? You must first pass through that narrow way. Behold, my son, this way has no yielding; there are no byways or crooked little paths. Whoever falls to the right or to the left side, death is his inheritance. Behold, this is the way that is found by so few people, and walked by still fewer; for there are some who well mark that this is the way to life, but it is too sharp for them; it hurts their flesh too much.

Therefore, my child, do not regard the multitude of the great crowd, nor tread upon their ways. Turn your foot away from their paths, for they go to hell, as sheep to death. As Isaiah recounts, saying: Hell has stretched her jaws wide open, so that there may go in both the prince and the common people. It is an understandingless people; therefore He who created them shall not be gracious to them. But where you hear that there is a poor, simple, cast-out little flock, which is despised and rejected by the world, there join yourself. And where you

hear of the cross, there is Christ; do not depart from there. Flee the shadow of this world. Be joined to God. Let Him alone be your fear. Keep His commandments. Hold all His words, so that you do thereafter. Write them on the tables of your heart. Bind them before your forehead. Speak of His statutes day and night; so you shall be a lovely tree, and a sprout in the garden of the Lord, a beloved plant growing up in Zion. Name the fear of the Lord to be your father; so wisdom shall be the mother of your understanding.

If you know this, my son, you are blessed if you do it. Hold what the Lord commands you, and sanctify your body to His service, so that His name may be sanctified, praised, glorified, and made great in you. Do not be ashamed to confess Him before men. Do not fear men. Rather leave your life than that you depart from the truth. If you lose your body, which is made of the earth, the Lord your God has prepared you a better one in heaven.

Therefore, my child, fight for righteousness unto death. Arm yourself with the armor of God. Be a pious Israelite. Tread down all unrighteousness, the world and what is in it, and love only that which is above. Remember that you are not of this world, as your Lord and Master also has not been. Be a faithful disciple of Christ. No one else is fit to pray, except he who has become His disciple; not before. Those who said, We have left all behind, they also say, Teach us to pray. Those were they for whom the Lord prayed, and not for the world. For when the world prays, they call upon their father the devil, and desire that his will be done, as it is also done. Therefore, my son, do not become like them, but shun and flee from them, and have no part nor fellowship with them. Count as nothing what is before the eyes. Seek only what is above. O my child, be mindful of my admonition, and do not forsake the same. The Lord make you grow up in His fear, filling your understanding with His Spirit. Sanctify yourself to the Lord, my son. Sanctify all your walk with the fear of your God. Whatever you do, let His name be praised therein. Honor the Lord in the works of your hands. Let the light of the Gospel shine through you. Love your neighbor. Deal out, with a poured-out fiery heart, your bread to the hungry. Clothe the naked, and do not wait until something twofold is by you, for there are always those who lack. All that the Lord grants you from the sweat of your face, above your necessity, deal that out to those whom you know fear the Lord. Do not let it remain by you until the morning; so the Lord shall bless the works of your hands, and give His blessing to you for an inheritance.

O my son, let your life be like the Gospel, and may the God of peace sanctify you in soul and body to His praise. Amen.

O holy Father, sanctify the son of Your handmaid in Your truth, and keep him from evil, for Your name's sake, Lord.

A song of Anneken of Rotterdam
To the tune of Vanden 48. Psalm. Ofte, Geen meerder vruecht ter werelt en is

A great joy it is in common,
That parents bring up their little children
In the fear of God,
With instruction in the Lord,
Diligently setting forth God's teaching,
Sparing
no rods thereto.
Hear how
Anneken took leave
Of her son at Rotterdam
When death stood before her:
"Esaia, receive your testament"

Do listen to the words now

That go out of my mouth.
See, I go the prophets' way,
After the apostles, martyrs;
Drink
with them the Cup straightway,
Which they have drunk before;
Christ
Himself trod this way through,
Also drank the Cup with them.
This way have passed through
Those
worthy royal priests
Who
came from the East
And have entered into the time of eternity
Through the prepared way;
All drank the Cup together.
They also went through this path,
The dead
who lie there prostrate
Under the altar's shelter,
Who cry and say: O Lord,
You true God, when
will You avenge Your servants' blood?
Going through this with pious mind,
The
good twenty-four elders

Stand before the throne of the Lord;
They cast off their fair crowns
Before the Lamb, and turn their harps,

falling down to God's honor.
Through this way went together

all who the sign Tau
had plainly
received on their forehead,
Being chosen out of all the seed
of men, and wheresoever
the Lamb goes
they follow His steps.
See, these had to in this valley
drink
the bitter Cup all,
And whatever was yet lacking
To the number of Zion, the Lamb's bride —
that is
called Jerusalem,
which came down from Heaven.
Wherever you hear of a
little flock
— poor and simple, thrust forth

driven off by the world —
join yourselves to them always;
and where you hear that cross is,
there is Christ from above.
Fear
no men; your life passes

Rather than you depart from the truth.
Your body made of earth —
though
you lose it —
for you has prepared a better vessel
God of
Heaven, of worth.
Sanctify
yourself to the Lord, my son,
And sanctify your walk fairly

With fearing the Lord;
Honor
your God in every place,
In all the works of your hand;
Let His name be praised.
Share with
your bread him who
has hunger;
Give with outpoured heart,
Clothe the naked without delay;
At no time delay
That anything be twofold with you;
always
there are those who need it.
All that the Lord allows you
Above necessity
of the
face's sweat,
Let God's people live thereof,
And do not wait until tomorrow;

God shall increase your work thus,
The blessing shall He give you.
When one wrote fifteen hundred years,
Thirty-nine thereafter,
Anneken left her life.
She has been a fair example,
Which many Christians lack,
Who betake themselves to God.

Testaments and letters of Jan Claesz

Hereafter follow some testaments and letters which Jan Claesz wrote out of the prison to his wife and children, and to his kindred.

Testaments written by Jan Claesz (lying in prison within Amsterdam) to his wife, children, and other friends after the flesh. In the year 1544.

Testament to his wife

A friendly greeting in the Lord to my dear wife, whom I now no longer love after the flesh, but after the soul. Hear my admonition. You know that we, thus long, when it went well with us after the flesh with Israel, did not then know what we were; but now that the good Father lays hold of us, now we feel what we are: too sick, weak, miserable, poor, and naked.

Therefore, my dear wife, take Jesus Christ for an example, what way He has gone before us, and that we must enter through much distress into the kingdom of heaven. Forget my flesh with all your sensuality. Pray the Lord for faith, so that you may overcome. And I will surrender myself as willingly to the Lord as He comforts my heart with His grace. You have yet time for amendment, but I am bound to His grace, on which I trust. Therefore do not think on what is past, but press on to the Lord with a firm trust. He will help you in all things unto the good. Give yourself over thereto, and always join yourself to those who fear the Lord, for that shall be best for you. For blessed is he who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor tread on the way of sinners, nor sit where the scoffers sit, but has his delight in the law of the Lord, and speaks of it day and night. My beloved wife, among the God-fearing one speaks of it, and thereby one departs from evil: for by the fear of the Lord one shuns evil, and by love one accomplishes all good. Become watchful, for it has gone slackly with you and with me. Let the Word of the Lord stir you to all good. Pray Him for His Holy Spirit; He can comfort you, for the suffering of this time is nothing beside the glory and honor that shall be revealed in us. For that is the proof which must be found in our faith, much more precious than the perishable gold that is proved through the fire. My dear wife, if we might have entered the kingdom of God as we began, and have done thus long, the way would not have been narrow. But through suffering and distress our Savior had to come into His own glory; how shall we come through with room to spare? For the way (as the Lord says) is narrow that leads to life, and few are they who find it, and still fewer who walk it rightly. For the good Father had well shown me this way, but my evil flesh has pressed me off it all too hard. Nevertheless I trust, through the grace of the Lord, to be saved. For Paul says: Though I gave all my goods to the poor, and let my body be burned, if I have not love, it is not profitable to me. Consider what this love is, and you will be able to take in the best part whatever the Lord sends you. How should I be able to utter it? Love is God's nature. May this be with you and us all. (I give it to you for a friendly greeting.) The good merciful Father pours it into all our hearts, through His beloved Son. Amen. Greet all dear friends in the Lord. Pray the Lord for me. Whatever the Lord gives me, I will do again.

Another testament to his wife

Know, my heartily dear wife, that I charge you that you in no manner depart from the Word of the Lord, but always comfort yourself therewith. For the suffering of this time is nothing against the glory that shall be revealed in us, if we remain in the faith. O, let us overcome thereby, and not depart, so we shall receive the crown which the good Lord has promised to all those who love His coming. If we desire to remain here, we do not love His coming; but if we pray Him for the Holy Spirit, He shall instruct us in all things, comfort and strengthen us through His grace. O let us pray, for through praying we must receive it. So, my dear wife, do not be anxious for any things that concern the body, but seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and it shall all fall to you. Herewith I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which can strengthen and keep you in all temptation. The grace of the Lord be with you, and with us all. Amen. Bring up my dear little children in instruction in the Lord; that I charge you. And join yourself to the good, for they have it good. Think of

no temporal things, for what is visible must pass away. What you can get, take with you; the other, commend to faithful friends, namely those who are faithful to you, and draw with your little children so far that you are protected by people. Bring them up in instruction in the Lord, and set yourself by those who fear the Lord. My dear wife, be well content. If the Lord had taken me with a sudden sickness, you would have had to thank Him; do so now also. This I leave you for a testament: Watch all the days of your life for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of the Lord be with you. Amen.

A testament to his children, and thereafter to his wife

My dear little children, Claes Janszoon and Gerit, Jan's daughter, this I leave you for a testament, if you should come to your years. Hear the instruction of your father. All that the world and your sensuality love, hate that, and love God's commandment. Let that instruct you, for it teaches: Whoever will follow me must deny himself, that is, go outside his own wisdom. And pray earnestly: Lord, Your will be done. If you do this, the Holy Spirit shall teach you. Whatever you shall believe, do not believe what men say, but what the New Testament commands you, that you shall obey, and pray God that He teach you what His will is. Do not trust in your understanding, but in the Lord, and let all your counsels remain in Him, and pray Him that He steer your ways. My children, how you shall love God the Lord, how you shall honor and love your mother, how you shall love your neighbor, the New Testament shall teach you, and all other commandments, what the Lord desires of you. All that is not comprised therein, do not believe that; and what is comprised therein, be obedient to that. Join yourselves to those who fear the Lord, and who depart from evil, and who through love accomplish all good. O do not look upon the great crowd, nor upon long customs, but look upon the little flock that is persecuted for the Word of the Lord; for the good do not persecute, but they are persecuted. When you have given yourselves to this, then beware of all false teaching, for John says: Whoever transgresses, and does not remain in the teaching of Christ, he has no God; but he who remains in the teaching of Christ has both the Father and the Son. The teaching of Christ is love, mercy, peace, chastity, faith, meekness, humility, and the full obedience of God. My dear children, give yourselves over to the good; the Lord shall give you understanding in all things. This I give you for my last farewell: Take heed to the chastisement of the Lord, for when you do evil He shall punish you in your mind; then leave off, and cry for help to the Lord, and hate the evil, so the Lord shall deliver you, and the good shall meet you. God the Father, through His beloved Son Jesus Christ, give you His Holy Spirit, who leads you into all truth. Amen.

This I, Jan Claesz, your father, have written as I lay in the prison for the sake of the Word of the Lord. The good Father give you His grace. Amen.

My dear wife, I charge you that you shall bring up my children in all instruction unto the good, and that you let them read my testament, and bring them up in the Lord, according to your ability, so long as you are by them. And I desire of you that you do not hold yourself, nor your little children, dearer than the Lord and His testimony. Do not let yourself be

overcome by your flesh. If they do not grant you to dwell in this city, draw into another. But this I heartily desire of you: always join yourself to the good, for blessed is he who goes about with the good. He who has always been the help of the little ones, He shall help you; that is the good Father. If you cannot keep yourself alone, then take a man who fears the Lord; but whatever you do, do not leave the Lord for a little dish of porridge. I will make your excuse as great as I can, but do not leave the Lord in order to keep Amsterdam. With His grace I will not leave Him for the whole world; do likewise. O let us press through with violence. My flesh I must lose through the grace of the Lord; let yourself do likewise. My dear wife, if we should think upon the suffering, we would stick fast in it; but we must see through it to the eternal reward. I comfort myself so joyfully in the Lord; do likewise. The Lord might have taken me on the bed; you would have had to be well content; how much more now. What do you know how long your time here is? Therefore do as the Lord counsels you. Be always ready for His coming; then you will be able to overcome it all. The eternal rest is promised to those who overcome. A firm faith, a sure hope of the eternal reward, a burning love to God and our neighbor, be with you, and me, and us all. Amen.

Write me at once how you stand therein, so I shall be the better comforted when you fulfill my desire. Pray. The Lord will be prayed to; that I now feel. Pray all together that the Lord's will be done in me, and in us all. Amen.

A testament to his brothers and sisters

Know, my dear brothers, Cornelis Claeszoon, Gerit Claeszoon, Ariaen, Claes's daughter, my dear sister, that I friendly desire of you that you yet convert yourselves, and leave all your pride, greed, with all wickedness, and also all evil company, and hold yourselves quiet, and join yourselves to the good. Search the Word of the Lord, and pray Him for His Holy Spirit; He shall instruct you in all that is needful to you. This shall happen if you deny yourselves and go outside your own will. For He says: Whoever will follow me must deny himself; he must take up his daily cross and follow me, says the Lord. Therefore die to all your lust, and you shall not die in eternity. For the wages of sin is death; but pray God for His Holy Spirit; He shall so change your minds that you shall hate the evil, so that you may shun it. O my dearest, hate the evil, and love the good, and God, who alone is good, shall be with you. But if you will remain by your evil sensuality, I testify out of the Lord's mouth that you shall condemn yourselves. But I hope something better of you, although I speak thus. O keep yet what the Lord has made known to you, namely: All that you will that men do to you, do that to them again, so it shall go well with you, and all good shall meet you. Thereto the good God help you through Jesus Christ His beloved Son. Amen.

Another testament of Jan Claesz to all his kindred

Know, my dear brothers and sisters, uncles and kinsmen, and all my kindred, that I do not suffer as a thief or a murderer or a wrongdoer, but for the ordinance which the apostles of the Lord taught and set in, namely the ordinance of the holy church, which was made over fifteen hundred years ago, which Jesus Christ commanded His dear disciples and sealed with

His blood, and which the apostles preached and taught, and also confirmed with their blood. My dear friends, do not bow your head down for my sake, because men cry that I have died as an Anabaptist and a heretic. There is but one baptism given, with words, upon faith; and before faith there is no baptism commanded by God. Now someone might ask: What, shall one then not baptize the little children? No; but even so they are saved through the merit of Jesus Christ, and are baptized in His blood. For it is written: As many as die in Adam are made alive in Christ. This happens out of pure grace, without any sign. But, my dear friends, the Lord has commanded to preach the Gospel; those who believe it, them one shall baptize. He has also commanded: And the believers shall keep His Supper, to His remembrance, in such manner as the Lord instituted it, and His apostles used it. Otherwise He has commanded them nothing: no Mass, nor infant baptism, nor auricular confession, nor any other outward worship of God. But He has commanded to love God alone, and to be obedient to His Word, and one's neighbor as oneself. O where shall one find those who do this? Search God's Word. He is no Christian who does not know that. You cannot satisfy it therewith, that they teach that you shall remain by the holy church. You must know what the holy church is, namely the believing assembly, which is born through the Word of God. For you well know that no one can come into this world unless he is born; so no one can come into the world to come unless he is born again, as Peter testifies: Not of the perishable seed, but of the imperishable seed, namely of the living Word of God, which abides forever. O blessed is he who is born of this. These born-again ones use right baptism, right Supper. They also separate themselves from all who teach shamefully or live unseemly. They do not kill their body (God's Word does not teach that), but they shun their company until they convert; for they are the Christian church, the communion of saints. They have forgiveness of sins, for there is no other name given in heaven or on earth through which they may be saved, than in the name of Jesus, that is, through His merit. They believe; they live only according to His ordinance. He did not kill those who did not believe in Him; His holy church has not done it either. But He and His own have been killed from the beginning, and it shall also remain so. Hereby you shall know who His own are: not those who boast of His name and stand for their things with the sword, but those who live after the example of the Lord, and confirm their cause with God's Word. This is the sword of the right believers.

Now someone might say: Where then have our forefathers remained, who have known nothing else? That God shall judge. One might also say that the Lord has promised to be with us until the end of the world. With the believers He always is, but with the unbelievers never: namely, with His Word, and with the right use of His signs, namely baptism and Supper, and walking rightly, and living conformed to His Word; with that He shall always be.

Dear friends, there were seven kinds of sect arisen among them in the times of the apostles; therefore the right teaching was not to be rejected. Or if now many evil knaves have arisen under the Gospel, God's Word is not the less for that. Whoever will be saved must bow himself under it. In the times of the holy Tobias all Israel went and prayed to golden calves,

which Jeroboam the king had caused to be made; but he remained alone by the Lord his God, and did what He had commanded him.

Friends, do not now look upon the great crowd, but look upon God's Word; that shall not deceive you. Cursed be the man who trusts in a man, and sets his flesh for his help; but blessed be the man who leaves himself upon the Lord. Here I leave myself upon this, that He prays to His Father, not only for those who were by Him, but for all those who through the Word should convert to Him. The good Father, through His only Son Jesus Christ, give you the right understanding, that you may further learn to know Him. Amen.

Of the sentence upon Jan Claesz

Jan Claesz, with an old man of eighty-seven years, whom men called Bestevaer, both coming into the court, greeting one another with a kiss, Jan Claesz said to Bestevaer: My dear brother, laughing, my dear brother, how are you minded now? Bestevaer answered lovingly, and said with a glad face: All well, my dear brother. Then Jan Claesz said: Fear now neither fire nor sword. O what a glad meal shall be prepared for us before the clock has twelve hours.

And then they were set apart from one another. And then the bailiff spoke: You are rebaptized. Jan Claesz answered: I am baptized upon my faith, as one ought to baptize all Christian people, according to the showing of the Scriptures. Read that. Then they said again to him: You are of those accursed Anabaptists, strange sects, opinions, and errors, and making strife among the people. Jan Claesz: We are not such a people. We desire nothing other than the right Word of God. If I must suffer for that, then I desire the seven aldermen. And then he was asked whether he did not confess that he had been rebaptized over four years ago, or thereabout. Jan Claesz answered: Over three years ago, or thereabout, then I was baptized, as one ought to baptize all Christian people. The court said: So you confess it then? Jan Claesz: Yes. The court: Well, since you then confess it, we have the full power of the seven aldermen. Jan Claesz: May I not get the full court? One well grants it to thieves and murderers; may that not happen to me? And then the four aldermen went out to pronounce the sentence. Jan Claesz, now lifting up his voice, spoke: O merciful Father, You know that we desire no vengeance. And he wrung his hands, saying: O merciful Father, give them Your Spirit, so that You do not reckon this to them for wickedness. And then the four aldermen came again into the court, and sat down to rehearse the sentence, saying thus: Jan Claesz, born of Alkmaar, who has taught the people false teachings, errors, and new opinions. Upon which Jan Claesz answered, saying: It is not so. Then the lords of the court forbade Jan Claesz to speak, and the good Jan Claesz then kept silence, so that he might hear his sentence. And then they went forward with their sentence, and said to the clerk: Read up his misdeed. And he read that he had caused to be printed at Antwerp six hundred books, which he had concluded with Menno Simons, and had scattered them in this land, false opinions with strange sects, and had held school, and made assembly, to bring errors among the people, which is against the placard of the emperor and our mother the holy church,

which my lords of the court are not to suffer, but to correct. Jan Claesz, rebuking this as before: They are no sects, but it is God's Word. Then the lords of the court said: We sentence you to death, to be punished with the sword, the body upon a wheel, the head upon a stake. We do not sentence you, but the Court sentences you. Jan Claesz, going out of the court, said: You burghers, bear witness that we do not die except for the right Word of God. This happened in the court.

Jan Claesz, now coming upon the scaffold, spoke to the people with understanding words, thus: Hear, you burghers of Amsterdam. Know that I do not suffer as a thief or a murderer, or that we have stood after other people's goods, or after anyone's blood; also not meaning that I would justify or exalt myself, but I come with the lost son, and stand only upon the pure Word of God. The executioner struck him upon his breast. And Jan Claesz, turning himself about, cried with a loud voice: O Lord, do not yet forsake me in eternity. Lord, David's son, receive my soul.

Herewith the dear brother Jan Claesz confirmed the Word of God with his red blood.

A song of Jan Claesz and Bestevaer
To the tune of vanden 8. Psalm. Ofte, het waren twee gespeelkens goet

There were two good brothers,
Very lovely of manners;
For God's word they shed their blood
At
Amsterdam in the city.
Bestevaer was the one named,
Old eighty-seven years;
The other Jan Claesz, well renowned —
Christ's faithful servants.
Being led before the court,
They kissed one another;

The fiery love was spread abroad,
Coming from the heart with delight.
Jan Claesz spoke with sweet words
And with laughing mouth:
"My dear brother, how are you minded
As now at this hour?"
Bestevaer with cheerful countenance
And lovely being
Said: "O well, my dear brother —
Joy came risen from the heart."

Jan Claesz.
"O what a joyful feast shall"
"Be prepared for us before twelve o'clock!"
"Fear now"
"sword or fire not at all;"
"There was joy and no mourning."
Those sweet words, lovely faces
They could not tolerate;
They were separated; it appeared in the deed
That it sorely
pained their eyes.
"You are re-baptized," spoke the deaf bailiff.
Jan spoke: "According to the Scripture's meaning,
I am baptized upon my faith,
As befits Christian people."
They also wanted to lay upon them
The charge of sects and evil matters,
Of false Anabaptist seed,

Who make strife among the people.
"We are of no such people;
We"
"desire nothing else"
"Than God's true word alone,"
Spoke Jan boldly before the Lords.
Seven aldermen he desired
When suffering stood before him;
Four
proffered the sentence;
Three drew back aside.
Jan cried (as these held counsel):
"O merciful Father,"
"You know,"

"we desire no revenge;"
His hands he wrung together.
"O merciful Father of mine,"
"Give them Your Spirit;"

"Let not this evil be reckoned"
"To them all, least and greatest."
Thus he was condemned to death,

To be punished with the sword;
The body on a wheel, the head on a stake —
Everyone pitied the pious man.
Bestevaer, also standing unafraid,
Showed his joy before all,
Though he had to let his grey beard
Fall by the sword.
Going to death, Jan spoke very boldly:
"We die"
"for God's words."
"You citizens, bear witness here —"
"Not as"
"thieves or murderers."
"We have also not coveted"
"Other people's goods,"
"Nor has he spoken further —"
"Nor after anyone's blood either."
"Also not supposing — he cried nobly —"
"That I hold myself righteous;"
"But I come with the"
"lost"
"son,"
"Trusting in God alone."
"With loud voice he cried mightily:"
"Now and in eternity"
"Forsake me not,"

"Take my soul, Lord,"
"O Son of David, in peace."
To death they were both led,
The old with the young;
The truth they have spread abroad.
Wake up; praise God with tongues.

The confession of Elisabeth

This is the confession of a tender girl, named Elisabeth, who had been a little beguine, who was imprisoned and put to death at Leeuwarden, in the year 1549.

The fifteenth of January, in the year 1549, reckoning the beginning of the year from New Year's day, Elisabeth was then imprisoned. And when those who were to arrest her came into the house (namely, where she dwelt), they found there a Latin Testament. And when they had Elisabeth, they said: We have her, we have the right man; we have now the female

teacher. And they said: Where is your husband, the teacher Menno Simons, and so forth. And they brought her to the town hall. And the next day two white-cowls took her between them, and brought her to the blockhouse. Then she was set before the council, and they asked her by her oath whether she also had a husband. Elisabeth answered: It does not befit us to swear, but our words shall be: Yes, yes, and no, no. I have no husband. The lords: We say that you are a female teacher, who leads many people astray, and we have well heard it said of you. We will know who your friends are. Elisabeth: My God has commanded me that I shall love my Lord and my God, and thereto honor my parents; therefore I will not tell you who my parents are, for that I suffer for Christ's name is a dishonor to my friends. The lords: With this we will now let you be, but we will know what people you have taught. Elisabeth: O no, my lords, let me yet be in peace from this, and ask me after my faith; that I will gladly tell you. The lords: We will make you so afraid that you will well tell it to us. Elisabeth: I hope, through the grace of God, that He will keep my tongue, so that I become no traitress, and do not deliver my brother into death. The lords: What people were there by, when you were baptized? Elisabeth: Christ spoke: Ask it of those who were there by, or who heard it. The lords: Now we mark that you are a female teacher, for you will make yourself like Christ. Elisabeth: No, my lords, that would be far from me, for I do not count myself higher than the sweepings that are swept out of the house of the Lord. The lords: What is it then that you hold of the house of God? Do you not hold our church for the house of God? Elisabeth: No, my lords, for it is written: You are the temple of the living God, as God speaks: I will dwell and walk in them. The lords: What do you hold of our Mass? Elisabeth: My lords, of your Mass I hold nothing, but all that agrees with God's Word, of that I hold much. The lords: What do you hold of the most worthy holy sacrament? Elisabeth: I have not in my life read in the Holy Scripture of a holy sacrament, but well of the Supper of the Lord. (She also recounted the Scripture that ran upon it.) The lords: Be silent, for the devil speaks out of your mouth. Elisabeth: Yes, my lords, this is a small matter, for the servant is not better than his Lord. The lords: You speak with a proud spirit. Elisabeth: No, my lords, I speak with a free courage. The lords: What did the Lord speak when He gave His disciples the Supper? Elisabeth: What did He give them, flesh or bread? The lords: He gave them bread. Elisabeth: Did the Lord then not remain sitting there? Who would then eat the Lord's flesh? The lords: What do you hold of infant baptism, that you have let yourself be baptized again? Elisabeth: No, my lords, I have not let myself be baptized again. I have let myself be baptized once upon my faith, for it is written that baptism belongs to the believers. The lords: Are our children then damned, because they are baptized? Elisabeth: No, my lords, far be it from me that I should judge the children. The lords: Do you not seek your salvation in baptism? Elisabeth: No, my lords, all the water of the sea could not save me, but salvation stands in Christ. And He has commanded me to love God my Lord above all things, and my neighbor as myself. The lords: Have the priests also power to forgive sins? Elisabeth: No, my lords, how should I believe that? I say that Christ is the only priest, through whom sins are forgiven. The lords: You say that you believe all that agrees with the Holy Scripture; do you then not hold of James's words? Elisabeth: Yes, my lords, how should I not hold of

them? The lords: Has he not spoken: Go to the elders of the congregation, that he may anoint you, and pray for you? Elisabeth: Yes, but my lords, would you then say that you are of such a congregation? The lords: The Holy Spirit has already made you saved; you need neither confession nor sacrament. Elisabeth: No, my lords, I well confess that I have transgressed the ordinance of the pope, which the emperor has confirmed with placards; but prove me in any articles wherein I have transgressed against my Lord and my God, and I will cry woe, woe, over me, poor miserable person. This foregoing is the first confession.

After that they set her again before the council, and led her into the torture tower, and the hangman Hans there by. Then the lords said: We have thus long gone at you with kindness, and if you will not confess, we will go at you with hardness. The procurator general spoke: Master Hans, lay hold of her. Master Hans answered: O no, my lords, she will yet well confess of her own will. And when she would not confess of her own will, they then set thumb-screws on both her thumbs and on both her foremost fingers, so that the blood sprang out to her nails. Elisabeth spoke: O, I cannot bear it longer. The lords said: Confess, and we will lighten your pain. But she cried to the Lord her God: Help me, O Lord, Your poor handmaid, for You are a helper in need. The lords all cried: Confess, and we will lighten your pain, for we have told you of confessing, and not of crying to God the Lord. And she held steadily on to God her Lord, as recounted above. And the Lord lightened her pain, so that she said to the lords: Ask me, I will answer you, for I feel wholly no pain in my flesh, as before. The lords: Will you still not confess? Elisabeth: No, my lords. Then they set two screw-irons on her, one on each shin. And she said: O my lords, do not shame me, for no man has yet ever touched my bare body. The procurator general said: No, Mistress Lijsbet, we shall not touch you dishonorably. Then she fainted. And the one said to the other: Perhaps she is dead. And when she awoke, she spoke: I live, and am not dead. Then they struck all the screw-irons loose, and went at her with flattering words. Elisabeth: Why do you go at me thus with flattering words? With children one used to go about thus. So they got not one word from her, to the disadvantage of her brothers in the Lord, or of any person. The lords: All the words which you have formerly confessed here, will you also recant them? Elisabeth: No, my lords, but I will seal them with my death. The lords: We will not torment you any more now. Will you now tell us with a good will who it is that baptized you? Elisabeth: O no, my lords, I have surely told you that I will not confess that.

Hereafter the sentence upon Elisabeth was passed, in the year 1549, the 27th day of March, and she was condemned to death, to be drowned in a sack, and has thus offered up her body to God.

A song of Elisabeth
To the tune of vanden tweeden Psalm, Ofte: Roosken root seer wijt ontloken

There was a maiden of tender limbs,
Elisabeth, that was her name,

Who dwelt in the city
Of Leeuwarden, a fitting city.
In January she was taken;
It was in the fifteen-hundredth year
Forty-nine; she had longing
For Christ,
whom she
confessed there.
They brought her to the Blockhouse in short while;
There they pressed upon her
To say on her oath, after the law's manner,
Whether she did not have a husband.
She answered, when she heard this:
"To swear befits us in no way;"
"Yes,"
"yes, no, no, shall be our words."
"I am not joined to any man."
The Council.
"It is said that you seduce many people,"
"And that you are also a female teacher;"
"Thus it is wanted that you shall declare"
"Whom you have taught in your time."
Elisabeth.
"O no, my Lords, leave me in peace"
"From this, and ask after my faith;"
"Gladly will I give you account thereof,"
She spoke, for blind and deaf.
The Council.
"But what is it that you hold of the mass"
"And the highly worthy sacrament?"
Elisabeth.
"Of such I never read anything certain,"
"But indeed"
"something of the Lord's Supper."
She spoke so much Scripture at that hour
That they said there in the court:
"The Devil speaks out of your mouth."
Elisabeth.
"Yes,"
"no"
"more than the servant is above his Lord."

The Council.
"Say, can infant baptism not profit"

"That you had yourself baptized again?"
Elisabeth.
"No, not again am I come thereto"

"Since it happened once upon my faith."
The Council.
"Can the priests also forgive sin?"
Elisabeth.
"No indeed; how should I believe so?"
"Christ the only exalted Priest,"
"Who alone cleanses us from base sins."
Thereafter, without long delay,
They brought Lijsbet again before the Council,
And thereupon they had her led
Into the torture cellar before the wicked hangman.
The Council.
"We have until now"
"Dealt with you with nothing but kindness;"
"But if you will not answer our questions,"
"With harshness we will proceed."
They had two thumb-irons set on her,
Since she would not confess at length,
So that they crushed her thumbs and fingers
That the blood sprang out at the nails.
Elisabeth.
"O, I cannot bear it longer."
The Council.
"Confess;"
"one shall lighten your pain."
Elisabeth.

"Help me, O Lord, she spoke with lamenting,"
"For You are a fine helper in need."
"Confess, confess, they cried from the side,"
"So one shall lighten you well;"
"For we tell you to confess,"
"And not to call quickly to God."
But she kept calling upon God very fervently,
Who lightened her, and she spoke coolly:

"Now ask me freely, continually,"
"For I feel no pain, as before."
Two more screws they set on her shins.
"Shame me not, she then said,"
"For as yet no man"
"Has laid his hand on my bare body."
Thereupon she fainted under their hands,
So that they said she was dead by chance;
But waking in the bonds,
She said: "I am not dead but still live."
The Council.
"And will you still not speak against"

"What you have confessed before us here?"
Elisabeth.
"No indeed, she spoke to them fearlessly,"
"But will with my death"
"boldly seal it."
In March,
in the year aforesaid,
The Council gave sentence over her;
With drowning they took revenge on her,
On that dear little sheep, those wicked wolves.
O let us consider with the heart
Elisabeth's manly courage,
When in distress she suffered pain and smart

She called upon the good Lord.

The confession of Hans van Overdamme
This is the confession of Hans van Overdamme, which he wrote out of the prison, and thereafter testified with his death at Ghent, in the year 1550.

Hans van Overdamme, with his fellow prisoners for the testimony of Jesus Christ, wishes all brothers and sisters in the Lord grace, peace, and a fiery love, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise, honor, and majesty, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

And you, dearest of my heart, be not troubled on my account, but praise the Lord for this, that He is so good a Father to me, that I may suffer bonds and imprisonment for the testimony of Christ; and I also hope to go into a fire for it. The Lord give me strength through His Holy Spirit. Amen. And walk in the fear of the Lord, according as you are

called. And though we no longer see one another here in the flesh, that we may hereafter behold one another in the kingdom of our Father, where I shortly hope to be. The peace of the Lord be with you. Amen.

The wish and desire of my heart, from the whole ground of my soul, is: O dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, always do more and more diligence to take heed to your calling, whereto you are called by God the Father, through Christ, to the majesty and glory of the kingdom of His beloved Son, who has purchased His congregation through His own blood, and has given Himself over for her, so that He might make her glorious, and has cleansed her by the washing of water in the Word, so that He might set before Himself a glorious congregation, which has no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she be holy and blameless.

Therefore, O dear friends, mark this, what great love the Father has shown us, that He has not spared His only Son; and how Christ so willingly gave Himself over, and suffered for us the most despised and shameful death of the cross, and poured out His precious blood for us, to wash and cleanse us from our sins. O dear brothers and sisters, let us mark it, pray diligently and watch, so that the saving grace of God, and the unspeakable love of the Father and of Christ, do not become neglected or forgotten in us, through any temporal care of the trouble of this world, lusts and desires, which kill the soul, and so that we then, as spots and wrinkles, are not washed and swept out of the glorious congregation of Christ, yes, as an unfruitful branch cut off and appointed to the fire. For, my dearest, it is not enough that we have received baptism upon our faith, and through faith are grafted into Christ, if we do not hold the beginning of His being firm unto the end. Therefore if there is anyone who feels that he has become a spot or a wrinkle, let him see to it that he hasten (before the day fall upon him, as a snare upon the birds) and do repentance with true sorrow and remorse, and raise up again the lowered hands and the slack knees, and run with a full run the race that is set before him, so that the lame is not thrust out of the way, but much rather becomes whole and strong, so that we may finish the time of our pilgrimage in the fear of God, and keep ourselves unspotted from this evil wicked world, which is yet full of deceit, snares, and nets, which the devil sets to lead astray and catch the souls of men through many kinds of lusts and tricks. O Lord, keep Your pilgrims (from this murderer) who walk in Your hope, and expect our help and comfort from You alone, O heavenly Father, through Christ Jesus our Lord, that You will also complete in us the good work which You have begun in us, to the praise and glory of Your holy name. O You almighty and eternal God, how wholly incomprehensible is Your grace and fatherly mercy over those who fear and love You. O Father, who would not fear such a God, who knows how to deliver His own, though they seem here for a little time forsaken, despised, rejected, and cursed by all men on this earth; yet He does not forsake His own. The comfort of His Holy Spirit in our hearts makes us free and joyful, that we may suffer contempt for His name's sake; and we hope, through the goodness of God, that our pilgrimage shall now soon be at an end, and that we shall be delivered from this miserable world and valley of tears, and this earthly house of our dwelling shall be broken, so that we may come home to our heavenly Father, and receive the

crown of eternal life which is now set before us, and hope that it shall be taken from us by no creature. Thereto strengthen us the almighty and eternal God, the merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Know, dear friends, how it went with me before my imprisonment, and thereafter in my imprisonment, how they dealt with us.

It happened at the time when the four friends had been offered up (of which I made the song) and I had seen them burn. Then I heard say how they had assailed the other friends, who still remained in the prison, with great cunning and deceit, through the counsel of the false prophets, who always have the devil's cunning in mind, as they had also boasted to them that they would do it. Our friends who had remained there were two young fellows and a young girl, and we prayed the Lord daily very diligently for them, fearing they might be snatched away in something, and we daily expected that they also would be put to death. And I was so driven in my mind (for their youth's sake) to go and stand at the front of the scaffold where they would be put to death, if they might have been sorrowful in any things, that I might have comforted them, and reproved the monks, who do our friends much distress with tormenting when they are led to death. But alas, the poor wretches did not come so far, but unwarily let themselves be brought into disputations with the false prophets, although they had been warned enough of it, that they should beware of it, as dearly as they held their souls. For not everyone has the gift to dispute, but freely to confess the faith, such as one has received from the Lord: that well befits the Christians. But when the poor sheep had given themselves into disputations, they became confused in their consciences, and so fell away from the truth, of which the false prophets bore a great boast, and that they had won their souls and brought them again to the holy church. And when I heard this, my soul and spirit became very sorrowful, for the loss of the poor sheep, and because the false prophets, and also the councilors, so greatly boasted themselves in the fall and ruin of the poor little lambs and sucklings, whom they had driven thereto with adjuring, as you shall well hear hereafter.

Thus being sorrowful, I sighed to God over the violence and power of the devil which he works through his children of unbelief. So it came into my mind with this, that I would write some little letters, to stick up in some places, reproving their vain joy over the loss of the poor sheep, whose souls they had murdered. Then I began to write, and in the writing my mind became so fiery, that where I thought to write a little letter of a hand's breadth, it became a letter of a whole sheet. And the Lord opened my understanding, so that I proved to the lords wonderfully their punishment, with the whole Roman empire and its endings, by the showing of Scripture. And in the letter I wrote that I wished and desired, and that it might happen, to dispute with freedom in public, in the presence of a great fire, with all their learned men, and whoever was overcome should be cast into the fire; and that they should let the poor little lambs be in peace, and let the sword of the magistracy rest, and fight with God's Word. When this letter was prepared, I let the brothers see it, whom it well pleased,

and I had six other letters written after it by a brother who could write better than I. And in the meantime the poor ruined sheep were let out of the prison, and recanted it all; and the one young fellow died the same day that he had gone out, a mile outside the city, and became an example or mirror to those who seek to keep their life. After this happened, I came from Antwerp with Hansken the cheese-buyer, and we had ordered all our things, that we should send the letters. And on Saturday evening we sent the letters to the lords of the city, and stuck two open letters in the middle of the city, so that everyone should read them. For this we greatly praise and thank the Lord, that we dispatched it before we were imprisoned. For we were all betrayed by a Judas who was among us, and who seemed to be one of the most pious brothers of all who were there. So feignedly could he hold himself, and he had long been out for it (as we now mark) to betray a heap of friends. And this traitor was by where the letters were stuck. And we had ordered to come together on Sunday morning, to speak of the Word of the Lord, for I would make my farewell with the brothers, to travel away the next day; but the Lord be praised, who had provided otherwise.

Then Hansken went early in the morning with me to the wood where we were to gather, and we did not find our friends at the place where we thought. We searched a good half hour long. We thought they would not have come, because it had rained so hard in the evening. We would almost have gone back. Then I said: Let us go; they may possibly be here in front. And I sang softly all the while, if they were there, that they might hear it. Then I heard it rustling in the wood, and said to Hansken: Our friends are here. Then we were still, and looked who would come forth. Then three came forth with weapons and staves. Then I said: Well, fellows, have you sought a hare and not caught it? Then they became wholly death-pale in their faces, and stepped up to us, and seized me by the arm, saying: Give yourself prisoner. There they caught us, and said: We have yet a great heap caught. Then we saw our brothers there, a whole wagon full sitting bound, and three judges with all their servants who guarded them, a great heap. When we came by, we greeted our brothers with the peace of the Lord, and comforted them with the Word of the Lord, to fight freely now for His name's sake. After that we reproved the judges, that they were so greedy to shed innocent blood. Then they locked Hansken and me together with iron bands, and our thumbs also. Then we thought they would have carried us to the city; but because it was on another lordship where we were caught, we had to go a half mile further. Then we counted it a great fortune that we were still so long together, that going along the way we might comfort one another with the Word of the Lord, before they separated us from one another. Then we were laid in a castle, a mile from the city. There we were all alike kept together in a chamber. We were there three days, for that was the right of the lordship where we were caught. There we thanked and praised the Lord our God, that He knew so well how to order it, that we had so long a time to admonish one another freely. Much people also came out of the city, who came to see and hear us; but at last no one might come by us in the chamber any more. There we were examined of our faith by the high bailiff of the land of Aalst, which we freely confessed to him. We thought we should be carried to Aalst; but because the bailiff of Ghent had set us on the wagon to carry us to Ghent when we were caught, therefore we all

together had to be carried back to Ghent. And our traitor, who had betrayed us, was imprisoned with us, so that we should not mark it; and they set him apart from us in another chamber. We had great pity for that, because he might not be with us, not knowing that he was our traitor. And he was carried on the wagon with us into the prison at Ghent. There we first came to know that he had betrayed us.

When we were now brought out of that castle to be brought to the city, much people had come from the city to see us. Then my brother's wife was imprisoned, who is also a sister, because she spoke to me, and was set on the wagon; and yet another man also, who wished us luck. There we spoke freely to the people who had come there, how they must be every man's prey who turn themselves from wickedness and will follow Christ. There was much people who would have spoken with us, but they dared not, for the wicked judges' sake. So we became ten covenanted ones: two stand ready, and four newcomers; the two others were imprisoned because they spoke to us. Thus they carried two wagons full to the city in high sunshine. And on the way they caught yet a woman, because she only said to us: God keep you. She also had to sit on the wagon. But when we came into the city, they would have imprisoned all those who spoke to us, and whom we called to again with the Word of the Lord; they could not have carried them on twenty wagons, for the people came running thick from all sides against us as we passed by there, like water that runs down from the mountains and becomes a great water, so the people ran together; and this lasted from the one city gate to the count's castle, which stands by the other end of the city, about an hour's walk away; there we were laid in that castle. And the judge of the land of Aalst delivered us over into the hands of the lords of the emperor's council; there we were laid apart from one another, some above in chambers, the women also remained above; but eleven of us were laid in a dark deep cellar, and in the cellar stood several vaulted or walled dark prisons; there we were all set apart, three and three. But Hansken and I were laid in the darkest of all; there was a little crumbled straw, as much as one could carry in a lap; therewith we might help ourselves. I said: It seems to me that we are with Jonah in the belly of the whale, so dark is it here; we may firmly call with Jonah to the Lord, that He be our Comforter and Deliverer, for we are now bereft of all human comfort and help; of which we have not been sorrowful, but have praised and thanked God that we might suffer for His name's sake; and we also addressed our other brothers, who lay in the other caves, for we could well hear one another speak. When we had lain there three or four days, we two, Hansken and I, were summoned above by the lords; there we were examined, and asked after the ground of our faith, when we had been baptized. Then the Lord, according to His promise, gave us a mouth to speak freely, and we desired to answer for ourselves in public, with the Word of God. Then they answered us that they would provide us learned men, who should instruct us; so we were led down again. Shortly after that I was fetched up into another chamber, by two councilors and a clerk, and they sharply examined me there, where I had been, and whether I well knew that I had been banished for over six years, in Marten Huereblock's time, and where we had held our assembly. That they knew all, for the traitor had told it all to them. I said: What will you ask me, since I come from strange lands? For I have purposely not wanted to ask much, in

case I were imprisoned, that I then should not have much to answer for. Why do you ask so sharply? Have you not yet innocent blood enough to shed? Do you thirst for still more? Ask freely and closely, I said; it shall be asked of you again by the righteous Judge, if you do not convert. Then they asked me still more, and adjured me by my baptism, that I should tell it; for, they said, we know that you people do not lie, therefore tell us. I said: That you know that we do not lie, that is a testimony to us unto salvation, and to you unto damnation, that you people kill such as us; but your adjuring has no power against the truth. And all that I said was written down, and they threatened to torture me, if I would not tell them all. I said: What I do not know, I cannot tell you; and they tormented me thus very long. Then I was led down again. And so they did with all our friends, one after another, alone.

On a Saturday I was again fetched up into the same chamber. Then there were four monks there: the guardian of the Friars Minor, his second, and the father of the Jacobins, his second. And with me came a young brother, who had not yet received baptism, but stood ready. When I had sat down, and asked what they desired, they said that they had been appointed by the lords to instruct us, and to speak with one another of the ground and articles of the faith. Then I answered that I was ready to let myself be instructed with God's Word, and well desired to hold conference of the ground and articles of the faith, and that in public, in the presence of the judges who shall judge us, and in the presence of our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned with us. Answer: They will not allow it so. Hans van Overdamme: Well, then they may do what they will, and we will not thus dispute in secret alone, so that our words are not twisted behind our backs. Answer: We will not twist your words. Hans van Overdamme: No, we know you well. Question: For what do you know us? What evil have we done you? Say then, what evil do you know of us? Hans van Overdamme: Since you will know it anyway, I hold you for false prophets and deceivers. Then we came to disputing of their spiritual appearance, and of the pope's commandment concerning the purity of the priests and monks, and why they are called spiritual and the others worldly, whereas they all ought to be spiritual. Then I proved that they were sects. Then they thought: This does not profit; let us dispute of the articles of the faith. Then I said: Well, as I have said. They said they would tell it to the lords. So we parted, when we had disputed with one another a good two hours.

Two days after that, Hansken and I were both summoned by the lords, and the four monks were there by, and they laid it before us to dispute. Then I spoke to the lords: My lords, I ask you, in what house we are, in a house of right or of violence? Answer: In a house of right. Hans van Overdamme: God grant that it must be so. But, my lords, wherein do you charge us, that you hold us imprisoned and locked up as thieves and murderers? Have we done anyone short, or do you lay violence or murder upon us, or any knavish deeds? Answer: No, we know no such thing of you people. Hans van Overdamme: Well, my lords, why have you then imprisoned us? Answer: Your opposing party will well tell you that. Hans van Overdamme: Are you then our opposing party? Answer: No, but we are judges. Then I said to the monks: Are you then our opposing party? Answer: No. Hans van Overdamme: Well,

if no one is our opposing party, why then are we thus imprisoned? Then a councilor said: The emperor is your opposing party. Hans van Overdamme: We have not misdone against the imperial majesty, according to the power which he has received from God, and I will be obedient to him in all ordinances, so far as I am able with the truth. The councilor: You have held gatherings of this new teaching, and the emperor has commanded that one shall not do such. Hans van Overdamme: To make such commandments is not given him of God. There he steps outside the power that is given him of God. Therein we do not acknowledge him as a ruler, for the salvation of our souls goes nearer to us, that we show obedience to God. Then the monks said: We are the opposing party in this, because your teaching is not good; for if it were good, you would not preach in woods and corners, but in public. Then Hansken said: Grant us a free place on the market, or in your cloisters or churches, and see whether we shall then go into the woods. But no: you would fear that one would reprove you. Therefore you have obtained that one may not reprove you, and have driven us out of cities and lands. The monks: Alas, we have not done that; the emperor does that. Hansken: You have driven him to it. The monks: We have not. Then the lords also began to speak against us, why we were not content with the faith of our elders, and with our baptism. We said: We know of no infant baptism, but of a baptism of faith, of which God's Word teaches us. Then we had yet many other words, reproving that they would be judges over matters of the faith, wherein they did not understand the Scripture. But if you will be judges, then hold yourselves impartial, and let the matter proceed in reasonable order, and let both parties be together with equal hand, and let our brothers and sisters who have been brought here imprisoned with us be with us; and then one of us shall speak, to whom the Lord shall open the mouth, and the others shall listen and be silent so long as he speaks, and let our opposing party also do so. The lords: We will not let you people come together. We will that you shall dispute here alone. Then we said: My lords, it would be the very best for you, and it would all go through with one disputation; otherwise you will always have to begin a disputation anew with one or two at a time. The lords: What is it then? We will not have it so. Then a councilor said: They will have them together, so that they would lead one another still further astray; therefore one may not let them come by one another. Hans van Overdamme: My lords, you say that you are judges, but we hold you as our party, for you seek in every way to weaken us, and by violence and cunning to make us and our companions fall away from our faith. Answer: Why should we not do that, so that we may bring them back to the right? Hans van Overdamme: Well, my lords, then hear this. Because we see that you are no judges, but our opposing party, and use all violence and cunning, where you can and may, to your fairest advantage and to our disadvantage: first, you have taken and robbed our Testaments, wherein we find our comfort, by violence; second, you have laid us apart, the one in deep dark cellars, the others in high chambers; and third, you now seek with separate disputations to outwit and deceive us, and then to say that you had overcome us, behind our backs to our brothers, and then again thus to us concerning our brothers and sisters. And therefore, my lords, we will not dispute here alone, unless our brothers and sisters shall be there by. When they heard that their purpose over us had no

progress according to their will, they became very angry, and the monks also. We well saw what was to be done, that it was all knavery, whatever they practiced. For although one proved of some points with the Scripture that they were in the wrong, they would yet not acknowledge it, and excused themselves with the emperor and his mandate, and the monks with the long custom of the Roman church, and with the great crowd of our elders. And when one had then shown the contrary with the Scripture, it was as before, as if one had gaped against the oven. Then we said: Well, my lords, will you then not allow us to dispute in reasonable order, as we have desired? Answer: No. Well then, we said, you know the ground of our faith, which we have freely confessed to you, so you may now do with us what you will, so far as God allows it. And see well to what you do and deal, for there is yet a judge above you. And the Lord will open the eyes of your understanding, so that you may see how miserably you are led astray and deceived by the false prophets, in that you fight against God and the Lamb, which shall fall heavy upon you, if you do not convert. Then we were led away again, when we would dispute no further. For we had concluded that counsel with one another when we were still together at the castle outside the city, so that they should not fall upon the simple ones with the disputation, and so could make no one wise that they had overcome them, well knowing that they will not dispute unless they come together; and then the disputation happens for the comfort and admonition of our brothers and sisters who hear it. For when we saw that they did their fairest, we would not leave ours either, for we well saw that it was needful. When they saw that this would not succeed, they brought forth another counsel, and appointed a councilor and two monks, a gray one and a black one, in a chamber; and each time a brother or sister was fetched forth, that they should dispute, and maintain the ground of their faith with the monks. They said that they would not dispute alone in a chamber, but in public, when we are together before the lords. Then they said: We adjure you by your faith and by your baptism, that you dispute here. Then the brother said: My faith and baptism I know, but I have nothing to do with your adjuring; only let us come together, that is rightly our desire, to dispute with you people in public, but not thus alone in a chamber. Then they summoned another, and so on, until they had had them all before them, and no one would dispute thus. Then I also had to come forth alone into a chamber by a councilor and two monks, who also began to adjure me. Then I said: Why will you adjure me, that I should cast the roses before the dogs, and the pearls before the swine, so that you should trample them? No, the Lord has forbidden me that. No, I count God's words more precious than that I should here let the light shine in vain, where no one is enlightened by it, but that it should be blasphemed and mocked, as you people do when one tells you the truth. Then they adjured me still much more. Then I said: Why will you adjure so much? I do not regard your adjuring, for it is a nature of sorcerers, who adjure against the truth. But now I well see through what our two brothers and sister have murdered and led astray their souls: through your sorcerous adjuring, in that they did not guard themselves against the devil's cunning, in that they did not have the gifts to dispute. Then the guardian said: You have boasted in your letter of disputing in public; why do you not dare now to dispute? Hans van Overdamme: You monk, that I still desire with my whole heart, to defend

my faith with God's Word, in public before all men; but your cowl would tremble quite otherwise if you had to dispute with me at the fire, and the magistracy were not your protector. The councilor: No, we have no desire for that, to let you dispute in public; you are now in our hands. Hans van Overdamme: I desired it before I knew that I should come into your hands; but I well see that we have fallen into the claws of the eagle, and he who comes therein cannot come out again, unless he leave soul or body there. The councilors: Who is the eagle, the emperor? Hans van Overdamme: No, it is the Roman empire or power; read the letter which I have written to you people; it shall well give you distinction. Then we had yet many words with one another, and the monks became angry at me, and began to speak puffed-up words. Then I said that Paul had rightly prophesied of them, that they were slanderers, bold, and puffed up. Then brother Jan de Croock became so angry that he began to cry: Fools, fools, heretics, heretics you people are. Hans van Overdamme: See, is that not a fine teacher? And Paul says that a teacher shall not be quarrelsome nor angry. The councilor was himself ashamed that the monk behaved so unbecomingly, and admonished him to be still. After that, at another time, there came two worldly priests: Master Willem van den Nieuwen lande, and the parish priest of S. Michiels. I asked them what they desired. They said: We come to seek your soul. That time I held myself as reserved as I could, hoping that we should have disputed in public before the lords, as they told me that they would do their best thereto. But when I heard that it might not be, when they came again to me the second time with the clerk, I thought: we must take it otherwise in hand with one another than we did last time. Then I asked: What do you desire then? Answer: We desire that you let yourself be instructed, for see, we seek your soul. Hans van Overdamme: Do you then make so great diligence to seek souls? Answer: Yes. Hans van Overdamme: Well, then go in the city in all places, to drunkards, whore-hunters, cursers, railers, covetous, proud, and idol-servants, tipplers and revelers, and murderers who shed innocent blood; they are yet all your brothers; go and seek their souls; mine Christ has found. Answer: We admonish them; then we have acquitted our souls. Hans van Overdamme: It is not enough therewith; you ought to go to them and reprove them thus, and if they would not hear it, you ought to bring them before the congregation, and reprove them in public; if they then did not hear, put them out of the congregation, hold them as heathen and open sinners, as Christ teaches, and Paul to the Corinthians. And reprove also your judges, who do violence and wrong, yes, spill and shed innocent blood. Then a priest said: Should we go reprove the authorities? Then I asked whether God were a respecter of persons. Answer: No. Hans van Overdamme: Will you be God's servants, and will you respect persons? Answer: That would make an uproar in the city, and one would kill us for it. Hans van Overdamme: Then you would suffer for righteousness. But it seemed to me that they had no great desire to suffer for that. In sum, we treated so much of the ban, that if one should follow Christ's and Paul's words, pope, prelates, emperor, and king, yes, they also with their whole crowd, should be shut out; so that little crowd would have become very small. Then I told them that their whole house stood in fire, kindled with hellish fire; they should first quench that before they came to see whether in our house there were any danger of fire. Then they went away; the one priest

never came again. With Master Antonius van Hille I dealt likewise; he tormented the others, but me he left in peace. Herewith I commend my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord into the hands of the almighty God and Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Written in my prison, for the testimony of Christ. In the dark prison I have lain a month; now I lie in a deep round pit, where it is somewhat clearer; therein I have written this letter. I hope this week to make my offering, as it pleases the Lord, with those whom the Lord has provided thereto; for if it does not happen this week, it shall yet wait a good two months, since they then do not sit in judgment for six weeks. Know that our brothers and sisters are well comforted and of good cheer through the grace of the Lord; God be praised. I pray you, by the brotherly love which you have to me, that you dispatch this letter to Friesland, namely to Emderland, this same letter, as soon as you can; you may well copy it out, but hasten therewith; I friendly desire that it be kept, so that it is not torn or soiled. The brothers who lie with me in the cellar greet you all together with the peace of the Lord. We likewise pray the Lord for you people; do so also for us. Walk in the fear of the Lord, and it shall go well with you. When this letter is read, dispatch it to Antwerp, that it may be dispatched in the congregation at Emden, so that it may be read before everyone; that I desire of my dear brothers, through the brotherly love which you bear to me.

Letter to the lords of the law at Ghent

This is a letter of the same Hans van Overdamme, which he sent to the lords of the law at Ghent, and to the councilors, the day before he was imprisoned.

Understand well. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And he who reads it, let him mark it, and judge with the understanding of the Holy Scripture; but woe to those who judge with lack of understanding. Hear: it is to you that I speak, O you fleshly generation, you Ishmaelites, you who boast yourselves to be Christians because you are born of water without the Spirit, and you persecute the children of the promise, who through faith in God's Word are born of water and the Spirit. Yes, you persecute them as Ishmael did Isaac, as Esau did Jacob, and as the Jews persecuted Christ: so now the fleshly-born antichrists do to the spiritually born Christians (who shall receive the promises of the eternal kingdom through Christ, who is an heir of all things, who lets His kingdom be proclaimed again through the Gospel, unto repentance and true remorse for dead works, through faith in Him), despising His witnesses, and so forth. This is the wind, O eagle: mark it, which blows where it will, of which you do not know from where it comes or where it goes. Hear now His voice, which the Most High has kept until the last times, to reveal to you your misdeeds and punishment, who now begins to deliver His people through many captivities and grief. Therefore mark, O you eagle, that the end of your time is very near. Are you not that fourth beast? O yes, you, which Daniel saw, which tore everything with its iron teeth, and trampled the remainder with its feet, and brought forth that most evil little horn. And you have inhabited the earth many years with deceit, and you have judged the world not with the truth, for you have tormented the meek, and wounded those who were at rest, and have loved the lying ones, and destroyed the dwelling of those who make fruit, and have

overpowered those who did you no wrong. Therefore your contempt has gone up to the Most High, and your pride to the Strongest. Therefore you, eagle, must be put away, so that the earth may cool and return, being delivered from your power, and may hope for the judgment and mercy of Him who made it, whose judgment shall be better and more righteous than yours, O you eagle. Therefore your evil heads, which are kept until the last, must be the end of the eagle, to accomplish the most evil wickedness of the eagle with its evil feathers, which also are held until the last.

Therefore hear, you vain body of the eagle, who vainly boast yourselves of that which you are not, namely Christians. Hear also, you most evil claws, who are willing and ready to destroy and tear what your most evil heads command, through the counsel of the lying ones whom they love. Why do you rejoice in the grief and fall of the poor little lambs and sucklings, who still use milk, whom you hold imprisoned by violence, and with false lying tricks murder their souls, who have come to the hearing of the truth but a year or two at the most? You have not yet those who can instruct you in all the articles of the faith. Be ashamed of the boasting that you, through your fleshly blind learned men, have overcome the innocent, with subtle lying tricks and broken scriptures. O woe, woe, for the great misery, the dreadful times, that wickedness has so far gained the upper hand that the truth is not so much as allowed to answer for itself in public. Let it be complained to the Most High, the sorrow, violence, and great misery of the fearful and the sucklings in these times, because no help, comfort, nor assistance can come to them from those to whom the Lord has given more graces and gifts, to stop the mouths of the gainsayers. Or if you will say upon this: Let them then come forward who are better gifted, and have received more graces. Hereupon we answer that the wolf would call long for the sheep before they would come, well knowing that they would be torn by him with great cruelty, without right and reason.

O woe, woe, how horrible a judgment, and dreadful punishment of the wrathful devouring anger of God, upon those who without any mercy oppress, persecute, and murder the innocent and the God-fearing, and themselves live so ungodly in all the unrighteous works of the flesh, so that such shall not possess the kingdom of heaven. O you spiritual Babylon, the Lord will require of you the innocent souls and the blood of His witnesses, and avenge them, for it is all found in you. You have made the kings of the earth and all peoples so drunk with the wine of spiritual whoredoms, that they may neither see nor hear the truth. O if we might once answer freely in public with the Word of God, in the presence of a great burning fire, with all your learned doctors, licentiates, priests, and monks, who help strengthen, protect, keep, and maintain the kingdom of Antichrist, and that he who was overcome should be cast into the fire: then it would be no need to torment and oppress the poor innocent little lambs. So your faith might also be proved, how it agreed with the truth. Then Pilate's hand-water, or the emperor's mandate, would be of no need, and the magistracy would remain innocent of the blood of the innocent, if they let God's Word be judge over the faith. But no: the false prophets and deceivers well know that their knavery and deceit would all too greatly be revealed thereby. Therefore they cry so diligently, as the

scribes and Pharisees did: Crucify him, crucify him; the emperor's mandate must have the upper hand. So it was in the beginning of the fourth beast, and now also so at the end of the same beast. Mark with understanding, he who can grasp it: the end is the worst. Princes, do repentance and amend yourselves, for the end of all things is very near. Woe to you, you false prophets, who withstand the truth, as the Egyptian sorcerers withstood Moses. But your knavery shall yet be made manifest to all men, as it already now well begins. Woe to you, you champions and fighters of Antichrist, who draw on the long customs of the Roman church as a breastplate, to defend yourselves therewith against the truth, and the mandate of the emperor as a shield, and drive the sword of the magistracy before you, to shed in all lands the innocent blood of those who do not desire to defend themselves with any temporal or bodily weapons, but only with God's Word. That is our sword, which is two-edged and sharp. But we are daily greatly belied by those who say that we would maintain our faith with the sword, as those of Münster did. The almighty God keep us from such abominations.

Know, you noble lords, councilors, burgomasters, and aldermen, that we acknowledge the state of your office for right and good, yes, ordained and instituted of God: namely, that worldly sword for the punishment of evildoers and for the protection of the good. And we desire to be obedient to you in all taxes, tolls, and ordinances, so far as it is not against God. And where you find us disobedient in such manner, we desire gladly to receive our punishment as offenders. God knows, who knows all hearts, that this is our meaning. But understand, you noble lords: the misuse and mishandling of your state or office we do not acknowledge to be of God, but to be of the devil; and that Antichrist has bewitched and blinded your eyes, through the cunning of the devil, so that you do not know yourselves, how heavily you lie fallen in the wrath of God. Therefore become sober and awake, and open the eyes of the understanding, and see against whom you fight: that it is against no men, but against God. Therefore we will not be obedient to you, for it so pleases God that we shall be proved thereby. Therefore we will rather, through God's grace, let our temporal body be burned, drowned, beheaded, racked, or tortured, as it seems good to you, whether scourging, banning, or chasing out, and let our goods be robbed, rather than that we will show you any obedience against the Word of the Lord. And we will be patient and longsuffering therein, committing the vengeance to God, for we know Him who has said: Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord. And again: The Lord shall judge His people. And it is dreadful to fall into the hands of the living God. And the Spirit testifies this, that this is before the door, and is the beginning.

Hear, you half-greatest: prepare your bed, for you shall bear. What shall I bear? The fruit of your labor, with pain and smart, and after that death. Hear, you on the right side: prepare the measure. Whereto shall I prepare it? To measure your neighbor, and then you also shall be measured. Prepare yourselves, you fire, and do not remain long. Hear, I speak to you, you company of the horn: the day of your meal is present; your food is already prepared. Eat quickly the fat flesh of the drunken, so that the power of the beasts may be given. The mind

is given to you to do thus. You shall have a short power after the beast. You fight against the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome you. He is a King of all kings, a Lord of all lords, whose kingdom abides forever. Amen. We testify of Him that it is He who shall come. Yes, He comes quickly, the Lord Jesus, who shall give each one reward according to his works. Amen.

A song of Hans van Overdamme
To the tune of vanden 26. Psalm, ofte: Ic weet een vrouken amoreus.

I know, whoever knows God's word,
That he must suffer in the world.
Hans van Overdamme at Ghent,
The cheese-buyer at his side —
They have proved this very well,
With still more other pious ones,
Who through one
came into torment,
Which did not seem fierce,
But they did not perceive its depth.
But because Hans van Overdamme
And Hansken the cheese-buyer both
Through power
that came to them from above
Spread God's word exceedingly,
Therefore they had to rue that:
They took them together
And set them in the darkest hole;
Being not weary,
They worshipped God the Father.
They were brought forth together,
Especially before the councillors,
Who diligently inquired
After their
faith and doctrine.
But to them
was given a mouth
According to the Lord's promise,
Which was not known to the world —
however shrewd of device,
You ponder in vain.
"Say, my Lords, spoke Hans to them,"

"All with deliberate mind:"
"In what house are we here together —"
"does one use"
"right or violence"
"herein?"
The Council.
"You are where right is used."
Hans.
"God grant that it may be so."
"Wherein do you accuse us? Unlock"
"what hides with you,"

"you my highly praised Lords."
"Why do you hold us fast imprisoned"
"And locked up at your pleasure?"
"Have we done violence"
"As murderers or thieves,"
"Or knavish deeds? Point them out to us."
The Council.
"One knows no such thing of you people."
Hans.
"Well, why do you hold us captive?"
The Council.
"Your adversary plainly"

"shall well declare it to you people."
"Hans straightway demanded there in common"
"Who his adversary should be;"
"There was no councillor or monk"
"Who would have the name."
"He spoke: 'Why are we in bonds?"
"Is there no adversary?'"
"'It is the valiant Emperor,"
"your opponent,'"
"Spoke a councillor standing by."
"Against the Emperor's Majesty"
"We have indeed done nothing;"
"According to the"
"power granted to him"
"By God, we will give him"
"Obedience in all with good patience,"
"So far as in such measure"

"it"
"may also stand with the truth."
The Council.
"Your folk one saw"
"gathered against his Placards."
Hans.
"It is not permitted to his power"

"to make such commandments;"
"There he steps outside the power"
"Granted by God; we blame that,"
"In no way acknowledging him therein"
"As a superior of faith."
"More counts with us the soul's gain,"
"That we with mind"
"obediently"
"keep God's commandment."
"They have begun again"
"With their evil adjuring:"
"'What do you want to adjure me of, then?'"
Hans.
"To"
"renew the rosary"
"And cast it before the fierce dogs,"
"The pearls before the swine?"
"No, that is against God's command;"
"I value it more"
"than"
"to let the light shine in vain."
"The priests with their false doctrine,"
"Very mighty against the truth,"
"Could not stand; that pained them;"
"Therefore they complained"
"To the Wolf, who the sweet sheep"
"Thereafter had roasted at stakes."
"The innocent blood had to quench"
"Their cruel mind"
"Before they could sate themselves."
"Thus came the sentence of death suddenly,"
"As the prosecutor declared:"
"'That you heretics are condemned —'"
"This is therefore the record:"

"That there has been disputed with you"
"By various learned men,"
"But willingly you have not repented"
"Nor accepted"
"the worthy instruction."
"Had we"
"been allowed openly"
"To dispute with your clerks,"
"What learned men they all are,"
"One would then have been able to perceive."
"My Lords, spoke Hans before the Council;"
"The prosecutor answered,"
"Saying: 'It is now all too late.'"
"'It is all too late.'"
"But they were not dismayed."
"They were then sent forth;"
"With laughing mouth they went."
"Hans spoke: 'It is now all too late, yes, yes.'"
"One saw them leap for joy."
"They had both subtly devised it,"
"As prudent foxes,"

"That the cheese-buyer with long tarrying,"
"It is told me,"
"Should draw off his hose."
"Meanwhile in this doing"
"Hans would say something good to the people,"
"And so he also did,"
"According to their shrewd devising."
"Then each standing at a stake there,"
"They made their offerings;"
"One wrote fifteen hundred years"
"And fifty clearly,"
"When they burned at Ghent."
"O Christian,"
"to the battle"
"betake yourself;"

"lay hold now on shield and weapon;"
"See that you tremble not before the Beast;"
"Take an example from these lads,"

"That with them you may obtain the reward;"
"Let nothing hinder you;"

"press through the narrow gate to the"
"Crown,"
"Which God's Son"
"Shall Himself set upon His own."

A letter of Jannijn Buefkijn

This is a letter of Jannijn Buefkijn, whom men call Hans the cheese-buyer, written in prison at Ghent, in the year 1550.

A blessed walk, and a living spiritual faith, hope, and a true evangelical trust toward God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, our only helper and Savior, I wish my beloved friends for a glad tiding and a friendly greeting, so that you through the same faith and trust toward God may grow up in a new pure life, which life is traced and richly found in the holy Gospel. O blessed are they who purify and sanctify themselves according to the contents of the Gospel, without which purifying and sanctifying no one shall see God or the Lord. So do the counsel of the Lord Jesus. He says: Search the Scripture. And I have done nothing else, as I and those who are imprisoned with me have said before the lords of the emperor's council, and they cannot charge us with the truth. They asked us, the one after the other, me first, whether I was baptized. I said: Yes, my lords. Question: How long ago is that? Answer: Four years, my lords. Question: What do you hold of your baptism in your young time? Answer: Nothing at all, my lords. Question: Of the sacraments of the priests, do you believe that flesh and blood is there, and that it is God? Answer: No, my lords. What would that flesh and blood be, and God? (I said before the priests of Jezebel.) Lay this table full for me here; I will blow it all away so that it flies as dust. Then they are no gods. One cannot handle God, nor eat Him bodily. Then they asked whether I stood by that. I said: Yes, my lords, until one proves me better with the Scriptures.

Then I was led away from the council, and another fetched forward, and ten have thus confessed, of whom one of the ten is not baptized, and has confessed that it is right and good, and said how he had once been by the teacher to be baptized. Then the lords asked him: How came it that he did not baptize you? So this person said (and he is still a young fellow and a friendly child): My lords, when the teacher set the faith before me, having questioned me, he well marked that I was still young in understanding, and charged me that I should search the Scripture yet more. Then I desired that it should happen. Then he asked me whether I well knew that the world kills and burns such people. I said: I know it well. Then he said to me: So I pray you that you have patience with this at this time, until I come again at another time. Search the Scripture and pray the Lord for wisdom, for you are still a young man. And so we parted. Then the lords asked: Is it then a grief to you that you are not baptized? He said: Yes, my lords. So they asked further: And if you were not now

imprisoned, would you let yourself be baptized? He said: Yes, my lords. Then he was led from the council. Now, friends, these are fair signs and miracles. Open your eyes, that such young people give themselves for the truth, their bodies into imprisonment, yes, into death. It was said to the lords that they should bring forward all their learned men; one shall prove to them with the truth that they are all false prophets, and that they have deceived the world with their falsehood for nearly thirteen hundred years; and that we would rather speak in public on a scaffold in the middle of the market than in secret. And the priests will not do that; they would rather let it cost them much. So all the learned were summoned to dispute, in the consistory, present all the lords of the council, and there also four of the principal most learned priests of Ghent were by. I heard it, for I was present by.

So search the Scripture, which the Lord commands you to search, and thereafter to do, on pain of the damnation of your souls, and of being cast into the eternal fire, where there shall eternally be weeping of the eyes and gnashing of the teeth. Which Scripture the priests forbid you to read, on the pain of being hated here all your life long by all men, and of your body being burned at a stake, which is very soon done, as one sees. So we rather do what the Lord commands, though we are despised for a little time, and cast out by men from this miserable world, and rest in the Lord, than do what men command, and be God's enemy for the eternal time in that horrible hell. So search the Scripture with a righteous heart toward God; the Lord shall give you understanding. The Lord be with you. My love I wish you. By me, Jannijn Buefkijn, imprisoned at Ghent for the testimony of Christ. Salvation to all those who seek the Lord with an unfeigned heart. Written in the dark with poor implements.

How these two foregoing went to death

Hereafter follows how these two foregoing, namely Hans van Overdamme and Hans the cheese-buyer, went to death.

When these two sheep were sentenced, the procurator general spoke: That you are sentenced as heretics is because various learned men have disputed with you, and you would not let yourselves be instructed. Hans van Overdamme: My lords, if we might have disputed in public, one would well have seen what learned men they have been. The procurator general: It is now all too late, it is now all too late. Then they were both sent away, and went with laughing mouth, Hans van Overdamme saying: Yes, yes, it is now all too late. And Hans the cheese-buyer had spoken with Hans van Overdamme, that he would pull off his under-hose on the scaffold, and meanwhile Hans van Overdamme would speak with the people, which so happened. When the executioner would help Hansken, Hansken desired to do it alone, so that Hans van Overdamme might speak the longer to the people. This being done, they were each set at a stake, and offered up their bodies to God.

A song of Hans the cheese-buyer

To the tune of Vanden 29. Psalm. Ofte, Genade ende vrede

O Lord, I will praise You,
You who send Your members all
strength from above,
here in this earthly valley,
that they remain standing fast
against the evil crowd,
when the wicked drive them,
they flee to You.

See yet what pious heroes
appeared there at Ghent.
However sorely they tormented them,
they remained pious standing to the end.
One named Hans the cheese-buyer,
who was also caught there:
of him we have made
a proper little song.

They made him come forward,
the lords of the council,
and sharply inquired
after his mind and deed.
"Are you baptized?" they asked.
"Yes," he spoke readily to the council.
"How long is it that you ventured it?"
Cheese-buyer: "It is four years ago."

They asked his mind
of the priest's sacrament,
whether it was not God, flesh, blood.
He answered pertinently:
"No, should I believe that?
Lay the table full of the bait;
they shall all fly from above
as dust when I blow them."

"Thus they are no gods.
One may in no way eat bodily God
as bread."
"Is this thus your conclusion?"
"Yes, until they show me
a better with clear Scripture."

Then they bade him rise,
that he should go from them.

There it was said: "Let fetch
all your learned men forward.
One shall prove them all
with the true Word,
that they are false prophets,
who for thirteen hundred years
have through their decrees
deceived the crowd of the world."

O men, turn yourselves
from these evil wolves,
who come in sheep's clothes,
being full of hate within.
They are Antichrist's knaves,
who make a great noise,
snatching men's souls
unto the eternal fire.

So, without delay,
go to your Creator, the Lord.
All that you shall need,
that you find in His teaching.
Christ shall steer you aright
if you remain fast by His Word,
and you shall well endure
when wind and storm come aboard.

One thousand five hundred years,
fifty counted thereto:
then one saw this valiant man appear,
and stand burning at a stake
by his dear brother.
Now they are in God's hands,
delivered out of the world's tumult.

A letter of Jeronimus Segersz

This is a letter of Jeronimus Segersz, written in prison at Antwerp to his wife named Lijsken, who also lay imprisoned there, in the year 1551.

Fear God at all times.

In the emperor's chair I lay locked and kept. For the testimony of Jesus Christ I was greatly burdened, and locked between walls. And the door is strong, but it is the Lord's work; therefore He also strengthens me.

Grace and peace, and joy, gladness and comfort, and a firm faith and good trust, with a burning love to God, I wish you, my dearest wife Lijsken Diercks, whom I have married before God and His holy congregation, and have thus taken to myself for a wife according to the Lord's command. Comfort, gladness, and joy must be increased and multiplied in you, my dear wife.

I pray the Lord so diligently for you, that He will comfort you, and take away what is too heavy for you. I know well, my chosen sheep, that you are very sorrowful for my sake; but set all sorrow aside, and look upon the captain of our faith, and upon the finisher Jesus, and let us henceforth walk in all righteousness and holiness, as children of peace, and let us yet well take heed to the time of grace, and think what a great grace the Lord has shown to us. O my dear wife, remember yet what a faithful God it is that we serve. He will not leave us put to shame. Remember how faithfully He led the children of Israel with an outstretched hand from the service-house of Pharaoh and out of Egypt, through the Red Sea; and remember how they had to prepare themselves before they might draw out, and how they ate the Passover lamb with unleavened bread. Standing they had to eat the Passover lamb, and the unleavened bread that they had, they girded in their clothes, and began to draw out toward the wilderness. And the angel of the Lord went before them, by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, and so lighted them. But when they were distressed by Pharaoh and his host, the people began to murmur against Moses, for they had no firm trust in the Lord, that He would lead them out. But the Lord said to Moses what He would do, and how He would show His power on Pharaoh and on his host; and He commanded Moses that he should take the rod and strike into the sea. And when Moses struck into the sea, the sea dried up, and the water parted from one another, and it set itself as walls on the right and on the left, so that they went dry through the sea. And Pharaoh followed after with his host, and he drowned with all his lords and people; but Israel came through without harm, and they praised and thanked God that He had delivered them from the service-house of Pharaoh. But they were then not yet in the promised land. They came into that horrible wilderness, and there was no bread. The bread that they brought out of Egypt was not much; it was the unleavened dough that they girded in their clothes when they drew out of Egypt. Then there was distress, because they had nothing to eat; but the Lord fed them with the heavenly bread.

So also, my dearest wife, we have not won it all when we have known the truth, and have separated ourselves from the world, and have denied all pleasures and desires. But we must also fight against the enemies; that is, we must here in this world fight against emperors and mighty ones and princes of this world. We must suffer in this world. For Paul has said that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. We must overcome the world,

sin, death, the devil, and all, not with outward swords or spears, but with the sword of the Spirit, which is God's Word, and with the shield of faith, wherewith we may ward off all sharp arrows which are as fire, and the helmet of salvation on our head, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, and our feet shod unto the preparation of the Gospel. If we are thus strengthened with weapons, we shall well get through the wilderness with Israel, and overcome and withstand all our enemies. They must come to shame who fight against the truth. When now the children of Israel were out of the wilderness, out of the horrible and dreadful wilderness where the serpents spat fire, and had walked through it forty years long, and had come through so many perils, and had taken in so many cities and lands on this side of the Jordan, then they had not yet the promised land in, for they were not yet over the Jordan. But the Lord showed Moses the promised land from afar. O my dear wife, I have also already seen the promised land from afar. I hope soon to come into the fair city of which John writes, which is very adorned. Her foundations are twelve precious stones, and her walls and streets of pure and clear gold, and the city has twelve gates, each gate of one pearl, and there is no night, for the Lord her God lights her. And the Lord said to Moses that he should not lead the people into the promised land, but Joshua brought them in, and the Lord led them dry-shod through the Jordan, and commanded them that they should keep His commandments and statutes; so He would thrust out all their enemies before their feet. And when they transgressed His commandments and statutes, the Lord gave them into the hands of their enemies, so that they were struck by their enemies. When they were now over the Jordan, they had not yet the land of promise in, where honey and milk flow; but they had to take it in with sheer violence, and kill all their enemies, and burn the cities with fire. So we also must take the promised land with violence. For Christ says that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence. I know now first what fighting is. No one knows it better than he who has tasted it. They come on so cunningly, to lead us astray.

Know that I have received your letter with my mother, which I read with tears. I thank you that you so heartily comfort me therewith, and I rejoice when I heard that you are so well content.

Before the margrave

Know, my elect beloved wife Lijsken, how I have been before the margrave, and he had two preachers by him there, with two aldermen, and the clerk of the blood. And he asked me whether I had not yet better bethought myself, saying that he had persuaded those two good men or lords thereto, if I would convert, that they might win my soul. I said that I would not leave my faith, for it is the truth. Then they asked me what my faith was. I said to the monks: Ask it of the margrave; to him I have confessed my faith; ask it of him. They tormented me sorely. I would not tell them anything at all. They asked whereby I knew that it was the truth, or whether God had spoken with me by mouth. When they could get nothing else from me, my confession was read, how I held nothing of the sacrament. I said: No, but a bread-god. The priests were angry that I so despised their god. They all wanted to speak with me. I said: I will not hear you, nor speak with you either, but let my brother come here by me, so I will

well speak with you, and confess our faith. Then they asked whether I was not strong enough in my faith, that I appealed to my brother. I said: Yes, my faith is strong enough, but so that you should not twist our words. Then they said: We shall not twist your words. I said: I know you all well, and know your knavery well. And the margrave said: It shall happen to you. And I thought that he said he would bring a Bible with him. The priests said: When the little children were baptized, then they had faith. And I laughed at that, and said, why then they did not draw into Turkey to baptize the Turks; if one then becomes believing, as you say, then they also would become believing. They said: Even if one baptized the Turks, they would still remain Turks. And they tormented me sorely, that I should depart, and be a good child of the Roman church. And the margrave with the aldermen were so seized with unrighteous mercy toward me, that they said: If one left you the life, and you converted, and became a good child of the Roman church, I would have good hope of you, for you are brought to this young and innocently, as I well know by whom (he meant Gielis of Aachen), and also because you are of such good parents, and your mother died soon of grief. I said: Though the door stood open, and you said, Go, and only say, I am sorry, I would not go, for I know well that I have the truth. Then the margrave said: I will burn you alive, if you will not hear. Then I laughed at that, and said: Whatever you do to me for my faith's sake, that I will gladly suffer. And he said: His wife is the greatest heretic that is in the city.

I cannot fully thank the Lord for all the great strength and power that He gives me in this need. I well find with time that the Lord is with us, for He so faithfully helps us out of all need. He is such a faithful captain. He gives His servants such courage. He strengthens them so that they do not fear. They neither fear nor tremble, through the great love which they have to their heavenly Father. For Paul says: Who shall separate us from the love of God? Distress, or anguish, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For Your sake we are killed the whole day; we are counted as slaughter-sheep, which are brought to death. But through this we overcome far, for His sake who has loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angel, nor principality, nor lordship, nor power, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate us from the love which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore, my dearest wife Lijsken, order yourself according to the time, and be patient in the distress, and steadfast in prayer, and look always upon the fair promises which are promised us everywhere, if we remain steadfast to the end. And let us keep the treasure well, for we have such a treasure in earthen vessels, and that same treasure we cannot hide. It breaks out everywhere. It is much too precious to hide. We are so glad with this treasure, which treasure is our faith, hope, and love, and they shall not leave us idle. Though they set us alone in a dark hole, separated from one another, the treasure is of such a nature that it will not be hidden. The one calls to the other, and so pours out his treasure, so that it might be seen. We are so well minded. The Lord have eternal praise and thanks. We call, we sing with one another. We practice such joy to comfort and strengthen one another. The Lord gives such strength and power that we cannot fully thank Him for the great grace which He

shows to us. Therefore we do not become weary. Though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed from day to day. For our distress, which is temporal and light, brings an eternal and exceeding weighty salvation to us who do not look upon that which is visible, but upon that which is invisible.

Thus, my dear wife, do not leave off serving the Lord your God with the whole heart, and following His footsteps. For we know, if our earthly house of this dwelling is broken, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, which is eternal in heaven. Thereafter we long, after our dwelling which is in heaven, and yearn thereafter, to be clothed therewith. For we would rather be clothed than unclothed. For so long as we are at home in the body, we go on pilgrimage in absence from the Lord.

Therefore, my dear wife, see diligently to it that you finish the time of your pilgrimage with fear and trembling: not with such fear and trembling that we should fear or tremble before the world, because they are so furious against us, but we shall fear and tremble before the Lord, so that we shall keep His commandments and statutes, and so finish the time of our pilgrimage in the fear of the Lord, and bring therefrom the end of our faith, namely the salvation of our souls. So we shall rejoice eternally with the Lord, and then we shall meet Him in the resurrection of the dead. Therefore do not fear the world, for the hairs of your head are all counted. They have no power, unless it is given them from above. And Christ says: Do not fear those who kill the body, but fear Him who has the power, after He has killed the body, also to cast the soul into hell, where there shall be weeping of the eyes and gnashing of the teeth, and their worm shall not die, and they shall have no rest day or night.

The almighty, eternal, and mighty God will so strengthen and comfort you with His blessed Word, that you may yet remain faithful unto the end. So you also shall come under the altar by all the dear children of God. There all tears shall be washed from our eyes. There all tribulation shall have an end. Then our rejected body shall be clarified, and be like the image of His brightness. Then our weeping shall be changed into laughing, and mourning into gladness. Then we, who for a little time are despised and scorned, yes, persecuted and chased out, and with great shame and pain and contempt brought to death for the testimony of Jesus Christ, shall triumph eternally, and live eternally with the Lord. We shall be clothed with white clothes, as John testifies in his Revelation of the souls of those who were killed for God's Word, and for the testimony which they had. And they lay under the altar, and cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, You who are holy and true, how long do You not judge, and not avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? And to each of them was given a white robe, and it was said to them that they should wait yet a little, until the number of their fellow servants and of their brothers was fulfilled, who also should yet be killed, as they were.

O what a glorious people we shall be, when we are with that great company of which Esdras writes, and John in his Revelation, and says that he has seen a great company which no one could number, out of all heathen, kindreds, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne

and before the Lamb, clothed with white clothes, and palm branches in their hands, and they cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation be to Him who sits on the throne of our God, and to the Lamb. These are they who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their clothes, and made them white through the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne shall dwell over them, and they shall no more hunger or thirst, nor shall the sun fall on them any more, nor any heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall rule them, and He shall bring them to the fountains of living water, and God shall wash all tears from their eyes. And Esdras testifies of the same company, and says that they stood in the midst on Mount Zion, and were clothed with white clothes, and in the midst of them stood one, taller than all the others, and he gave each of them palm branches in their hand, and he set each one a crown on the head. And John says that he saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had kept the victory over the beast and her image, and her mark, and over the number of her name, standing on the sea of glass, having God's harps, and they sang the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.

See yet, my dear wife, what glorious promises we find everywhere, which God shall give and grant to all dear and true children who remain faithfully by Him here, and who have ended their life to the Lord's praise, and have washed their clothes white through the blood of the Lamb.

O my heart-groundedly dear wife, I cannot thank the Lord enough for all His great goodness which He shows to me. He gives me such strength and power that I cannot utter it. O now I well find that the Lord is a faithful helper in need. He does not forsake those who trust in Him. For whoever trusts in the Lord shall not be put to shame. He shall keep us as the apple of His eye. He shall deliver us from all violence of the devil and tyranny of this world. Yes, He shall keep us, so that we shall not go into hell, if we otherwise remain faithful by Him unto the end. For Christ says: Whoever remains steadfast unto the end shall be saved.

O my heart-groundedly dear wife, remain yet faithful to the Lord unto death, for the crown is not in the beginning, nor yet in the middle, but in the end. If you remain faithful to the Lord, He will not forsake you.

He will give you the crown of eternal life, and lead you into His kingdom. He will crown you with praise and honor. He will wash all tears from your eyes. Dear Lijsken, if He shall wash all tears away, then there must first have been weeping here. He will heal all our suffering; therefore we must first suffer in this world. Yes, fight and strive against the raging lions, dragons, and bears, yes, against that evil wicked generation of vipers, and serpent-rulers, and against the cunning serpents of this world, and that evil seed of Cain. For Paul says that we have not to fight with flesh and blood, but against the rulers of the darkness, and against princes and mighty ones, yes, against the spirits that work in the air, which is the old serpent and Satan, who (Peter says) goes about us as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Therefore be diligent in the defense, with praying and supplicating to the Lord, and hold

yourselves fast to the teaching of Jesus Christ our Savior, so that you may bring therefrom the end of your faith, namely the salvation of your soul, and will yet fight a good fight with Paul. Herewith I will commend you, my heartily dear wife and sister, to the almighty, eternal, mighty God, and to the word of His rich grace, so that you may remain standing against all the gates of hell. Amen.

Another letter of Jeronimus Segersz to the brothers and sisters

The eternal joy, peace, and grace from God the Father, and the unfathomable mercy, favor, and love of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who out of grace was sent by God the Father unto salvation for all those who are born again with Him through His imperishable Word or Gospel, and do His will; and the grounded and unspeakable comfort, power, strength, and communion of the Holy Spirit, which through them both is given from heaven, unto an eternal comfort, joy, and gladness to all true repentant and obedient children of God, who have amended their life, and so with Christ through His Gospel are risen in a new life: this same only God will strengthen you all together in His eternal truth, and maintain you with the mighty word of His grace in all righteousness, holiness, and truth unto the end, and keep your understanding, hearts, and minds in Christ Jesus. To the same be praise, honor, glory, power, might, strength, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish my dear heartily and beloved elect brothers and sisters, and all lovers of the unfeigned and eternal truth, that right repentant faith which works through love, which avails before God, and a pure, chaste, and holy conversation and walk in the fear of God, and a fiery love to God our heavenly Father, and to your neighbor, and to His eternal, clear, and unchangeable truth. And I pray the Lord for you day and night, without ceasing, that He will open the eyes of the understanding, and enlighten the heart of knowledge, so that you may know that it is the right truth, and that He will empower you with His divine Word, and strengthen you in the faith, so that you may walk in this same truth, with all humility and meekness, being a light to all men, and so that you may remain steadfast unto the end. And I pray the Lord that He will keep you from all the gripping wolves, which have gone out from us, and shall yet arise among you, which shall not spare the sheep, and from all false heretical and devilish teachings, which throw themselves up under Christ's name, and come forth in a holy appearance, just as if they were sent by Christ, but they have gone out and been sent by the devil.

Therefore, my dear brothers, be watchful, pray and watch, for it is well needful, and remember after my departure that I have warned you of the false prophets out of the prison. And so I have written you a little with the help of God, and with Peter admonished a little.

Well knowing that I shall shortly put off my mortal coat, and fall asleep with my brothers and sisters in Christ. Although you yourselves are taught and strengthened in this present truth, I nevertheless count it profitable to admonish you yet a little, if anyone might yet be amended, edified, and strengthened thereby, and the name of the Lord praised and thanked

thereby, and that you might remember me thereby, how I have been an example to you in that which the Lord has given me, and have walked among you with all humility.

Thus I admonish you now, my heartily dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, and pray you with Paul, through the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a sacrifice which is holy, living, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of God, and do not set yourselves like this evil wicked and perverse world, but be renewed through the renewing of the mind, so that you may prove what is the good and well-pleasing perfect will of God.

O my dear brothers, I heartily pray you that you will yet all together amend your life, and let the world go with her lusts, and all together look upon the life of Christ, how He has gone before us. For John says: Whoever will boast himself of Christ shall also walk as He has walked. O see, my dear friends, it is not enough that we have indeed been baptized in Christ's name, and are called a brother or sister of Christ, and bear the name of Christ. O no, that cannot save at all. For John says: My children, do not let yourselves be led astray, for there is no one righteous but only he who does righteousness; and whoever sins is of the devil, and thereby one also knows which are the children of God and the children of the devil. And Christ says: You are my friends, if you do what I command you. And again Christ says: He who loves me shall keep my word, and keep my commandments; and he who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. For John says: Whoever says that he loves God, and does not keep His commandment, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. And you know that a liar has no part in the kingdom of God. Therefore do not be Christians with the mouth or with the tongue, but with the truth and with the deed. For it is all too vain to have borne the name of Christ, so long as we are not conformed to Him in words, works, and thoughts. For Paul says: Those whom He has foreseen, those He has also ordained, that they should be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among all brothers. If He has called and ordained you thereto, then be also diligent to become conformed to Him, so that you are found right Christians in deed when you come into the tribulation wherein we now are. For though we are in it now, you may come into it tomorrow also. Therefore watch and pray, for you know neither hour nor time. Therefore do your diligence that you may please the Lord, for we must all together be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ, and there each one shall receive in his body according to what he has done, whether good or evil. Now, since the Lord is to be feared, I counsel you, and humbly pray you, that you will set your life conformed to the Gospel. For it avails nothing at all to bear the name of Christ and to be called brothers; there only the fulfilling of the commandments of God avails. For I have already seen many boasting Christians among us, who love Christ with the tongue but deny Him with the deed, which is greatly to be lamented. For they are like counterfeit money, which seems fair gold from outside, but when it comes on the touchstone or into the fire, then it is nothing but copper within. So they also walk among the pious as if they also were a right Christian; but when the Lord begins to prove them in tribulation, then one sees that it is all built on the sand, and that they love their belly more than Christ, as it now appears with those who are in the bonds with us. For

thus long they have let themselves be counted all pious brothers, but now they speak quite otherwise.

Thus, my heartily dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, take us for a mirror, all who desire to make the Lord a fit offering, and be our followers, and be no longer so slow or so faint in love, so that, when you also come into the bonds, you are not then sorrowful therein that you have not led a better life. For the devil tempts us therewith night and day. Therefore I warn you out of brotherly love that you take heed to yourselves while you have time. For Paul says: The saving grace of God has appeared to all men, and teaches us that we shall deny ungodly being and worldly lusts, but live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, awaiting the revelation and appearing of the great God our Savior Jesus Christ, who has offered Himself for our sins, so that He might cleanse us from all uncleanness, and so cleanse for Himself a people that should be diligent unto all good works.

See, my dear friends, such a people Christ has elected, who are not idle nor light-minded, but through patience in good works seek eternal life. And thereto He has called and elected us, so that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. For such a holy congregation He has chosen, which has not a spot or wrinkle, but that they walk holy, blameless, and unreprovable before Him in love. Therefore be holy in all your walk, according as it is written: You shall be holy, for I am holy. O see, brothers, it is time that you take heed, for the axe is now set at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not bring good fruit shall be cut off and cast into the fire. For all who say, Lord, Lord, shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, but all who do the will of my Father who is in heaven. For after you have died to sin, and been cleansed through the knowledge of the truth, you may not be idle, so that the devil does not take the seven spirits to himself and come into you again, and the last be worse than the first. Therefore do not let sin have dominion in your mortal body, being obedient to its lusts, nor present your members as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as those who are living out of death, and your members as weapons of righteousness. And pray that your flight does not happen in the winter or on the Sabbath, and be not found in the darkness, dear brothers, so that the day does not overtake you as a thief. For doing so, you shall be children of the light and of the day. For they are not all children of God who boast themselves of the faith and do not fulfill it with the works. For Christ says: Blessed are you that you know it, if you do it. For those who know it and do not do it are likened to the fools. For the servant who knows the will of his lord and does not do it shall be beaten with many stripes. But those who believe from the ground of their heart, doing as they believe, those are the right children of God, and they also shall be counted for the believers in the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore I counsel you, and pray with Peter, that you do your diligence thereto, that in your faith you show virtue; in virtue, discretion; in discretion, moderation; in moderation, godly love; in godly love, brotherly love; in brotherly love, common love. If these things are abundant with you, they shall not leave you idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord

Jesus Christ, but the entrance to eternal life shall be abundantly prepared for you. But he who does not have these things is blind, and forgets the past cleansing of his sin. Therefore make your souls pure through the obedience of the truth, in right unfeigned brotherly love, and love one another out of a pure heart, as those who are born again anew, not of the perishable but of the imperishable seed, namely through the living Word of God, which abides forever. Gird up the loins of your mind.

Gird up the loins of your mind, and be sober, and set all your hope on God, and have a burning love among one another, and one mind and courage, and do not regard what is high, but make yourselves equal to the least, and let no foul talk go out of your mouth, nor spend your time with idle words, which do not profit, but unto an ungodly life and being. But whatever is wholesome to hear, whatever is profitable unto amendment, and let your words always be mingled with salt in grace. For Peter says: If anyone speaks, let him speak as the words of God, so that you may be a mirror to all men. For Christ says: You are the salt of the earth. If the salt loses its strength, it is no longer fit for anything but to be cast out and trodden by men. For one does not light a candle to set it under the candlestick, but to set it up above, so that all may see by it. And you are the light of the world. Let your light shine before the world, so that men may see your good works and praise your Father who is in heaven. And Peter says: Lead a good walk among the heathen, so that those who backbite you, as offenders, may be put to shame, that they have mocked your good conversation in the fear of God. And he says further: Whoever will love life, and see good days, let him restrain his tongue that it speak no evil, and his lips that they do not deceive. Let him turn from evil and do good. Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord look upon the righteous, and His ears upon their prayer, but the face of the Lord looks upon those who do evil. Therefore see well to it that the wrathful face of the Lord does not look upon you. For in the last days the ungodly shall cry: Hills and mountains, fall on us and cover us, so that we do not see the wrathful face of Him who sits on the throne. And Christ says: Unless your righteousness is better and greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you cannot come into the kingdom of heaven. And again: Unless you are changed and converted, and become as children, you cannot come into the kingdom of heaven. See, my brothers and sisters, if you are not thus humbled, do your diligence that you become so. For Christ's words are no lies. For He says: In those days many people shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in Your presence, and cast out devils in Your name? But then I shall confess to them that I have not known them. Depart from me, all you who do evil. And Paul says: He who lives after the flesh must die.

O friends, there is already a heap of you who are like the asses and the mules, who go on so slowly, who must all be driven with blows and with pushes. O that is not walked after love. Raise up the loose knees and the slack hands. It is long enough slept. For Paul says: Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten you. If you are risen with Christ, seek that which is above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God His Father. Savor what is heavenly, and not what is earthly.

O my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, be yet followers of God, as elect children, and walk in love, as He has loved us, and has given Himself over for an offering and a gift, to God for a sweet savor. But unchastity and uncleanness shall not be found among you, as befits the saints, nor shameful words out of your mouth, nor foolish talk, nor unseemliness, but much rather thanksgiving. For this you shall know, that no fornicator or unclean person, or greedy man, who is a servant of idols, has inheritance in the kingdom of God. Therefore do not be partakers of them. For you were formerly darkness, but now you are a light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light, for the fruit of the Spirit is all manner of goodness, righteousness, and truth. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

Thus I admonish you as fellow helpers. For the Lord says: I have heard you in the acceptable time, and helped you in the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation. Let us now give no one any offense, so that our service is not blasphemed, but let us show ourselves in all things as servants of God, with great patience, with distress, with anguish, with stripes, with imprisonment, with tumult, with nakedness, with peril, with sword, with chastity, with knowledge, with longsuffering, with friendliness, with the Holy Spirit, with unfeigned love, with the words of the truth, with the power of God, through praise and contempt, through good report and evil report, as deceivers and yet true, as those who die, and behold we live, as the unknown and yet known in all things, as the stricken and yet not killed, as the poor and yet making many rich, as those who have nothing and yet possess all things.

My dear friends, my mouth has opened itself to you out of brotherly love, humbly praying you that each one of you be minded as Christ Jesus also was, showing such love among one another in deed. For that is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that you shall love one another. For whoever does not love remains in death. But when someone has the goods of this world, and sees his brother have lack, and shuts his heart against him, how does the love of God remain in him? My dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, let us no longer love with the tongue, but with the truth and with the deed, and always be mindful of the poor, and give each one according to his ability with joy. For God loves a cheerful giver. And Paul says: If anyone exercises mercy, let him do it with delight. For consider once, if you were as fiery in love as you have well been in the world, whether you would not as well know how to find two or three stivers to give to the poor, as you have well found them to go drinking and playing. Not, my dear friends, that I will burden or weigh you down, but that each one show his love therein, according to his weak ability. For you may not carry the goods with you, and you may take your mirror in me. For they have taken it all, yes, all our money that we had about us, and asked whether we had no more of it. Therefore it is much better that you help the poor therewith, than that the lord has it. And if you desire to give your life for your brother, how much more ought you to stand by your brother with your temporal goods, so that it be as it is written: Those who gathered much had no surplus, and those who gathered little had no lack. And see also to it that it all goes reasonably, so that it

is a blessing and no greed, and so that the offering is acceptable to the Lord. For the contribution of this proved service does not only fill the lack of the saints, but it is also abundant in this, that many thank God through this proved service. Therefore do your diligence that you show your love herein, so that the Lord may be praised and thanked thereby, and that you show yourselves in all things as servants of God. Read Paul to the Corinthians; he shall teach you how you ought to set yourselves therein. And when you have read it, I humbly pray you that you will then also do thereafter, for it is well needful.

And further I pray you, all young married couples, that you dwell by one another with all humility, simplicity, and loveliness. And you young women, be subject to your husbands in the fear of God. And you husbands, love your wives as yourselves, and take them up and bear them with all humility and loveliness, and admonish and instruct them sweetly with the Word of the Lord. For you know neither hour nor time when the Lord shall take you from one another again. There you may take your mirror in me and in my wife, how shortly the Lord has taken us from one another to His praise. Therefore dwell by one another with all humility, so long as the Lord lets you be together. For your time here is small, for the Lord has a delight to have His elect by Him.

And further I pray you, my dear brothers, that you will be diligent to labor for increase again. For I trust in the Lord that through this seeing and hearing many shall yet be converted to the truth, and I will also yet do my best with those who come here by me. And gather again that poor scattered little flock, which grieves me greatly, which scarcely knows where to go or where to dwell, and is in greater distress than we are here. But be comforted, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. Though we now sit in greater room than you, be yet patient in your persecution. For you shall not have walked through all the cities of Israel before the Lord shall deliver you. Therefore be yet diligent to come by one another, and to comfort and admonish one another from the Word of the Lord, so that the love among you does not grow cold.

Thus admonish and instruct one another in the love of God. And I pray you that you do not forget us in your prayer, and that you write my wife a letter now and then, to comfort her, for she shall yet sit long. And further I let you know that I am in great gladness, and cannot praise and thank my Lord enough day and night for His great love which He has given us, that He has made us both worthy to suffer for His name, and for His power and strength which He is showing upon us, and for His promises which He has promised us. For this is the hour for which I have so long prayed the Lord, and did not know myself good enough that I should be worthy to suffer for His name. Therefore I am so greatly rejoiced, because my hour has come, that I shall be delivered from this flesh.

Thus strengthen yourselves in the love of God, and await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. But to Him who can keep you without stumbling, and set you before the face of His glory blameless with joy, God who alone is wise, our Savior, be honor and might,

kingdom and power, now and in eternity. Amen. Greet one another with a holy kiss of peace.

Let all the friends hear this letter, for I have written you out of brotherly love, and I am sorry that I cannot write you more. Remain all together commended to the Lord. Greet G. S. H. D. for me in the Lord, for I love them from the heart, and further all brothers and sisters in the Lord. Take this little admonition in the best part, for my spirit has been pressed thereto, to admonish you a little.

Written in the prison by me, Jeronimus Segersz.

Another letter of Jeronimus Segersz, which he wrote to his wife Lijsken
The grace and mercy of God the Father, and the kindness and love of the Son, and the communion and peace of the Holy Spirit,

which is sent to us from the Father through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto comfort and joy of all true and faithful children of God,

through whom we are constrained, taught, and directed, the same keep your heart, mind, and senses in Christ Jesus, unto praise and honor of the Father, and unto salvation of your distressed soul, and unto edification of all brothers and sisters who fear and love the Lord.

To the same God, who alone is wise, be praise, honor, power, and strength from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish my dear wife a true, genuine, godly love, and a right, unfeigned, penitent, unfeigned faith, which is working through love, and a firm hope and trust in God, and a firm steadfastness in your faith toward God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. To the same I commend you, and the word of His grace, for since I cannot speak with you by mouth, my dear wife Lijsken, I have written you a little with the Lord's word, with God's help, for although we are separated from one another in body, we are yet present in the spirit, for I remember you day and night in my prayer, and pray the Lord that He will strengthen you with His spirit of truth, for I know well that you shall yet have much strife before you are delivered, and I know also well that you shall be greatly tempted by the loose foxes, and gripping wolves, yes, much more lions and dragons, yes, they are a serpent's brood, who shall not spare your soul, but destroy, devour, and murder. Therefore says Paul: Take heed that no robber deceive you through loose philosophy and cunning of men, with which they approach us to deceive. Yes, Christ Himself has warned us hereof, that in the last days there shall be many false prophets and many false Christs, yes, if it were possible that the elect should be deceived, but that is impossible, for the Lord keeps them with His strong arm, so that the gates of hell cannot harm them. Yes, Paul says that in the last time some shall fall away from the faith, and cleave to erring spirits, and doctrine of devils, who forbid to marry, and to take the food which God has created. Yes, yet he says: Do not let yourselves be deceived with vain words, for that sake comes the wrath of God upon the children of

unbelief. Yes, yet Christ has warned us of the doctrine of the Pharisees, yes, of those who come in sheep's clothing, for within they are gripping wolves; by their fruits you shall know them, as Paul says: Do not wonder that the servants of Antichrist shall set themselves up as servants of God, for the devil can well change himself like an angel of light, for they come with feigned holiness, and shall be lying. Therefore see, my dearest sheep, how faithfully Christ with His apostles has warned us of the false serpent, and cunning serpent, so that we should not let ourselves be deceived by the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, who seeks nothing else than to bring our souls to eternal damnation, as Peter says, that he goes round about us like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; resist him with a firm faith. Therefore I pray you, my dear wife, from the ground of my heart, since we are so faithfully warned of the false prophets, who have nothing but the doctrine of devils, and seek nothing but to destroy and tear your soul. Therefore I pray you yet once more that you give them no hearing, and have nothing to do with them, for Paul says: Have no communion with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Yes, John says that he who does not have the doctrine of Christ has no God. And yet Paul says: Though an angel came from heaven, and taught you otherwise than I have taught you, let him be cursed. If they then have no God, and have nothing but a false, heretical, cursed, and devilish doctrine, how should they be able to teach us any good? Therefore Christ with His apostles has so faithfully warned us, so that we should not let ourselves be deceived by the loose foxes, and cunning philosophy and cunning, for there shall never be laid another foundation than that which is laid, namely Christ, upon whom you are founded, built, and timbered, and no other gospel may be preached there than that which is preached, in which you also believe, and for which testimony of the gospel you also lie in bonds. Therefore I pray you, my dear wife Lijsken, through the mercy of God, that you always have the Lord's word before your eyes, and that you do not let yourself be moved from your faith through the cunning of men, with which they approach you to deceive, for I know that you shall yet suffer much temptation. Therefore, my dearest, do not look upon men, for he who trusts in men is cursed, says the prophet. Yes, to look upon men brings the fall, says the wise man. And do not regard flesh and blood tormenting, for that is the scorching of the sun: yes, these are the storms, through which the work of the Lord is proved. Therefore confess now Christ in this time, so He shall also confess us before His heavenly Father, for He will prove the third part with fire, as gold in the furnace, and all that remains standing shall be found as pure gold, and you have partly passed through the proving, in which proving you have remained steadfast; the Lord have eternal praise, honor, and glory, and the gracious Lord will strengthen you; as you have begun, so you shall be found before God and before all His congregation a pure gold.

Thus, my dearest, remain steadfast in the doctrine of Christ, for now it is the day of which Christ has spoken, that we shall be brought before lords and princes as a testimony of His name, and that we shall be despised of all men, but whoever remains steadfast unto death shall be saved. And Christ says: If they have persecuted me, they shall also persecute you, and the time shall come that those who kill you shall think they do God a service therein. And see (says the Lord), I have said all this to you beforehand, so that when it happens, you

should remember that I had said it to you, for they shall do all this to you, because they have known neither me nor my Father. For see, my dear wife, thus Christ has warned us how they shall deal with us. Therefore, my love, do not fear now, nor be dismayed, though you now lie imprisoned in the lions' den with Daniel. Trust the Lord; He shall well keep you, that they shall not destroy you, and He shall deliver you out of their teeth, that they shall not tear you, and do not forsake Him; He shall not forsake you, for He says: Whoever despises you, despises me; whoever persecutes you, persecutes me; whoever touches you, touches the apple of my eye. If then they persecute not us, but the Lord, then will you yet fight in a godly manner, as a godly champion of Christ, and fight for His prize, as He has fought unto death, so also you through God's grace, for whoever fights is not crowned unless he fights lawfully, says Paul. Therefore, my love, arm yourself with the armor of God, and be not ashamed to confess His word before men, but always remember the words of Christ: Whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my heavenly Father. Or: Whoever is ashamed of me, or of my words, him I will also put to shame before my heavenly Father, for whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for the gospel's sake shall find it. But whoever has anything dearer than me is not worthy to be my disciple. Yes, whoever puts his hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. And Paul says: This is certainly true: If we die with Him, we shall also live with Him, but if we deny Him, He shall also deny us. Thus, my dearest, do not forsake the Lord, for we are nothing but dust and ashes, yes, nothing but a mortal flesh, which must yet die in dishonor but rise in honor. Thus be yet patient in distress, for it is the right way which leads to eternal life, which all God's holy ones, prophets, and apostles, yes, Christ Himself has gone through, and they have all had to drink this cup. Therefore look not upon death, but through death, so that another does not come before you, who takes your crown from you. Therefore, my dearest, be longsuffering in your distress, and patient in suffering, and await your deliverance, as the husbandman awaits his fruits, for blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God has promised all those who love Him, for Christ says: Blessed is the man who suffers persecution for righteousness' sake, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to him. Yes, we praise them blessed to be who have suffered, says James. Christ has also suffered for us, and has left us an example, that we should follow His footsteps. Yes, if Christ has suffered, arm yourselves with the same mind, and herewith accord the words of John, and say, that Christ has left His life for us, and we must also leave our life for the brothers. Thus be not dismayed, elect love, for their threatening, but praise and thank the Lord in that matter, for Christ says: Blessed are you when men persecute and despise you for my name's sake, then rejoice and be glad, for it shall be well rewarded you of my Father who is in heaven. My love, this is not said that we should be sorrowful, but that we should rejoice that we are worthy to suffer for His name's sake. Paul says: You have not received a servile spirit to fear again, but a spirit of the elect children, through which we cry, Abba, dear Father; the same spirit assures our spirit that we are God's children, if otherwise we suffer with Him, so that we may also be raised to glory, for this suffering of this time is not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, for never eye has seen, nor

never heart has known, nor never mouth has confessed, but God alone, what shall be revealed to those who love Him, and keep His word. And Paul says that it is not enough that you believe in Him, but also suffer for His name. Thus, my dearest, be yet a willing bride, ready for the battle, for He shall not let you be tempted above your ability, but beside the temptation He shall make you a way out, for though a mother forgot her child, yet I will not forget you, says the Lord, and He shall keep you as the apple of His eye. Therefore fear not men, who pass away like hay, but step forth in a godly manner with Joshua and Caleb toward the promised land, await with Noah the day of the Lord, for Christ says: My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, but they do not hear the stranger's voice, and no one shall draw them out of His hand, for it is impossible that God's elect should be deceived, as Paul says: Who can separate us from the love of God? Yes, no torments of this world, for we know that to those who love God, all things serve for the best, for our distress, which is temporal and light, brings us an exceeding glory, for now it is the Lord's will, so I hope that also this your proving shall serve you for the best, for the Lord has appointed your time, and we shall not go over it. Therefore fear not, for God is your captain, He is your strength, He is your leader; do not forsake Him; He shall not forsake you. Trust in Him, so you shall not be put to shame. Be faithful unto death; the crown of life is prepared for you. I desire willingly to offer my body unto the praise of the Lord, yes, not only my body, but though every limb, yes, every little hair were a body, I would offer them all through the power of God unto the praise of the Lord, to obtain His promises, for what manner of love has the Father given us, that we should be called God's children. Therefore the world does not know us, for it does not know Him. My beloved, we are God's children, and we know that when He shall be revealed, we shall be like Him. Yes, says Peter: We shall be partakers of His divine nature. Yes, we shall be where Christ Himself shall be, and shall judge with Him all generations. Yes, we shall follow the little Lamb wherever it goes. Yes, we shall sing the new song on Mount Zion, and we know firmly that if our earthly house of this dwelling is broken, we know that we have another building of God, which is eternal in heaven. Who would exalt that foul, stinking flesh, which is nothing but a heap of earth, above these fair promises? O see yet how fair promises Christ has promised His own who remain steadfast unto the end, for there is no other way to eternal life than this way, for all righteous souls have from the beginning had to suffer, and so take in the kingdom of God. So, my dearest wife, since there is yet no other way, be yet a willing bride, ready to receive your bridegroom, as then you shall be crowned with praise and honor. Thus, my dearest, I have written a little, with which you may a little strengthen yourself through the Lord's word, for Christ says: The world shall rejoice, but you shall mourn and be sorrowful, but be comforted, I have overcome the world, and your sorrow shall be changed into joy, and no one shall be able to take your joy from you, for He who works in us is stronger than he who is in the world, and John says that our faith is the victory which has overcome the world, and be always mindful of Lot's wife, and of the man of God who was bitten by the lions because he had eaten bread against God's commandment, and was deceived by the false prophet. So also you, that you be in no way deceived by the false prophets, but fight with the prophet David against the Goliath,

and you shall devour him as bread, for the kingdom of heaven now suffers violence, and the violent who remain standing take it in, for Joshua and Caleb have taken in the promised land with a mighty hand, and those who did not remain standing could not come therein. Thus be not dismayed, though you are proved here a little time, for now it is thus His will, so take willingly from His hand that which He sends you, for Paul says: We know that to those who love God all things serve for the best, for Christ will show His wonderful power and strength upon you, against the dragons and serpent's brood, yes, against the gripping wolves, who daily stand against Christ, and fight against you to destroy you, but be of good courage, and trust Christ; He shall not forsake you, for He is your strength, He cares for you, He is your protector, through whom you shall overcome them all together who are against you, for He shall feed you with the bread of life, yes, with the bread of understanding, and shall give you to drink of the water of wisdom, and shall comfort you in all your distress, and press a firm, steadfast faith in your heart, which they shall not be able to resist, for He who has begun the good work in you shall through His grace and power unto His praise, unto the end, bring it out and accomplish it, unto salvation of your soul, and unto edification of all who fear the Lord. To the same God who can help you out of all distress, and deliver, and keep you from all snares of the devil and keep you from all false doctrine, to Him be praise, honor, power, strength from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

See, my dear wife, since I cannot now help you with my weeping, or with my blood, I have written you a little, to comfort you, and leave you that as a remembrance or testament, that you remember me thereby, how I have gone before you, for I hope to seal this letter with my blood, as that it is nothing but the pure truth, and for that I desire to leave my life, unto the praise of the Lord, and unto edification of all who fear the Lord, and I pray the Lord that He will let you follow, as I hope through the grace of the Lord to go before you, and I trust the Lord that He shall also let you follow, and I trust you also, that you shall also so steadfastly follow me through the Lord's grace, and I pray the Lord that He will let the fruit grow up unto His praise, that it also may be found worthy to suffer for the name of the Lord. Thus I have commended the fruit to the Lord, who is mightier to keep you than I, and the Lord shall keep you, I do not doubt it. And I hope the seal of this letter shall be my blood. Thus I commend you to the Lord, and to the word of His grace, that He will keep you in all righteousness, holiness, and truth, and though we must here part from one another, I know and trust the Lord firmly to be by one another in that eternal life. Therefore I will willingly make my offering. O might I suffer for you, I would gladly offer my flesh for you. I am sorry that I may not write you more. Herewith remain commended to the Lord, and do not worry about the child, for my friends shall well keep it, yes, the Lord shall take care of it. Henrick van Deuenter greets you greatly in the Lord, and prays the Lord day and night for you, that you may remain steadfast unto the end.

Here follows yet another letter of Jeronimus Segersz to his wife

Grace, peace, joy of heart, through the confession of Jesus Christ be with you, my dear wife Lijsken, in the Lord. I wish you, my dear wife Lijsken, a fervent love toward God, and a glad

mind in Christ Jesus. Know that I remember you day and night in my prayer, beseeching and sighing to God for you, for I am all sorrowful for your sake, because you shall have to sit there so long, and would well, had it been the Lord's will, that you had been out of the bonds, but now the Lord's will has been otherwise, because He will prove you, and reveal His power and strength upon you against all who stand against the truth. Thus I can do nothing against the Lord's will, so that I do not tempt Him, but I will much more praise and thank Him, that He has made us both worthy to suffer for His name, for they are all too elect little sheep whom He has chosen thereto, for He has bought them out of men for firstfruits of God. And further, my dearest, I have been very glad until this hour, praising and thanking the Lord that He has made us fit hereto, but when I heard from you that you were more sorrowful than your mouth could speak, which has made me weep many a tear, and I have a sorrowful heart over it, for it is a great sorrow, and I understood that it should be because you should often have told me to go away from Ahasuerus, and that I have not done it, which has cost me many a tear, and is heartily grieved to me, yet I can do nothing against the Lord's will, and had it been His will, He would well have given us a way out, but He has set us a measure, and we shall not go over it. Thus we cannot escape the Lord. Therefore let us not be sorrowful over the Lord's work, but much more (as Christ says) rejoice and be glad, for it shall be well rewarded us in heaven, and as Peter tells us, that we should praise and thank the Lord for that matter. O my love, that is not said that we should grieve ourselves. Thus be yet patient in your distress, and patient in your suffering. For Paul says that to those who love God, all things serve for the best. So I trust it in the Lord, that it shall also serve you for the best, that you shall have to sit there so long. Therefore receive it yet willingly from His hand, that which He sends you, for He lets no one be tempted above his ability. Thus be yet partakers of the suffering of Christ, for all who are without chastisement, they are bastards, and not children. And James says: Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God has prepared for all those who love Him. Thus be yet Christ's followers, and take up your cross with patience, and with gladness, and follow Him with joy, for He has suffered so much for our salvation; therefore let us also suffer for His praise, for now our hour is, so let us with joy fight after the crown of life, which is prepared for us. Thus I pray you, my love, that you be no more sorrowful, for the Lord shall keep you as the apple of His eye. Yes, though a mother forgot her child, I will not forget you, says the Lord. Yes, my little sheep hear my voice (says the Lord), and they follow me, and no one shall take them out of my hand. Therefore, my dearest, be yet content, and trust the Lord; He shall not forsake you. And yet I understood partly from my sister, that you were also sorrowful, because you had not borne with me more. See, my dear sheep, you have not been contrary to me, and we have lived with one another in no other way than we were bound to live, why would you then be sorrowful? Be yet content, for Christ shall not reckon that to you, for He will not remember our sins. And I thank the Lord that you have yet lived so humbly with me. And I would well, that I might sit for you a year long on water and bread, yes, and then yet ten times die the death, and that you were delivered. O might I help you with my tears, and with my blood,

how willingly would I suffer for you, but my suffering cannot help you. Thus be yet content, I will pray the Lord yet more for you. And I have written this letter with tears, because I heard that you are so greatly sorrowful, and I pray you, write me how it stands with you. Herewith I commend you to the Lord.

A letter of Lijsken, wife of Jeronimus

This is a letter of Lijsken, Jeronimus's wife, which she wrote to him in prison at Antwerp, in the year 1551.

Grace and peace be to us two from God the Father, and the love of the Son, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us unto all strength, comfort, joy, and salvation of our souls.

My beloved husband in the Lord, know that the time seemed very long to me at first, because I was not used to being imprisoned, and heard nothing but temptation to go from the Lord. They said, why I would trouble myself with the Scripture, that I should sew my seam. And it seems, they said, that you will follow after the apostles. Where are your signs which you do? They spoke with all tongues after they had received the Holy Spirit. And they said: Where is your language which you have received through the Holy Spirit? But it is enough for us that we have become believing through their words, as John recounts, where Christ speaks: I do not pray for them alone, but also for those who shall believe in me through their words. Herewith I commend you to the Lord, and the grace of God be with us always.

Thanked be God the Father, who has had such love toward us, and shown it to us, that He has given His dear Son for us. He will give us such love, such gladness, such wisdom, and such a steadfast mind, through Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, that we may remain standing against all devouring beasts, against dragons and serpents, and against all the gates of hell, which are now very cunning to catch, deceive, destroy, and lead astray our soul. Therefore we may well humbly pray the Lord without ceasing, day and night. For the devourer goes about us, seeking whom he may devour, for it is not unknown to us what he has in mind. But though they are very cunning, the Lord's hand is not yet shortened toward those who love Him and do His will. For the eyes of the Lord look upon those who love Him, and His ears upon their prayer, but the face of the Lord stands upon those who do evil. Therefore each one may well see to himself, that the face of the Lord does not stand upon him. For the soul of the man who sins must die the death, if he does not amend himself before the Lord comes. And it is not assured to us when the Lord shall come, for He shall come as a thief in the night. Therefore we may pray the Lord for one another, so that our flight does not happen on the Sabbath, when we are idle, nor in the winter, when we have no fruit on our trees. For every tree that does not bring forth good fruit shall be cut off and cast into the fire. But he who brings good fruit, He shall cleanse, so that he should bring forth abundant fruit. It is also proclaimed to us through the Lord's mouth: If a man sins

willfully, there is no more offering left behind for him, but the expectation of the dreadful judgment, and the pain of the fire, which shall devour the enemies. Moses' law drove so strongly, that if anyone transgressed it, he had to die without mercy, through two or three witnesses. How much more torment shall he have who treads the Son of God under foot. It is also spoken out through the Holy Spirit: If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we also die with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we deny Him, He shall also deny us; if we do not believe Him, He nevertheless remains faithful, He cannot deny or forsake Himself. Now that we have so great a cloud of witnesses about us, let us lay aside all that presses us, and the sin that clings, and let us run patiently in the race that is set before us, and look upon the finisher Jesus, who, when the gladness was set before Him, took the cross upon Him with despising of the shame, not threatening when He suffered for our sins unto the salvation of our souls. So we also, my dearest in the Lord, to the praise of the Lord, and to the comfort of all dear friends. I wish us two the crucified Christ for an eternal joy and strength. The Lord who alone is wise, and has given His wisdom only to the simple, the innocent, the cast-out of this world, Him I trust, that He shall comfort us until our childbirth is accomplished.

My dear husband in the Lord, whom I have married before God and His congregation, of whom they say that I have sat thereby in adultery, because I am not married in Baal. But the Lord says: Rejoice when all men speak evil of you for my name's sake; then rejoice and be glad, for it shall be well rewarded you in heaven.

Know that I have wept greatly, because you were sorrowful for my sake, because you had heard that I should often have told you to go and dwell away from Ahasuerus, and that you have not done that. Be content therein, my dearest in the Lord. If it had not so pleased the Lord, it would not have so happened. The Lord's will must happen unto the salvation of both our souls, for He does not let us be tempted above our ability. Therefore be comforted, my dearest in the Lord, and rejoice in the Lord, as you have done before, praising and thanking Him that He has so elected us, that we may lie so long in bonds for His name's sake, and are found worthy thereto. He knows what He has provided therein. Though the children of Israel lay long in the wilderness, if they had been obedient to the Lord's voice, they also would well have come with Joshua and Caleb into the land of promise. So we also now here in the wilderness among these devouring beasts, who daily spread out their nets to catch us therewith. But the Lord, who is so mighty, and does not forsake His own, those who trust in Him He keeps from all evil, yes, as the apple of His eye. So let us then be content in Him, and take our cross upon us with gladness and with patience, and wait with firm trust upon the promises which He has promised us, not doubting thereof, for He is faithful who has promised them, so that we may be crowned on Mount Zion, and adorned with palms, and may follow the little Lamb. I pray you, my love in the Lord, be comforted in the Lord, with all dear friends, and pray the Lord for me. Amen.

Another letter of Jeronimus Segersz to his wife

Grace and peace be with you from God the Father, and the mercy and love of the Son, and the power and communion of the Holy Spirit strengthen your faith, heart, mind, and understanding in Christ Jesus. Amen.

I wish my beloved wife, whom I have married before God and His holy congregation as my own wife, as Abraham took Sara, and Isaac Rebecca, and Tobias his uncle's daughter for a wife, so I have also taken you for a wife, according to the tenor of God's word and command, and not as this evil blind world, for which sake I praise and thank the Lord night and day, that He spared us so long, until we knew one another as spouses, and that we had the knowledge of the truth. For this sake they say that we have sat in adultery, because we are not joined together with that idolatrous, fleshly, vain, proud, greedy being, and with that adulterous generation, which is nothing but an abomination before God's eyes. Therefore they belie us, as they belied Christ. And though they yet said that you should busy yourself with your seam, that does not hinder us, for Christ has called us all, and bidden us search the Scripture, for it testifies of Him, and yet Christ said that Magdalene had chosen the best part, because she searched the Scripture. And yet, my dearest, were they to ask you where your signs and tongues were, that does not hinder you, for the believers whom Peter and John baptized did not speak with all tongues, but it was enough for them that they believed in Christ. And yet Stephen, who was full of the Holy Spirit, did not speak with all tongues, nor did all the bishops and teachers who were with Paul do all signs either, and did not speak with all tongues either, and yet taught the word of God blamelessly. And Paul says yet that the Holy Spirit gives His gifts in the congregations: first, one has the gift to make healthy, another to prophesy, another to speak with full tongues, another to do wonders, another to admonish, another to do mercy, another to believe firmly, and all this the Holy Spirit works, through whom the one lends the other a helping hand to his own betterment, and thus grows up to a holy temple, and let every one remain in the calling wherein he is called. And further, it is enough for us that Christ has prayed, not only for His disciples, but also for those who should become believing in Him through their words. See, my beloved wife in the Lord, how gladly the gripping wolves would murder the simple souls with their lies and cunning, with which they approach us to deceive, to bring your soul to eternal death. Therefore beware of them, and give them no hearing, for they are very cunning, but do as Christ says: My sheep hear my voice, but they do not hear the stranger's voice. Therefore no one shall take them out of His hand either. See, my beloved, how Christ has warned us before this time. Therefore let us now look well before us, so that we are not deceived through the cunning serpent. And know that I also have once been before the lords, when I called upon you, and that I then so spoke, that they let me alone in peace, although they fetched the other yet twice, they let me be. And yet I have once spoken with the priests of the sending, and reproved them so with the Lord's word, that for anger they struck their fists on the table, and they did not know what to say, but they said that Peter had been pope, and that St. Andrew had done the first mass. Then I answered them that they could not prove it

with the truth. And I said to them that they were erring spirits, and had the doctrine of devils. And therewith they went away.

And further I let you know, my beloved wife in the Lord, that I am sorry that you have wept, for when I heard that you were proved, I have prayed the Lord the more fervently night and day for you, and know firmly that He shall keep you as the apple of His eye, and I praise the Lord always, that He has made us both worthy to suffer for His name's sake, wherefore I am greatly rejoiced. And when I read your letter, and heard how it stood with you, and that you wished me the crucified Christ for a greeting, my heart and my spirit leapt up in my body for gladness. Yes so, that I could not read the letter wholly out, I had to bend my knees before the Lord, and praise and thank Him for His strength, comfort, and gladness, although I was yet sorrowful for our brothers' sake, and for your sake, that you shall have to sit there so long. I have commended you to the Lord in His hands with the fruit, and trust Him for that, and do not doubt it; He shall give you the same gladness which He gives me, and shall keep you unto the end. And I have such joy and gladness in His promises, that I cannot once think upon these torments, but only upon the great promises which He has promised those who remain steadfast unto the end. And I have such gladness, comfort, and joy as I ever had. Yes, such gladness that I cannot say nor write it, yes, that I did not think that a man could have such gladness in the prison, for I can scarcely sleep day nor night for gladness, nor fully thank nor praise the Lord, for it seems to me that I have not been here one day. O might I break my heart in pieces, and give you and our brothers. O I would that I could have helped them with my blood, I would so gladly suffer for them. O my beloved in the Lord, now I feel how powerfully, how strongly, and how fatherly He keeps those who trust in Him, and seek nothing but His praise, yes, what strength, comfort, and joy He gives there: and how shamefully He lets them fall who trust in men, and forsake and deny Him, yes, so that they get a gnawing conscience, a sorrowful heart, and a horrible fear, yes, that they expect nothing but eternal damnation and the fire's pain, and expect that fearful word: Go, you cursed, into the eternal fire, for the face of the Lord looks upon those who do evil. Therefore see, my beloved wife in the Lord, let us look upon the finisher Jesus, how He has gone before us in death for our salvation, for see, the crown of life is prepared for us; we shall sit with Him on His throne; we shall be clothed with white garments. Herewith I commend you to the crucified Christ, for a comfort and joy, that He will keep you, and satisfy you with His divine word, and feed you with the bread of life, and with the bread of understanding, and give you to drink from the fountain of life, with the water of wisdom, with the unfeigned milk. The same keep your soul unto salvation. Amen.

Another letter of Lijsken, Jeronimus's wife

The grace and peace, joy and love, which Christ has left behind to His disciples, I pray out of an earnest heart that He will give us such love, such a steadfast mind, that we may be found fit to receive the fair promises which He has promised us, if we remain steadfast unto the end. To the same Christ be praise and honor, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I cannot fully thank or praise the Lord for the great grace, and for the unfathomable mercy, and for the great love which He has shown to us, that we should be His sons and daughters, if we overcome as He has overcome. O rightly we may well say that upright faith orders itself after that which does not appear, which works through love, which shall bring us to glory, if otherwise we suffer with Him. Let us mark, dear friends in the Lord, what great love the worldly people have one toward another. There are some, by hearsay, on the Stone, who rejoice when they should go to the rack, for the sake of those whom they love, that they would then be the nearer to them, although they might not come by one another in person. Hear yet, my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord: if the world has such love, O what love ought we then to have, who are awaiting such fair promises. I see yet a fair likeness before my eyes, of a bride, how she adorns herself to please her bridegroom of this world. O how ought we then to adorn ourselves, to please our Bridegroom. O might we be so adorned, as the five wise virgins were adorned with oil in their lamps, to go to meet our Bridegroom, so that we also might hear the sweet voice: Come, you blessed, possess the kingdom of my Father. I pray the Lord night and day that He will give us such a burning love, that we do not look upon what torments they do to us, to say with the prophet David: I do not fear all that men may do to me. And this our pain, which is light and temporal, is not to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Now then it is the Lord's will that I must lie so long with Daniel in the lions' den, and must expect howling and gripping wolves and lions, and the old serpent, who has been in the beginning and shall be unto the end. So I pray all dear brothers and sisters that they do not forget me in their prayer. I will gladly do the same again according to my ability. O my dear friends, how can I thank my heavenly Father enough, that He has made me, poor sheep, fit hereto, to lie so long in bonds for His name's sake. I pray the Lord night and day that this my proving must happen unto the salvation of my soul, and to the praise of the Lord, and to the edification of my dear brothers and sisters. Amen.

Nicolaes at the Sugar-herb brought two priests here to me, to instruct me, whom I answered through the grace of the Lord. And they said to me that it grieved them greatly that I had come under this opinion, for they could make no faith of it, more than an opinion, inasmuch as we did not keep what the Christian congregation or church commands. But I answered them, and said: We desire to do and believe nothing other than what Christ's church commands. But we will have nothing to do with Baal, or more other temples which are made with hands, after the teaching and commandments of men, and not after Christ. Therewith we will in no way have to do. For Stephen says that the Most High does not dwell in temples which are made with hands, for he said that he saw heaven open, and saw Christ sitting at the right hand of His almighty Father. And Paul says that we are the temple of the living God, if otherwise we do His will; so He will dwell and walk in us. They said that they were the sent ones, and those who were sitting on Moses' seat. Then I answered them that the woes then belonged to them which are recounted in Matthew 23. They asked me whether I would say that he who has taught me these things was sent of God. I said: Yes, that I know firmly, that this one is sent of God. Then they asked whether I well knew how a

teacher must be. I answered: A teacher must be the husband of one wife, blameless, who has obedient children, no drunkard, wine-bibber, nor whore-hunter. Then they answered: If we do wrong, it shall drip on our cap; the Lord is merciful. Then I asked whether they would sin upon the mercy of God, and said that it was written that we should not do one sin upon another, and that we should not say, The Lord is merciful. We spoke yet much, so that it would be too long to write. I said to them that they were always learning, and could not come to the right knowledge of the truth. Then they said that Christ had spoken to His apostles: To you it is given to understand, but to them in likenesses and parables. I said: To him who now also understands it rightly, to him it is also given. At last they crossed themselves greatly, and said that I would well know it when I should stand before the judgment. That shall be true, I said. We shall be set there for judges, to judge that disobedient adulterous generation. And therewith they went away, and I said to them that they came from Satan, to murder and kill my soul.

Once more I wish my dear husband in the Lord, and myself, the crucified Christ for an imperishable joy, and an imperishable love unto eternity. Amen.

Know, my dear husband in the Lord, when I read that you are so greatly rejoiced in the Lord, I could not read the letter out; I had to pray the Lord that He would also give me the same gladness, and keep it unto the end, so that we may make our offering with joy, to the praise of our Father who is in heaven, and to the edification of all dear brothers and sisters. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord, and to the word of His grace. Know that I thank you greatly for your letter which you have written me. The grace of the Lord be with us always.

Another letter of Lijsken written to her husband

The overflowing grace of God be always with us two, and the love of the Son, and His unfathomable mercy, and the joy of the Holy Spirit be with us unto eternity. Amen. To the same, who has begotten us again from the dead, be praise from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish us two the crucified Christ for a protector and keeper of our souls. The same will keep us in all righteousness, holiness, and truth unto the end, and He shall also keep us as His sons and daughters, if we hold the godliness of His being unto the end, yes, as the apple of His eye. Therefore let us trust Him, and He will not forsake us in eternity, but shall keep us as He has done His own from the beginning of the world, and does not let us be seized with any temptation but such as are human. The Lord is faithful, Paul says; He will not let us be tempted above our ability. Thanked be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has made us fit hereto, to suffer a short perishable suffering for His name, for such fair promises which He has promised us, with all those who remain steadfast in His teaching. And in little we may suffer here, but in much we shall be rewarded.

My dear beloved husband in the Lord, you have in part passed through proving, in which proving you have remained steadfast. The Lord have eternal praise and honor for His great grace. And I pray the Lord thereto with weeping, that He will also make me fit thereto, to suffer for His name's sake. For they are all too elect sheep whom He has chosen thereto. For He has bought them out of men for firstfruits of God. Yes, we know, as Paul says: If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we also die with Him, we shall also live with Him. Therefore let us not reject the chastisement of the Lord, for whom He loves He chastises, and scourges every son whom He receives, as Paul recounts. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord, and to the word of His grace and glory, through which He shall make us glorious, if otherwise we remain by it unto the end. The grace of the Lord be with us.

A letter of Jeronimus Segersz written to his wife

The grace, joy, and peace from God the Father, and the kindness and love of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion and comfort of the Holy Spirit, will strengthen, comfort, and empower us, and will keep us both in all righteousness and holiness unto the end. To the same be praise from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish my elect wife in the Lord, and myself, the eternal gladness, and that imperishable and incorruptible life, and that He give us both that we may remain unchangeable by His divine Word and eternal truth unto the end, which He also shall do, for He has promised it to us, if otherwise we remain faithful in that which He has given us, and that we desire to fight for it for His prize, as He has fought for our salvation, and has been obedient to His Father unto death. If otherwise we also remain so faithful unto death, we shall receive the crown of life, and possess eternal life with Him, and He shall not forsake us in eternity. For the Lord will not or cannot do against His Word, for His Word shall not pass away in eternity, and He has so faithfully promised us that He shall keep us, if we do not forsake Him, so that no one shall take us out of His hand, and shall keep us as the apple of His eye, yes, as His sons and daughters. For see, my beloved, how faithfully He has kept those who have faithfully served Him: as Noah was kept in the ark, and Lot was led out of Sodom, and Jacob was kept from his brother Esau, although he sought to kill him, and Joseph from his brothers, Jacob's sons, and Joshua and Caleb from all the heathen, and they went into the land of promise, and David from Goliath, and Susanna from the false witnesses, and Daniel from the lions, and yet of many more others, who would be too long to write. But mark here how faithfully He keeps those who fear and love Him from the heart; yes, how shamefully they also fall who forsake Him, as we may see from the beginning of the world, how it perished for its wickedness' sake, and how Lot's wife was punished, and Esau could not find his birthright again, and the whole house of Israel perished in the wilderness.

See, my beloved wife, the Lord has let all this happen, not only for their sake who had sinned there, but also for our sake, so that we should see how Christ is with the righteous and keeps them, and that we should see how He forsakes the ungodly and brings them to

nothing. For Paul says: All that is written is written for our learning. Therefore let us see very diligently to it that we seek, fear, and love the Lord from the ground of our heart, and serve Him faithfully, and not forsake Him. For Christ says: Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters, as we daily see before our eyes, how powerfully He keeps those who trust in Him, and how soon they have fallen who forsake Christ and trust in men. Therefore, my beloved wife in the Lord, let us trust the almighty Lord, and always look upon the captain of the faith, and upon the finisher Jesus, and let us always have the crucified Christ before our eyes, and faithfully follow after Him, as He has gone before us, and take our cross on us with patience, and always think on the words of Christ, where He speaks that they shall kill us, and shall think they do God a service therein, and think that it is said to us beforehand, so that, when it happens to us, we should not then be offended. For the servant is not greater than his Lord. And all this they shall do to you, because they have known neither me nor my Father. For the word of the cross of Christ seems to those who perish a folly and a mockery, but to us a power of God. Therefore let us always remember the words of the Lord, that Christ says: Whoever confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my heavenly Father; whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my heavenly Father and His holy angels. Let us yet trust firmly in Him, and He will not forsake us, for He does not forsake His own, but has prayed His heavenly Father that where He is, He also wills that we shall be there with Him. Therefore let the world keep on calling us heretics, rebaptizers, and damning us. For Paul says: Who will charge the elect of God? It is God who justifies them. Who will damn us? It is Christ who has died for us, who also is risen, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and prays for us. How should He not give us all things? For He has not spared His only begotten Son, but has given Him for us all. If God so loved us when we were yet enemies, how much more shall we be kept from the wrath after we are justified through His blood? For being made righteous through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have an access to this grace wherein we stand, and boast ourselves of the coming glory which God shall give us. Not that only, but we also glory in tribulation, well knowing that tribulation brings forth proving, proving patience, patience hope, and hope shall not leave us put to shame, and that therefore, because the love of God is poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us.

My dearest, therefore let us trust the Lord powerfully, and wait upon His promises with patience, as the husbandman waits for his fruits, and let us not forsake Him; He will not forsake us. And I have commended us both, and the fruit, into His hands, that He do His divine will with us, whereby His name may be praised, and that it be unto the salvation of our souls, and unto comfort and joy of all who fear the Lord. And I trust Him firmly without doubting, that He shall keep us as His sons and daughters, yes, as the apple of His eye. And I let you know that I was greatly rejoiced when I read your letter, and that you wrote that you pray the Lord with weeping eyes that He would also make you fit to suffer for His name. My beloved, do not be anxious, but pray the Lord with a humble heart that He will give us what is most saving for our souls, and that He shall without doubt do, and

shall not let us be tempted above our ability. The same will keep us in all righteousness, holiness, and truth unto the end.

I also let you know, my beloved, that they tortured me greatly to know the midwife where our sisters have lain in. But the Lord was mightier, who kept my mouth, than all their torments. The Lord have eternal praise and glory, who does not forsake His own. And they got no names from me, except one or two which they had read to me out of a letter, and I would tell them that, to hear what they would say. But they asked whether I mocked them, and then gave me yet more, and said that I should tell it of the woman, and yet more others, or they would torture me until the next morning, and would stretch me a foot longer than I was. And they said to Ghileyn that he should stretch, and his knave stretched hard, and Ghileyn poured my body full of water, and had me lying thus mother-naked on the bench, so that I had no more for my manhood than my shirt, and had me thus bound on the bench with four cords, so that it seemed to me that my head and legs were off. But they had nothing else. The Lord have praise and glory. And when they let me loose, they had to lift me from the bench with two or three of them, and clothe me, yes, so that it would not be possible to bear the pain without the help of the Lord. And they said that I should take counsel, and become a good child of the Roman church, and that I should tell all whom I knew, or they would have me yet better. And I said thereon that I had not erred, and will much rather die than deny my faith. Then they said that they would come again. But they can do no more than the Lord allows them. The Lord have eternal praise, who has made us fit hereto, and will yet make us fit to become children of His kingdom. Amen. My beloved wife, I commend you to the Lord, and to the word of His grace.

A letter of Jeronimus Segersz to grooten Henrick

This is a letter of Jeronimus Segersz, which he wrote to grooten Henrick, who also lay imprisoned there, in the year 1551.

The grace and peace of God the Father, and the great mercy and love of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent by the Father out of grace unto the salvation of all those who have died to their sins, and so with Christ are risen in a new life, and the eternal unfathomable joy, comfort, and communion of the Holy Spirit, strengthen your heart, understanding, and mind in Christ Jesus. To the same be praise from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish you, my dear brother Henrick in the Lord, whom I love from the ground of my heart, for the steadfastness of our faith's sake in Christ Jesus, that right repentant faith which works through love, which you have, and a firm steadfast mind and steadfastness unto the end in that same mighty saving faith. And I am greatly rejoiced at your steadfastness, that you are again so well comforted and content. The Lord have eternal praise. And I pray the Lord night and day for you, that He will empower you with His divine Word, and strengthen you in the faith, and that He will keep you in this lions' den, as He kept Daniel, and that He

will keep you with His mighty arm, and will give the new Jerusalem for an inheritance, which He also shall do, for He is faithful who has promised it to us.

Therefore, my dear brother in the Lord, let us fight valiantly against all the devouring beasts, for the life is prepared for us, and let us not fear their threatening, nor be terrified at their torments, for they can do nothing without the will of the Father. And the Lord will not let us be tempted above our ability. And the Lord is our captain; before whom will we fear? And the Lord is with us; who can be against us? For He shall yet keep us as the apple of His eye, yes, as His sons and daughters, for no one shall take His sheep out of His hand. Yes, it is impossible that the elect of God may be led astray.

Therefore, see, my dear brother in the Lord, do not be dismayed, though they snarl at you foully and grumble at you. They can do nothing else to you. Let us fight valiantly against all the dragons and lions. Put on the armor of God, and the sword of the Spirit, and strike freely, undismayed, upon them, and look at no one. They shall well have to give way from the field, for the sword which the Lord has given us is much too sharp for them, and the Lord helps us fight. Who should be able to remain standing against that? For our God is a devouring fire, which consumes His enemies. Therefore I pray you, my dear brother, that you do not let it weary you, though they let you sit here so long in this lions' den. For the Lord is proving us hereby, for He proves His elect as gold in the furnace. Therefore be patient in your distress. For where there is no fight, there is no victory. So we must have a fight if we would overcome, and whoever overcomes shall possess it all. Therefore let us take the cross upon us with humility and patience, and wait for our promises, as the husbandman waits for his fruits, and let us take the Lord before our eyes, and be faithful to Him unto death. For in little we may suffer here, but in much we shall be rewarded. For He shall set us on His throne, and give us the hidden heavenly bread to eat, and shall make us pillars in the temple of His God. Herewith remain commended to the Lord, and to the word of His grace, who will strengthen you in His righteousness unto the end.

Further I let you know how you have been told, it is said to me, that I should have forsaken the Lord. For that cause I have greatly wondered. Which is not so, nor shall it be to eternal days. But they have said that to draw you off again and to make you sorrowful, and have belied me. For I have never stood otherwise in my faith than is fitting, and am of the same mind as I was when I lay by you. The Lord have praise. And I have never been movable, but I would rather be tortured ten times every day, and then at last be roasted on a gridiron, than deny my faith which I have confessed. Therefore, though they tell you much that I have fallen away, do not believe it. For the devil does that to lead you astray and deceive you therewith. For I shall never, through His grace, forsake the Lord. But I have been weak in the flesh many days, but my spirit was so much the stronger. And I prayed the Lord that He would yet send me more suffering, if it were saving for me, and the Lord still gives me more strength and comfort, for which I cannot fully thank Him. Herewith remain commended to

the Lord. And when you people sing, I hear you well. And I thank the Lord that He is still giving you so much strength, that I still hear you sing.

The last letter which Jeronimus wrote to his wife

This is the last letter which Jeronimus wrote to his wife, in the night when he was sentenced. And he was put to death in the year 1551, the second of September.

Grace and peace from God the Father, and the unfathomable mercy of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the kindness and communion of the Holy Spirit, be to you for an eternal comfort, joy, gladness, and strength in your bonds, distress, suffering, and grief in your labor, and unto strength of your faith, and love, and distress. To the same be praise from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

I wish my heartily beloved elect wife in the Lord that right true repentant faith which works through love, and a right firm unmovable steadfast mind, in our and your most holy faith. And further I wish you the crucified Christ for a bridegroom, who has chosen you for a daughter, bride, and queen, that King of the Most High, the eternal Father and jealous loving God. Him I have now commended you to, my beloved in the Lord, that He now be your comforter and bridegroom, after He has called and taken me before, wherein I am also well content, as I saw that it was the Lord's will. The Lord have eternal praise and honor for His great power which He has shown upon us.

My dearest in the Lord, do not make it a burden, or be greatly sorrowful therefor, that He has taken me before. For He has done it all for the best for us, and so that I should be an example to you, and that you may then follow after me as valiantly as I, through the grace of the Lord, shall go before you, who has made us both worthy thereto, to suffer for His name.

O my dear sheep, I humbly pray you that you give no hearing to the papists or other crafty people, but steadfastly follow after your bridegroom and your unmovable bridegroom, and follow His footsteps, and do not fear their threatening, nor be terrified at their torments, for they can do no more than the Lord allows them. For they may not hurt one little hair of your head without the will of the Father who is in heaven. Therefore do not fear, but remain persevering and steadfast in the teaching of Christ, and by the right truth. For the Lord will not forsake you, but shall keep you as the apple of His eye, yes, as His daughter and child. For it is impossible that the elect of God may be led astray. For His sheep hear His voice, and they follow Him, but the stranger's voice they do not hear. Therefore no one shall take them out of His hand, for He is their shepherd and protector. Therefore fight now strongly, my elect sheep, for the prize of the Lord, as He has fought so strongly for the salvation of our souls. Therefore be well minded, though you yet lie a little in this lions' den. The deliverance is near, and it does not delay to come, but coming He comes who shall come, and with power He will receive you for His bride and queen. For He has a good pleasure to

have His elect by Him, for He has a delight to behold them, and the day of the Lord is near here by.

Therefore, my dear wife in the Lord, thus fight now valiantly, and fear no men, but rather say with Susanna that you would much rather fall into the hands of men than into the hand of God, for it is dreadful to fall into the hands of the living God. And go yet to meet the Lord with fiery love, as you have done until now, through the grace of the Lord which is working in you, and fight valiantly, for the crown of life is prepared for you. For to the overcomers it is all promised and granted, for they shall also possess it all. For Christ says: Blessed are you when all men speak evil of you, for it shall be well rewarded you in heaven. He says further: Blessed are they who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. And the Lord has spoken: When they have led us all before lords and princes, tortured and killed us, then they shall yet think that they have done me a service therein. Therefore trust only firmly in Christ, and the Lord will not forsake you, and the crown of life is prepared for you. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord, and to the word of His grace, and will herewith take leave of you here upon this world. For I do not think to see your face here any more, but I hope to see you again under the altar of Christ in a few days. Therefore, my beloved wife in the Lord, though the world counts us lying, and takes us bodily from one another, yet the merciful Father shall in a few days bring us together again under His altar, with our brother. For I do not doubt thereof, but trust firmly in Him. For I have commended us three into His hands, that He do His divine will with us, whereby His name may be most praised and thanked, unto the salvation of our souls, and unto comfort and strength of all those who fear the Lord, serve and love His name, which He also shall do. And do not doubt thereof, for He does not forsake His own who trust in Him. And therefore I also go with a glad mind, to make my offering to the Lord's praise. And if I could yet have come by you, I would yet have come, but Joachim would not have it. But Christ shall bring us together again under His altar in a few days; that men shall not be able to hinder. Herewith I say farewell to you, until we come together again under the altar. Remain herewith commended to the Lord. And grooten Henrick greets you greatly in the Lord.

See, my dear wife in the Lord, now the hour has come that we must part, and so I go before with great joy and gladness to my and your heavenly Father. And I pray you with great humility that you are not sorrowful therein, but rejoice with me. But I am in part sorrowful that I leave you under these wolves. I have commended you with the fruit to the Lord, and I firmly know that He shall keep you unto the end, wherein I set myself content. Hold yourself valiantly in the Lord.

A song of Jeronimus Segersz and his wife Lijsken
To the tune of O Sion wilt v vergaren

God the Lord is faithful. He comforts His own early and late. When Jeroen with his wife suffered much grief from the wicked, they were not forsaken by God in their distressful tempest. He who came to help them in need, very wonderfully through His Spirit.

The margrave with his sophists came with their stall very fair before him. But Jeroen spoke without tricks: Though the door stood open straightway, and he said, You may well go hence, only say, I am sorry, I would not depart, for I have the truth, I know.

Margrave: Then he spoke all in anger: I will set you in the fire alive, if you will not hear. Jeroen, laughing at the noise, spoke boldly: I will gladly suffer all that you might do to me for my faith's sake. For the fight the champion was well prepared.

He once so reproved two priests together with the Word of the Lord that they might well have been ashamed. They grew angry and wrathful, so that they raged against Jeroen, striking with fists on the table. They said that Peter instituted the papacy, Andrew did the first Mass.

These went away at last. But Jeronimus came to the bench, where he suffered much smart and pain. Gileyn's knave stretched him long. Thus lying fast bound, Gileyn poured his body full of water. The cruel wolves stood about him, waiting for speech in the need.

When he had suffered such, lying fast between walls, then he was so well content. The burden was stroked from him. For he could hardly sleep, for the great gladness and joy which he might gather in the emperor's chair, added to him by the Lord.

Thus the sheep had escaped the wolf. But he went at Lijsken subtly, meaning to un-pious the woman. But the divine Word was her pillar, and she remained standing against Antichrist's crowd, who drove her hard, also taking a run at the Scripture.

Priest: What will you wear out the Scripture for? Go hence, and sew your seam. The apostles of the Lord, will you follow them in deed, as it seems? But where is your language? They spoke through the Spirit alike, very fiery, all of them, with tongues, God's Word authentic.

But all who were baptized by the apostles did not speak with tongues before the crowds. It is enough, after the Scripture's meaning, that we believe in Christ, who commanded us to search the Scripture fully, which He brought from above. For Magdalene had chosen the best part.

Priest: We people are the sent ones, sitting in Moses' seat. Lijsken: So, after the Scripture's report, all the woes belong to you also, of which we read in Matthew. Priest: Is he then sent of God who has thus instructed you? Lijsken: Yes, that I know surely for a conclusion.

It has grieved the sophists and hypocrites all too sorely that they might not bite to death God's children through their false teaching. Thus the council was concluded, that one should thrust the dear sweet sheep to death. So they quenched their cruel mind.

Jeroen, going to the offering, was very well ready to die. Grooten Henrick, standing there also, has also patiently awaited death. They both stepped together thus to the stakes, unfeared, longing after their Father, to whom they commended their spirit.

Jeroen had to leave his beloved. That was a great grief to him, for she was pregnant with child. And when her childbirth was accomplished, with torment and labor they cast the sheep into the Scheldt. Take example, to spread the praise of God, brothers who are tormented.

A letter of Peter Bruynen

This is a letter of Peter Bruynen, which he wrote in prison at Antwerp, and was put to death there, of the five, for the Word of the Lord, in the year 1551, the 2nd of October.

Grace be with you, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praised be God of mercy, who through His divine Word has begotten us again to a living hope, which is kept for us in heaven, we who are kept by the divine power in the faith, and are proved unto the kingdom of God, for which we suffer. For that the Lord be thanked, because He has chosen us thereto and made us fit, unto the inheritance of His saints in His light. So, dear brothers, be valiant and unfeared, and walk with a stiff unchangeable faith before God and His congregation, and take firmly before you not to go from the Lord, nor to be separated from His love, for any distress or tribulation's sake. So He may, in your forsaking, when you are robbed of all men's help and comfort, grant you assistance and comfort. For He comes to the help of him who goes outside himself and denies himself. For He alone dwells in the heart of men, and will dwell, and does not will that we shall serve anyone else besides Him.

So be now built and timbered in Him, and let love have the advance among one another, wherein the one is kept in the other, and let each one cheerfully endeavor to be the foremost in virtue. And do not regard the slow and careless walk, namely of those who in ease of life and adornment of clothing or outward show let themselves be called Christians, to follow after that measure. But take heed to those whose life and confession of faith is conformed to the teaching of Christ, so that you do not go too high, nor too deep, nor too broad, nor too long. For many run out therein, whereby they look one upon another, whereby they grow cold. So, my dear brothers, if you are risen with Christ, seek that which is above, so that your mind is directed to the imperishable, and let your hope be on the invisible, and be patient therein. For there must be patience, if we otherwise will inherit the promise. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draws near. Put off the old man, and put on the new. Deny ungodly being and worldly pleasures. Be changed through the renewing of your mind. If you will be partakers of the resurrection of Christ, know that you must first have crucified the old man, so that the sinful body cease. And do not let it weary you to do good, for your

labor shall not be in vain. For you have become partakers of Christ, if you hold the beginning of His being unto the end.

So do not let yourselves be moved by any matter, nor fear the child of man, which vanishes like hay. For they can do nothing to you without God's permission. But let God be your fear, for that is perfect wisdom. Make yourselves small before Him, for the great glory is honored by the lowly. Always compare yourselves to the humble, so you shall be great in God's eyes. Do not let yourselves think that you know anything, or are anything, so that you do not deceive yourselves. Always go outside yourselves, and do not regard from whom any ungodliness or suffering is added to you, though one wrongs you. For it is grace with God when one bears sorrow for conscience' sake, and suffers it with wrong. So be now patient in your distress, and be partakers of the suffering of Christ, so that you may inherit the promise. For it is here a little time to suffer contempt, and to have it against the eternal joy. And this suffering, which is temporal and light, works an eternal and exceeding great glory. For though we have a poor life, yet much good shall be repaid us. And though death now has the greatest power over us, there shall come an east wind of the Lord, which shall dry his evils again. For it is sown in dishonor, and it shall rise in power: a natural body, and there shall rise a spiritual body. So this house of this dwelling must now be broken, if we will obtain the house that is prepared for us of God.

So we need not fear those who kill the body, for they cannot harm the soul. But the most that they rob us of is that for which we are most repaid again by God, and after that they have no more that they can do. So gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, watch in prayer, and always give thanks to God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for His rich grace, and that He has let us know His will, and revealed the savor of His knowledge, and has given us the most glorious and most precious promises, we who formerly were estranged through the mind in evil works, and were estranged from the life that comes from God, from whence we had no hope in the promise. But when the kindness of God was revealed to us, not for the works' sake which we had done, but through His grace, He made us saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, with which we are sealed unto the time of redemption, which is the pledge of the coming inheritance, and which assures us and gives testimony that we are God's children, and teaches us all manner of things, which is given us of God unto wisdom, righteousness, and glory, through which reconciliation has happened to us. God the Father, who alone has immortality, to whom alone power and might, praise and honor belong, to Him be honor and thanks through Christ our Lord, for His unspeakable grace, from now unto eternity.

How it stands with us, for that the Lord be thanked, whom we cannot thank enough, and for the gladness that He has known us worthy enough to suffer for His name, and for the gladness which He has prepared for us besides, wherein we are in the prison, which we have there. For He is faithful, so that He gives His own, beside the temptation, a way out, and He does not let His own come or be put to shame who trust in Him. The grace of the Lord be

with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. Jan, Pluyn, and I. Herewith remain commended to God, and to the word of His grace. Written by me, Peter van Weert, where he sat, of the three, in the prison.

Peter's second letter, taking leave

Hereafter follows Peter's second letter, taking leave.

Herewith we commend you to the Lord, all dear brothers, and grant you that you may finish your course to the Lord's praise, so that you may obtain the crown, and that you may remain steadfast unto the end, so that you may obtain salvation. For no one obtains the prize unless he fights knightly. So run, that you may obtain the jewel. Fight as knights of the Lord. Take firmly before you that you do not worry how or what you shall speak at that hour, when you shall be brought before the magistracy. For God the Lord does not leave His own put to shame who trust in Him, though they are brought forward as offenders; yet He does not forsake His own. For though weeping came in in the evening, gladness would come again in the morning. And though He is angry a moment of time in order to chastise, yet He keeps in life through His grace. Therefore we are not forsaken by Him, though we have more adversity than the world. My brothers, the servant is not greater than his Lord or Master. Remember, though Christ was rich, for our sake He became poor, and though He was exalted, yet for our sake He suffered and took on contempt, so that we through His poverty should become rich, and through His contempt should become heirs of His promises. So let us go out with Him outside the camp, and help bear His contempt. Let us long after the coming good, and be not in the darkness, nor laden with eating or drinking, nor terrified with any trade or care. Walk as children of the light. Be always ready, as those who always await their Lord, for He shall come as a thief in the night. Rest yourselves, take the staff in the hand.

Rest yourselves, take the staff in the hand, gird up your loins, tread toward the promised land. You shall well take it in, if you do not fall into unbelief. It is pleasant and fair. We have seen it from afar, for which we thank the Lord, and praised must He be. For which we desire of you, you lovers of the truth, that you help us thank the Lord. For I also once made the Lord a vow, that I would live the days of my life forth to Him, which He has helped me fulfill, for which I praise Him, which I also have diligently done often with outstretched arms. That I write such is so that you do not forget to thank and praise the Lord, for He is greater than all our life. For you cannot make Him so great but that He is yet more wonderful. Remain in His words, and keep His commandments. Love one another heartily. Therein He is also praised for His faithfulness after His promises, which He shows in us, namely the joy which He gives us. We do not know how to write you enough of it, dear brothers. For in the beginning of our imprisonment, when they carried us prisoner, we were joyful and unfeared, likewise before the lords, thereafter on the bridge, and in our imprisonment with gladness. And further we hope that God shall give us free courage unto the end.

So, our dear brothers, if they would do us any greater death, do not be terrified therein. For in a quarter of an hour one can do much. It is still far from the pain of hell, and unlike to be compared with the coming joy. For after we have suffered this anguish, and passed the narrowness, we are awaiting the gladness and room. Then one shall wash all tears from us, and thereafter we shall no more weep or cry, but go from the one joy into the other.

O my brothers, set yourselves to come to His joy. Lead henceforth a Christian life, and see to it that the Gospel is not blasphemed for your sake. Be always meek, and have an unspotted conscience, and in your things always consider the end, so that you do not fail. And do not forget the fervor of spiritual amendment, of the beginning of the Christian life, so that, when you think you are a perfect Christian, amendment of life is still needful. Be commended to God and to the Word of His grace. We, Jan, Pluyn, Peter, greet you in the Lord. Pray the Lord for us, that we finish our course to His praise. We also pray for you.

A confession or defense of the faith of Jan the old clothes-dealer (Jan de oude cleercooper), when he lay imprisoned at Antwerp, in the year 1551

Question: What do you hold concerning infant baptism? Answer: I hold it for nothing other than men's institution.

Question: With what will you then prove or maintain your baptism? Answer: Mark 16.

Question: What do you hold concerning the sacraments? Answer: I do not know to speak of men's sacraments, but the supper, as Christ held it with His apostles, I hold for good and worthy, for I think that there are many men who do not know what to say of sacrament.

Question: What do you hold concerning the Roman church? Answer: I hold nothing of it, but I hold the Christian church for good and worthy, which is Christ's congregation.

Question: What do you hold concerning the host which the priest has in his hand, do you not believe that our Lord is therein with flesh and blood? Answer: No, I, for there stands written, Acts in the first, that He shall come again as He went up to heaven.

Question: What do you hold concerning the pope? Answer: The Antichrist.

Question: What do you hold concerning the mass, ceremonies, and the confession which one holds in the church? Answer: I hold nothing thereof, for the tree is no good from which it is instituted.

Question: Where are you baptized? Answer: My lords, if you know it, why do you yet ask me?

Then the bailiff spoke: I adjure you by your baptism, that you shall tell us where you were baptized. Answer: I hold my baptism for good and upright, but I do not regard your adjuring.

Then they read all those who were baptized with me, by name and surname. N. and said: Ahasuerus has confessed it to us. Then I said: It is true.

Question: Who has baptized you? Answer: That I may not say.

Question: We shall well make you say it. Answer: The flesh is before you; do with it what you will.

A song of five pious Christians

A song of five pious Christians, who were all put to death together at one time. To the tune of Mijn God waer sal ick henen ghaen

To the praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. O Christian, will you begin with us, of five brothers who sought most of all to win the land of promise. The kind God Himself had provided them all to a good lot. Therefore they were a mockery to the world.

First, when one carried them prisoner hence, they were laden with no distress, but had great gladness together, thanking God for His grace, whose power they felt at that hour. The praise of God, going out of their mouth, with singing and speaking they made it known.

A fair confession they have made, out of the Scripture, after Christian fitness, testifying the clear truth plainly before the sophists who came there, so that they might well be ashamed of their deceitful device, wherewith they torment the pious.

When one was asked of the Roman church, he spoke: I hold nothing of that. But Christ's congregation he confessed strongly, for a good and worthy building. Question: The bread being in the priest's hand, is that not the precious pledge, namely flesh and blood of Christ the valiant? Answer: No, he spoke, for the evangelist declares that Christ shall come again, as He has gone heavenward. Question: What do you hold of the pope of Rome? Answer: I hold him for the Antichrist, who has missed against Christ. For all his planting is full of cunning.

The margrave with his sophists likewise attempted it in many ways, with heavy torments and false practice. But they came to shame therewith. The priests have raged much, and tormented the Christians greatly, and at the close they are sentenced to death.

Thus they were sent forward, all five. But they sang or spoke along the streets. Delight and joy was their business. Although, after the emperor's placards, they should now die straightway, they remained yet undisturbed. For they had from God the new birth.

When the number was set in the world, one thousand, and thereto yet five hundred, and also fifty-one over all, then one wondered at these five. They kissed one another. Love was not quenched. And at the stakes they died at rest.

O little friends of Christ, keep good courage. Do not let love grow cold in you. Waiting patiently for the good Lord, who can strengthen you in distress. Christ, the faithful shepherd fine, who helps His sheep through the pain, brings them to fat pastures of heaven.

A letter of Peter van Weruick

This is a letter of Peter van Weruick, which he wrote in prison at Ghent, and there left his life for the testimony of Jesus, in the year 1552.

The overflowing grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is a Father of mercy, and a God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our distress, so that we also may comfort those who are in all manner of distress, with the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God. For as the suffering of Christ comes over us, so much comfort comes to us through Christ. For our distress, which is temporal and light, brings us an eternal and exceeding weighty glory, us who do not look upon that which is visible, but upon that which is invisible. For that which is visible is perishable, but that which is invisible is eternal. And we know, if our earthly house of this dwelling is broken, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, but which is eternal in heaven. Thereafter we long, after our dwelling which is from heaven, and we yearn that we should be clothed therewith, if yet we are found clothed and not naked. For while we are in this dwelling, we sigh and are burdened, for we would rather be clothed and not unclothed, so that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. But He who prepares us thereto is God, who has given us the pledge of the Spirit. So we are always comforted, and know that so long as we are at home in the body, we go on pilgrimage in absence from the Lord. For we walk in faith, and we do not see Him, but we are comforted, and have much more desire to be out of the body, and to be at home there by the Lord.

I admonish you, dear brothers and sisters, through the mercy of God, that you will diligently gather with one another, to give one another good discernment of the eternal truth of our Savior, while you have the time. For we have here no abiding city, but we await one, and that through patience. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, take the Word of the Lord well to heart, and understand well what the Lord says, so that you may remain standing valiantly when you are proved. For I tell you, dear brothers, that there must be fought valiantly, a good deal harder than I thought. For they come at us with such cunning questions and with sweet words, so that they might catch us in some words, and so make us fall away. Therefore, dear brothers, give one another good discernment, which is the way of the Lord and the way of the devil, and which is the upright service of God and the service of the devil and of the idols, and which are the children of the Lord and the children of the devil. For the children of the Lord are not of this world; therefore the world hates them. They suffer all persecution. They are led as slaughter-sheep to death, and hated by all men. They must be

every man's prey. They have nowhere any sure place. They are to all people of the world, and every man's castaway. They weep and howl, and the world rejoices. They are despised because they hope in the living God. Hereby one well knows which are the children of the Lord and the children of the devil. Whoever does right is righteous, as He is righteous. Whoever does sin is of the devil.

O dear little children, therefore do not love the world, nor what is in the world. For if anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, namely the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world. And the world passes away with her lusts, but he who does the will of God abides forever.

My dearest, know that I have fought a great fight against the rulers of the darkness and the false prophets. For they said that one may well hear and be taught by them, though they do not live after the commandments of the Lord. Then I asked thus: He who does not walk in the commandments of the Lord, is he not a stranger to the Lord? They said: Yes. Then I said that Christ says, My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me, but the stranger's voice they do not hear, but they flee from him. So, if I heard the stranger, I would not be of Christ's sheep, for Christ's sheep do not hear the stranger. Answer: They preach the truth anyway; the word is not the less for that. Then I said: John says, He who says that he knows God, and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and in him is no truth. If then there is no truth in him, how can he preach the truth? So John must lie. Christ says: An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Second, He says: How can you speak good, seeing that you are evil? Solve this question, so I will also believe. I tell you: Though he took a Testament, and read it wholly out in your church, as the apostles have written, I will show them that they lie. And let a man speak the same words who walks in the ways of the Lord; he shall say the truth. And if someone of your people preached these words in your temple, over drunkards, adulterers, thieves, murderers, greedy men, backbiters, evil-speakers, and so forth, and said, You are the elect people, the royal priesthood, the holy people, the people of possession, so that you should proclaim the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness to His imperishable light, you who in former times were no people, but now are God's people, and have been those over whom God did not have mercy, but now He has had mercy on you: if he spoke these words over that evil people, would he not lie? But if a God-fearing man spoke them over the God-fearing people, he would say the truth. Second, if you preached, We are led as slaughter-sheep to death for Your sake, would that also not be a lie from you? But a God-fearing man would say the truth.

Thus we had many words, but it profited nothing at all. Then I asked whether the children of the Lord must not all be spiritual. He said: Yes. Then I asked why they were called spiritual, and the others worldly, whereas they all must be spiritual. That they did not know how to show. Then I said: Christ does not pray for the world, but for those who are not of the world. If you are then spiritual, how comes it that you are not all of one mind? For the

one may go only in the gray, and handle no money, and his shoe must have a hole above; the others must all go in the black, and the others all in the motley; the other may not eat what they cook, and they may not speak to father or mother when they see them, and when they do not see them, then they speak to them. I said: These are all diverse sects, and all plantings of men, and not of God; therefore it shall all be rooted out. Hereupon they did not know much to say. Then I said: Your teaching is the teaching of the devil, for it is all against the truth that happens and is kept there. As Paul says, that in the last times some shall fall away from the faith, and cleave to wandering spirits and the teaching of devils, who forbid to marry and to use the food which God has created. Now I see that you are teaching this, for you forbid to marry and to use the food. Then I was made to go away.

And within a very short while after that, the dean of Ronse came with yet a priest, and they fell upon me very hard with loose questions, but the Lord kept me, so that I was not betrayed. He asked me whether I did not believe that the bread which Christ gave His apostles was the body of Christ, when He said: Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. I said: That bread was not the body which was broken for us; it was for a remembrance. Then he said: The bread changes into His body. But I said that it was for a memorial sign, and not the body itself. Then they asked me of baptism, whether the children must not be baptized. I said: There stands nothing of infant baptism, but of a baptism of faith. Then they said: See, we shall show that the children must be baptized, John 3. Does Christ not say there: Unless someone is born anew of the water and the Spirit, he shall not possess the kingdom of God? Then I said: That is not spoken to children, but to the hearers. But they said: It is. And therewith they would maintain and set up infant baptism. So we had many words, but we agreed nowhere.

Therefore I admonish you, dear brothers and sisters, that you will give one another good discernment of all matters, namely of the Supper, of baptism, and of the becoming-man of Christ, and of the spiritual children, and of the children of the world. And walk wisely in the fear of the Lord, and fear no men, though they rage foully. I also admonish you, dear brothers and sisters, through the love of our Lord, that you all together will pray the Lord for me, so that I may remain standing valiantly when I am proved. Further I pray that you will diligently instruct my beloved mother of all matters, and my brother also, and my wife, on the chance that she might convert. The Lord fill you with His Spirit. Amen.

Written with anxiety because of the people who were always there. The overflowing grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

He who fears God shall do good.

A song of Peter van Weruick
To the tune of Wij willen de Mey ontfangen

Great are the Lord's powers
In heaven, and on earth
All who wait upon Him
May well stand unafraid
Before the devilish nation
Who come in angel's guise
The serpents' generation
Who spit out their venom.

Very cunningly they assailed
Peter van Weruick, at Ghent
To bring him to falling away
But he remained valiant to the end
And has confessed God's name
Boldly, in the open
The sophists with arguments
He has overcome there.

He sweetly warns
The brothers and sisters all
Diligently to maintain
Gathering in this vale
And with one accord to give
One another good discernment
Of the truth, very mighty
Of our sweet Savior.

Let the word cling in the heart
That God speaks, and understand it well
So that you may remain valiant
When the proving comes
Valiantly must one fight
Yes, much harder indeed
Than I thought in former times
This I tell you all together.

Dear brothers, give
One another good discernment
And consider here besides
How the way of the Lord lies
And of the devil; mark
Which is the upright service of the Lord

And the service of the idol-churches
According to the devils' teaching.

Henceforth, to distinguish
Look upon the Lord's children
And the devil's, of both
For of the world are not
The children of the Lord
Therefore they are envied
And persecuted with wounding
By the perverse world wide.

They are brought as slaughter-sheep
Toward death
All men snatch at them
Counted as a prey
They have no sure shelter
Are despised by every man
They weep and howl
And joy comes upon the world.

This little song is for the best
Told from Peter's admonition
Who for God's Word at the last
Valiantly stood at a stake
In the year fifteen hundred
Thereto fifty-two more
He was separated herefrom
For the upright Christian teaching.

Brothers, shun hypocrites
Who have always erred
They spend their time
With the teaching of Antichrist
Turn yet from such
Your salvation depends on it
But abide by the word of the Lord
So shall you remain standing well.

A prayer, admonition, and confession of Adriaen Cornelisz

Here follows a prayer, admonition, and confession of Adriaen Cornelisz, glassmaker, being imprisoned at Leiden, and put to death there for the testimony of Jesus, in the year 1551.

His prayer to God

O Lord of heaven and earth, who have made all things out of nothing, who have given me members after the image of Your Son, so I hope now to offer the same for Your holy name. For You are the Lord, before whom all knees bow, both those that are in heaven and those that are on earth. Hear my prayer, and let my incense-work be acceptable before You. Do not take Your grace from me, I spotted man of unclean lips. Cleanse my mouth, so that Your name may be praised thereby. Incline Your ears to me, and You shall look upon those, how they fall upon me. But it is better for me to fall into the hands of men than to sin in Your sight. For Your eyes are as a flame of fire, and Your word is as a two-edged sword, cutting on both sides, and it presses through until it separates soul and spirit, through sinews and marrow, and is a judge of the thoughts and minds of the heart. And there is nothing hidden before Your eyes. So I cry with David Your dear prophet, that it is better to fall into men's hands than into Your wrath. O Lord, lead me into the land Haran, where I have not one foot of inheritance, namely the promised land. That will You give me out of grace, and not out of my works or merit. Deliver me with Lot out of that generation. Keep me, Lord, from the raging lions' teeth, which are many, yes, the raging wolves in the evening, which do not leave anything over until the morning, who run swift with their feet to shed innocent blood. O Lord, keep me with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so that the fire of blasphemy which goes out of their mouth does me no harm. O Lord, let my prayer be heard with Tobias and Sara. Hear my prayer with Elijah, and receive me for a burnt offering, which is living, holy, and acceptable to You, so that the prophets of Jezebel come to shame, and no longer lead Your people astray. Lord, keep me with Joseph from that evil wife, so that I rather let my cloak be taken, namely my first body. For it stands: Whoever cleaves to a whore is one flesh with her. Keep me, Lord, for I call heaven and earth to witness that I die in my simplicity. For whoever seeks to keep his life here shall lose it, and whoever loses his life for You, Lord, and for the Gospel's sake, shall keep it. So I also cry with the old Eleazar, and would much rather die honorably than live with shame. O Lord, see, over us is kindled the heat of an overflowing crowd, and they shall snatch some of us away, and shall feed the empty ones with idolatry. But You, Lord, keep me; You, Lord, keep me. You give Your servant bread in need, water in thirst, and in the day of tribulation You forgive the sins. And You have said to Your dear prophet: Though a mother forgot her child which she herself has borne, You shall not forget us, for it is Your word, Lord. You have spoken to Your dear apostle Paul: Go out of that evil generation, touch not what is unclean; then You will deliver us, and be our Father, and we Your sons and daughters. Now we also go outside the camp, and will help bear Your contempt. Lord, teach us to pray after Your will, that we may pray in the Spirit and in the truth, that we call You a right Father. For a son shall honor his father, and a servant his lord. So let us be partakers of the word, as it stands: These are they who have not loved their life, but have given it over unto death. For those who have gone to death from men, it is better to expect hope from God, that they shall be raised again. For You prove Your elect; You prove them as gold in the furnace, and You receive them as an offering of the burnt offering. Lord, let Your servant depart in peace. Holy Father, sanctify

Your son, so that I may be found unreprovable in Your coming. Keep me, holy Father, for Your holy name's sake. Amen.

His admonition to the friends

The rich grace and peace from God our heavenly Father, who has cleansed us through the bath of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and has given us a clear shining in our hearts, and opened the eyes of the understanding through the hope of the Gospel, and warned us that we should deny ungodly being and worldly lusts, but live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world, and that we should keep ourselves unspotted from this world, before God the Father, who wills that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so that we may have hope and comfort in the time of revelation, and may be counted among the number of the elect. Hereto make you fit the Father and His blessed Son Jesus Christ, now and at all times, unto eternity. Amen.

We, citizens with the saints and household members of God, timbered on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Christ is the cornerstone, on which all the timbering hangs together, which grows to a holy temple in the Lord: salvation to the twelve tribes, which are scattered all about through the cruelty of placards and strict persecution. So, my dear brothers and sisters, do not let it weary you now, that you now suffer for a time, and must flee from the one city into the other. But remember, dear friends, that it all comes to your salvation, and take for an example Tobias with his wife and his son, how he had to flee, and one had to hide him naked. Likewise Mattathias with his sons, and those who loved him, when he said: He who is now valiant and well minded, let him make his testament, and follow me. Take also in likeness Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, who dwelt in huts, and yet more others. For we have here no sure place. They went about in sheepskins and in goatskins, with hunger, lack, and sorrow, of which the world was not worthy. See, my dear friends, do not think that you are alone, or that you are forsaken by the Lord, when any tempest comes upon you, but think that we must take the kingdom of God through much suffering. If these aforesaid had thought thereon from where they had gone out, they had surely had time enough to return; but these give to understand that they sought a fatherland, a city which had a foundation, whose builder and maker is God. Therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God. So also, my dear friends, He will not be ashamed of us. For He speaks through His pious prophet Isaiah: Can a mother also forsake her own child, which she herself has borne? Yes, though she forgot it, God shall not forget you. Therefore look how the gracious Father has been by all pious children of God, and how He has kept and maintained them under His mighty hand. As we may clearly understand from Abraham, for when he went out into a strange land, he often had God for a comforter. He gave Jacob courage when he fled Esau his brother. He fed Hezekiah three days and three nights, who complained over the blasphemy of Sennacherib. He delivered the Jews who were besieged by Holofernes, through Judith. He delivered the three young men from the heat of the fiery furnace, and He was also in the pit by Daniel, so that the lions did not devour him. He delivered Israel from the servile hand of Pharaoh. He delivered Rahab out of the shadow of

death. Susanna He delivered through Daniel. He delivered Peter out of the prison. He delivered John out of the island Patmos. Paul He comforted through the vision on the way to Damascus. The apostles He comforted through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He turned the great grief of Joseph into great gladness in Egypt. So God shall also turn all your grief together into great gladness, as He Himself speaks: The world shall rejoice, but you shall mourn and be sorrowful; but be comforted, God shall also turn your sorrow into gladness. A woman, when she shall bear, has sorrow; but when the child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish, because a child is born into the world.

So also you: now you have sorrow, but I shall see you again, and your sorrow shall be changed into gladness, and no one shall be able to take that gladness from you. Therefore do not fear, my dear friends, the children of men, who perish as hay. Do not fear, you little flock, for it is well pleasing to your Father to give you His kingdom. And do not fear, my dear friends, that tyrannical generation, nor those who kill the body. But I will show you whom you shall fear: fear Him who, after you are dead, has power to cast into the eternal fire. And, my dear friends, here a little suffering of tribulation. It is so little beside the eternal pain or punishment. But John in the Revelation says thus: Fear God and give Him the praise. And so the prophet Esdras comes and says thus: See, God is the Judge; fear Him, and leave off from sins, and forget the unrighteousnesses, not to do them in eternity, and God shall lead you out and deliver you from all tribulation. See, over you is kindled the heat of an overflowing crowd, and they shall snatch some of you away, and shall feed the idle ones with idols, and those who consent to them shall be to mockery, to disgrace, and to be trodden. For there shall be a place for the places, and in the neighboring cities much uprising over those who fear the Lord. For they shall be as mad men, sparing no one, to rob and to lay waste those who fear the Lord. For they shall lay waste and rob the good, and shall cast them out of their houses. Then the proving of my elect shall shine, like the gold that is proved through the fire. Therefore, my elect, see, the days of tribulation are hereby, and from them the Lord shall deliver you. Do not fear, nor waver, for God is your captain, and the Lord will not leave you orphans, for He cares for us all together. For He shall keep us as the apple of His eye. Therefore do not leave off for our distress's sake, wherein we are given over, but if you will remain with the Lord, the tempest shall soon come aboard you. But, my dear friends, remember: as the suffering of Christ comes much over us, so also much comfort comes through Christ. For never did ear hear, nor eye see, nor did it come into any man's heart, what God has prepared for those who love Him. Therefore he who has this hope in Him purifies himself, as He is pure, and goes out of this evil generation, and has no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproves them. For what is done by them in secret is also shameful to say, but what is reproved by the light is light. Therefore he speaks: Awake, you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten you. Therefore, my dear friends, if there were yet any among you who were slow or sleepy, let them yet now awake, or they will be shut out with the foolish virgins. O my dear friends, it shall not profit that some of you have the knowledge which the way is. O my dear friends, knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. For it does not profit that one knows the way, but one

must tread it. And though it is narrow and strait, and searched out with much labor, it must nevertheless be walked. Therefore, my dear friends, you who have become partakers of the heavenly calling, take heed to the time of grace, and do not look upon those who go forward so lazy and slow, but order yourselves thereafter, that you may go in through the narrow gate. For many shall labor thereafter to go in, and shall not come in. Why, my dear friends? Therefore, that they seek to go in through another way, which is not commanded us, but he who goes in through Christ, for He is the way.

Those are they who shall inherit the city, whom the Bridegroom shall set at the table, and serve them. But, my dear friends, the lazy, who are neither cold nor warm, God shall begin to spew out of His mouth, who say that they are rich, and have become rich, and do not know that they are poor, miserable, naked, and blind. So Solomon comes, who says: Go to the ants, you lazy one, and look upon their labor. They gather in the summer what they shall consume in the winter. So the prophet Jeremiah comes, and says thus: The cranes and swallows mark their time, when they shall return; but my people do not mark the time. O you unknown, the ox knows the crib of his master. You who say, Tomorrow it shall be fair weather, and it happens so. O you who can prove the constitution of heaven and earth, why do you not prove among you what is right? Therefore, my dear friends, see to it that none of you is found among the slow, but be girded up, with the staff in the hand, to eat the Passover lamb. For we have a Passover lamb to eat, which is Christ. So let us now keep the Passover, not in the old leaven, nor in the leaven of wickedness, but in the sweet dough of purity and of the truth.

So, my heart-groundedly dear friends, do not let yourselves wonder when you are searched through the fire of tribulation, just as if something new happened to you, but be partakers of the suffering of Christ, so that in the revelation you may have hope and comfort. Let no one among you suffer as a thief or murderer, but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but praise the Lord in that matter. For it is time that the judgment begins at the house of God. If it then begins at us, what end will it then be with those who have not believed the Gospel of God? And it holds narrowly, that the righteous shall be saved; where will the ungodly and sinners then appear? So Solomon comes and says: If it is repaid to the righteous, where will the sinner then remain?

Therefore, my dear friends, see now to it. Flee the shadow of this world. And, my dear friends, do not be diligent to escape the cross, so that you would draw into other lands to have great freedom. O no, my dear friends, but always order yourselves under the cross. For the children who are under the rod are so obedient from fear that their Lord should come and find them sleeping, so they are always diligent, so that they are not found sleeping. For when the flesh gets a little freedom, it takes yet more of itself. And, my dear friends, though I have written this so boldly, take it in the best part. For I am not your lord in that matter, but I write according as my own flesh testifies to me. Therefore, my dear friends, walk wisely toward those who are outside. Remain among that scattered Israelite little flock, for where

blood is shed, there is profit to do. Set your pounds to work there, each one according to the gift which he has received from God, and go to meet one another with reverence. Endeavor that you show yourselves to be a proved servant to God. Lay off all cunning and all hypocrisy, and be desirous of the reasonable unadulterated milk, as newborn children, so that you grow up thereby, if you have otherwise tasted that the Lord is friendly, to whom you have come, as to the living stone. So timber yourselves to a spiritual house, to a royal priesthood, to a holy people, to a people of possession, so that you shall proclaim the virtues of Him who has called you, as obedient children. He who speaks, let him speak as God's Word. Carry out your service reasonably, so that your treasure is not blasphemed. And as you formerly have been diligent to depart from God, so now do so much more diligence to turn to the Lord, and be abundant in the same. Do good to all men, most of all to the household members of the faith, and see that in your faith you show virtue, in virtue discretion, in discretion moderation, in moderation godliness, in godliness brotherly love, and in brotherly love common love. If these things are abundant with you, they shall not leave you idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord.

But he who does not have these things by him is blind and gropes at the wall, and forgets the past cleansing of his sins. So not with you, my dear friends. Make yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, and being partakers of the spiritual goods, let the temporal goods also be partaken among one another. And let that go orderly, and think: It is more blessed to give than to receive. For we read in John 6 that some followed the Lord. But the Lord said: You do not follow me because you have seen signs, but because you have eaten of the bread and are satisfied. Therefore, my dear friends, do not work for food that perishes, but for that which remains unto eternal life. For man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. For food belongs to the belly, and the belly to food, but God shall bring the belly and the food to nothing. So, my dear friends, if you order yourselves after the Gospel, you shall be fruitful branches of the true vine Christ, the lovely olive branches which are grafted on Christ. And, my dear friends, do not let yourselves be made to fall away from the Gospel by those who are enemies of the cross of Christ, who will preach the Gospel without a cross. Do not believe such, for those are they who love your flesh and kill your souls, and they are those who lay cushions under the arms, or under the heads. But separate yourselves from such. For such do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but their belly, and through sweet preaching and flattering words they lead astray the simple hearts. For it is not unknown to us what the devil has in mind. For the devil can transform himself into an angel of light. Is it then a wonder if his servants have the appearance from outside? O my dear friends, a thief does not come except to steal and to murder. Order yourselves so that you are not led astray by them, and so fall out of your own steadfastness. Therefore hold what you have, so that no one takes your crown. And he who stands, let him see to it that he does not fall. For what do you have that you have not received? For all spiritual gifts and perfect gifts come from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shifting of darkness. Therefore admonish one another, my dear friends, every day, so much the more as the day of Christ is at hand, and that so long as it is called

today. And see yet that you bear care for one another, and do not ask much, my dear friends, after others, when you come by one another, or where each one dwells. But in such things be unwise, and be children in wickedness, but in understanding be old, gray, and keep the door of your mouth before him who lies in your arm. My dear friends, if you have understanding, answer your neighbor; but if that is not so, put your hand on your mouth, so that you are not caught in an uncivil word, and so put to shame. Let no foul talk go out of your mouth, but what is useful unto amendment, where need requires, and wholesome to hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you are sealed, unto the day of reconciliation. My dear friends, herewith I hope to take leave. Do not take it amiss from me, though I have written you a little. I hope that it shall be to edification, and I have done my diligence with the little gift which the Lord has given me.

Adriaen Cornelisz, glassmaker, your unworthy brother, who am not worthy to be called a brother, written in my imprisonment, sitting in the stocks, with yet two companions, and yet one alone, and yet two sisters who lie below us. And we await every day the deliverance of our body, and our pilgrimage is already half through, I hope. I hope that we shall soon have finished the rest. Remain commended to the Lord, dear brothers. Remember the prisoners. We remember you in our prayers. Greet all lovers of the only salvation, by name. The time is now all too sharp to write, so we must order ourselves according to the time.

Know how it has gone with us in our last time. On Sunday a priest came by us, as we should be offered on the Monday, who set before us and said: You must die. Answer: So the Jews also did, and said, We have a law, according to which you must die. So we also must, as the emperor's placard shows. But we asked the priest whether their things were upright. He answered us: Not all, for we also have abuses in our church. Then we said: A little sour dough sours the whole dough. Then he said: It must be leavened. Thereby one may mark that their things are not good. But beware of such, for they are not sent of God. Greet for us all the lovers of the divine Word.

His confession before the magistracy and before the priests

My dear heart-groundedly dear brothers and sisters, salvation to the twelve tribes which are scattered all about, in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, with all who call upon the Lord with a pure heart, in their and our places.

I must yet write you a little, and herewith I hope to make my departure. You shall know how it went in my imprisonment. It happened that I came to Leiden, and I speaking there with a brother, and it wondered us how it came that they held our friends so long. So we agreed. I should go speak to the bailiff's knave, who is named Jan van Delft, and asking him how it was with the prisoners, whether they should not soon be offered up. So he said: I hear nothing at all of it. Then I said: It falls to you a great trouble, this long lying. Jan: I would well bear the time, that it were almost an end. Adriaen: You can hardly go further. Jan: Yes, that is true. Adriaen: A little ease would well serve you. Jan: It were almost time. Adriaen: Jan Jansz, I would well have spoken a little with you of some matters. Jan: I have yet a little to do

here. I will well speak with you. Wait for me here a little. And I waited a while, and he came yet before he had ordered the prisoners or brought food, and he came by me speaking friendly. My words he took so lovingly, and I knew nothing else but that he would also take on our faith. Then I said: Jan Jansz, what do you think? Will you leave this regiment, and let the prisoners loose? I will make it so that you shall be well, for it stands in your hands. You have the keys. And he had already said to our friends in the prison, before I said this to him: Shall I once let the door stand open, so that you may run out? What would you do that for? our friends said. And on that matter I spoke to him the more boldly, and I became mindful of the word of Paul and of the jailer, whether the Lord had also given any grace to this one, through the admonishing of our friends. So I had much speaking with him. And he asked whether I well knew those whom he named to me. I said: No, but I have well heard of them; but one he named whom I well knew. Then I said: Yes, that one I know well. So he asked me from where I was. I said: I was born at Schoonhoven, but I did not say that I was dwelling at Delft. But however clever I was, the devil was yet more cunning, as it is well known. Then we had walked long together, and we came again to the prison. Then he said: Will you once speak to the prisoners? Undismayed, going in, I came by our dear sisters, and holding ourselves unknown, speaking toward one another. Then this servant went a little away, and spoke to another servant. Then I well saw how I had fared. Now someone might ask or say: Why did you go in there? O dear friends, my flesh and blood did not drive me there. It is all lost, running or chasing, but it is right as the prophet says: We may well flee, but not escape. Therefore we must all come where we are appointed.

I did not think that I should have a lucky journey at Leiden. And then the other servant asked whether I would go above by the others. I thought, it is as bad as it can become, and I went above, and then they locked the door behind me, and the one went for the bailiff. And being a little above, and speaking to our friends, I went below again. Then they opened the door, and there stood the night bailiff before the door. Then he said: You must remain here a little. Then I asked whether I would go above. He said: Yes. Then I said: Christ had twelve apostles, and one was a Judas; but here there were but two, and one is a Judas. Now well, the Lord be praised for His grace. And not waiting long, they locked me above alone, and I began at once to sing the song: O truth, how are you now trodden down. But I had not long respite, for there came so much people, and at once they came and took from me my Testament, and the song of our four friends which I had made. Then they locked me below by E. S. And not lasting long, the bailiff came with the whole council, and the gates were locked, and one said there were a dozen within Leiden, and they were so diligent, meaning that they had a great Hans or a captain. Alas, no.

Then the bailiff asked: Where is your rapier? I answered: My Master has not taught me to carry a rapier. Bailiff: Who is your master? Adriaen: Christ is my master. Bailiff: Christ is the master of us all. Adriaen: If Christ were your master, you would not presume to fight against Him, but it shall fall hard for you to kick against the pricks. Bailiff: That comes upon us. Then they asked where I had slept. Adriaen: I have slept well. Have you slept badly? Bailiff:

No. I will make you say it. Then one of the lords asked whether I was rebaptized. I said: No, I am once rightly baptized. Bailiff: Who has baptized you? Then I asked whether he also would be baptized. Bailiff: Are you not ashamed to say? I will well tell you where and by whom I am baptized: here in St. Peter's church. Adriaen: If you will be baptized with us, I will well tell you. Bailiff: I have not yet the courage for that. Adriaen: You are not yet fit for it either. Bailiff: Where is the knave with the hat who went with you? Adriaen: I know of no knave with a hat. Bailiff: We have seen him go with you. Adriaen: Lord bailiff, you lie, and if you are Christ's servant, you ought not to lie. Then they showed me the song of the friends, and asked me who had written it. I said: I have written it. Then they asked whether I had also composed it. I said: I have written it, but I said nothing of composing. Then the under-bailiff said: You were at my house on a Friday, and you said me a refrain of Mary Magdalene. Adriaen: You have also lied, for my Master has not taught me little refrains. Under-bailiff: Or an admonition. Adriaen: It is not so. Then the servants, and more others, said: The knave is drunk. Yes, dear friends, then I became thinking of the words of Peter, Acts 2, how those were drunk, so I also, for I had tasted neither beer nor bread of the whole day. Then they would go away again, and they knew no counsel with me, where they should lay me. For Jan van Delft the servant said: It is reasonable with E. S.; now this little knave shall ruin him again. But they laid me there yet by. This all happened together on the same Monday as I was taken.

On the Thursday after, the bailiff came with two aldermen, and a commissioner out of The Hague, and asking me much, and I not willing to say, and yet asking where I had slept, and I not desiring to say, and yet many other matters, which were too long to recount, yet asking: Do you know Gielis of Aachen well? I said: I have not been at Aachen in my life. Asking long thereon, then I said: I know him. Then they asked where I had been by him. I said: I could not show you. That remained standing there. Then they said: One shall well make you say it. Then I said: My lords, I have always avoided knowing much, on the chance, if I were imprisoned, that I had not much to say. Then they laid before me the letters which I had sent them, and the song, and they well saw that it was one handwriting, but I did not confess that. I thought, I shall yet come early enough, for I must yet say something to them when they torture me, for the matter concerned myself, and therefore I did not conceal that when I was tortured. But of others I had no charge, to burden them, and also I did not desire to want to know where the friends dwelt, when I spoke to anyone. And know, dear friends, of this matter there is great lack among some, who always ask after the one and after the other, and when one does not say it, they do not take it well. O dear friends, if you knew what a suffering it is, when you should be imprisoned, you would not ask so. Therefore if you will ask something, ask after the faith, which may save your soul. See, my dear friends, take this in the best part, for I have written you this out of love. And all the pain which I have suffered, that is to know others. So the less you know, the less you have to answer. Then the commissioner looked at my Testament, and he said: This is a forbidden Testament. I said: There you have also lied. Then he kept still. And the evening came. Then they went away, and promised me a daybreak.

On Saturday morning they all came before eight o'clock, and they brought me into the torture cellar, and there was the executioner. Then they asked me whether I was not otherwise minded, to say it. I began to admonish them. Then they said: We have not come here to be taught by you, but we ask you whether you will say it. And my mind did not stand so. Then the executioner undressed me, and he bound my hands on my back, and there was a windlass, and they bound a block to my legs, and so drawing up, they let me hang so. Then they asked me in the hanging, and I did not speak. And letting me down again, the bailiff asked where I had worked since I had been out of Flanders. At Delft, I said. They asking yet more, I not desiring to say, then they hauled me up again, and they unbound the block, and the executioner laid a wood or iron between my legs, and there he went and stood on it, and my legs were bound together. Letting me down, the bailiff asked whether I had not been at Leiden at a certain time which he named, with yet six of my friends. I did not confess that. Then the executioner drew me up again, and they had bound my eyes, and they took rods and scourged me. Letting me down, the bailiff said: Say that, or I will say it to you. I did not desire to burden anyone. Then they hauled me up again, and pulled me by my beard and by my hair, and striking and scourging on my back. But I did not see, because my eyes were bound, who it was that did it. They might also have asked: Who has struck you there? In sum, that I was struck with seven or eight rods. And letting me down, and I not answering for a long time, they poured water on me, for fear of swooning, and in the hanging they had also poured on me. And I sitting down, not speaking for a long time, the bailiff said: You will not say it. I will say it to you. You have slept at Steven Claesz. Adriaen: That is true. Bailiff: You have been here before the prison with yet six of your friends, and have admonished the prisoners that they should fight valiantly, and that they should remain by their faith, and you have gone and hired a boat for six stivers. What was that for a knave to whom the boat belonged, and the knave who was in the other boat, who gave the skipper a half stiver, wherewith he mended his chest, so that he would sail with you? And he knew all what the knave was called, and what we had done he also knew all, and how there was a woman with us, and how we had read, and how two sat with bare heads, and where we had gone up. Then I said that it was so, and so they wrote it. But I excused the two of those who were in the boat, but it did not help. That remained standing there. Then they showed me the letters, to four or five. Yes, I said, I have written them. Then they said: This is the placard-writer. That does not belong at all, the aldermen said, that you set the emperor so down. Then I said: I do not set the emperor down. However great the emperor is, the highest Emperor is yet greater. Bring me a Bible. I will prove to you what I have written. Then they said: Why have you written these letters? I said: I have written them because it grieved me, and so that you should not make your fingers bloody any more, and that you should once do repentance, as those of Nineveh did. That remained standing there. Then they asked what I held of the sacrament of the altar. I said that it was worth nothing. Question: How long have you not been there? Answer: Not in four years. Question: Have you been of this faith so long? Answer: No. Question: Why did you not go there then?

Answer: Out of lack of understanding I well knew that it was worth nothing. Then they went running. They had been busy with me from eight o'clock until half past eleven, at midday.

This is my account which I had, dear friends. Do not be dismayed, though it is written somewhat hard. The Lord well helps His own. If the Lord had not helped me, it would not have been possible to bear. But we can do all things through Him who makes us mighty, which is Christ. And as the suffering of Christ comes much over us, so much comfort comes through Christ. Hereby I will let this be. I bear the marks, of which Paul speaks, in my body.

On Sunday morning they came, and read up my examination, and asked whether it was so. Then I became mindful of what is said by the prophet: They are wolves in the evening, which do not leave anything over until the morning, yes, who run swift with their feet to shed innocent blood. Then I said to the bailiff whether he was not yet almost sated with that innocent blood, that he was so diligent in the way of unrighteousness. Then he said: I do not kill you. I said: The emperor's mandate kills us, but you should then be content with what you have, and not ask after more. Wherewith will you prove that you may kill us? There it is written: If you see your brother sin, rebuke him between you and him alone. If he will not hear you, take yet one or two with you. If he will still not hear, tell it to the congregation. If he will not hear, hold him as a heathen, yes, as an open sinner. There the Scripture speaks of no killing. Bailiff: We have quite other Scripture, where Paul says: The magistracy is not set in vain, for God has commanded it Himself. Adriaen: Yes, for protection of the good, and for punishment of the wicked. But it seems to me that it is all turned about, that it is for punishment of the good, and for protection of the wicked. Bailiff: We shall well prove to you that we may kill you, with books. Adriaen: That you shall not do with the Gospel. Under-bailiff: What do you know that it is the Gospel? Adriaen: There it is written: Amend yourselves, and believe the Gospel. Under-bailiff: There are eight Gospels written. Adriaen: I am well content with the four. If those cannot teach me, the others would not teach me. Bailiff: Adriaen Cornelisz, if one sends you learned men, that you let yourself be instructed with the Word of the Lord? Adriaen: I will well let myself be instructed with the Word of the Lord. Bailiff: That is well spoken. Adriaen: I will not speak with them, unless it happens in the presence of the law, and in the presence of those who are imprisoned with me. That did not please them. Then they went away, and the bailiff traveled at once to Delft.

Three weeks after, the bailiff came into the stocks, where we sat among us three, and he asked whether it did not almost begin to weary us. We said: No. Then I said: James says, Take it for an example to suffer discomfort. It wondered them that we counted it so little. Then I said to the bailiff: As the suffering of Christ comes much over us, so much comfort comes through Christ. Bailiff: I should think that it would all weary you. Adriaen: Does it not also begin to weary you, to shed this blood? He did not answer. Then he asked whether one should send us learned men. We said: We will always well be instructed with the Word of the Lord. Bailiff: One shall instruct you with nothing other than the Word of the Lord. Answer: We will always give our faith for a better, so that one does not say that we stand

obstinate, and so our opponents ought also to do. Bailiff: That is so. Let yourselves be instructed, on the chance that your remaining here might not be long. Adriaen: You do not know whether your remaining here shall be long. And though we are now as forsaken, the Lord shall soon be gracious to us. That remained standing there. Then he said: One shall send you someone. Then we called to him, in going off the stairs, that he should bring a Bible with him, or a Testament.

After noon a priest came there with two servants, and he came forward so fair, and he set out his peddler's ware, and meant to sell something, and he spoke so lovingly. And when one of us spoke up, then he brought much forward. Then I said that the Lord had warned us of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of those who walk in long clothes. Priest: The clothes shall not do it. Then I said that their things were worth nothing: infant baptism, ringing of bells, the Mass, and all their lures. Then he spoke thereon, of the holy baptism of children, that it was right. I asked where it stood written for right. Priest: To the Corinthians, in the first letter, in the 16th chapter. Adriaen: There it stands, The household of Stephanas are the first in Achaia who have given themselves to the service of the saints. These could not be children at all. Children cannot give themselves to the service of the saints, but one must serve the children themselves. Of the jailer with his household he asked us whether there were no children there. Answer: No. Priest: What do you know of it? Adriaen: There it is written thus: The jailer rejoiced that he had become believing in Christ Jesus with his whole household. Children cannot rejoice themselves at the faith, for they have no faith. Then he was also out of that. Likewise of Lydia the seller of purple he also went on so. Priest: When I was young, then I had my faith as perfectly as I do now. Adriaen: What do you say then? Then he did not answer me. And he said: When I was born, then I had the hand, and I did not know it; so also my faith, that was hidden in me, and the original sin which I had was taken away therewith through the rebirth of the water, which happens there on the font. Then I asked him whether the water was crucified for him, or Christ. Priest: Christ. Adriaen: Nevertheless you seek salvation in the water. Thereon he was silent. Then Dierick Jansz asked where it stood written that one shall baptize the bells. Priest: That is instituted by the holy church. And yet of that Mass-doing. Then he said that he had God in the Mass in flesh and in blood bodily. Then I said that he was a deceiver. Priest: Has God not said, Take, eat, this is my flesh, and drink, this is my blood, and as often as you eat of this bread, you shall proclaim the Lord's death? There we had much speech of it. Then I asked him whether he had also well read in 1 Timothy 4. Priest: Yes. Then I asked whether he had brought a Testament with him. Priest: Yes, here is a Testament in Latin. Adriaen: We have not lain in any Latin high schools, but in that high renowned school of the Gospel, of which the Spirit of God is schoolmaster. He said he would well read it in Dutch. Then he read of those who forbid to marry and to wed, and forbid the food. Then I asked of whom it was spoken. He said he did not know that. Adriaen: If you are a teacher, you ought well to know that. Priest: Yes, it stands of the ending of the world. Adriaen: There it stands of the last times. Will you now say that it is not the last time? Then he was silent, and said that he had not forbidden marriage, nor the food. Then we said: Your father has done it, namely the pope. And you

have been out with Haman to obtain mandates, to kill us and ours, and you have helped give the emperor ten thousand pounds of silver. Priest: I do not do it. Adriaen: If you are Christians, Christians ought not to persecute anyone. Priest: We do not persecute you. Then I asked him whether the Christian congregation persecuted, or whether it suffered persecution. Priest: It suffers persecution. Then I asked where he suffered persecution, or whether it is not we who suffer persecution. Priest: We suffer persecution from the devil. Then we asked where it stood written that one might kill us for our faith. Then he said that it was ordained for the evil sects. We said: We do not admit any sects. Priest: One suspects whether it might also go so with you. Then Dierick Jansz said: Does one well hang a man whom one suspects that he has stolen, without his having done it? So one might not kill us either, before it is found upon us. The priest went at last, and we had him with many things of which he had no understanding. And I said that he was one who robbed God of His honor, through their confessions, that they will forgive the sins. There he was also struck, and then he went away. And I hope that we shall soon make our offering with one another.

O my dear friends, see yet to it that you take heed of one another, and walk cautiously. For the people are so disordered, and they do such great diligence after our brother, where he is. Therefore walk a little more wisely herein than some of you do. For, dear friends, they would handle him foully, if the Lord allowed it, if they had him. Therefore take it in the best part, for there are so few laborers in the harvest. Therefore you who are now in the harvest, take heed that you care for it. And yet, dear friends, when you come by one another to speak of the Word of the Lord, do not spend your time with useless talk, and with old wives' fables, but exercise yourselves in godliness, so that you may withstand in the evil day, and in all things stand protected, and be always diligent that with honor you build the spiritual temple, unto the coming of our Lord. He who is holy, become yet more holy; he who is pure, become yet more pure — as Paul writes to the Thessalonians, that it was not needful to write to them, but he said that they should become yet more abundant; so also you, dear brothers. Read the admonition which I have written you, which shall well be shown to you. Greet me all the friends in the Lord, especially G. our brother, a faithful servant; and all those who are in bonds greet him, and all lovers of the truth greet him also. Be commended to the Lord, and know that we are all still well minded; the Lord be praised always.

My dear friends, I must yet write you a little, for the paper above fell all too short for me. For, dear friends, paper is all too dear when we are in bonds. But since Habacuc brought me yet some paper, I write you yet a little of some matters which we had in the prison, which were forgotten above. So it happened that the servant who had betrayed me came to bring us food. Then I asked him whether I had wronged him in any matters, that he would forgive me; and I spoke to him as often and as friendly as I could, which is also commanded us. Then he said: You have not wronged me, nor any of yours. Through the lovely speaking and showing of love, he was ashamed that he had betrayed me, and that I yet spoke to him so lovingly.

Yet some reasons of the priest who came there to instruct us. So I asked him whether he also had faith. He said: Yes. Adriaen: If you sat here by us in the stocks a month, I think you would well deny your faith. Priest: I would possibly not. Then he began to speak of the faith, and he said that the faith was incomprehensible. I said: If the faith is incomprehensible, how can we then be saved? Then he was struck. Then we recounted a little of the sending of the preachers, and how Paul says that the teachers shall be blameless, and going forward the reason following, that they shall be hospitable. Then I said: You would all rather go as a guest than that you should have anyone as a guest. And a receiver of strangers. Then I said: If I came to your house, would you well be willing to receive me? Priest: Possibly yes. We had yet speech of infant baptism. That he would maintain with the households. Then I asked him to whom the Scripture speaks, and does it not speak to those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand? Priest: Yes. Then I asked him whether any Scripture belonged to the children. Priest: No. Adriaen: If no Scripture belongs to the children, then no baptism belongs to them either. Then he was caught, and then he was out with his infant baptism. He spoke yet of eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood, how Christ gave His apostles flesh of His flesh, and blood so outwardly to drink. Then I said that he was worse than the Jews. Priest: Why? Adriaen: The Jews murmured thereon, and said, How can this one give us his flesh to eat? And you come now and will eat it so. Understand firmly: Christ has not spoken that reason as you draw it, I said to the priest. In sum, he would gladly have been away with honor, for his peddler's ware might not count.

A song of Adriaen Cornelisz

To the tune of the 106th Psalm, or Thought, thought, and so forth.

Thank God, and will spread His praise, whose works are manifest by us. Adriaen Cornelisz came to Leiden, to visit his friends there, being in bonds. The fire of love has freely pressed this young man thereto. And Judas was on the path, who spoke to him with a loose tongue, so that he went in the more boldly.

He came gliding by his sisters. He might refresh himself little there. For Jan van Delft went to speak to one, to whom he said something in his ear. There one went quickly. Then one well saw how Adriaen had fared, through these two false servants. The under-bailiff at that time: him one let declare it at once. Thus he appeared there immediately.

Adriaen was where he must remain, and was set fast there with one. But he lifted up a song, bracing himself: O truth, how are you now trodden down. It was all disturbed. One locked the city gate. The council came running to, and the people from every side in heaps. The cry was over all, that there were of the rebaptizers gathered a dozen in number.

When they would know much of him, and he would not tell them, so it was resolved among them that the hangman should torture him. He began to admonish them there, but

Antichrist's sent servants, who hated his admonishing. The executioner pulled Adriaen out, bound his hands on the back, hung a block on his legs.

Drawn up, they let him hang, having a windlass prepared thereto. Then they asked him with severity, but he gave them no account. Thereafter they let him down again. But when he did not answer, they grew angry at him above measure. An instrument taken, the executioner hauling him up with cords, stepped heavily between his legs on it.

It was very painful for them to endure, that he did not speak to their will. For they bound his eyes yet, and hauled him up again tightly. They struck his body stiffly with rods. By the hair they plucked him, and by his beard they jerked him. O pain and villainous shame. But that did not succeed for the wolves, for of the sheep they got nothing for certain.

When now the hour had come that he should taste death, ready thereto like the pious, he fell down on his knees, prayed devoutly, after Christian manner, and unfeared. God's friend is risen up, and has accomplished his offering therewith, giving his spirit, to the praise and honor of God. His suffering and death have been praised.

When one has written everywhere one thousand five hundred, and at the end yet fifty-two besides, then Adriaen confessed God's Word at Leiden, bold, before young and old, steadfast of mind, and sealed it with his blood. Friends, take example here, that you hold yourselves to the good in distress. For God stands by in water and fire.

A letter or confession of one named Jooskint

A letter or confession of one named Jooskint, being imprisoned at Kortrijk, and thereafter left his life there for the testimony of Jesus, in the year 1553, reckoning the beginning of the year from New Year's day.

Grace be with you, and peace, from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who will comfort and empower us with His Holy Spirit, so that we may remain standing against the offense of the devil, him who (as Peter says) goes about us as a roaring lion, seeking him whom he may devour, so that we should withstand him with a firm faith.

So know, dear friends, that I have such a fight against the fleshly lords, so that they come upon me with their crafty reasons, seeking to draw me off from the obedience of our dear Lord. Although I hope that the Lord shall stand by me, I do not doubt thereof. For God speaks through the prophet Isaiah, comforting His own: Though a mother forsook her child, yet I shall not forsake you. Which the Lord wonderfully shows upon me. Praise must all tongues speak to Him. Yes, though I had as much paper as I have ever written on, and time to write, I could not write you the joy and gladness which I find in me. Yes, my joy is unspeakable. But N. is weak, and he prays that you will diligently pray the Lord for him. For he is ready to go into the fire, but the enemies of the cross he cannot withstand, for they come upon him with crafty reasons, as their schoolmaster the devil knows much craft, which

he revealed to our Savior when he came to tempt Him in the wilderness, as it stands written in the Gospel. If he then used his craft on our Savior, I am not sorrowful, though I also have a little fight. For, dear friends, they are so good to withstand, if they used reasons, but they go at him all with lies. For their father is lying, as our Savior also said to them. So they also have the nature of their father, which they have in part revealed to me, which I cannot let you know all. But I hope that the Lord shall give me so much grace that I shall write you a little of the dealing against the fleshly ones.

It shall please you to know that Ronse and Polet came on the Saturday after noon into the prison, summoning me to them. When I came by them, I asked what their desire was. They said: That one shall tell you. They asked me after my age. I said: That I do not know. If you will have a good account of it, you should have to ask my mother. Ronse: Tell us as near as you know it. Jooskint: Between twenty and thirty years. Then their writer wrote: Between thirty and forty years. Ronse: When were you last at confession? Jooskint: Why do you ask that? Ronse: I desire to know. Jooskint: You have not had me taken; you well know how it stands with me. Answer: We do not. Jooskint: Of whom are you, or on whose behalf have you come to me? Answer: On God's behalf. Jooskint: That I do not believe. Question: Why? Jooskint: Because you have imprisoned me to know how it stands with me. For all whom the Lord has sent out to go and teach have had no one laid in prisons. For He sent them out, and commanded them, wherever they came and one did not receive them, that they should shake the dust from their feet and go from there.

Polet: You have well read that Paul gave some over to the devil. Jooskint: Show me where Paul laid them in prison. That I ask you. Polet: I do not know it. Jooskint: Why do you then undertake to bring up against anyone such scriptures which you yourself do not know? Yes, and above that, to catch anyone, to bring him to the faith. If your faith were good, which I do not hold that it is good, for I do not hold you to be of God. Question: Why? Jooskint: Because the Lord says, I will have obedience and no offering, and because you are not obedient to Him. Question: Wherein? Jooskint: Because Christ has commanded that one shall show the strayed the right way, and you say that I am strayed. Why have you not shown me the right? For I seek nothing other than the right. Answer: Therefore we have come. Jooskint: Therefore you should have come where I dwelt. Answer: We did not know where you dwelt. Jooskint: You well knew how to send the bailiff. Answer: If you had been a good sheep, it would not have needed. Jooskint: Christ left the ninety-nine, and He went to seek the lost. Then Ronse said: Do you not hold me as set by our holy father the pope, and our gracious lord the emperor, for your superior? Jooskint: I know no superior but Christ. Question: Yes, do you then hold the emperor for nothing? I said that I was well content that he was my superior after the flesh. Then they wrote that I knew no superior after the spirit but Christ, and the emperor after the flesh. Then Ronse said: When were you last at confession? Tell me that yet. Jooskint: Here I do not desire to speak against you. Question: Why? Jooskint: Before the lords in full court. There I will well speak. There, they said, your life would pay for it, that you spoke there anything that clung. Tell me, he said, what do you

hold of the children's baptism? Then I was driven to speak, and said to them: Nothing. Ronse: Yes, what baptism do you then hold? Jooskint: I know but of one faith and of one baptism. Ronse: How long ago is it that you were baptized? Jooskint: A half year, or thereabout. That they wrote. Question: What do you hold of the Roman church? Jooskint: I do not hold the least point of all that they hold. That was also written. They asked me so much that I said to them: I have freely confessed my faith, and for it I am ready to go living into a fire. So be content, since you know my faith. They asked me very much. I said: Go from me. I hold you for enemies of the cross of Christ. So go from me, for you know the ground of my faith, which I have freely confessed to you. So do with me what pleases you. For these members I possess through the grace of the Lord, and I am also ready to lay off these same through the grace of the Lord, yes, to set them for His holy prize. They said much. But I said: Go from me, and do not come any more where I am, for you are against God. Do you not fear the Lord? See what stands, Matthew 13, of the weeds of the field. After you say that I am evil, the Lord has commanded that one shall let it grow up until the harvest. Answer: If we let it grow up, you would ruin us all. Polet: Does Augustine not say? Jooskint: Do not speak of Augustine, for I do not know him. I hold no teaching but that of the apostles, prophets, and the words which our Savior brought out of the high heaven, out of the mouth of His heavenly Father, and sealed with His precious blood. For that I desire to go into the fire. But Augustine, Gregory, Ambrose, those I do not know. Ronse: Yes, do you not believe that our blessed Savior is resting under the holy sacrament? Jooskint: That I do not believe. Ronse: Where is He then? Jooskint: At the right hand of His heavenly Father, and shall at last come down with the glory of His Father, to judge the living and the dead. Fear that strict judgment, and amend yourselves, and put on sackcloth and hair clothes, and do penitence, and go to the people whom you hold running after your false service of God. Warn them, for you murder their souls. For you say that you have the key of the kingdom of heaven from Peter's times, and that it has always remained by you.

Rightly Christ speaks, that you have the key, and that you yourselves shall not come in, and those who would gladly come in, them you hinder. Ronse: Who has baptized you? Has Gielis the baptizer baptized you? Jooskint: You know how it is set with me. Be content. Polet: It was Adam the pastor. Ronse: Or David Joris. I was silent. Ronse: Joos, tell me who your godfathers and godmothers were. Jooskint: I know of no godfathers. Ronse: Your witnesses. Jooskint: I have told you that it has happened. So be content therewith. For I have such trust in the Lord that I hope He shall keep the door of my mouth, so that I shall not tell you, though you should tear me in pieces. They asked me very much. I said: Go from me, for you are not of God. Answer: We are. Jooskint: Away, away, go from me, go from me, and do not come any more where I am. And yet much that happened there, which would be too long to write. At last they went away, and I was led again into the cot behind.

On the Sunday I was fetched into the aldermen's house. There the law was gathered, and there was Salome, and master Cornelius the dean of Kestenne, Ronse and Polet. I was set there in the midst, and well fast bound, and held by two thief-leaders. I said: My lords, what

is your desire? Ronse: That one shall tell you. Then one read my confession of my faith, which they had written in the prison, and asked whether I was still of that mind. I said: Yes, for that I am still ready to go into the fire. Ronse asked whether I did not believe that Christ had taken His flesh of Mary. I said: No. Then it seemed that master Cornelius would have fallen into a swoon, and they blessed and crossed themselves greatly, and were all very disordered. And a little was spoken of it, but they blew their venom into the aldermen like dragons. Each one bespoke an alderman, and said: There it well stands written so, but he does not have the understanding. The Scripture will be understood. And they brought from afar many crafty reasons, and stuffed the lords' ears full, and asked me many crafty questions. I said: I have confessed my faith to you. Be content therewith. And I pray you, not that I am worthy, but through the red blood of our dear Lord, let me in peace. You have my faith, and me here in your hands. Be content. Do what pleases you. Then Ronse asked whether I had been by nowhere, and adjured me by my baptism at three times, that I should say who was by there. I said that I would not tell him one word. Ronse: You have denied your baptism. Menno would not well take it of you, that you should deny your baptism. Jooskint: My faith and baptism I acknowledge, but with your adjuring I have nothing to do. I would thereby acknowledge you sorcerers. Then Polet said: One may well swear. Jooskint: See Matthew 5, whether He does not forbid that one shall in no manner swear. They said: No. I said: Yes. Then Polet looked in a Bible which they had brought with them, a great book, and it stood as I said. Then master Cornelius said: That Bible is false. In our Latin it stands otherwise. Jooskint: Do you bring false books beside me? Why do you say that it is false? And it is privileged. Do you then let them reign with privilege, and you visit them? Answer: I have not visited them. Jooskint: Someone of the learned at Leuven. Then Ronse poked master Cornelius Roose, and said: It is true, they are visited, and were good, but the printer had a little knave, and printed them false, while his master was toward the city. Ronse asked me how it came that I so readily believed one whom by chance I never saw again, and let myself be baptized by him, and that I would not believe them, whom I saw daily, yes, them who were present there, and had instructed me that journey and before that, as they said, and why I would not believe him, my pastor, who daily preached the Gospel. Then I answered, because he was lying, and that I had heard him preach that one found nowhere written that Mary was mother and virgin, but, as he said, because their church taught it, therefore one must believe it. Therefore, I said, I will not hear him. For I had read in Isaiah and in Matthew, and in more other places, to the contrary.

Hearing the lies go out of your mouth, I have after that given you no hearing, nor shall, I hope through the grace of the Lord. He said: No? I said: Yes, and I present my body to the bench against yours. But he had no desire thereto, and said: Should one not on the torture bench? Ronse: You confess that our church is not good, because we are not blameless. Are you blameless? There are manslayers of your people, because one would not believe them, yes, would not cleave to their teaching. Jooskint: Have you seen such on me, or anything other than is fitting? I am here in the hands of the judge. Let them punish me for it. Ronse: We do not know such of you. Jooskint: Then do not tell me what another does, nor hold me

for evil because another does it. The one shall not bear the other's burden, you mine, nor I yours. The soul that sins, that shall die. And yet much more that they said, which is not worth writing. They also said that Christ had said that the scribes and Pharisees sat on Moses' seat, and had commanded us to do after their commandments but not after their works. Therefore, they said, do what we counsel you, but not after our works, for Christ teaches you that. Jooskint: To whom did Christ say that they sat on Moses' seat? Answer: The Pharisees. Jooskint: Does the Scripture belong to you? Answer: Yes. Jooskint: So you confess that you are of their generation. Then master Cornelius the parish priest asked me why I did not believe in one point of the Roman church, and that I well believed that Christ was crucified, which the Roman church also believes. That is surely a point. And why I believed that Matthew's Gospel was a Gospel, and that it stands written nowhere, and he would show me that Paul had written before the evangelists. Then I said: Show me that Paul wrote before Matthew. Master Cornelius: What have you to do therewith? Jooskint: Should I not have to do therewith? It concerns my life and my soul, after your saying. Master Cornelius: He is overcome. Jooskint: Be silent. You are not worth speaking. And see to it that you do not say after my absence that you have overcome me, or that I have the devil in me, or damn me among the simple people, and lead yet more astray. Then Ronse said: You are damned, if you remain so. Jooskint: Why? Ronse: Because you do not believe. Jooskint: I believe, and I hold my faith so mighty that I would rather go into the fire than transgress one point. There happened yet much, too long to write. At last I was led again into the prison. There two fetters were struck on me. I said: I am not ready only to let myself be fettered, but to die the most despised death for the name of the Lord.

Polet came on the Monday with the lard-seller, and asked how it stood with me. I said that it never stood so well, for which I praised the Lord. They said that they were therefore very glad. Then Polet said: Joos, would your thing be good, and your church? The Germans have a congregation. The English have a congregation. But where are the members of your congregation? You are no church alone. Let us hear whether you also are a little flock, and who your members are. Then I said five or six times: Behind, and go from me, Satan. And then they both ran away. Then I said: Now you speak. At the judgment another shall speak. So I have not seen them any more. I have heard that I shall be greatly tortured, for they mean to know from me all the circumstance. But I trust the Lord, that He shall keep my mouth. So pray the Lord for me, that He will stand by me. For they thirst after much blood, but they can do no more than the Lord allows them. So I commend myself into the hands of the Lord. And whatever you hear said outside this letter, hold that for a lie. In a token of the truth I hope to seal this letter with my blood. Hereto God give His grace, so that His name may be praised thereby. Amen.

Another letter or confession of the same Jooskint

To the praise of the Father.

I, Jooskint, imprisoned for the testimony in Christ Jesus, praying and admonishing all dear friends, and all dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, with the grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, praying through this grace that they would not only take heed to or live my prayer or admonition, but that each one (as I hope by the help of God) would give himself thereto, to take heed to the warning of the Lord, and that each one would give himself to the amendment of the sinful life, as I also do not doubt that each one does who fears the Lord with the whole heart. For the Scripture speaks: He who fears the Lord shall do good. Yes, the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. After then the fear of God steers us to virtues, let us then fear the Lord. For Christ Jesus requires the same of us with His blessed mouth, where He says: Do not fear those who kill the body. The soul they cannot kill. But fear Him who, after He has slain to death, has the power to cast soul and body into the eternal damnation. So I admonish you with these words, not only with these words, but with the whole sum of the Scriptures, that each one would give himself to keep them. For Christ says: Whoever hears these my words and keeps them, him I shall liken to a wise man, who has timbered his house on the stone. And when a shower of rain fell, and when streams came, and winds blew and struck against the house, yet it did not fall, for it was founded on the stone. And whoever hears these my words and does not do them is like a foolish man, who has timbered his house on the sand. And when a shower of rain fell, and the streams came, and the winds blew, and struck against the house, then it fell, and its fall was great.

So let each one pain himself to do diligence thereto, to take heed to himself, and to redeem the perilous time. For Paul says: Redeem the time, for it is an evil time. So take heed to the time, and admonish one another, for the need requires it, and let each one arm himself well, as Paul admonishes us. For we have not only to fight with flesh and blood. Rightly Paul has taught that. That I now feel so well. Praise the Lord must have, who so faithfully stands by me with these weapons, and, as He has promised, when we should be led before such, would give us a mouth to speak, has now opened my mouth. Praise must He have, so that I through the grace of the Lord defend myself valiantly with my Lord's Word, and have valiantly withstood my enemies five times, not only my enemies, but the enemies of the cross of Christ, as you shall yet well hear.

You shall know how I, on the day which one calls St. Thomas in Babel, lay in the cot where I have always lain. After noon I saw and heard that fleshly and worldly lords had come into the prison, and also the high bailiff. Then the servants came and said: Joos, come out. Then I said in my heart: Lord, open my lips; my mouth shall speak out Your praise. With that I came in before them. Then Ronse and Polet each lifted their four-cornered cap, and said: Joos, God greet you, and bowed to me with their head. Then I also lifted my bonnet, saying: God is well worth such a greeting to me, yes, and yet more. I am ready for His name to lay off these members again for His prize, which He has granted me through His grace. The Lord is well worth so much to me, for we have well seen Him worth so much, that He has died the bitter death for us. Then the inquisitors said: Joos, are you not yet advised? Will you not yet stand off? I said: Yes, always from doing evil. Why did you not ask me that when I

still ran in wickedness, when I practiced all manner of unrighteousness? They said: You might have gone to the sermon. And they asked after my faith, which I have freely confessed. Then they said: Speak against us, and say whether you are not yet advised. Jooskint: Against you I do not speak, for you are not of God. How should I believe in you? Christ has died for me. Therein I believe. But you would not be willing to die for me, neither the one dean nor the other dean (there were two deans: Ronse and the oil-maker), nor the one parish priest nor the other would be willing to die for me. I am taken on my neck. Let me free, and you die for me. Answer: Who teaches that? Jooskint: Christ, and He says, A good shepherd loves his sheep, and lays down his life for his sheep. You say that I, remaining in this proposition, must be damned. Ronse: Yes. Jooskint: It is then a wonder that you will kill me, seeing that I am in a proposition for which I shall be damned. Let me go, until I am in a better one. Answer: We shall separate from you. Jooskint: Yes, you, and give me over. Polet: Paul well gave some into the hands of the devil. Jooskint: So you also do. You have damned me. Be content then, without delivering me into the hands of the judge. Paul has not done so, nor has Christ taught so, Matthew 28, Mark 16, where He says: Go, preach the Gospel to all creatures. But Christ does not say: Those who will not believe you, shut them in cots, or with great fetters on the legs. Have all believed Christ who have heard Him preach? Have all believed the apostles who have heard them? Answer: No. Jooskint: Have then those who have not believed the apostles been killed? Answer: No. Jooskint: How comes it then that the apostles have not done such, and that you say you are place-holders of the apostles, that you undertake to kill us, though we were fair evil after your saying? But I have a better hope than you say. Polet: That I will tell you. Have you not read how Elijah brought Baal's priests to death? Jooskint: Yes, and this still fails, to bring you people under also. For you serve Baal yet more sorely than they did, and you sup and revel much more sorely with Jezebel than they did. Answer: What does that concern you? You always look at our works. Jooskint: Christ has taught me to know the tree by the fruits, and says that an evil tree cannot bear good fruits, nor a good tree evil fruits, and so forth, speaking of that matter. And I said: After your works are not good, I do not hold you for good. Question: Are you then good? Jooskint: That you do not hear me say. There is no one good but God alone. And though we said that we were good, which we do not, you say against it that we are evil, and that for the cause which you told me when we were in the aldermen's house: that when one will not believe us, we stab to death those who will not believe us. Ronse: That I still say. Jooskint: Where have you seen such on me? After you say that I have taught the people, have I stabbed or struck anyone to death, or tangled a hair, by reason of my teaching, which you say that I teach for an opinion? Answer: We do not know such of you. Jooskint: I know such of you. You burn them or smother them who will not cleave to your false service of God. Rightly you have judged yourselves in this matter. Answer: This does not profit. Let us dispute concerning the faith. Jooskint: I will not dispute here alone. Then they said: Do you then give yourself overcome? And they meant to give me over to the judges, if I had said yes. Then I said: No. Wherein have you overcome me? I have said, not once, fifty times: Show me a better with the evangelical word. I desire to go

off. Answer: Let us then begin. Jooskint: Well, before the aldermen's house, in the presence of a great fire. He who is overcome there, one shall cast him in. Answer: That shall not happen to you. Then the under-bailiff said: You seek to make commotion. Jooskint: You have made it with my taking. If you had let me work, Kortrijk would not stand as it now stands. It has not stood so in seven years. Polet: One shall not bring you there, and that for the cause, so that you should not spread your venom. Jooskint: You ought well to come before the aldermen's house, and the more people heard, the better it would be. For if I have the lie, and you have the truth, are you then ashamed of the truth before the people? Bring me there, and show me that I am wrong, so you shall stop the people's mouth, and say, when you have overcome me: This is the man who has maintained against the Christian faith. Now we show him with Scripture that he is wrong.

Bring me there, and show me that I am wrong, so you shall stop the people's mouth, and say, when you have overcome me: This is the man who has maintained against the Christian faith. Now we show him with Scripture that he is wrong, and then cast me into the fire. Then the people shall be edified. If you will not do that, then you do not will that the people know the truth. Ronse: One shall not bring you there to speak. When one shall bring you there, then one shall well hinder you from speaking. Jooskint: Why? The people have five senses, and he who has the five senses shall well hear whether I speak good or evil. Ronse: One shall well hinder you from speaking there. Jooskint: So do it. Thrust me boldly into a sack, and smother me by night, so that no men see it. He sees it who searches hearts and reins. There people enough see it, and He shall see it, and well avenge Himself. I let it stand upon Him. For I am yet ready to lay off this flesh, whether in the fire or in the water, whether before the aldermen's house or here in this fire, and that was the fire in the hearth. If it is not great enough, make it greater.

Then they laid before me again to dispute, and said that they were sent of God, and set as place-holders of God. I said: No. For you have bought your benefice, or they are given you, or you have won them by serving. But those whom God has sent have been sent otherwise from the beginning of the world. They said that they would show me with Scriptures that they were sent. I said: Show it. Answer: That is it, that the key was given to Peter, and he was pope, and it was given him and his successors. Jooskint: Show me that successors stands there. Answer: One shall well show you that. Jooskint: Show it me then. Then Ronse read in a Testament, Matthew 16, from where Christ asked, Who do the people say the Son of man to be? to where Christ says, I give you the key. Then there stood nothing of successors. Then he said: You have well heard it. Do you not, Joos? It is so long. I would read further, but it is too long a work. Jooskint: I will that you read further. Ronse: How far? Jooskint: To where it stands of the successors. Ronse: You have well heard that He says, On this rock I shall found my church. So He is founded on St. Peter, and he was pope. Jooskint: Christ is the foundation, as Paul says, 1 Corinthians 3, saying: No other foundation can be laid, except that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. But Peter is not the foundation, nor did He found the church on Peter, but on the confession of his faith, where he confessed: I confess that

you are Christ, the living Son of God. So Christ is then the foundation. But let us speak, I said, of the key. You fall from the key onto the church. You say that I run from the one to the other. Remain you by one, and show me, as you have maintained, that Christ says: I give you the key, and your successors. They said: That we shall well show you. But hear, it is this, Polet said, and came forward with a crafty reason. I said: I am not to be paid with a reason. Show me in the book. Then Ronse said: We well know it by heart, so do you also. Hear us speak it by heart. I said: Read it. They said: Is it not all one, whether we read it or speak it? Joos, hear what I shall tell you. I said: I am not content with telling. When they would not read it, then I spoke to the high bailiff and to Roegaergijs, and said: My lords, I desire that you stand by me in this matter, and make them read this, or I say that you are violent men, and no judges. Then they said: Read it to him. Then they read Matthew 16. Ronse read it. When he did not find it, he became as white as snow. Then he said: It does not stand there. Polet: Those same words do not stand there, but the sense stands, Matthew 28. And he read: I remain by you unto the end of the world. Jooskint: That is not where He says, I give you the key, and your successors. Polet: If you will have just those words, they do not stand there. Do you make so much of it? Jooskint: No, but because you say that you would show it me. Ronse: Be silent, you N. You are not worth speaking. Jooskint: Why should I be silent, where you with your false mandates have obtained that neither procurator nor advocate may speak for us, nor any friends? If you do not will that I speak, then you should have let me lie there behind in the cot. But I shall not be silent, for you nor for anyone. I am neither thief nor murderer, nor ravisher of women. Why should I let speaking be?

I shall defend myself to the end, for it concerns my life, and not be silent, so long as the tongue stirs in my mouth. But be silent, you N. You are not worth speaking. You soul-murderers, you enemies of the cross of Christ. Then they laid before me yet to dispute. I said: Before the aldermen's house, but not here. Answer: One shall not bring you there. Jooskint: Well, so do what pleases you. I have confessed my faith to you, at the first when I came here, and I have said it to you before this, more than fifty times, and say to you yet, that I hold nothing of all your peddler's ware, nor of one point that the Roman church holds. Ronse: Do you not hold of the sacrament? Let us hear what you hold of it. Jooskint: An idol, a little bite of flour. And if I had your oil, I would smear my shoes with it. Ronse: We well hear that you are bold enough. Then a fight began there, and they meant to fall upon me, and I defended myself valiantly with the Word of the Lord, as befits a servant who loves his master. And the Lord gave me so to speak, that within three times I did not speak one reason but they remained short therein.

Then there was recounted of the becoming-man, which they would carry out on the dumb letter, Matthew 1: This is the book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. Whereon I said that it stood, Matthew 22, when Christ asked the scribes and Pharisees: What do you think of Christ? Whose Son is He? They said: David's. He said to them: How then does David in the Spirit call Him a Lord? where he says: The Lord has said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I lay your enemies for a footstool of your feet. If David now calls

Him a Lord, how is He then his Son? And no one could answer Him a word. And I also recounted to them of the figure of Melchizedek, and Revelation at the last, that He is the root of David, which they would not hear, and remained on their dumb text. When I heard that they would not acknowledge their wrong, then I said: If you will speak of the becoming-man, or of any matters of the faith, come before the city hall. Then Polet said: Who would judge there who had right or wrong? Jooskint: These good lords. Polet: They do not understand the Scripture. Jooskint: They understand it well enough for you to dispute here, or in the aldermen's house. They ought then also well to understand it, to dispute before the city hall. If they do not understand the Scripture, then they ought well to be ashamed that they are judges over this matter, where they do not understand the Scripture. There happened so much that I would not write in a hand of paper their craftiness.

And I commend all dear friends, and all brothers and sisters in the Lord, into the hands of the Lord, and pray them all together that they will arm themselves bravely, for it is needful, and when they come so far as I am, that they do not give themselves to disputations. For if it were possible, they would draw us from the truth. I let you know that I am so well minded that I could not write the joy or gladness which I have, and I hope that the seal of this letter shall be the laying off of my body. Thereto the Lord give me His grace, so that His name may be praised thereby. For I seek nothing other than the Lord's praise. No more. Remain commended to the Lord, and to the word of His grace. Amen.

Pray the Lord for me. I will gladly pray the Lord for you.

They say: Christ is David's Son. Understand the meaning. If He is David's Son, then He is not God's Son. For no one has two fathers. It would be against nature. But Christ is the only Son of God the Father, pure.

End of Jooskint's confession.

A song of Jooskint
To the tune: The May now stands in its time.

The greatest joy comes through God's Word, whereby the Christians are quickened. Much valiance was heard there, within the city of Kortrijk, of the prisoner Jooskint, who has fervently loved Christ, and freely left his life, sealing God's Word bloodily.

He came and stood before the sophists, saying, What is your desire? Ronse: When have you last made confession? Joos: What will you now forestall that for? For that you thus had me taken, such has surely not happened. You knew how my matters stood. No, we, they reported thereon. Joos: Of whom do you come, or out of what name? Ronse: We come on God's behalf. I do not believe it, Joos spoke fitly. For to know my circumstance you have delivered me into hand. But those whom the Lord sent out to teach, it has not been their saying to lay anyone in bonds.

Joos spoke yet with a turning away from the prelates and estates: I believe in Christ the Lord, who has let Himself be killed for me. There is no one among you, be it priest, parish priest, dean now, who would forgo his life and be willing to die for me. Ronse: Who teaches that? Give account thereof. Joos: Christ, and He says, A good shepherd lays down his life for his sweet sheep. But you thrust me yet further, damning me if I remain hereby. Therefore it is a wonder, he spoke, that you people will permit me thus to be brought to death.

After I am in a proposition for which one shall damn me, so let me go west or east, to come to a better one. Ronse: From you we will separate quickly. Joos: Yes, giving me over for certain, straight on into the judge's hands, to hold fast in bonds. Polet: Paul well gave over to Satan. Joos: So you also do to me. Do not then give me into the judge's hand. Paul yet did not so. Christ does not teach that, but commanded the Gospel everywhere to be proclaimed on earth, before small and great of worth.

He did not command those who will not believe to be thrust into the cot, and laid still in fetters. All who heard Christ preach, have they believed Him, or also the apostolic voice? Then there was one there who said, No, thereon with shortness. Joos: Are they then all led to death who did not believe their words? Ronse: No, they said again. Joos: Did they not murder them? And you go for place-holders. How comes it then that you undertake thus to kill us, though we were (as you say) wicked?

Polet: And have you also not read how Elijah commanded Baal's priests to be killed with speed? Joos: Yes, and to root you out, unhidden, that still fails. For you serve Baal's deceit more, revel and sup more than they were wont, with Jezebel well enough.

They brought Augustine in at the end. Jooskint, being discontent therewith, spoke: He is not known to me, and bring no reasons forward from him. For I hold no teaching more than that of the apostles of the Lord, and of the holy prophets, foretelling God's secrets, and the words of our Savior, brought from heaven's throne, out of the mouth of His pleasant Father, and He has sealed them fair with His precious dear blood. For that I desire to go into the fire, this hero spoke boldly, without any swooning.

And when one thousand five hundred years, fifty-three, was written, Joos stood at a stake openly, where he has ended his life. He has carried out the fight valiantly, as a bold champion, unmoved. Brothers, walk so with delight that you may rest with God's friend.

A confession of Claes de Praet

This is the confession of Claes de Praet, being in prison at Ghent, and put to death there for the Word of the Lord, in the year 1556.

Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you together, my dearest brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Blessed be God and the Father of Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all manner of spiritual blessing in the heavenly being through Christ, as He has elected us through the same, before the foundation of the world was laid, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. Let each one among you take heed to his calling wherein he is called, so that Satan does not torment you therewith in your proving, and admonish one another diligently in love. For I would well write you an admonition, but the time is not well suited thereto for me, for I am closely watched by the jailer, who greatly fears the dean and is afraid of him. Nevertheless I am very inclined to write you something of my examination, and of the priests' wickednesses and invented lies, wherewith they mean to damn me. But God be praised, that He helps me keep the field. This I write you, if anyone might be edified thereby, of those who are yet young.

First, after I was imprisoned, on the sixth day I had sat very sorrowful, and oppressed, and heavy of heart. The flesh was very terrified: Now I must to it, and much more other fight, at wife, at children, and Satan who went about me, to devour me with many wonderful assaults, which would be too long to recount. And on the sixth day before noon the jailer came, and called me out from where I was locked in, saying: Claes, come here below, follow me. And he went before. And my heart kindled in me with joy toward the Lord my God, so that all my distress and anguish was driven from me, as the dust is struck from the street with force. Then I thought: O gracious God, now I find that You are faithful in Your promise. Lord, rule now my mouth after Your promise. Then he led me into a chamber. There sat the chief alderman, and yet two aldermen with him, and the bailiff, and a man with a great beard, who had a great book to write in. And they looked at me greatly when I came into the chamber, and I did very great reverence, and I offered them all together peace. And the jailer set me a chair, and said: Claes, sit down there. It is so the ordinance. And I sat there in with a glad mind, the heart to the Lord my God, not thinking on myself, nor on any things that are in this world. Then they said: Cover your head. I said: It does not well befit now. And the bailiff asked me: What is your name? I said: Claes de Praet. Then he said: Write that, and born of this city. Then the writer asked me: Were you born from here? I said: I do not know otherwise. Bailiff: Where have you been so long, Claes, the last journey when you were away, so long out of the house? Claes: In Emden-land. Bailiff: What did you go make there? Claes: I inquired there in the land whether I might not have known to buy or sell any goods, or do something whereby I might have won my bread. Bailiff: Yes, and to see the brothers. That I well hear. Claes: Yes, lord bailiff. Bailiff: Yes, Claes, have you received another baptism than you received in your youth, when you were made a Christian? Claes: I do not remember of that, when I was so young. Bailiff: Have you received a baptism of which you remember, Claes? Claes: Yes, lord bailiff. Bailiff: How long ago is that? Claes: About four years. Then they all wondered greatly. The bailiff asked me yet once: How long ago, say you? Then said the other alderman: About four years. Then the bailiff looked at me sharply, and asked who they were who conversed with me, and who were of my brothers who were also baptized. And I said: It is not our manner to ask one another, where are you from? or where do you dwell? or what is your name? or what do you do? Bailiff: You people do not want to know.

Claes: No, we, lord bailiff. Bailiff: You do that so that you should burden no one. Claes: Yes, we, lord bailiff, for we well know that they stand very much after our blood, and the Lord has permitted us that we shall be prudent as serpents. Then the bailiff grinned at me, and they spoke very much Latin among one another. Then the bailiff asked: Where was it to do, that you received your baptism? Claes: At Antwerp. Bailiff: Where there? Claes: Between St. Joris' gate and the Coeper gate. Bailiff: In what house? Claes: In a little new house. Bailiff: What trade did they do therein? Claes: I saw no trade done there. Bailiff: Yes, Claes, who was by? There must have been witnesses by, who testified that you were a brother. Claes: There were three or four persons by, who dwelt in the house, and one who led me therein. Bailiff: Who was it who led you therein? Claes: It was a young man. Bailiff: From where was he? Claes: I did not ask him. Bailiff: How many were there baptized with you? Claes: We three. Bailiff: From where were they? Claes: I did not ask them. Bailiff: What trade did they do? Claes: The one was a mason's lad, as it seemed to me. Bailiff: Where did he know to find you, who led you there? Claes: He had set me a day in the Coeper gate. Bailiff: How did you know whether the baptizer was there in the city? Claes: I had at divers times inquired thereafter when I went there for my merchandise, and then I heard that he was there. Bailiff: Where did you hear that he was there? Then said the chief alderman: They know all their people's folk. Bailiff: That little house where you were baptized, do they dwell there still, or do you not know that either? Claes: That little house was shortly thereafter wholly driven out. Bailiff: So you know nothing to speak thereof, do you? Claes: The one went to England, the other was burned, the other I do not know where they went. Bailiff: What man was it who baptized you? Claes: It seemed to me to be a blameless man. Bailiff: Yes, Claes, what do you know of the man who baptized you, whether he was blameless? Then said one of the aldermen: He has said: It seemed to him that he was blameless. Then said the chief alderman: These people preach also, do they not? Then said the bailiff to him: We used to ask that all, but we do not use it any more. And they rang the bell, that the jailer should come and lead me away. And this they wrote. The writer asked what folk of Ghent I had left at Emden. And I would not answer him, for the reason that it was not his office to ask. And then said the aldermen to me: Claes, we shall send men who shall teach you the right faith. Claes: The right faith I hope that I have, and if they will strengthen me therein, they shall be welcome to me, but if they will draw me off therefrom, I do not desire them. Then they said much: Claes, hear them, hear them always. Then I thanked aldermen and bailiff all together heartily, that they had been troubled with me. And the jailer's servant pointed me to go upward. Then I went upward. And I became very heavy-hearted, that they had not asked me after my faith, and two servants had stood listening at the door, who came up by me, and tormented me with many kinds of things, and said: Poor blood as you are, who will let your life therefor, and your wife and children you leave in need, it is not well done that you break your marriage, for God has Himself instituted it. I said: I do not break my marriage, nor my housewife either, but his fault it is who take me from my housewife, let him well see to it what they do. They said: I should speak all, as they would hear. I said: That God has not taught me. And I admonished them that they should beware of gripping or coming at such

blood. And I spoke well against them, and they went away, and prayed God that He would grant me my greatest salvation. Then I sat there alone, and Satan came to tempt me, bringing forward inwardly: Poor man, are you here for your faith's sake? The lords ask you after no faith, but after the baptism which you have received from such a man, as you well know, and tormented me with all that he could bring forward, he did his best to cast me down. Then I thought: O you evil tempter, you murderer, I well perceive that you are the same who tormented Peter, wherewith he has warned us. And I fled to God, and lifted up a spiritual song, and sang with joy, and became cheerful and glad that I had fought through that storm. There I was about ten weeks.

Then the jailer came, saying: Claes, come hither; here are two pied crows. And he charged me much that I should think on my wife and children. I said: I think enough on them, but Christ has said: Whoever does not forsake father and mother, sister and brother, wife, child, yes, his own life, for my name's sake, is not worthy of me. He said: It is true, for him who can do it. Then he led me into a chamber, where two Jacobins were. They doffed their cowls, and I doffed my bonnet, and they bade me good evening, and I them also. The one asked me: What is your name, my friend? I said: Claes, and I said: What is your name? He said: Brother Peter the baker. And he told me how he had been to the chief alderman, and that he had desired that he should come instruct me to the right faith. I said: That I have received from God. Question: What is your faith? Claes: I believe only in Christ Jesus, that He is the living true Son of God, and that there is no other salvation in heaven or on earth. Question: Is there nothing else to believe? Where remains the mother, the holy church, wherein we must believe? Claes: Do you well know which the holy church is? Question: Do you know it well? Let me hear it. Claes: I ask you, for you speak of it. Answer: The same which it has been from Christ's times, and from the apostles' times, and which the apostles have kept, and still do. Claes: Which is that? Answer: The mother, the holy Roman church. Claes: Is that the apostolic church? Answer: Yes. Claes: Have the apostles kept it so? Answer: Yes, even as we, neither less nor more. Claes: Have the apostles done Mass? Answer: Yes. Claes: Where does it stand written? Answer: I will show you. And he showed me to the Corinthians, where Paul speaks of the Supper. I said: He speaks there of the breaking of the bread. Did he do Mass there, as you people do? Answer: Yes, neither less nor more than we do. Claes: Have the apostles persecuted, and held their church with fire and sword, as you people do? Answer: Yes, they have shed blood, and betrayed, and slain to death. Claes: Malchus's blood was shed by Peter, and Judas betrayed, but where have they slain anyone to death? Answer: Peter slew Ananias and Sapphira with the sword of his mouth, so that they fell down to death. And he laughed and stuck up his finger. Then I said: It well seems to me that you are of those of whom Paul speaks, 2 Timothy 3, from whom we shall flee. For your folly does not remain hidden, but manifest before men. For you sit and mock and dally, and well show that you are men of broken minds, who always learn and never come to the truth. And I reproved him greatly, and he would yet speak much, and question me of baptism and the becoming-man of Christ, and other articles of the faith. But I had taken before me to make no disputation against them without aldermen being by, but

to confess as I have confessed here above before them. When they heard that I would hear no more, and stood to go, one also said: O Claes, how miserably you are strayed, and yet I have you so dear. I would well that you were of my mind, and that I should let my body be burned. O poor man, I will pray for you and have prayer made when I preach. Claes: I do not desire that you pray for me, nor have prayer made. For your prayer is vain, and is not heard before God, so long as you remain in your wickedness. Answer: There may perhaps be one or two in all the heap who is good. Claes: Draw hence, for you seek to chatter. Then he went away all laughing, and said: I will have prayer made for you, whether you will or will not. For you please me well, and I will yet come again.

Thereafter, about yet two weeks, two of the same band came. The one was a coarse fat man, who had very much talk in him, and the other was very fierce and gripping in the words, and would fall upon me greatly to dispute. But I would not to it, except with many questions which I cast up to them, as I had done to the other, and let them uncover their own wickedness. For there were very many prisoners come to stand behind under the chamber window, and the chamber door, to hear, and that I well knew. Therefore I asked the more, because the one had so much talk, and came by drink.

When I had sat about seven weeks, I was called off, and led into a chamber. There sat the dean of Ronse with his clerk, and yet a person by him. And the dean bade me sit, and I sat at the front of the table by him, and he went and gave me a long sermon, and I listened. He recounted how it was impossible without faith to please God, and whoever does not believe is damned, he said. And at last he asked me: Why have you let yourself be so led astray, and brought into error, and become fallen away from the holy church? Then I said: Because it stands written that it is impossible without faith to please God, I have been diligent to search out the faith, and to pray God that He would strengthen me therein, through His grace and mercy. And He has done it abundantly, and that I also desire to keep faithfully to His praise, and not to deny it for any suffering, nor for anything that is in the world. Dean: It seems to you that you have the faith, but you are far fallen away from it. And that you people are so free and comforted unto death, that is the devil, who can transform himself into an angel of light. Therefore when you read the Scripture, you have let yourself be instructed by a poor simple craftsman, who has taught it to you after his craft. Therefore you are now deceived. You should have let yourself be taught by those who have received the right teaching, the servants of the holy church. Those are the pastors or shepherds. Claes: Are they that, who have received the right teaching? Dean: Yes. Claes: Why do they then live a devil's life, as one sees? Dean: What does that concern you? There it stands, Matthew 23: Do after their commandments, and not after their works. Claes: Are you then the scribes and Pharisees of whom Matthew has written? Dean: Yes, we. Claes: So all the woes come upon you which follow thereafter in the same chapter. Dean: They do not. And we had yet very much speech thereof. And he would gladly have had me willing to dispute in the articles of the faith, but I would not to it, except with such questions. The man was willing in speaking, and very soft, and desired that one should give hearing to his reason, and he also gave good hearing. And I

thought, I have so long and so much heard of this man, that he so greatly persecutes and oppresses the congregation. I must now know how he will maintain it with the Scripture, where I speak to him. For I do not know that I had ever seen him. And I asked him where he found it written that he should run so bloodthirsty after the innocent blood, of which no one knows to complain of any misdeed. Dean: My friend, I do not run, nor do I stand, after anyone's blood. Claes: You then send your servants for it. Dean: I do not, my friend. Claes: Do you then persecute no one? Dean: No, my friend. Claes: Nor have you any mandates wherewith you let it be done? Dean: No, my friend. Claes: You have surely delivered my fellow brothers over to the law, whom you had got in your hands, who have remained standing in the faith, and one has surely seen it openly, present before all the world. Dean: I do not, my friend. Claes: What do you then come to sit there for, by the aldermen, and to speak so much, if you do not trouble yourself with it? It seems to him who hears you that you have no guilt therein. Dean: No, my friend. And he rubbed his hands in one another. Claes: Who does it then? Dean: The worldly, or the lord who has received the sword. We had yet much speech thereof, so that he knew no way. And he asked out of the Scripture, Deuteronomy 17. There he founded that the priests had the power, and so forth. I said: That was in the law of vengeance, but now we are in the law of grace. And I asked him how he dared undertake to take in hand what the Lord had forbidden, namely of the weeds, Matthew 13, that one should let both the good herb and the evil herb grow up. And I asked which I was of the two. I must surely be the good or the evil herb. Dean: You are the evil herb. Claes: Why do you not let me grow up until the day of harvest? Dean: That the Lord of the field commanded his servants that, was therefore, that they should not ruin the good with pulling out the evil. But I can well go along the edges, and pluck here and there a little pluck or two, yes, sometimes six or eight, yes, ten or twelve, yes, sometimes a hundred or two, without ruining the good. Claes: Yes, so you are wiser than the servants of the Lord. Dean: I can surely do that well. Claes: When I dealt with the priests, and walked after your will, was I then a good little plant? Dean: Yes. Claes: Am I now then an evil little plant? Dean: Yes. Claes: Now well then, if I am an evil little plant, after your own saying, then you have ruined me, and yet more with me who have gone before me, yourself with your plucking, and you say that you can do it so well.

Ah, poor plucker as you are, when on the Verle place you plucked those four little plants of Lier over five years, where you stood on the scaffold and preached, and the people said, Antichrist preaches. At that time I began to search out for what faith those people died there so freely, and I searched the Scripture which you recounted there, in 2 Timothy 2 and 3. Then I found that I must turn myself from such people, as there stands discerningly enough of it, to know you people, and I turned myself from such a heap, and still do. Where do you remain now with your plucking, poor plucker? The more you pluck, the more you ruin, after your own saying. It were better for you that you stood still. And I said to him very much out of the Scripture, so that he was ashamed, and did not know how to answer. At last he said: Those were not my people, my friend. It seems to me that you have well searched through the Scripture. Where have you held your church? Claes: Where Christ and His apostles have

held it, in the hedges, in the woods, in the field, on mountains, on the watersides, sometimes in the houses, or where they found the place. Dean: Christ preached openly, but one cannot find you people, where you are, or who you are. Claes: That may at least well grieve you greatly, that you cannot find them nor know them, and that one knows you people so well. I hope that God will not allow that you shall find them. But though you sometimes cut into the little branches, I hope that you shall not cut off the vine. Christ Jesus, the living Son of God, shall well keep and feed His little branches, so that they bring fruit, though you are diligent, and now do your best, to tear and to bring to nothing. And we had yet much speech of the church, and of his, and he exalted his greatly, and I asked him much thereof, whether the young children were damned who died without baptism. He said: Yes. I asked whether the apostles had done Mass, and had persecuted. And of all he said: Yes. So that it seemed to me, the more I asked him, the more he lied, and I reproved him in his lies, wherein I found him. He said: They are no lies, but it is the truth, but you do not believe what one says to you. You remain equally hard, and unbelieving. And it seemed that the apostles' life had been nothing other than the priests' life, neither less nor more, as he said. And he said of your life: You people well keep a good walk or conversation with all men, and to do to your neighbor as you would have, and live with one another in peace, love, and unity, which is very good, and stand by one another in your need and anguish, and to leave the life for one another, which is also very good. I cannot say against it. And to ban out of your congregation those who live unfittingly, as you people have done Gielis of Aachen, who had led such a life, as I well know. Here I cannot say to it. It is all well done. But what does it help that you now have the life, if you do not have the faith? It cannot save you. I said: We have the faith also, but you do not understand it, or will not understand. But it shall yet once be revealed to you, in the youngest day of the Lord, whom you have served. And I went at him yet hard. And he rang the bell, so that the jailer should let him out, and the jailer came into the chamber, and he stood up to go. And I thanked him greatly that he had come here for my sake, and he turned himself about, and said: I would gladly see that you would let yourself be brought to the way, but you remain equally hard in your unbelief. You are like your lord. I asked: Who is my lord? He said: The devil. And I fell upon him with many Scriptures, so that he should not come any more, and he went ashamed from there, because the jailer was there, and other prisoners who came running by the door. And I had asked him account of Gielis, and he knew to tell me it all, wherein I wondered greatly.

And the third day after, I was yet once fetched off by the jailer, and I went very willingly downward. And he showed me to go into a chamber. When I came in there, the chief alderman sat there with yet an alderman, and a pastor or priest, who was very experienced in examining our friends, and very biting in the words, so that he could not hear one reason but he snapped into it to break it. But the one alderman had never been alderman before, and he alone forbade him, for he saw very quickly, and listened sharply. I, coming into the chamber, did the lords great reverence, and they me also, and I sat by the table, and the priest made a long recital, as the dean had done, and I kept silent until one asked me. When he had done his sermon, he asked me: Why have you let yourself so miserably be led astray from the faith

into error? Claes: I am not led into any error, but out of error into the right Christian faith. Priest: What then is your faith? Let us hear it. Claes: I believe that Jesus Christ is the true living Son of God, and that there is no other salvation, neither in heaven nor on earth, nor thereunder, nor thereabove. The chief alderman: That we also all believe in our church. The priest laughed, saying: That I would also well preach. Tell us something else, and speak freely. For Christ said: When you are brought before kings and princes and magistracy, do not fear what you shall speak, for in the same hour it shall be given you by my heavenly Father. Yes, my Spirit shall speak through your mouth. If you have now received the Holy Spirit, speak now freely out through the Holy Spirit. And the chief alderman sat on and nodded and grinned, and said: Yes, yes, Claes, yes, before I could speak a word. The priest at once: Christ has promised His church that He would be by them unto the end of the world. And of you people I find no one who knows to speak to me longer than about thirty years. For before that it has not been, or do you know any books to show which are older, of your people? Show them to us. Claes: Inasmuch as Christ has promised His church that He would be by her unto the end of the world, I do not doubt that He has been the keeper of His body, and still is, and shall be, so long as the world shall stand, after His promise, Matthew 28, Ephesians 5. Though she has sometimes been rooted out in some lands through bloodsheddings and anguish of persecution, and through false teaching of the Roman realm or otherwise, therefore it has not been brought to nothing through the whole world. For the world is great, and it may well have struggled on in some corners of the world, and from the one to the other, without going to nothing. And that you ask me after any books of our church: the Bible is our book, which has reigned in the church from old times. Priest: Is that great enough for you? And have you enough in one? Claes: Yes, it is yet too great for us. The priest laughed, and said: Where then remain all the books which the learned men have written, from the time of the apostles, who have also received the Spirit of God, as well as the apostles? Have they all written in vain, like Jerome, Gregory, Augustine, and Ambrose? Those were surely good virtuous men, were they not? Claes: Were those the four pillars on which your church stands founded? Priest: Yes. Claes: I have not known them, but by hearsay: they were pious kitchen knaves, if they have founded your church, as it still is, as one sees. The priest turned himself away, and said: Ah, ah. I said: Christ has not founded His church so, as also Peter and Paul, Stephen and John. They got rather rods on the back, stones on the head, and the sword in the neck, and so forth. The priest was angered, and said: Tell us then a right account of your church, for one knows nowhere to find it. If it were good, it would well come into the open. You people have neither head nor magistracy, nor do you know one another. That is a strange understanding. Claes: Paul teaches us to the Ephesians of the right church, which Christ has prepared for Himself, which is glorious, holy, and blameless, without spot or wrinkle, who are baptized together in one spirit and one body, whose head is Christ, and members of His body, joined together. These have one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and one God, a Father of us all, and above us all, and through us all, and in us all. This is the right temple of God, wherein God's Spirit dwells. This church Christ has bought and redeemed with His blood. Priest: Has Christ not

redeemed all men, but only these? Claes: There it stands written in particular places that the unbelieving shall be damned. What shall the death of Christ then profit them? Or what shall it avail them that Christ has died? It is to be feared that they shall lament it, that Christ has died. But those who have believed in the Word of the Lord, and have followed thereafter, those are they who shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and triumph with the Lord on Mount Zion. Those are they who have death, devil, hell, and world under their feet, though the world runs with angry blood, raging, to tear them, to devour them, and to bring them to nothing. But if they were of the world, the world would love them. But now they are not of the world, therefore the world hates them, as Christ has said. Priest: You people do not believe that Christ is God and man. Claes: I believe that Christ is truly God and man. Priest: Do you not believe that Christ is man of Mary's flesh? Claes: No. For if He had become man of Mary's natural flesh and blood, He must have had His beginning at Mary. And there it stands that He is without beginning of days, and without end of life. And the Word would not have become flesh, if He had taken on the flesh of Mary, nor would He have come in the flesh, after the testimony of John, but He would have come of the flesh, if He had taken it on of Mary. And there it stands: Whoever does not confess that Christ has come in the flesh, that is the spirit of Antichrist. And if He were such a fleshly man, He could not have gone to heaven. For there it stands, 1 Corinthians 15, that flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God. Priest: Nevertheless the angel Gabriel, did he not say to Mary: You shall conceive and bear a son? Claes: Well, understand that little word rightly, that he said: You shall conceive and bear. For what Mary conceived could not have grown of her. Priest: Which word has become flesh? Claes: That same word of which John testifies to us in the first, saying: That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, and we have seen with our eyes, which we have beheld, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, and the life is revealed. What more account will you yet have? Priest: Where has Christ taken on His flesh, in heaven or on earth? Claes: What I do not know to show you with Scriptures, that I will not say. Priest: Do you believe nothing other than what is written there? Claes: No. Priest: You surely believe that you have a soul. And what do you know what your soul is? How great, how long, how broad, or what color? Claes: What does that concern me? My salvation does not lie therein. Priest: You believe that the dead shall rise. And how can anyone comprehend that what has come to nothing shall rise and become living? Claes: I well let myself be content with the account which Paul has written, 1 Corinthians 15. Priest: Do you not believe that Mary is mother and virgin? Claes: Yes. The priest smote his hand on the table, and stuck himself up greatly, saying: That you shall not know to show me. One finds nowhere written of it in any Scriptures. Claes: The prophet Isaiah has prophesied that He should be born of a virgin. And again, when Gabriel said to Mary.

And again, when Gabriel said to Mary: You shall conceive and bear a son. Mary answered: I know no man. How may that happen? Priest: Yes, so you may seize it here and there. But that she remained a virgin until her death. Claes: That I do not say. Priest: That is my meaning. And what do you hold of the Supper, when Christ took the bread, and thanked, and broke, and said: Take, eat, this is my body? Do you not believe that He gave them His

natural flesh and blood? Claes: No. Priest: Did He not say: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink of His blood, you shall have no life in you? And he said: That was the right heavenly bread, which has come from heaven. Claes: That bread of which Christ speaks, John 6: is that the bread which you people give the people to eat, namely that which you people call the sacrament? Priest: Yes, that same it is, which He has left us. Claes: So then no one shall be damned of all who eat thereof. For Christ said: Whoever eats of this bread shall live forever. And there come to it all, whores and knaves, thieves and murderers, of whom it is written that they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Priest: They have sorrow for their sins before they receive it, and the Lord said: When a sinner once sighs for his misdeed, I will not remember it in eternity. Thereof we had much speech, but it is too long to write. At last I asked the priest whether he believed, when he takes his host into his mouth, whether he then receives Christ's body in flesh and blood, as great as He hung on the wood of the cross. Priest: Yes. Claes: When you swallow Him, where does He go then? The priest was wholly angered. The chief alderman asked me: Yes, why can you not be as well content with your first baptism? Must you yet let yourself be baptized once more? Claes: I know but of one baptism. Priest: Your godfathers and godmothers well know that you are once baptized. You may ask them. Claes: Though I had well known that I was baptized, I now well know that it happened without faith. And there it stands, Romans 14: All that does not happen out of faith is sin. Chief alderman: Your godfathers and godmothers were believing. Claes: I do not know that the apostles baptized anyone unless they themselves believed, and confessed their faith. And what did I confess, when I was baptized young? Priest: Ask that of your godfathers and godmothers. And what do you hold of our father the pope and his realm? Claes: The pope with his whole stall and Mass, and all that is in it, it is all worth nothing, neither sack nor seed. You people sell and deliver the people Masses by dozens, by twenties, by thirties at a time. They have neither scythe nor pick. They neither cut nor stab. And you people commend them to the people for good and upright. Is that not deceit? You people preach to the people that one should not drink drunk, and you people yourselves go behind the street as smothered as pigs. You people preach that one should not be greedy. Where is greater greed than in the priests and monks? You people preach that one should not be idle. Where is more idleness than among you? You people would rather go from door to door with the sack or basket begging than work, as one sees. The priest was angry and stood up, saying: That is the first that you people teach one another: to reveal the faults of your fellow man. Claes: Why should we not take heed to the knowledge which Christ has given us, saying that one shall know the trees by their fruits? Priest: That is all to be understood spiritually. And he went out of the chamber. The chief alderman asked me whether I would gainsay, or revoke my second baptism, and all that I had spoken. I said: No, my lords, in no manner to deny what has happened over me in the name of the Lord. The chief alderman, hearing that, stood up. They stood up, and began to go out. Then I thanked them that they had been troubled with me. The chief alderman turned himself about, and asked me yet once whether I would revoke, or whether I would see what would come of it to me. Then my heart was kindled, to make him and the other aldermen say that they should

see before them what they do. And I said: My lords, to revoke in no manner. And what shall come of it to me, following the emperor's mandate, that I well know. But there are two mandates: one of the highest King, and the other of the mortal emperor, and these two stand against one another. The one says that one shall let both grow up, the good with the evil; and the other, that one shall pull it out. So, my lords, I pray you that you will advertise the other aldermen, that they consider which is the best. For you have not received the sword to correct the innocent. And I said to them very much, as the Lord gave me to speak. And he stood with the bonnet in the hand, and the others also, and the jailer by, and were very still. And at last they prayed God that He would grant me my greatest salvation, and went away.

So I greet the whole congregation, scattered in all lands, with the peace of the Lord. For now I await from day to day to make my offering. Pray God that He will keep me standing unto the end. I pray daily for you. Written in bonds.

A song of Claes de Praet
To the tune: A new song we lift up.

The world, angered at the Christians, catches and kills in many a place. Claes de Praet also came into suffering. At Ghent, confessing God's Word, he had to fight bravely.

When he now lay imprisoned there, Satan awaited his stroke, and assailed him in many ways. Of wife and children it was the talk. Much distress rose upon him.

The sixth day the magistracy came, summoning Claes with an account. Then he kindled with joy. From the heart all heaviness stroked away. In God he rejoiced.

With questions they undertook him: Have you received another baptism than in your young years? Claes made his ground known plainly, freely before the crowd.

Ronse: How has such deceit happened to you, that you left our holy church? Claes: Because it stands fittingly, without faith it is not possible to be acceptable to God. Ronse: You should simply have remained by their teaching who have received it rightly, servants of the holy church. Claes: Why, Claes said to them, do they then do the devil's works?

And how have you been so bold to do the same, which God forbids, of the weeds of the fields? One should let good and evil grow green until the harvest, after the Scripture's report. Ronse: I can well go along the edge and pluck a little pluck in the land, yes, obtain six or eight, ten, twelve, yes a hundred with the hand, without ruining the good. Claes: So you are wiser, and know better, than the Lord's neat servants. Was I then a good little plant, walking after your ordinance, and am I now an evil little plant?

So you have ruined me plainly, and yet well more than me alone, who have gone through before. This comes through your plucking for certain, after your own reason. Ah, poor

plucker, the more you pluck, the more you jerk toward ruin. Where do you remain with your plucking? To stand still would have succeeded better for Ronse than so to pluck and jerk.

Thereafter came a priest, who stood greatly on old custom and human teaching, like Gregory, Augustine, and those who have written more, Jerome and Ambrose. Claes spoke: They are not known to me, but by hearsay they were freely good pious kitchen knaves, if they formerly founded your church as it still is.

Christ has not founded His church so, as also thereto Peter, Paul, and Stephen. They got rather a rod on the back, a stone on the head. The sword took the life.

Priest: But what do you hold of our father, the pope with his realm all together? Claes: He with his stall and Mass, it is all together not worth a hair, neither sack nor seed for certain. For good you sell and deliver the Masses readily by the dozen, twenty, thirty in number. They have neither scythe nor pick of edge. Is it not false altogether?

The priest was very angered and wrathful when he heard such words. His courage he could not quench, or the innocent lamb must to death. How should they hush it up? So one thrust away the dear man, who willingly stepped to the stake, where one should burn him. Now they have no more of him there, for he rests in God's hands.

Friends, this happened at Ghent, when they wrote fifteen hundred, and fifty-six. It is God's teaching and foundation which Claes de Praet has driven.

The testament of Jorian Simonsz

This is the testament which Jorian Simonsz left to his son Simon, when he sat imprisoned within Haarlem for the Word of the Lord, and was thereafter put to death, in the year 1557, the 26th of April.

God through His great mercy grant my son Simon to grow up in virtues, and, if the Lord lets him come to his understanding, to know Him, and having known His will, to order his life thereafter, and to become eternally saved, through His beloved Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My child and dear son, incline your ears to your father's admonition, and hear after his reason and account, how and in what manner he has begun and ended his life. Unprofitably, proudly, puffed up, drunken, self-seeking, untrue, full of all idolatries, was the start and the beginning of my life. And when I had now come to my years, and began to be my own man, I sought nothing other than what well pleased my flesh, a lazy dainty life. I was desirous of shameful gain. I sought to bring my neighbor's daughter into shame, as it appears, alas, through the work wrought by me. And what I well did in secret is shameful to say. Yes, I was a vessel full of indiscretion.

But, my dear child, when I gave myself to the Scripture, searched it through and read it through, I found that my life stretched to eternal death. Yes, that the eternal woe hung over my head, and the fiery pool was prepared for me, which burns of brimstone and pitch. Such, I say, was drawing near me, after the sound of Paul's words. For he says, those who do such shall not inherit God's kingdom.

When I took such to heart, I began to be greatly terrified and afraid, and I have taken God's Word for my counselor, which would be the very best counseled for me: here for a little time to lead a lustful life, and await the eternal hellish pain, or here to bear a little misery (if one may otherwise call it misery), and thereafter the eternal joy. I found in the Scripture: What does it profit a man, that he should win the whole world, and must suffer damage to his soul, that he also had nothing wherewith he might redeem it. Therefore, beloved son, I have counted it better with Moses to suffer discomfort with God's children a little time, than with the world, which shall pass away, to live in all the luxury. So I have stepped out of my ease, willingly, uncompelled, and have given myself onto the narrow way, to follow Christ my head, well knowing that if I followed Him unto the end, I should not walk in darkness. When I had now in part stepped out of and cast away the old damnable, and desired to be a new godly creature, and to lead a pious penitent godly life, then I was from that hour, like all the pious who have been before me, hated, yes, laid prisoner within Haarlem, at St. John's gate. (He thereafter left his life for the Word of the Lord, in the year 1557, the 26th of April.)

This, my beloved son, has been my life until the time that the Lord enlightened me. For the foremost, my dear child, I will have you well heartily warned, admonished, and prayed, that you will watch yourself, and shun all wickedness, and walk in the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, from childhood on. And if God reveals His truth to you, do not then delay to walk therein. For death goes after the young as after the old. Take yet heed to your time, which is granted you of God unto amendment. Have your conversation with the good, and watch yourself from the perverse. If the sinners entice you, do not consent to them, and do not companion yourself with them. Keep your feet from their paths. Their goings reach to destruction. So do not touch the pitch, so that you are not defiled. For an evil end draws near the evil, which shall bear the burden over all. From this and from all evil, my dear son, watch yourself, and think that Paul says that we shall all be set before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive there in his body according to what he has done, whether good or evil. And the flesh will not counsel you anything good. Therefore Paul may well say: To be fleshly minded is death. Yes, those who are fleshly cannot please God. Therefore put to death your fleshly members here on earth. Read Paul, or let him be read to you. He shall well tell you which are the works of the flesh.

If you have time and place, do diligence and earnestness to learn to read and write, so that you may the better learn and know what the Lord is requiring of you. Beloved son, my heart's wish and prayer is to the Lord for you, that your soul may be protected from the lot

of the wrath of God, which shall come over all the ungodly who have not asked after the Lord, and have not walked in His commandments. This coming wrath you cannot better escape than that you look upon Jesus Christ, the Son of the almighty and eternal Father, who is the head and example of all believers, yes, the captain of the faith, and the finisher, that is Jesus Christ. Ask Him for counsel, what is most needful for you to do. He shall tell you. Knock at the door of His holy Trinity, and pray to Him. He shall open to you, and give you that which is needful for you. Have desire and appetite after the truth, and you shall be satisfied. Do not stand after high temporal things. Although those who obtain them are called blessed and praised by the common people, yet they are unblessed and rejectable before God. Therefore humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, so that you may be exalted in eternity.

See how it has gone with Him, and with all the pious before Him and after Him. His birth was poor and miserable. He had at once to flee before Herod, for he stood after His life. He had, as He lived, nowhere His head might rest. And for all His great and glorious benefits He had for thanks that He must be called their deceiver, wine-drinker, Samaritan, and one who had the devil in him. Thereabove He yet had to watch their stones, until (when the time was fulfilled) they damned Him with the most shameful death. And before the Law the pious Abel also had to suffer from his brother Cain, who out of pure hate and envy, because his brother's works were good and acceptable to God, and his own evil and rejectable, killed him. Also all dear prophets, who lived and stood for the Word of God, without any respect of persons, have had to suffer much. Micaiah, in the time of Ahab the king, found alone true among four hundred false prophets, had to be struck by Zedekiah, and thereafter cast into a pit. Elijah, alone true among four hundred and fifty false priests of Jezebel, also had much to suffer. So that Paul may well say, for he had proved it himself, that all who will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution. This all other pious witnesses of Christ have also proved, and have remained steadfast unto the end, for which, after the sound of the Scripture, the crown is prepared for them. For Christ's own mouth testifies such, that whoever remains steadfast unto the end shall be saved. He who overcomes shall possess all, shall be clothed with white clothes, shall eat of the tree of life, which stands in the midst of Paradise.

This, my beloved son, will consider. Here have your thought night and day, namely: to die to the world and to fulfill Christ's will. First and before all, watch yourself from all false prophets, hypocrites, and feigned saints, which in my times were priests and monks, which I fear shall not be lacking in your times, so long as the fat broths follow them. Do not believe them, for they are deceivers of men, and murderers of their souls. My son, he who wrote you this was well wise through experience and search. Out of the cup he himself had drunk. Also do not read any sects, which in my times were already many, as Lutheran, Zwinglian, and more others, which, though they have a show of good, yet in the ground they are evil and full of deadly venom. Look after a little flock, whose whole rule of life agrees with the commandments of God, and whose ordinance or sacraments are conformable to the

command of Christ and the use of the apostles. That is the right congregation of Christ, without wrinkle or spot. This is flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone.

These also have teachers after the teaching of Paul, blameless in all things, who have obedient children and believing wives, who know of no lawsuits nor pleas, of no cursing nor swearing, no hate nor envy, no lying nor deceiving, no unchastity nor adultery. Where it is all love, peace, unity, and truth, as Paul shall well teach you, which are the fruits of the Spirit.

My dear son and beloved child, this is my greatest and last will, my testament to you. This I desire of you, that you will read this through with diligence, chew this well over, and lay this same by the Scripture, to order your goings hereafter. Mark well, son, what I write. Many shall reveal themselves in a show of good masters, saying that they have medicine for your sick soul. But those by whom you shall find profit are those who have the truth. Hold yourself thereto. Water and fire are set before your eyes. You may stretch out your hand to whichever pleases you. That is death or life. This, my dear son, shall at first be very hard for you to hear, for it is contrary to your first birth, which is of the flesh. But you must be born anew and turned about, if you will otherwise enter the kingdom of God. This you cannot understand so long as you are fleshly minded, yes, so long as you do not become the world's fool and enemy. Heart-groundedly dear son, my prayer is now as before, that you will think hereon, and order yourself hereafter. Out of a faithful fatherly heart I have left you this, as I should journey from this world, and for the Word of the Lord should die the death. The Lord grant you, and all who read it or hear it read, that they may take it to heart, do thereafter, and become eternally saved.

My son's testament.

Written in the year 1557, the first Monday in April, and on the 26th day of the month confirmed with death.

Here follow yet three small warning letters of Jorian Simonsz with his fellow prisoners

Peace and joy, comfort in all distress and suffering, God grant to all those who have to suffer for His Word, through His beloved Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To our very beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, with all who seek to fear the Lord with the whole heart, we make known and to be known how we all, the Lord be eternal praise, are very well minded, and hope to remain by the Word of the Lord, and not to depart from it, nor for anything that is visible, yes, neither for living nor for dying. For there is nothing, we hope, that shall be able to separate us from God's love. We shall be able to do all things through Him who strengthens us. We hope with our God to leap over the walls. And, dear little friends, rejoice with us. Why should we fear, where so many a man by the world sets himself in so great perils for so little gain, both of soul and body, by water and by land, and then yet does not know, though it all succeeds well, whether it shall fall to profit or loss? But we, having accomplished this journey with the Lord's help, know that it is all profit at hand,

that no loss can fall thereon. For we do not run as upon the uncertain. We do not fight as those who beat the air. But we are assured, through the Lord's grace, that we shall obtain that which is promised us, if we fight through valiantly, as we hope. We think to pour it back to them fourfold. We shall cry it and not be silent, what the Lord grants and reveals to us. Our sister Mariken is also very well minded, and has also uprightly confessed her faith, and she desires also to remain thereby so long as there is breath in her. She is so valiant and well minded that she refreshes and gladdens us all. We admonish one another with the Word of the Lord, so much as God gives each one to speak, now with words, now with songs. Yes, I am many an hour that I do not once think that I am imprisoned. Such gladness the Lord gives us. I thank you heartily that you have fulfilled my prayer, also for your hearty admonition. Do the best concerning my H. F. Commended to the Lord and to the word of His grace. Jorian Simonsz, out of our bonds.

To our very beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, with all who desire to fear and follow the Lord from the heart, we, bound in the Lord, wish a valiant steadfast mind, and a perseverance in the truth unto the end, through Jesus Christ our Savior and redeemer, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Very beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, be it known to your love how we all, through the Lord's grace, stand after the best, and stand with the whole heart thereafter, that we desire to offer ourselves up to the Lord in His hands, whether it befall us to live or to die. We still stand with the whole heart thereafter, that the Lord will make His glorious name great through us, and set before our eyes the captain of our faith and the finisher, Jesus. We know that the servant is not better than his Master. It is also a true and a precious word: If we suffer with Him, that we shall rejoice with Him. Hereon all pious witnesses of Christ have looked, and on His great promises, as we have in the Old Testament of those pious forefathers who hoped on the coming grace, and have therefore fought valiantly for God's law, and would have no fellowship with the surrounding peoples, and have therefore willingly given over their life, because they would not worship nor honor their cast or carved images, as also the pious Eleazar, who would not eat swine's flesh against the Law. His wholesome words we hope, through the Lord's grace, to take for our example, namely that it is best to remain by the Lord. For though it were fair that we, through hypocrisy, from which God keep us, carried the life off thereby, we could then still not escape the almighty hand of God, living nor dead. Therefore we will wholly give ourselves over into the hands of the Lord, as the pious Maccabean mother with her seven sons, and as all pious witnesses of Christ have done. Yes, they have rejoiced that they were known worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. So, beloved brothers, we are minded in the Lord and not otherwise. We hope, through the Lord's grace, to be an example of valor and of perseverance to the weak milk-sucking young. This is written by me on Monday, after I had been twice before the lords, and had been asked whether I would remain thereby.

To our very beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, with all who desire to fear and follow the Lord with the whole heart, we, bound in the Lord, wish that the gracious heavenly Father will keep them all from all offense from within and from without, through His dear beloved Son Christ Jesus, together with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Heartily dear brothers in the Lord, do not yet grow faint, though you must now wander from friends and kindred, house and yard, not knowing where. Seeing that the sun's burning now begins to touch the grown-up seed in you on all sides, brothers, be not yet dismayed, and let the seed get moisture in you, and keep it. Set yourselves under the shadow of the Scriptures, and that shall be a glorious shelter to you. We know that we must go through much distress into the kingdom of heaven. When the head is burdened, all the other members burden themselves therewith also. If we then will be members of the body of Christ, we must also be partakers of the suffering of the head. If we then suffer with Him, we shall rejoice with Him. Therefore, dear brothers, if the Lord yet lets you converse a time among the evil generation, lead yet the time of your pilgrimage with fear. Set yourselves as lights among the wicked evil world. Let your faith break out in the works, otherwise it is dead. Hold your eyes on the captain of the faith, and the finisher, Jesus Christ. He is the only cornerstone in Zion. No one may lay another foundation than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Hold what you have, so that another does not take your crown. Commended to the Lord, who will lead you into all truth. Jorian Simonsz, your dear brother, with my dear fellow prisoners, wish you all good, and we stand with the whole heart after the very best.

A song of Jorian Simonsz
To the tune: Care, you must stand aside.

O fathers, will you leave a treasure to your children? God's Word and law, hold that before them, so that they grasp it from youth. Hear Jorian Simonsz's admonition, written to his son, when he lay imprisoned at Haarlem, where he also left his life.

After he had well searched good and evil of both, he devised a testament for his son, before he departed.

After your father's admonition, my child, incline your ears. Be minded to hear his reasons with diligence.

Watch yourself, my child, from all evil. Fear God the Lord. For through that one grasps the beginning of God's praised wisdom. If God opens His pure truth to you, go straight forward thereafter. For death goes after the little young as after the old, without sparing.

So the time granted you of God unto amendment on earth, be conversing with the good. Watch yourself from the perverse.

If the sinners entice you, do not consent to them. Do not companion yourself on their path. Their going leads to injury.

Think, dear son, that Paul reports that we shall by name be set before Christ's judgment seat, all together.

There each one shall receive in the body according to his deeds. He has done ill, or well. Watch yourself from the flesh's counsels.

For the mind of the flesh is death. Yes, he who lives after the flesh's manners does not please God in small nor great. So put to death your earthly members.

If you have time and place ready, do diligence to learn to read and write, so that you know the better the will of the Lord.

The heart's wish, and my prayer, is mightily to the Lord, so that you may be protected from the ungentle wrath of God,

which shall come with speed over all who walk ungodly, who do not ask after the Lord, and mishandle His law.

Jorian has admonished his son much more before his dying, and gave, as a good father, a teaching to inherit God's kingdom.

One has counted fifteen hundred, and thereto fifty and seven, when Jorian, set at a stake, valiantly ended his life.

O little friends, now for a close: be an example, to instruct your children, that they fear God and get clear sights.

A confession of the faith of one named Jacques, being in prison, which he afterwards sealed with his death. In the year 1559.

I believe in one only God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and of earth, as it stands written, in whom Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, and all the prophets have believed.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father, who was from the beginning with God, and when the time was fulfilled, which God had promised, this Word became flesh, and was born of the lineage of David, of a pure virgin, betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the lineage of David, she who is blessed above all women. I believe that this true Son of God has by many signs and wonders declared the word of his Father, and after this he was delivered over to death, crucified under Pontius Pilate, and buried. I believe that this same Jesus Christ has suffered for us, and when we were his enemies, he suffered death for us, so that those who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life. I believe that this our

Savior is risen from the dead, as he had before said, and sits at the right hand of God his Father.

I believe also in the Holy Spirit, as John testifies in his first epistle in the fifth chapter, saying that there are three who give testimony in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; these three are one.

I believe also in the communion of the saints, whose prayer avails much for us.

I believe also in the holy congregation, in which are those who believe in Jesus Christ, who are by one Spirit baptized into one body, as Paul says; and Jesus Christ is the head thereof, namely of the holy congregation, as it stands written. I believe that this holy congregation has power to shut and to open, to bind and to loose, and what they bind on earth is also bound in heaven, and all that they also loose on earth is also loosed in heaven. I believe that God in this holy congregation has ordained apostles, prophets and teachers, bishops, deacons.

I believe and confess also one baptism in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, as our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded and ordained, and as the apostles have used it, and as they have written thereof. And I believe also that all those who have received this baptism are members of that body of Jesus Christ in the holy congregation.

Concerning the holy Supper of Jesus Christ, thereof I believe and confess as Christ himself has said, as it stands written: When they ate the Supper, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink, and divide it among you, for this is my blood of the new Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins. This do in remembrance of me. I believe this, as Paul testifies, saying: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up at the last day.

I confess and declare the married state to be an ordinance of God, namely, a man and a woman together joined in the name of the Lord, in the holy congregation. Therefore shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh; therefore they are not two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. And the bed is undefiled, for God shall judge fornicators and adulterers.

I confess also that fasting and praying is very profitable, as the apostles have done.

I hold the words of the holy James for good and upright, where he says: Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, that you may be saved. I believe that one must do this with an upright heart.

I confess and declare also the magistracy to be set and ordained by God, for the punishment of the wicked and the protection of the good, for they do not bear the sword without cause. Which magistracy the Scripture commands us to be subject to, and teaches us to pray for the same, that, as Paul says, we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. Paul also calls the Power to be a servant of God.1 Since then it is a servant of God, I would gladly pray that it would please her to be merciful toward me, as God is merciful. Here I renounce all those who would resist the Power by the sword and violence, and hold that for a devilish doctrine.

I believe also in the resurrection of the dead, as it stands written, that all men shall rise from the dead in their own bodies, when the Lord shall come in the clouds with his angels, where he shall judge every one according to his works.

In general, I believe all that a true Christian is bound to believe of the holy congregation, and of the articles of the faith, I believe with all my heart, and will live and die therein. Here I renounce all false doctrine, heresies and sects, which do not agree with God and his word. And wherein I might have erred in any false doctrine, thereof I pray the almighty Lord that it would please him, through his great love and mercy, to forgive me. I pray also, wherein I might have sinned against the Emperor or the King, or against any other, that it would please them to forgive me, through the great love and mercy of God.

The confession of Jacques

Here follows the confession of Jacques, which he made before the commissioner and the inquisitor, whom one calls the heretic-master, for the most part set on question and answer.

After I had been imprisoned ten weeks, this was my first examination.

The third day of January, in the year 1558, reckoning the beginning of the year from New Year's day, after midday the jailer came to me, saying that I must appear before the commissioner, to be questioned of my faith. Then I was ready with a glad mind, and went there with the aforesaid jailer. And coming into the hall, where he was sitting, I greeted him humbly, and he greeted me again, speaking these words: Jacques, is your name Jacques? Jacques: Yes, my lord. Commissioner: Jacques, I am commissioned here on behalf of the king and of the procurator general, to hear you over the articles of the faith. Jacques: Well, my lord, in the name of the Lord that must happen. And after many words which we had together concerning the faith, he began to ask me from where I was born, and of my dwelling, residence, and conversation, from the time of my youth to this present time, which I confessed to him. Thereafter I was led again into the house of the jailer.

The next day, namely the fourth of January of the same year, I was after midday led again before the same commissioner. And being before him, he began to revile, to rail, and to blaspheme against the shepherds and flock of Christ, saying: Is it not a miserable thing, that

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Dutch *Dienaersse*, feminine: "a female servant of God."

we people let ourselves be led astray thus? Jacques: Yes, my lord. Commissioner: I speak of you people and more others, who forsake our mother the holy church, and let yourselves be deceived by a heap of light-minded idlers and land-runners. Jacques: I have not let myself be deceived by such. Commissioner: No? When you believe those abominable vile men and beggars, as Menno, Lenaert, Henrick of Vreden, Frans the cooper, Gielis of Aachen, and such more rascals, and forsake us and the true Word of God, do you then not let yourself be deceived? Jacques: I have not forsaken the Word of God, for my faith is founded on the Word of God, and not on men, nor on men's teaching, inasmuch as the prophet Jeremiah cries: Cursed and accursed is the man who trusts himself on men, and sets the flesh for his arm. And a little thereafter he cried and said: O the wicked ones, as Menno and Lenaert. How many people have they led astray, and led to all devils and damnation? Jacques: My lord, I pray you that you will not speak such words, for it would be heavy and hard for you to prove that they are such as you name them. And second: they have not deceived, but clearly taught the Word of God. And I do not believe that those who have believed in the Word of God come to destruction, but the Lord shall well judge it all. Commissioner: I will not dispute, for I myself let myself be instructed by those who are learned in the holy church. But I well know what is of you people, and of your teaching. If you had power, you would gladly cut our throats, as one has well seen happen of your people at Munster, at Amsterdam, and at more other places. Jacques: O my lord, do not say such words against your conscience. For I believe that you well know better, inasmuch as you have been here in the council the time of twenty years, as you say. This he had said to me beforehand. Therefore I let myself think that you know us well better. For if we had such evil hearts, to want to murder the people, we would not so give ourselves over into your hands. For if we would only speak against our heart, and hide the truth from you, you would have no power over us, inasmuch as you shall not find anyone who may complain with the truth of us, that we have done anyone wrong or damage. Commissioner: From where then come so many sects and heresies? Out of what sprout so many uproars and mutinies? Jacques: As far as the sects and heresies which are on earth are concerned, as those of Münster, or Amsterdam, or elsewhere, we have in no manner fellowship nor part with their works, nor with their teaching, but we hold them for devilish teaching. And all such things do not hinder that the truth is not the truth, and that the Christians are not the right Christians, no more than in the times of the apostles all sects and heresies which were round about them, which had some appearance of the Word of God.

After these and many more other words which we had together, he began to soften, and said to me: You must not study so high, but let yourself be instructed by more learned and wiser than you, and you must believe in the Word of God. Jacques: O my lord, should I not believe in the Word of God? For that same Word I am imprisoned here, and stand presently before you, to answer thereof. Commissioner: You are not imprisoned for the Word of God, but for your evil deeds. Jacques: My lord, have you heard that there has been anyone who has complained of me, that I have in any manner done him wrong or damage? Commissioner: No, I have not heard that any complaints have been made of you. Jacques:

The Lord be praised, that it is not for my unrighteousness's sake, but for the testimony of the true faith. Commissioner: It is not so, but it is for your misdeeds, wherewith you have misdone against the imperial majesty, and have transgressed the mandate of the king our lord. Jacques: If I have transgressed the mandate of the king, that is a small matter, inasmuch as I, doing that, have fulfilled the mandate of the King of kings, who is the true God and eternal King. Commissioner: You have also transgressed the mandate of God, and of our mother the holy church. Jacques: My lord, you would not be able to prove me that by the holy Scripture, nor any man either, that I have therein transgressed the mandate of God. Commissioner: One shall well prove it to you. Well then, let us begin to finish the articles which are commanded me, to question you. We had yet many more other words, which were too long for me to recount, and also that they are not well in my memory. The same commissioner was somewhat softened, and gave me good hearing to speak after my desire.

Thereafter he began to ask me when I came to Emden, and where I took lodging, and whether I had any guidance for coming to such people. I answered: Yes. Commissioner: From whom did you have that guidance? Jacques: From a good friend. Commissioner: In what house were you? Jacques: I do not confess the house where I was. Commissioner: Who was it that led you to Lenaert? Jacques: They were men and fellows, women and daughters. Commissioner: What were their names? Jacques: Concerning their surnames, I would have had much to do, to know them all by names and surnames, because I had not been there a long time, to be able to know them. Commissioner: When you came into the house, where was Lenaert? Of what did he preach? Jacques: He preached the pure Word of God. Commissioner: Of what, and of what articles did he preach? Jacques: He taught the amendment of life, and to put off the old man, and to put on the new, proving mightily by the Scripture that those who walk after the flesh, and after their lusts, have no part in the kingdom of God. Commissioner: Did he not speak of any other matters? Jacques: My lord, I would have much to do, to remember all, as I well think that you would with great labor remember a sermon that had happened a year and a half or two ago. Commissioner: Did you receive your second baptism there? Jacques: I have received but one baptism, and that after the ordinance of Christ. Commissioner: Did you not receive a baptism in your youth? Jacques: I do not know what one did to me in my youth, and I have no memory thereof. Commissioner: Your father or your mother, have they not told you that you were baptized, and have you not had godfathers and godmothers? Jacques: I well think yes, that they have told me, and I have also named some people godfather and godmother, but that has not been after the Scripture. Commissioner: Well, was that not enough? Have you above that yet received anything from Lenaert, namely the water, or the baptism after your meaning? Jacques: I have received from him the baptism after the Word of God. Commissioner: That baptism which you received in your youth, do you not hold that for good? Jacques: Had I held it for good, and for a baptism, I would not have received another. For there it stands written that there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and not many baptisms. Commissioner: That baptism which you received from Lenaert, did you receive it in the house where you were gathered? Jacques: Yes.

Commissioner: Was it after the sermon or before? Jacques: After the sermon. Commissioner: Did he not speak of baptism? Jacques: Yes, and he proved by the holy Scripture what it was, and what baptism signified, humbly exhorting those who desired to receive that baptism, to well mark and take heed of that which they took upon them, proving the cross and persecution that follows thereafter for those who have come so far, and many more other proofs through the holy Scripture. Commissioner: Did you not fear that placard of the Emperor? Jacques: No, nor also at this time. Commissioner: Jacques, it shall not go well with you, unless you submit yourself to the mercy of your misdeed. Jacques: My lord, I well expect mercy from the Lord, but I do not know that I have misdone against the Emperor or the King, wherefore I should expect mercy; and if that placard is against the word of God, it does not seem to me that I misdo, fulfilling the mandate of God, against any persons, whosoever they be. Commissioner: Jacques, Jacques, think on that which the placard contains. Jacques: My lord, I well know that it has dominion in this world above the word of God, to cause to die those who believe in his name, and who depart from unrighteousness, as it stands written that it should so happen. But what shall it be, when you have done with me according to that placard, and shall have killed me? You shall yet have nothing else but a vile and mortal body, which is subject to corruption; but as much as concerns the soul, you may not come at it, and when you shall come before the judgment of God, then you shall know what you have done. Commissioner: Jacques, I do not seek your death, God knows it, and it were grievous to me that you had pain in the uttermost of your fingers. Jacques: My lord, one shall well see it in the end. How comes it then that you thus shed the innocent blood here, since you cannot distinguish of the faith, as you have told me? Why do you not ordain that those who cannot understand your faith as right and good be banished out of the land, keeping their bodies and goods, as one does over the whole of Germany, and also in the Eastland, who will not judge over the word of God to shed blood? After many more other words, he asked: What do you hold and believe of the sacrament of the altar? Jacques: Do you mean that breaking of the bread? Commissioner: Yes. Jacques: I confess and believe, as Christ has ordained it, and as the apostles have used it, and as Paul writes thereof to the Corinthians. Commissioner: How do you understand it? Jacques: As it is written, and I do not desire to gloss the word of God. Therewith he was satisfied, and he marked it down so on his paper. Commissioner: What do you hold of the mass, confession, and absolution of the priest? Jacques: As for the mass, I do not know it, nor also the Scripture itself, and I have never read the name in the word of God. Commissioner: What shall I then write thereof? Jacques: I do not know; what pleases you, my lord. Commissioner: Would you not simply confess that you believe in the ordinance of the true and holy church, as the Scripture declares, and as a good Christian is bound to believe? Jacques: Yes, my lord, with all my heart. He wrote it down thus. Commissioner: Who have been your instructors in such doctrine, and with whom did you converse in the beginning, and in what place? Jacques: I have had my conversation at Antwerp, speaking with many of the Scripture, but chiefly I have been instructed, and have taken my foundation, by reading that holy word of the Lord. He wrote it down thus. Commissioner: But now, see here a great article, namely,

whether you have not been a servant or deacon over the poor, or an exhorter, or having any charge in the congregation among the brethren. So it was written on his paper, as far as I could mark or see. At first I did not know what he wanted to say with this, so great an article. And I answered thereto: No, and I do not find myself fit thereto, but I am a little member in the congregation. Commissioner: Have you not been in the congregation before you received baptism? Jacques: Yes, two or three times at least. Commissioner: In what place has it been, and what sort of houses? Jacques: As for the houses, I do not know to whom they belong. Commissioner: What sort of houses, great or small? Jacques: We gather ourselves where we best may, as it comes to pass, and I well remember having been in very poor little houses, which had better likeness of a stable than of a house. He wrote it down thus on his paper. Commissioner: Have you also been among the brethren in the exhortation after you received baptism? Jacques: My lord, that brings its own answer with it; you may well think, if I have been there before, that I have been there still more afterwards. Commissioner: Is your wife of the same doctrine as you, and is she also rebaptized? Jacques: I have enough to do to answer for myself without answering for my wife, and were she here, she might answer for herself; but nevertheless, I hold her for a woman who fears the Lord. And therewith he was satisfied.

The eighth day of January of the aforesaid year, 1558, on a Saturday in the morning, I was led into the same hall, before the inquisitor or heretic-master, who in short time heretofore has been set here by the king of Spain, having from him all power, to bind or loose, to let go free, or to cause to die. And when I came before him, I greeted him humbly, and he greeted me also, saying to me: Jacques, I am very glad over one matter, namely over that which the procurator general has told me, that you are well content to confess your guilt, if one can prove to you by the Scripture that you have transgressed the commandment of God, and that you are in error. Are you still in this same intent, and will you accept the Scripture? Jacques: Yes, and I am ready to hear all good instruction according to the word of God. He had my confession, which I had made before the commissioner, and he asked me: Will you still confess that you have received that baptism from Lenaert? Jacques: My word is not yes and no, but yes, yes, and as I have confessed, so I confess still openly. Heretic-master: Has the baptism which you received in your youth not been enough for you, without receiving another once more? Jacques: I do not hold that same baptism, which I received in my youth, for any baptism, according to the word and ordinance of God. Heretic-master: I shall prove it to you. But do you also believe that the little children are born in original sin? Jacques: David says indeed that he was conceived in sins, as also all little children, but that sin is not reckoned to them, seeing that Christ has died to take away that sin, as Paul everywhere in his epistles testifies, and as sin has come into the world through one man, and death through sin, so grace has overflowed through Jesus Christ. Heretic-master: How are the little children cleansed, if it does not happen through baptism? Jacques: They are cleansed through the blood of Christ, since he is that Lamb which takes away the sins of the world. Heretic-master: How does it come to pass that they are purged from original sin? Jacques: My lord, I have told you, namely, through that blood of the Son of God, who died for us when we

were still his enemies and unbelieving. Heretic-master: Do you not believe that the little children bear their sin from Adam, until they are cleansed through baptism? Jacques: One would have to prove that to me with the Scripture. I believe that word of the prophet, who says that the child shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father the iniquity of the son, but the soul that sins, it shall die the death. Heretic-master: It is not to be understood thus, but the child is unclean until it has received baptism. Jacques: Are the children cleansed through that outward sign of the water? Heretic-master: No, but they must be cleansed with the water, and thereafter with the Holy Spirit. Jacques: Which washing goes first, namely, the washing from without, or the washing from within? Heretic-master: The washing from without, and after these spoken words: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, they are thereafter cleansed within. Jacques: My lord, you say that without Scripture, for Jesus Christ says that such are hypocrites, who first cleanse the outside, but the inside is to be cleansed, and the outside shall also be clean. Heretic-master: You err, and do not understand the Scripture, and have let yourself be led astray by a heap of land-runners. Jacques: My lord, I do not lean on men, but it is not given me to understand otherwise, and men shall not give me that faith, for there it stands written in the prophets: They shall all be taught of God. And Jesus Christ says that no one can come to him unless it be given him of the Father. But now, my lord, prove to me only by the Scripture that the baptism of little children is a planting and ordinance of God, and used by the apostles, and I shall believe it. Heretic-master: That ordinance is made by Jesus Christ, saying: Whosoever is not born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Jacques: Christ does not speak to the children, but to a doctor in the law, and he does not speak either of the little children now newly born, for Christ says thereafter in the same chapter: That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I have said to you: You must be born again. The wind blows where it will, and you hear its voice, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with all who are born of the Spirit. After I had read in his Testament in High Dutch, printed at Zurich, I said: My lord, if the outward baptism of children is a new birth, one well knows whence it comes, for one sees it with the eyes. Heretic-master: How do you understand it then? Jacques: I understand that the new birth is of the one who was in the old Adam, in that flesh of sin, that one had to put off, kill, and crucify that flesh of sin, with all its desires and lusts, to be born again into a new life, after the new man Christ Jesus, as Paul largely testifies. Heretic-master: That is to be understood of the grown and old people, but the little children who are unclean, one must cleanse with water to obtain salvation. Jacques: What do you believe of the little children who receive no baptism here, according to the faith that you hold, namely, of the pope? Heretic-master: They go to all thousand devils. Jacques: O my lord, there it stands written: When you judge, judge righteous judgments. Also with such judgments, says Christ, as you judge, you shall be judged. You condemn the innocent little children, whereas Christ says that to such belongs the kingdom of God. Heretic-master: Those were baptized, or at least had received circumcision, which was to them in the stead of baptism. Jacques: The Scripture touches nothing thereof, that they were circumcised, and you shall not be able to

prove whether they were Jewish or heathen children. Heretic-master: They were all Jews who were at Jerusalem, and thereabout in the Jewish land. Jacques: Luke testifies quite otherwise, that within Jerusalem in the Jewish land were all sorts of tongues that are under heaven. Heretic-master: Is it not a miserable thing of you people, that you thus err in the Scripture? Does not Paul say that he has cleansed his congregation in the bath of the water? Jacques: Paul says: In the bath of the water through the word. Well, will you cleanse children through the word? Or only through the bath of the water? For they cannot believe the word. Heretic-master: Then they are condemned, since they do not believe. Jacques: Do not speak so, for they are innocent, and poor in spirit, and to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. He said, as he had also said before: One must above all cleanse them through the baptism of the water, to come to salvation. Jacques: Peter the apostle testifies clearly: As the ark which Noah had made preserved from death, and from the wrath of God, all those who had forsaken the company of the wicked and of the world, and had entered therein, that in such manner baptism is to us unto salvation; but the apostle does not account of any worth that baptism which takes away the filthiness of the flesh, unless there be a good testimony of a good conscience before God. And I do not believe that the little children have that testimony of a good conscience, since they do not know the good or the evil. To this matter he answered me nothing, and looked sharply at me, and a little thereafter said to me: It is Calvin who writes there: Attestation (that is, testimony) of the good conscience — such false prophets, who lead you people astray; but the true text does not say so. Jacques: I am not imprisoned for the doctrine of Calvin. And I begged him many times that he would let me read in his book how the apostle wrote it, namely, in his own Testament, which he had before him, or in his Bible, in Latin, which was a very small format, translated and printed by Robertus Stephanus at Paris. But however I begged him, he would not let me read, and I said to him: My lord, you ought not to hinder me from proving that word, since you contradict it. And after yet more other words, he said to me: Since you will not believe in the holy teachers, as St. Ambrose and St. Augustine (and yet a heap of other saints, whom he named to me), and in the ordinances which the holy church has instituted — yea, what will you then believe? Jacques: I believe only in the ordinance of Christ, or prove to me that the apostles baptized little children, and I shall believe it. Herewith he wanted to try me, with the households that were baptized, wherein there might well have been little children, as he said. I answered that the Scripture touches nothing thereof, that there were little children, but proves very well that such households heard the word, and believed, as it stands written of the jailer, also of Cornelius the centurion, with all those who were of his house, who received the Holy Spirit, as the apostles — namely, those who heard the word. And therefore, my lord, you could not prove to me that there were little children. Heretic-master: I will not stand firm thereon, to say that there were, or that there were none, for that is in doubt; but you must believe what the fathers and the holy doctors have thus ordained thereof in the church, and used until now. Jacques: Have the same teachers instituted this ordinance with good intent, or have they instituted it because it was an ordinance of God contained in Scripture? Heretic-master: They have done according to the word of God with good intent. Jacques: My lord, you well

know how strictly it was commanded to the people of Israel, to do no things after their own good pleasure, but that they should do only that which the Lord commanded and ordained them. For Saul was rejected of God because he had not done justly according to the word of the Lord which was commanded him, but had used his own good pleasure. And after many more other words which we had together, he went away from me, and said: Jacques, I pray you that you well consider thereon, for you are in error and led astray. Jacques: I am not in error nor led astray, I am already resolved, since you cannot prove to me by the Scripture that the baptism of little children is an ordinance of God, and therefore I do not believe it either. Heretic-master: What will you have me prove to you, since you do not believe in the holy teachers of the Catholic church, nor in their ordinance either? Jacques: My lord, there it stands written: Every planting which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted out. And after yet many more other words, he went away, and said to me: Adieu Jacques, consider well, and pray God earnestly. I said also: Adieu, and said to him that it was well my hope, always to call upon the name of the Lord for my help. There were yet many more other words which we had together, which I have not written, because they are not well in my memory, and because I kept it brief. I have forgotten to write his allegations, wherewith he wanted to prove that circumcision was a figure of baptism, and that one had to use it in like manner; whereupon I proved to him by the Scripture how circumcision was a figure of the covenant, and signified nothing else than to give to know that they were comprehended in the covenant, and children to whom the promises came. But Paul proves to us now that he is not a Jew, nor a child of Abraham, who is so outwardly, or after the flesh of his seed, but those who are so in the heart; as Christ says, that such are Abraham's children who do the works of Abraham, although they yet come of the fleshly seed of the heathen. And I showed him how baptism signifies the true rebirth, as Christ showed to Nicodemus, and the putting off of the old man into a new life, and that one had therefore to be born again, and not newly born, as they will say; and where there was no rebirth, there served also no sign, for it were mocking God. He said to me: Should then the little children have no part in this sacrament? I said to him that the sacraments were left behind to be used in the holy congregation for those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, and to discern of the sacraments, and not for the innocent. We had yet many more other discourses over that article, and I proved to him the misuse which they have in their baptism against the Scripture, and of that baptism of the wise midwives, how they hold it for good, and rebaptize once more; therefore I said that they were Rebaptizers.

The Monday, the tenth of January of the same year, I was again led before the same heretic-master, and after some discourse, he asked me: How have you resolved concerning baptism? Jacques: I know no other counsel than I have told you, seeing that you cannot prove to me by the Scripture that it is an ordinance of Christ to baptize the little children; I do not believe therein either, but I hold to the baptism ordained by Jesus Christ, and commanded to his apostles. Heretic-master: Thus have the false prophets instructed you, of whom the Scripture says that they shall come, and have gone out from us. Jacques: Such false prophets one shall know by their fruits, says the Lord. And as much as concerns that which you say, that they

have gone out from you: Paul, being at Miletus, showed to the elders of Ephesus that from among them and from the flock should rise evil men, who should teach evil things; is it not so, my lord? Heretic-master: Yes. Jacques: Is it not indeed, my lord, a perverse matter, and wholly contrary, that baptism which you people use? For Christ has commanded to baptize those who believed, and those who were instructed and taught. And the apostles have baptized only those who received the word. And you people baptize only those who do not believe, and who cannot be instructed nor taught, nor who can receive the word, for they are innocent; and that seems to me wholly contrary, and to set the wagon before the horses. Heretic-master: It is because you are in heresies, my child, and because you do not believe the holy teachers; see how it will go with you. Now well then, let us speak of another article. And after he had seen and read my confession, made before the commissioner, as I have said before, he asked me: What do you believe of the Eucharist? Jacques: What is that? Heretic-master: Of the sacrament of the altar? Jacques: Will you say, of that Supper of the Lord, or that breaking of the bread? Heretic-master: Yes, it is one thing — Eucharist, Sacrament, or Supper. Jacques: My lord, it is not one name, for see how the apostles have named it. Luke says: They broke the bread from house to house, and not the body of Christ. Heretic-master: That same whereof Luke speaks, that is of the word of God, which they distributed to every one. Jacques: My lord, so say also David Joris and other heretics, who make nothing of that breaking of the bread. But see, when Paul was at Troas, and the congregation was come together, in the night, so that a young man fell from the high loft, Luke says that Paul continued the word until midnight, so that the young man fell through a window; and when they had climbed up again, Paul having raised him up, they broke the bread and ate — it was not the word that they ate — and thereafter Paul spoke until the break of day, and went from there. And hearing this, he looked sharply at me, and did not know what to say. Do you not believe, said he, that when the priest has spoken those words, our Lord is there in the bread, in flesh and blood, all even as the Jews had him in their hands, and crucified? This same he has asked me very often. And because I did not seek to dispute with him, I said: My lord, if you can prove it to me by the Scripture, I shall believe it. And he pressed me, saying: Say no or yes, what you believe thereof. Jacques: Such as the Scripture testifies thereof. Heretic-master: I ask you whether you do not believe that he is in the sacrament, in flesh, in blood, as he was on the cross. And seeing that he grew warm, I waited a little to answer. Heretic-master: Well, what do you say? Jacques: Nothing, my lord. Heretic-master: That I hear well, but why do you wait so long to answer, yes or no? Jacques: My lord, there it stands written: Be swift to hear, and slow to speak. Heretic-master: Well then, Jacques, say only yes or no: If you believe that he is there in the bread, in flesh and blood, say yes. Jacques: My lord, if I said yes to you, how could I prove it to you by the Scripture that he is there in flesh and blood, after the priest has spoken the words? For I have never read it in the Scripture, and because I could not prove it to you, therefore I will also not say that it is so. Heretic-master: Then you do not believe it, I hear, no? Jacques: I believe thereof no further than the Scripture testifies, and how could he be there in the bread, my lord, since it stands written that he is ascended to heaven, and that he sits at the

right hand of his Father, until he shall have set his enemies as a footstool of his feet. Heretic-master: Do you not believe that he is mighty enough to sit at the right hand of his Father, and also to be in the bread? Jacques: My lord, I believe that he is almighty, but against his word he cannot, for he must be true, and he is the only truth itself. Heretic-master: Will you not believe the Scripture which is written: Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you — do you then not believe that it is his body? Jacques: Which do you hold for his body — that which was delivered for us, and suffered, and sat at the table and spoke, or that which he held in his hand, namely, the bread? Was that delivered for us, and did that bread die on the cross for our sins? And did not that bread signify his body? Heretic-master: Both. Jacques: I have not read that there are two Christs, but only one only Son of God. This I have often laid before him before. Heretic-master: These two are but one; also the wine is his blood, after the spoken words of the priest. Jacques: Does the wine become his blood, after that spoken word, and does it remain always blood, and not wine? Heretic-master: After the word is spoken, the bread is his true flesh, and the wine the true blood of Christ, and they remain thus flesh and blood. Jacques: What did Christ then want to give his disciples to know, when he said: This is my blood of the new Testament, which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins — and I say to you: I shall from now henceforth drink no more of this fruit of the vine? My lord, Christ calls it his blood of the new Testament, and nevertheless he gives his apostles to know that it is still a fruit of the vine, seeing that he afterwards still so names it, after he has said that it is his blood. Heretic-master: Where does that stand written? Then I took his Testament in Dutch, which he had before him, and read to him. And after I had shown and read it to him, he said to me: You must not regulate yourself by your understanding, but by the exposition of the holy teachers, as St. Augustine, Ambrose, and others more of the old church. Jacques: I am well content with the exposition of Paul, without seeking other many expositions. Heretic-master: Where has Paul expounded that sacrament of the altar? Jacques: Paul has expounded and given to understand to those of Corinth what that Supper of the Lord, and that breaking of the bread, is. Heretic-master: Show it me. And I still had his Testament, and read to him the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul says: I speak as to wise men; judge you what I say: The cup of thanksgiving wherewith we give thanks, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? And I had scarcely read, when he answered me thereon hastily: That is against you, for the apostle proves there indeed that there is flesh and blood in the bread and wine, and that one is partaker of the body of Christ. Jacques: My lord, if it please you, let me read a little further, and you shall mark that Paul does not give to understand of that body of Christ in flesh and blood, as it hung on the cross, but of his congregation, which is his body; for when he says that we have communion and are partakers of that body of Christ, he says: For we many are one bread and one body, since we are partakers of one bread. Heretic-master: The apostle speaks there of another body, namely, of his congregation. Jacques: I do not find that Paul makes any difference or distinction of two bodies, but of one body of Christ. Heretic-master: How do you understand then: To eat his body, and to drink his blood? Jacques: As

Paul gives to understand, that it is a communion or participation of the body of Christ. Heretic-master: My child, how are you so led astray? Do you then understand that you may well be partaker of the body and the blood of Christ through that communion, without eating and drinking thereof? Jacques: My lord, I am not led astray, but I found myself on that word of God. Heretic-master: Well, what do you understand then by this communion? Jacques: The apostle gives us there to know, when he says in that same chapter: Behold Israel after the flesh; those who eat the sacrifices, are they not partakers of the altar? See, my lord, there is the likeness which Paul gives to make those of Corinth understand; do you not understand it also so, my lord? Heretic-master: Yes. Jacques: My lord, I well think that your meaning is not so, that those who were partakers of the altar therefore ate the altar, but only the sacrifices which lay on the altar. Heretic-master: Does it seem to you that it goes so with that sacrament? Jacques: My lord, it seems to me that, when we eat the bread, we thereby signify to have part in the body of Christ, and yet we eat but only the bread, and not Christ — no more than as Israel did not eat the altar, but only the sacrifice, and yet in eating the sacrifices thereby gave to know that they were partakers of the altar. And looking at me very sharply, he said: What an error! Do you not believe that in eating the consecrated bread, one eats that body of Christ? Jacques: Paul does not give it so to understand, and I do not understand it so either. Heretic-master: Is it not a miserable thing of you people, Jacques, that you do not believe that word of God, which says: This is my body, this is my blood; do this in remembrance of me? Jacques: I believe that word of God; Christ gave well to understand that he would not be there bodily, since he said that one should do it in remembrance of him. Paul says also: As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, you shall declare the death of the Lord, until he comes. So he is then not there bodily, since he has not yet come. Heretic-master: He is indeed there bodily, according to that word of Jesus Christ, and all holy teachers expound it so. Jacques: I hold more of Paul alone than of all the other teachers, and hold myself only to the exposition of Paul. Heretic-master: You must also believe the holy teachers of the Catholic church. Jacques: I believe the holy Scripture, and only that word of God. Heretic-master: If you believe that word of God, you must believe that, when the bread is consecrated and the words are spoken, whosoever receives it bodily receives the body and blood of Christ, since Jesus Christ so speaks, and he does not lie, but he speaks the truth. Jacques: I well know that Christ speaks the truth, but one must understand how he speaks. When he says: I am the bread that is descended from heaven, and the bread that I shall give is my flesh — do you believe that? Heretic-master: No, do you believe that? Jacques: I do not say it to you, and we do not now dispute thereover, but because you say that one must believe as Christ speaks — see, when he says: I am a vine, my Father a husbandman. Paul says also: The rock out of which the children of Israel drank was Christ. Heretic-master: No, no, one must not so believe all the words, but only as a sign of Christ. Jacques: So is also this same manner of speaking. Heretic-master: Yes, this is a sacrament, which is left us of the body of Christ in a remembrance. Jacques: My lord, behold Israel after the flesh: that little lamb which they ate was named the Passover, and an eternal remembrance that they were drawn by the strong hand out of Egypt, out of

bondage; and also that bread which we break is for a remembrance of Christ, who has redeemed us from sin and eternal death, drawing us from the bondage of the devil and of the enemy. Heretic-master: Yes, according to the meaning of your shepherds, Calvin and Zwingli, and such heretics, who have brought forth new doctrine; and we have been in this faith over fourteen hundred years — why do you not believe us? Jacques: My lord, should I so believe, for the long time's sake? There have been many heretics, as Sadducees, Nicolaitans, heathens, and many more others, who have erred yet much longer time. Turn yourself to the Scripture only, after the example of the good king Josiah. Heretic-master: Do you mean that, my son? No, no. Jacques: My lord, so said the children of Israel to Jeremiah, and they were out of the way. You well know also how they misused the grace of God, making a golden calf, and praising it and saying: This God has drawn us back and redeemed us out of Egypt. Your people say now at this time also of that bread: Here is Christ who has died for us. He grew angry, and asked me: Do we commit idolatry, that we worship Christ? Jacques: No, if he is in the bread; but if he is not there, what is it else that you do? Heretic-master: Well, what is it then that you believe thereof? Speak one word only, yes or no. Jacques: My lord, you have well heard that I believe that he sits at the right hand of his Father in heaven. Heretic-master: But in the bread? Jacques: My lord, I have told you that I believe thereof as Paul testifies thereof. Heretic-master: Then you do not believe, I hear, that one eats that holy flesh of Christ sacramentally. Jacques: Do all those who receive the bread also receive the body of Christ? Heretic-master: Yes, wholly, whosoever they be. Jacques: A robber, murderer, rascal, or another full of treachery, full of deceit and wickedness, having no sorrow or repentance of his evil, but having still a will to lead such a wicked life — does such a one receive the body and blood of Christ? Heretic-master: Were it the worst man in the world, yea, were it a Turk or a heathen, if he came to that sacrament, he would receive the body and the blood of Christ as well as another — yea, what is more, were it also a beast. Jacques: How could that, my lord, be possible, that unbelievers, godless, and unrighteous, to whom eternal damnation is promised, should receive the body of Christ, and his blood? It would then needs be, against all Scripture, whether God will or will not, that they had eternal life, and as well the beasts as we, because the Lord has promised that whosoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood has eternal life; and the godless men would have a part in the body of Christ and Belial, the light and the darkness — it is impossible, says Paul. Heretic-master: How, do you not understand that Paul says that whosoever eats that body receives a judgment? Jacques: Hold, my lord, and corrupt not the Scripture, for Paul says, this bread, and not the body. Heretic-master: Well, whosoever eats this body, or this bread, and drinks this cup unworthily, receives his damnation. Jacques: My lord, he who receives his judgment is far from receiving the body of Christ, but it is the sentence of his death that he receives. Heretic-master: Well then, you do confess these words of Jesus Christ, who has said: Whosoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life — so you do believe that one may well eat and drink him, as he says. Jacques: I believe the words of Jesus Christ, but not in such manner as the Jews, who were offended at him, saying: How shall this man give us his blood to drink, and his flesh to eat? Yea, even his disciples. Heretic-master: That was

because they did not well understand it. Jacques: That I well believe, for had they well understood it, they would not have said that, and his disciples would not have left him for these words, as they did. Heretic-master: Understand well, my son, that was because they understood that one had to eat his flesh roasted or sodden, like other flesh; but he spoke of eating it sacramentally, else that other eating would not have helped. But do you not believe that one eats his flesh sacramentally, which is a sacrament that he has left us under the form of the bread and of the wine, into which he changes himself? Jacques: Then he has left things behind that are good for nothing. Heretic-master: How so? Jacques: Therefore, my lord, when his disciples so grossly understood it, as you people and others also do, he said to them that the flesh was good for nothing, but the Spirit that quickens, and: My words, said he, are spirit and life. If one then eats his flesh, what does that profit? Heretic-master: That was because they did not well understand it, as I have told you. Jacques: My lord, I well believe, had they well understood it, it would not have been needful for him to give them to know that it was his word that he wanted to say. Heretic-master: How do you understand then that he spoke of his word? Jacques: My lord, I understand that it was of his word, as it stands written that man does not live by bread alone, but by the word that comes out of the mouth of God, which alone quickens us in God unto eternal life. Heretic-master: See there how your seducers have instructed you in their new doctrine. Jacques: I am not founded on men, but on that word of God. Heretic-master: Why will you then not believe, as your mother the holy church, that after the spoken words the bread and the wine are changed? Jacques: My lord, I have told you, because there is nothing written in the Scripture of such matters, for neither the bread nor the wine were changed which Christ gave. Heretic-master: O, it was indeed. Jacques: My lord, I have proved to you how he still called it a fruit of the vine after the spoken words. Heretic-master: And do you not believe, Jacques, that Jesus Christ is almighty? And that he was mighty to give his disciples his blood to drink? Jacques: I know, my lord, that he is almighty, and that he was well mighty to do it; and if he had now done it, my lord, has he promised you that you people should also well do such a work? Heretic-master: But is Jesus Christ not mighty to leave us that behind for a testament in his sacrament? Jacques: Yes, my lord, had he said it, for he had indeed power over the wind, over the devils, and to change water into wine, and to make himself invisible. In sum, I believe that he is almighty in all things, but a sinful man has no such power. Heretic-master: No, when he speaks the same words of Christ? Jacques: The power does not lie in the words; that would be as sorcery. And also, he who should say to a sick man: Be whole, in such form as Christ said it, would not therefore be whole. Heretic-master: Then you do not believe that Christ Jesus is in the bread, no? Jacques: My lord, I think that you have well heard my conclusion, what I believe thereof. Christ has said that we should do it in his remembrance; should he be present there, how could one then do it in remembrance of him? Heretic-master: O, how those knaves have led you astray — Zwingli and Calvin, such sacrament-violators, who turn all Scripture into the contrary. Jacques: My faith is not founded on the doctrine of Calvin nor Zwingli. Heretic-master: Whereon then? Jacques: On that word of God, and on that foundation of the apostles. Heretic-master: How? You do not

believe that word of God. Jacques: My lord, should I not believe that word of God? For that same I am imprisoned here, and am here chained before you, to give testimony thereof. Heretic-master: My son, it is for that word of Satan, and not for that word of God. Jacques: My lord, look well before you, how you speak, that you do not blaspheme, for I have not alleged that word of Satan for my doctrine and faith, but that pure word of God; and you allege to me the word and exposition of men. Heretic-master: It is that word of the holy teachers of the church, whom you reject. See there the cause of your error. Jacques: I do not reject them, but I leave them such as they are, in their being, for I find matter enough in that word of God to lay a good foundation, and find waters of life enough to drink in that pure fountain, without running to the brooklets or pools, which are mostly defiled and stirred up. Heretic-master: Well then, this gives us no progress at all; it is now late. Since you will not believe, as our mother the holy church teaches you, see that you well consider, for you are in such error — if you so die, you shall be damned to all thousand devils in the bottom of hell. Jacques: My lord, there it stands written that judgment belongs to God alone; how do you so boldly step into the stead of God? God shall well judge me. Heretic-master: Jacques, that is all clear, for you do not believe, and whosoever does not believe is damned, says Christ Jesus. Jacques: There it stands written: Judge not according to the sight of the eyes, but judge righteous judgments. If I did not believe, I would not allege that word of God for my defense. Heretic-master: All heretics do that also. Well then, pray God earnestly, that you may return to the holy church. Jacques: I hope through the grace of God that I have become a member of the true and holy church, which is cleansed and purchased through the blood of Jesus Christ. Thereafter he rose up, and said to me: Adieu, Jacques, see well to it that you well consider, for your time is near; consider your matters well. I said to him also Adieu, and that I was ready always to follow the best in that which should be proved to me by the holy Scripture, and otherwise not. We had yet many more other words concerning this matter, altogether about two hours long, but they are forgotten by me. He gives good audience, and does not easily grow warm; we spoke sometimes in Flemish, sometimes in French, but for the most part I spoke Flemish, for the sake of the hearers whom I heard at the door. See here the two articles about which one is most tormented by them. Always when he returned again to me, he brought some subtle Scripture to catch me, but the Lord must be praised, I have always come out above. I have been before him indeed eighteen or twenty times, and should I write all the discourses which I had with them of these two articles, I should well fill a hand of paper; so many comparisons and likenesses, outside and without Scripture, they brought forth to me, but I sent them always to the Scripture. If there be anything in my little songs that does not accord with this writing, one shall not wonder thereover, for though I should write yet so much thereof, I could not recount all the discourses which I have had with them. Thus have they tormented me.

The fourteenth day of January, of the same year 1558, on a Friday after noon, I was again led before the heretic-master, and I went before him, and he greeted me cheerfully, for, as much as I could mark, the wine had made him very cheerful, and he brought no books with him. And after some words which we had together, he said to me: Jacques, the cause why I have

come here is only to know your conclusion, for I will no more dispute with you of the Articles of the faith, as of the Mass, of Confession, of the Indulgences and Purgatory, and the invocation of the Saints, or other ordinances of our mother the holy church. Jacques: My lord, I am well content, I seek also not to dispute, but only simply to believe that which we are bound to believe, as much as concerns the Articles of the faith. Heretic-master: Yes, we have not much to do with disputing, for Paul says: Shun a heretical man, after the first or second admonition. Jacques: My lord, how could you admonish me for heresy, since you have not yet overcome me, that I am a heretic? Heretic-master: No? Are you not a heretic? seeing that you contradict the Christian faith? Jacques: I do not contradict that faith, for all my meaning stretches thereto, but you take your meaning in the Scripture in one manner, and I in another, and no one may judge of the right or the wrong, but the spiritual men through the Spirit of God. He asked me, laughing: Have you the Spirit of God? Jacques: My lord, you must not ask me that with mockery, for I do not boast thereof, nevertheless I hope through the grace of God, that I am not driven by the spirit of Satan. Heretic-master: Yet you are led astray and in error, and Paul says, that one shall shun such after the first or second admonition. Jacques: Seeing then that you hold us for heretics, oh that God would grant, that you would at least use the counsel of Paul, namely, that you would flee us, and withdraw yourselves from us, and not persecute us to the death, and not pour out in all corners our blood. Heretic-master: Jacques, I do not seek your death, that God knows. Jacques: My lord, God knows it well truly, and one shall well see it in the end. Heretic-master: Yes, we do only that which is charged and commanded us. Jacques: By whom, my lord, by God or by men? Heretic-master: It is commanded us by God, to shun the false prophets. Jacques: It is well true, my lord, that Christ admonishes us, that we shall beware of those false prophets, but he gives us a sign to know them by, namely: As a tree by its fruits. What fruit have you seen in us, whereby you might condemn, that we are false prophets? Heretic-master: Enough daily. Jacques: Wherein? Heretic-master: Therein, that you have a false doctrine, which teaches men ill, and leads them to damnation. Jacques: My lord, that our doctrine is false, that is spoken after your good pleasure, yet you may not know, that we are false prophets, but through the fruit of the work, through which one may know whether we are false prophets or not, for Christ says: You shall know them by their works, and he does not say: By their faith. Heretic-master: You people justify yourselves over your works. Jacques: No, but it is impossible to pluck grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, or that an evil tree bring forth good fruit, as the Lord testifies. Heretic-master: Well then Jacques, as I have said to you, I am not come here, to dispute, but to understand your meaning. Jacques: I seek also no disputing, but I will answer you, that you accuse us wrongfully of heresy, and of seduction. Heretic-master: Well, let us leave that, how then are you resolved, concerning your confession, do you remain still upon the same purpose, as you confessed before the Commissioner? Jacques: Yes, I. Heretic-master: Will you then not let yourself be instructed? Jacques: I seek nothing else, but always to follow the best, most righteous, and most virtuous, and I am not so obstinate in my faith, were it that I knew a better way to eternal life, than this same, which I now have, I would take it. Heretic-master: Well then, concerning

the baptism and the Sacrament, whereof we have spoken together, what think you thereof? Jacques: Yes but my lord, that which shall be proved to me by the Scripture, that same shall I believe and nothing else. Heretic-master: So you do not believe the holy Teachers of the Catholic church, I hear well, no? Jacques: I believe the holy Scripture alone. Heretic-master: Therefore you are in heresy, that you hold more of yourself, than of the holy Teachers. Jacques: I do not praise myself, but only in the Cross of Christ, but I will not trust in any men, for there stands written: Cursed is the man, who trusts himself on man. Heretic-master: That I know well, but you do not believe that word of God either. Jacques: My lord, do not say that, for it is not so. Heretic-master: No? when our Savior says, taking that bread, this is my body, and taking the cup, this is my blood, why do you then not yet believe it? Why do you doubt thereof? Jacques: My lord, I believe those words of Christ, and do not doubt thereof. Heretic-master: Yes after your opinion, and with a different meaning. Jacques: My lord, I hope that I understand it not otherwise, than the Apostles understood, as Paul expounds it, 1 Cor. 10. Heretic-master: You say it. And hereabove we had yet many more other words over this article, and of Baptism, and a little thereafter over that purgatory and that placard, all about an hour and a half of time, and thereafter he drew away from me, showing me a very fair countenance and friendliness, whether it came from the heart, I do not know.

The twentieth day of the same month of January, of the aforesaid year, I was again led before the same heretic-master, and he asked me: How have you resolved concerning that which I have laid before you, concerning the baptism and the Sacrament, and what opinion have you therein. Jacques: I know no other counsel, than that which you have heard of me before. Heretic-master: So you remain then, I hear well, opinionated and obstinate? Jacques: My lord, it were grievous to me, that I should be obstinate against my conscience, but since you cannot prove to me by the Scripture, that which you believe, namely, that the baptism of little children is an ordinance of God, and a use of the Apostles, also that the bread and the wine are changed into flesh and blood, when the priest has spoken those words over the bread, that seems to me sorcery, and I cannot so understand it. Heretic-master: You must not doubt in that change through the power of God, for I have proved it to you enough by the Scripture of God, but you will not believe. Jacques: My lord, do not say that, for had you proved it to me by the Scripture, I would gladly believe, for all my salvation lies in that holy word of God. Heretic-master: I have alleged to you that word of God, but you believe nothing but your fantasy and opinion. Jacques: My lord, I pray you, do not think it, were it that I knew it better, or understood otherwise, I would not want to resist, that word of God against my conscience, being in such a state, as I am, namely, imprisoned under pain of death, awaiting death from day to day, one might well say, that I were the most miserable and unhappiest man, that ever was on earth, that I sought with free will, and premeditated deed to have pain and suffering here to the death, to obtain eternal damnation. Heretic-master: Yes my child, see well what you do, for is it that you die in such evil faith and doctrine as you have, you are damned before all Devils. Jacques: O my lord, how dare you speak so, there stands written: Judge not, that you be not judged, for with such judgment, as

you judge (says the Lord) you shall also be judged. Heretic-master: I judge you after the truth. Jacques: My lord, do not say that, for you do not know what you judge. Heretic-master: Och, och, I do well. And taking an inkpot, which stood on the table, he said to me: I am as certain, as I am sure, that I hold that pot, is it that you remain in this doctrine, and so die, that you shall nevermore see the face of God, but shall be damned in eternity. Jacques: My lord, do not judge so, for you tread in the place of God, and take from him his honor, for to him alone belongs that judgment. Heretic-master: Think you that I do not know, what I say? and that I do not see that you are in error? and the heretics shall not come into Paradise. Jacques: My lord, it seems so to you, that we are in error, and as it seems to you people of us, so it seems to us again of you people. Heretic-master: Ah that is easy to know through that word of God, which are in error and heresy. Jacques: It is so, it is easy to know for those, to whom the Lord has given grace, and wisdom, and therefore I pray you, my lord, that you will not take it ill of me, is it that I speak somewhat boldly with you, and open my heart to you. Heretic-master: No I troth. Jacques: My lord even as it seems to you people, that we are false prophets and seducers, so it seems to us of you people, as it seems to you people that we err, so it seems to us that you people err, as it seems to you people that we seduce the people, so it seems to us that you seduce them, and hereupon we hazard that life, and all that we have in the world, to testify to you people and to seal with our blood, that faith that we have in God. Heretic-master: Yet it stretches you to nothing but damnation. Jacques: Is it that the same stretches us to damnation, we are the most miserable that are under Heaven, for we are driven away, despised, rejected, as an abomination before the whole World, running from the one place to the other, so that we in the flesh have always to suffer, having no rest, and after your saying, we should yet have to suffer after this life. No, no my Lord, we feel quite another testimony and promises through that word of God. Heretic-master: That comes so to pass, that you are seduced, all that shall serve you to nothing. Jacques: Where then is that people which through suffering and grief must follow their Master to that eternal life, as Christ has said, that they should be blessed for his name's sake? Heretic-master: That was spoken only to the Apostles. Jacques: How comes it then that Paul says, that all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution? And the prophet says, that the righteous shall have to suffer much, but the Lord delivers him out of all evil. Heretic-master: That is to be understood, that the devil shall always give them enough temptation and grief. Jacques: Paul speaks of persecution and not of temptation, and I understand also not, that Christ has spoken of temptation, when he said: They shall scourge you in their assemblies, and persecute you to the death, thinking to do God a service therewith, also you shall be hated of father and mother, brothers and friends, and some among you they shall kill. Heretic-master: Well then, all that was spoken only to the Apostles. Jacques: Does Christ not speak there of all who believed in his Name? Heretic-master: He spoke only to the Apostles, who had to suffer, when they went to proclaim that word, but afterwards one should cease, to persecute them. Jacques: How came it to pass that the congregation and assembly suffered so cruel persecution? and yet they were not all Apostles. Heretic-master: How so? Jacques: As Luke testifies, Acts 7, 12, and Paul, 2 Thess.

1. Yes you yourself my lord know well what one of your old Teachers writes, named Eusebius, in his fourth book, in the eighth chapter, writing of the first church, in what suffering and contempt they were, does he not say, that they were accounted among the people as robbers, murderers, child-murderers, horrible men, and that they committed lewdness with their mothers and sisters, and that they shed men's blood in their service of God, and that they offered their children to the Idols, were also accounted as mutineers, accursed knaves, enemies of God and of all creatures, and of other evil deeds which the world laid upon them, is it not so my Lord? as also write the old Teachers, Cyprian and Tertullian. Heretic-master: It is so, all that is well true, but that happened by those who had no knowledge of the Gospel. Jacques: I believe well, had they believed the Gospel, they would not have persecuted them, nor spoken such reproaches lying, but it has always been, that even those who boasted of the word of God, have persecuted those who sought to fear the Lord, and to serve God with their whole heart, as you see in Israel, who ought to have established the honor and law of God, brought to death the Prophets who were sent to them, and those who knew the Lord with pure heart. Heretic-master: Therefore, therefore there are always evil with the good, and with that good little grain is the chaff to the end. We had yet many more other discourses hereof, and in the last he asked my conclusion of the Baptism and the Sacrament, whereupon I answered him, as I had done at other times. And he went away from me, admonishing me that I should pray to God, that he would give me understanding, to return again (said he) to the holy Catholic church.

The seven and twentieth day of the same month of January, of the aforenamed year, I was again led before the same heretic-master, and after some words he asked me, how I had resolved, concerning that which he had said, namely, the baptism and the sacrament. Whereupon I gave him answer as at other times, that I found no other counsel, than to hold to my first confession, since I found not by the Scripture, that which he laid before my eyes, and that which he would compel me to believe. Heretic-master: Do you then remain obstinate therein, and will you believe nothing else? Jacques: I am not obstinate, but I find not by the Scripture in such wise as you tell me, that I must believe. Heretic-master: No? Do you find not by the Scripture what you must believe of the Sacrament? Jacques: Yes I, but not in such manner as you believe, for so I could not understand it. Heretic-master: The cause is, that you will not so understand it. Jacques: How my lord, think you that I will resist God against my conscience, I would then be worse than an unreasonable beast. Heretic-master: Why then do you not understand it? Jacques: Therefore, that it is not given me otherwise to understand, and do not marvel thereof, for there stands written in the prophets, where the Lord says: They shall all be taught of God. Heretic-master: Yet it seems to me, when I lay it before your eyes with the Scripture, that it is nothing but self-will and stiff-neckedness, when you will not so believe. Jacques: I could not so understand it, and do not think, that, if I understood it otherwise, that I would here desire to take my pleasure and pastime, here to be imprisoned daily, and fettered, having left my wife and household to great damage, awaiting from day to day death, for it were a thing against human nature. Heretic-master: Well then, believe only in the word of God, as there stands written, I am

content, namely, that when one eats the bread, that one is partaker of the body of Christ, and when one drinks the wine, that one has part in the blood of Christ, as Paul testifies to the Corinthians. Jacques: Be then content therewith, I believe as Paul there testifies. Heretic-master: Do you then believe that there is a communion of the body of Christ? Jacques: Yes I. Heretic-master: Well then, you may not be partaker of the body, without eating thereof, you must then needs say, that it is the body of Christ, which you eat. Jacques: Paul does not say that. Heretic-master: How may you be partaker of the Body, without eating thereof? Jacques: How was Israel partaker of the Altar, and ate not the Altar, but only the offering? Heretic-master: Ha ha, see there, how your Calvinus has instructed you or Swinglius. Jacques: I do not hold the doctrine of Calvinus or Swinglius. Heretic-master: Of whom then, of Menno Simons? Jacques: My doctrine nor faith is not founded on those men, but on that word of God. Heretic-master: Who then is your head and Captain? Jacques: Christ. Heretic-master: But who is it that instructs you here on earth, who is your Teacher? Jacques: That word of God. When I heard that he did not know of what congregation I was, I would not tell him nor give him to know. Heretic-master: But yet you must be instructed herein by some man. Jacques: We are not founded on men, but on the living stone. Heretic-master: Have you then no Shepherd or Bishop? Jacques: Yes we. Heretic-master: Who is it? Jacques: Christ the Son of God. Heretic-master: You understand well what I mean to say, but you will not answer, yet you have some adherents, or Calvinus, or Swinglius, are you then contrary to Menno Simons? Jacques: I believe well that there is not much difference of my and Menno's faith. Heretic-master: Do you then believe as Menno, that Christ has not taken of our flesh in the virgin Mary? Jacques: My lord, you have said, that you will not dispute of that matter, do you say now otherwise? Heretic-master: Well then, say only what you believe thereof. Jacques: I believe that he is the Son of God in all manners, in flesh and spirit, but where he has taken his flesh, that I leave in the secrecy of God, the Apostles have not disputed thereof. Heretic-master: Yes yes. We had yet many more other words, which I have not all written here.

The first day of February of the same year, 1558. On a Monday after midday, I was again led before the same heretic-master, and after we had had some words together, he asked me: Have you not prayed to the Lord for wisdom? Jacques: Yes I, and it is well needful for me to pray him daily. Heretic-master: How do you find yourself at rest in your conscience? Jacques: Very well, the Lord must be praised thereof. Heretic-master: How do you feel concerning the Baptism and the Sacrament, whereof we have spoken? Jacques: I have the same opinion as I have before clearly said to you. Heretic-master: Will you believe nothing else? Jacques: I would well believe otherwise, were it given me otherwise to understand, but against my heart and conscience I will not speak with hypocrisy, for there stands written, that the spirit of God shuns all hypocrisy. Heretic-master: So have you then resolved thereupon (as I hear) fully? Jacques: Yes, until the time, that it be taught to me otherwise. My lord, think you also that there is nothing more, which is in my way in your assembly, but this, namely the baptism and the sacrament? Heretic-master: Well, what is there that is still in your way? Jacques: Yet many of your ordinances and institutions in your congregation, whereof I do

not find one little word in the holy Scripture. Heretic-master: Yet we have no ordinances nor institutions, that I could not prove to you by the Scripture. Jacques: Where stands written only that little word, mass, or purgatory, or to pray for the dead? Heretic-master: I shall well prove it to you, namely, the purgatory, and that one must pray for the dead. Jacques: Where stands it written in the holy Scripture? Heretic-master: Will you also receive the books of the Maccabees? Jacques: Yes I troth for Apocryphal books. Heretic-master: What is Apocryphal to say? Jacques: The ancients have used this name, to signify that they are no authentic books, out of which one might take a rule and ordinance. Heretic-master: It is well true, that the Doctors have had some difficulty therein, but therefore you may not reject them. Jacques: Yes my Lord, the cause, why I will not receive them, is not only for this, that I will not trust in that which men have said, but also for this, that I find not, that Christ or his Apostles received them, or have alleged any testimony out of the same. Heretic-master: Yes yes, where have you found, that Christ or his Apostles have alleged any words out of the books of the Kings? Jacques: Enough. Heretic-master: Well where? Jacques: My lord, in the first place there stands written in Matthew, that the Pharisees reproved Christ, because his Disciples plucked the ears of corn on the Sabbath, and Christ answered them: Have you not read what David did, when he hungered and those with him, how he went into the house of God, and ate the shewbread, which he ought not to have eaten. Therefore I say, since Christ points them to that which stands written in the books of the Kings, thereby he proves that he receives them for good. Heretic-master: Well, do you also find something in that book of Joshua. Jacques: Yes I my lord. Heretic-master: What is that? Jacques: My lord, you well know that James says in his Epistle, and alleges there a testimony or example out of that book Joshua, namely, the second chapter, when he speaks of Rahab the harlot, who was saved through her works in faith. Heretic-master: So you will then not receive the books of the Maccabees, for this, that Christ and his Apostles have taken no testimony out of the same? Jacques: No I, and also for this, that there is written a doctrine against all Scripture, namely, to do sacrifice, and to pray for the dead. Heretic-master: Would I take the labor, I would well prove to you all our ordinances with the Scripture, as mass, confession, adoration of the images, invocation of the saints, and others. Jacques: I do not think it, and also my lord, were it so that we were agreed in all Articles, I would yet not want to unite myself with you, unless, that you proved to me by the Scripture, whether it is a Christian thing, that innocent blood (for the faith's sake) to shed, as you do. Heretic-master: That is for error's sake. Jacques: Were it also for this, that one understands the Scripture ill, yet I find not by the Scripture, that one may kill anyone for his faith. Heretic-master: O, that I shall well prove to you, that one may well kill the heretics, for there stands written, when any heretic should rise up, or false Prophet, that one should kill them. Jacques: I have well read in the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy, and there stands written: Were it that a false Prophet arose, or any other of their kindred, who would teach them to walk after other Gods, than they had known, that that false Prophet should be killed, and stoned with stones. Heretic-master: Well then, see there a testimony, that one may kill the heretics. Jacques: My lord, we are no more under that Law, but under that Gospel, and were it that we were clean under that Law, we

yet will not teach you to walk after other Gods, than after him who has created Heaven and earth, and in his Son Jesus Christ. Heretic-master: You do yet through your ordinances. Jacques: For the diverse uses of the ordinances those of Israel might not refer anyone to death, since they believed in the same God, but all that serves us to nothing, for that which was commanded in the Law, is not commanded in the Gospel of Christ. Heretic-master: No? how so? Jacques: Therefore my lord, in the Law it was commanded: Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, also to love his neighbor, and to hate his enemy, and through Christ it is commanded us wholly contrary, not to resist evil, and to love our Enemies. Heretic-master: It is true, but he has not so commanded of the heretics, that one should not kill them. Jacques: What means then that my lord, that Christ will say, when he gives to know, that one shall not root out that weeds, which is among that good grain, fearing, that in the rooting out of the weeds or evil weeds, one might root out also the wheat, therefore he commands, that one should let them until the time of the harvest, and the harvest is not yet come. Heretic-master: You do not understand that well, for it is easy to know, whether it is weeds or wheat. Jacques: Yes it well, to him who has knowledge of the Seed. Heretic-master: Yes that is true. Jacques: My lord, there stands written, that the fleshly men only know fleshly things, but the spiritual, no one knows but the Spirit of God. Heretic-master: That is well true. Jacques: Therefore my lord, I would gladly ask you something. Heretic-master: What is that? Jacques: Have you the Spirit of God? or has the Council received the Spirit of God? Heretic-master: No, I will not answer that. Jacques: How shall you then, or those of the Council be able to judge spiritual things? for the matter whereof we speak, is spiritual, which one must judge through the Spirit of God. Heretic-master: One judges you only for this, that you have transgressed that Placard of the Prince. Jacques: Had his command not been against that command of God, I had not transgressed it. Heretic-master: It is not against that command of God. Jacques: I would well that you proved to me by the Scripture, that that Placard of the Emperor or of the King is upright and righteous. Heretic-master: I believe that you think, that all our Fathers have been deceived, and your Sect is saved. What will you say, it is now well twelve hundred or thirteen hundred years, that the Emperor Theodosius caused to proclaim a Placard and Mandate, to cause to kill the heretics, namely, those who at that time were rebaptized, as your sect. Jacques: Yes my lord, you say that our sect has lasted but twenty or thirty years, but it has always been that those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, have had to suffer persecution, after that word of Paul. Heretic-master: So say all heretics. Jacques: Paul has spoken it first of all, yet he was no heretic. Heretic-master: I know well, that he was no heretic, but they all use that word of Paul, but I say to you, it is now not newly sprung up, that there are placards and mandates to cause the heretics to die, it has been so over fourteen hundred years. Jacques: But it is to be seen, whether the Emperor Theodosius of whom you have said, did well, and a good work after God's will, giving such a mandate. Heretic-master: Yes he troth, since he well knew that they were heretics. Jacques: My lord, it was after his meaning that they were heretics, but after the meaning of those who left their life for the testimony of their faith, he was himself a heretic and Tyrant. Heretic-master: What do you know that? Jacques: That understands itself, for those who bring us to

death for our faith's sake, we do not account better than heretics and Tyrants, as one may well think that those also did, who were killed by Theodosius the Emperor. And therefore, such matter may not be judged, but through the Spirit of God. Heretic-master: No no, you must not think that so many learned Doctors, who at that time were in the Catholic church, would have allowed the same, were it unjust to kill the heretics. Jacques: I will not lean on ordinance or wisdom of men, for I hold to that instruction of Christ, and of his Apostles, who always admonish us, that we shall separate ourselves from the false prophets, and shun the heretics, and not run after them, or persecute them to the death. Heretic-master: My son, do you well know, why they did not kill them? Jacques: I believe that it was for this that it was not pleasing to God. Heretic-master: No no, Jacques, it was therefore that they were not mighty enough, and that they had neither King nor Prince nor Magistracy. Jacques: Christ was mighty enough to have at his behoof more than twelve Legions of Angels, and the Apostles had power enough through the holy Spirit, but they were called, to be a flock, as sheep and lambs, simple as the doves, converted as little children. Heretic-master: It is well true, that was so then at that time. Jacques: And now my lord, shall the children of God be of another nature, than those who were at that time, and shall they have a nature of the Wolf? Heretic-master: Troth no, I do not say that to you. Jacques: Yet it seems to me my lord, that, those who now boast themselves to be children of God, have a true nature of rending wolves. He looked at me very sharply, and said to me: Why seems that to you? Jacques: Therefore my lord, that Christ calls his people sheep and lambs, and the nature of a flock of sheep is so, when they see come any beast, and perceive that it is a Wolf, they flee all together away, yes though there were also a thousand against one wolf, and do not run after, to devour the Wolf, and to shed his blood, and these who boast to be the Flock of Christ, do wholly the contrary, whence comes to them then this nature? Heretic-master: This comparison is not good, they are but useless allegations, for it goes not so to pass with that Flock of Christ, as with a flock of sheep. And I seeing that he rejected this, asked him: Is it not needful that the children of God must be born of God, as John testifies, and must they not be of such sort and inclination as their Father and Lord? Heretic-master: Yes they, but why? Jacques: Therefore that there stands written that the Son of God has been led as a Lamb or Sheep to the slaughter, and has not opened his mouth, so must then his little flock be of such sort and nature, since they are born of God. Heretic-master: That, it had to so happen. Jacques: Why? Heretic-master: To fulfill the Scripture. Jacques: So must it also go to pass with his children, to fulfill the Scripture. Heretic-master: What Scripture? Jacques: That which stands written, have they persecuted me, they shall also persecute you, remember that I have said it to you: The Servant is not better than his Lord. Heretic-master: That he said to his Apostles. Jacques: I understand that he spoke of all his children, and that the same is written to our instruction. Heretic-master: No, no, my Son, you must understand that the Apostles were sent to proclaim and to preach that Gospel to all creatures, and the Lord foretold, that much suffering should come to them, and that they should be killed, but after they had won a Prince to the faith, then they had rest, and might well kill the Heretics in their land. Jacques: My lord, that Scripture does not say that, and also I could not

comprehend that the nature of a sheep may be to kill a Wolf, and to devour him, for you people say, that you are that Flock of Christ, and that we are rending wolves, and you people kill us, that does not seem to me right to be. Hereupon he asked me laughing: Jacques, was Peter also not a sheep of Christ? Jacques: My lord, was he chosen of God, so he was also of that flock. Heretic-master: Answer, yes or no. Jacques: I believe not only, that he was a sheep of that flock of Christ, but even also a shepherd. Heretic-master: Well then, he who was a sheep, has well killed two men? Jacques: Which? Heretic-master: Ananias and his wife Sapphira. Jacques: How has he killed them, since he had no staff, nor sword? Is it not been the Spirit of the Lord? Heretic-master: Even so he has done that. Jacques: My lord do not give the honor to the men, as though they might do that through their own power, for that they were killed, was through the Spirit of the Lord, and also it was not for such matter, as you people kill, but it was for their lying against the holy Spirit. Heretic-master: Well then Jacques my Son, this furthers us not, see that you well consider, and amend, and convert to that faith, as your parents have believed, for you are in error, and therefore believe as a good Christian is bound to believe, without undertaking so many things. Jacques: That faith is a gift of God, says Paul. Heretic-master: Yes it is truly a gift of God. Jacques: Then men may not give it. Heretic-master: Troth no, one must pray to God. Jacques: How comes it then that one will compel me to believe, threatening me with death? Heretic-master: One gives you time to convert. Jacques: My lord, what time? six, seven, or eight days, as I have seen in Brabant? is that a time to so hastily change in the faith? Heretic-master: Of Brabant I know not, but here one gives them at least three times fourteen days, to see, whether they will believe, when one has held forth to them that word of God. Jacques: How do you say so my Lord, is it that they will believe? you speak as though they might of themselves believe, and yet you say that that faith is a gift of God. The Apostles had heard two or three years the Lord Jesus, full of wisdom and truth, and yet they could not well comprehend, as you may mark in the two disciples who went to Emmaus. Paul had also well heard the Apostles and Disciples and yet could not comprehend, but thrust them into prison, and when it pleased God, he has revealed to them his will, at such time, as he had prepared thereto, and not at a time appointed of men. Heretic-master: That was for this, that they had not yet such doctrine, and because it was in the beginning, they could not comprehend. Jacques: It was therefore, that it was not given them, or that they were not drawn of the Father. Why do you also not await the time, that God do with us his will? Heretic-master: You have long time heard it, and yet one gives you time to consider, you have yet three Weeks to consider from this day. Jacques: My lord, is it not your meaning, that one shall kill me after those three Weeks? Heretic-master: You may yet convert here in between. Jacques: Were it not given me otherwise to understand, and I can not comprehend otherwise, how shall I then convert? Heretic-master: Yes, therefore it is that one gives you a time, to see whether God will do no mercy to convert you. Jacques: My lord, I think now of the children of Israel, who were besieged in the City of Bethulien, and had lack of water, so that their wives and children died of thirst, and said: There is no more help of God for us, let us deliver the city into the hands of the enemies, so say you people also: There is no more hope that he will convert, let us

deliver him over to death, and as Ozeas governor of the city, thinking to give a good counsel, said to the inhabitants: Let us yet await five days, and is it that within those five days no help comes from the Lord, we shall deliver the city to our enemies. My Lord, were they not sharply rebuked of a woman, a widow, named Judith, who said to them: Who are you, who today tempt the Lord, and tread in the place of God among men, and will comprehend his counsel, &c. Heretic-master: That is not to be likened to your matter. Jacques: My Lord, it seems to me to be one thing, for you people say: Is it that no help comes of God, within that time, which you set us, that one must deliver us over to death, and after your saying, we are damned before all devils. Heretic-master: Jacques, there is no doubt thereof. Jacques: How think you then my Lord, to escape that judgment of God, that you thus send us away to damnation, why do you not leave us in the hand of God to the end, for so long as we live here, one may always have hope of amendment, after that it seems to you that we are damned, for after death there is no hope more. Heretic-master: I do not drive you to damnation, for I am not he who judges you, and also I will not be guilty of your death. Jacques: My Lord, when Susanna was so unrighteously condemned to death, who bore then the punishment, the Judges or the witnesses? Heretic-master: Those who were guilty thereof. Jacques: My Lord, the Judges were rebuked of Daniel, but the Witnesses were rebuked and punished, Dan. 13. Heretic-master: Think you that I am witness of your matter, I am only come here to instruct you. Jacques: My Lord, yet I hold you for a principal witness, for upon your testimony the Judges shall refer me to death, or let me go free, for for this matter's sake you are sent here, and set by the King. Heretic-master: I do not desire, that they condemn you upon my testimony, and also I will not judge. Jacques: My lord, when the Judges shall ask you of me, what shall you then answer, shall you not say, that I am a heretic, and that I have deserved death? Heretic-master: No I. Jacques: My lord, I pray you, what shall you then say. Heretic-master: That you are deceived and seduced from the right way. Jacques: To be seduced, to err, or to be a heretic, my lord, it seems to me that it is all one thing. Heretic-master: Well then my Son, do not think, that I am come here for this, that I will refer or judge you to death, for you shall only be referred upon your confession, which you have made before the Commissioner, for as concerns my person, I do not desire that they refer you upon my word, and will also have nothing to do therewith. Jacques: My Lord, I have not so long time handled that practice, and dwelt seven or eight years in the Council, I know well what that may avail, but that I say this to you, is to warn you, that you do not defile yourself with my blood, for I know well for what matter you are committed here. Then he stood up, and went away. These same words hereabove related, we have afterwards yet often had with one another.

The seventh day of the same month of February, of the aforesaid year, 1558. On a Monday, I was again summoned before the same heretic-master, and coming before him, he greeted me, and asked: How stands it with you, have you still the ague? Jacques: It stands well with me, the Lord be praised thereof, and the ague has left me over three weeks or thereabouts. Heretic-master: How do you find yourself at rest in your conscience? Jacques: Very well, the Lord be thanked thereof. Thereafter he made to me a long relation, which were too long to

relate in brief, summa, it was this, that he prayed me very much, that I would want to return again to the holy Catholic church, and believe as a good Christian ought to believe, without searching so high things, and wanting to be so wise, &c. Whereupon I have answered: I search not, but only that which is permitted me to believe, and I am well content simply to believe, that which a good Christian is bound to believe. Heretic-master: You say well that you will believe as a good Christian, but yet you have a heretical faith. Jacques: I have no such, but my faith is only founded on that pure word of God, and were you willing to be content with that word of God, you would also be well content with my faith. Heretic-master: You allege well that word of God, but you have another understanding in your heart. Jacques: As we believe, so we speak, and since we allege to you the Scripture, which is God's word, for the testimony of our faith, why do you not hold yourself content therewith? for it belongs to God alone, that heart to search, and not to men. Heretic-master: What do you then believe of Jesus Christ, where has he taken his flesh? Jacques: Does the Scripture teach you that you must ask me that? Heretic-master: For this that Menno says, that he has brought his flesh from Heaven. Jacques: I have not heard him say. Heretic-master: And yet he believes so. Jacques: That faith of Menno is, that the word is made flesh, after that testimony, John 1. Or as your text reads in your Testament, is become flesh. Heretic-master: What do you believe thereof? Jacques: I believe, that Christ is the Son of the living God. Heretic-master: Where has he taken his flesh? Jacques: I know it not, but that he is born of the Father. Heretic-master: Do you then not believe that he has taken his flesh in the belly of the virgin Mary? Jacques: My lord, can you prove me, that Jesus Christ and his Apostles have compelled anyone to confess that, I shall confess it to you also, for when Peter confessed Christ, that he was the son of the living God, Christ did not ask him of whom he was made, but said, that he would build his Congregation upon this stone. Also when the eunuch of Candace said to Philip, that he believed, that Jesus Christ is the son of God, and desired upon this faith to be baptized, Philip was content, without searching, where he had taken his flesh. Heretic-master: It was not needful to inquire thereof then at that time, since there was yet no difficulty thereof. Jacques: What need is there also now? Heretic-master: For this that there are so many heretics. Jacques: In the times of the Apostles there were also heretics enough, but this is the cause, that Satan always brings forth some vain disputation, to destroy the understanding of men, and to draw them into errors. Heretic-master: So you will then not confess, that he has taken his flesh and blood in the Virgin? Jacques: I will not search that which goes above my understanding, namely, whereof the Son of God has been made, for that has been a wonderful work: But that you do not think, that I am a heretic, I confess him to be a Son of God in all manners, in power and might, in Spirit, in flesh and blood, generated of the own substance of one Father, namely, the eternal God, as the Scripture testifies to us: Who was from eternity with the Father, and when the time of the promises was fulfilled, that eternal Word became flesh, received in a Virgin, of the holy Spirit, and born of the same Virgin Mary. Heretic-master: He has taken his flesh and is made of our flesh, thereof you will not say, no? Jacques: It is enough for me that I believe thereof after the Scripture, without searching further. Heretic-master: Does the Scripture not say, that he

has taken our flesh? Jacques: I have never read it, and I desire not to dispute further, also you have said, that you will not dispute thereof, why do you ask me now so much thereof? Heretic-master: The cause is, to know whether your faith is not, as the faith of Menno Simons. Jacques: You have heard, that I do not receive the testimony of men, to found my faith thereupon. And seeing that he could get nothing else of me, he asked me: Which is your conclusion? Jacques: I have declared to you my faith, and thereupon I have made my conclusion, until the time, that the contrary be proved to me. Heretic-master: I have proved it to you enough, but you will not believe but your fantasy and stiff-neckedness, and have left the holy church. Jacques: My lord, I have not left the holy church, for had I known your church for that holy church, I would not have left it, to betake me to another. Heretic-master: Yet howbeit that Satan has thus deceived you, and that it seems to you that we are not the holy church, it is yet the same which has always been from the times of the Apostles, and has been maintained through the holy Teachers until now. Jacques: Since it is the same church, which was in the times of the Apostles, it must then have the same or like-formed Bishops and Shepherds, which were at that time. Heretic-master: Yes, so we have also. Jacques: Well then, my lord, show me one in your whole Congregation, only one Bishop or Shepherd, who is in doctrine and life unblameable, as Paul or Timothy, or also Titus, and I shall follow him with my whole heart. Heretic-master: Have you such Shepherds among you people? Jacques: My lord, you say that we are the assembly of Satan, and that your church or congregation is the same, which was in the times of the Apostles, so prove to me then that same people, through whom I shall know them. Heretic-master: Where think you to find such? for they had the holy Spirit, and now one receives him not. Jacques: No? how comes it then that Paul says, that whoso has not the Spirit of God, belongs not to him? Heretic-master: That has another understanding. Jacques: My lord, what understanding then? Heretic-master: He speaks there of those who did not walk after the spirit. Jacques: Well, for what else do I ask you, but for Bishops and Shepherds, who walk and are driven through the Spirit of God? who are holy, righteous, prudent, and unblameable in doctrine, in life and conversation, as Paul instructs, that they must be. Heretic-master: I could well name to you such Bishops or Shepherds, who are unblameable, but you do not know them. Jacques: Where are they? Heretic-master: In Italy and in Spain. Jacques: Is the congregation of God there, and not here? Heretic-master: There is also a Cardinal or bishop in England, who truly is a man unblameable in doctrine and conversation. Jacques: My lord, do release me from these fetters, and let me go, and I shall do all diligence to come to him, to see whether it is also so. He answered me laughing, No, no, you must believe that which one tells you. Jacques: My lord, there stands written: Cursed is the man, who trusts himself on men: Shall I then trust myself only upon your word? Heretic-master: Think you that I lie therein? Jacques: That I do not say, but I desire first to see, before I believe it. Heretic-master: Yes, yes, you may not now. Jacques: Since I may not see it, I can also not believe it. Heretic-master: What will you so much mark upon their conversation? since they have the same Doctrine of the Apostles? Jacques: That is yet to be proved to me, and also it were hard for you to do, to prove to me through the Scripture, that they have the same Doctrine of the Apostles.

Heretic-master: Yet they have it, but you are hardened, and cannot comprehend it. Jacques: That is for lack of the Scriptures, and are they the same trees of the roots of the Apostles, show me the fruits, that I may know them. Heretic-master: May you then know that faith by the works, whether it is good or evil? Jacques: My lord, our Master has thus instructed us, that we shall know the false Prophets by their fruits, for when we find grapes on the vineyard, we dare not say, as you people do, that we have plucked them from thorns. He said to me laughing: Say we that? Jacques: Do you not? do you not say that we are evil, bad, useless Trees, which one must throw into the fire? and yet you have confessed to me, that our fruits are good, were it not our faith. Heretic-master: It is well true, you do good works before men, but that inward avails not, for your faith is not good. Jacques: Our works spring out of our faith, the vessel can give nothing else, than that which is in it, and therefore the Lord names, a generation of vipers, those, who confessed that the fruit was good and the tree evil, saying: Make the Tree good, and his fruit good, or the Tree evil, and his fruit evil. Heretic-master: Therefore you will say, that our Bishops and Shepherds may have no good faith, unless their works are good? Jacques: My Lord, I may answer with Paul: They say that they know God, but they deny with the works, since they are so abominable and disobedient and reprobate to all good works, and such I will not follow for Shepherds. Heretic-master: No, no Jacques, they are not so abominable as it seems to you, howbeit that they are also Sinners, as we all are. Jacques: My lord, you know better than you say, for I would be ashamed to uncover the stains of shame of such a people, who boast to be the light, and the Salt of the Earth, and Leaders of the blind and ignorant. Heretic-master: What shame is that? say boldly. Jacques: My lord, since you desire of me, that I say it to you, you yourself well know, what inhuman fornication, as Sodom and Gomorrah, shameful to tell, those of Rome do, namely, the Pope, who boasts himself a holy man, and God on Earth, also the Cardinals and Bishops who are there, I leave standing the pride, the pompousness and godlessness as such holy people do. Heretic-master: It is well true, there are some who do great abomination before God, so that it is an abomination of some, but Jacques, for the evil's will, one must not condemn the good, they are not all evil, there are also righteous. Jacques: I believe that the righteous are thinly sown, for I have had my conversation for the most part of my youth among Priests, Canons, and Monks, but the overflowing evil, which I have seen there, were shame to relate. Heretic-master: My son, not all, not all. Jacques: My lord, as much as I ever have seen and known, I do not know, that I have seen one walking after the rule which is commanded to a Bishop or Shepherd, as you yourself better know, what has happened over fourteen days, or three weeks hitherto, here in this city N. in the convent of the Jacobins. It happened, that the Monks or Jacobins drove their Prior out of the Cloister, because he reproved them of their fornication and evil. Heretic-master: Jacques, howbeit that there have been godless Popes, Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, Monks, there have in contrary also been good, do you not know that the good little grain is not without chaff? No, no, there are good little grains and good Shepherds, howbeit that you do not know them. Jacques: Show me then only one upright Shepherd, such as I have demanded of you, after the Scripture, and I shall follow him. Heretic-master: Were it that I named them to you, you

yet do not know them, and will not believe me, but were it also so, namely, that they were evil, yet they have that true Faith. Jacques: I hold to that testimony of Paul, that the light has no communion with the darkness. Heretic-master: Will you then say, that a man who does evil works, may not have that true faith? Jacques: Is it that a man, who has received the knowledge, betakes himself to do evil, his faith shall not long endure, or it shall well soon be darkened. Heretic-master: Who has told you that? Jacques: Paul writes to the Romans, that some held the truth in unrighteousness, since that which of God might be known, God had revealed to them, and although they had known God, they have not honored him, as God, nor thanked, therefore God has given them over after the desires of their hearts, fulfilled with the darkness. Heretic-master: Paul speaks there of the Philosophers, who took their marking from the Heaven, Stars and Planets, &c. Jacques: That is all one to me, of whom he speaks, they were Philosophers or others, but Paul proves, that through their works and unthankfulness, their hearts have been fulfilled with darkness: And thereto he says also: Therefore they have not received the love of the truth to be saved, God shall send to them strong delusions, and so it is also happened. Heretic-master: Judas Iscariot, did he not do an evil work, delivering the Son of God? Jacques: The Scripture says, that it had been better, that he had not been born. Heretic-master: Yet he had a true faith, what say you thereof? Jacques: Had he that true faith before or after? Heretic-master: Before and also after, howbeit that he yet was a Thief. Jacques: Howbeit that his heart was evil, he yet had a good conversation, so that they dared not think, that it was he, who would do that work, but asked all: Is it I, is it I? Heretic-master: See also Demas, had he not that true faith? yet he had his heart in the things of this world, and notwithstanding Paul has held him for a Brother. Jacques: It is well true, that Paul has held him a time long for a Brother and fellow-worker in the work of the Lord, but after he had said, that Demas had left him, having loved this present world, he names him no more brother nor fellow-worker. Heretic-master: That you do not know. Jacques: The Scripture touches not thereof. Heretic-master: That, that, neither gives nor takes, you must believe that a sinful man may well have the faith and the Gospel, think you that one must not therefore hear him, and believe his word? Jacques: My lord, wherein do you reprove Paul of sin, after he had received the knowledge of the truth? Heretic-master: Stands there not written: Whoso says that he has no sin, makes God a liar? Jacques: It is so, but there stands also written in the same Epistle: Whoso is born of God, does no sin, for his seed remains in him, and cannot sin, because he is born of God. And Paul said: How shall we live the sin, since we are dead to the sin? Heretic-master: It is a question which Paul there asks, but think you therefore, that he did not sin? Jacques: You know that Paul said, that Christ lived in him, did Christ then do the sin. Also he admonished those of Corinth, that they should follow him, as he had followed Christ, and takes God and men to testimony, how holily, and righteously, and unblameably he had walked among them. Of what sin shall you then accuse Paul my lord? Heretic-master: Yet he was a Sinner, that you may not deny. Jacques: I will not deny it, for he himself says, that he was the principal Sinner, blasphemer and persecutor, in unbelief: But not after he had received the knowledge. Well then, but that which I ask you after, that is after Shepherds, who are unblameable in

life, doctrine, and conversation, for I know well that all men are born in sin, but whoso remains in the sin, has not known God. Heretic-master: You must not so understand that place, for a sinful man has well knowledge of God. Jacques: Yes with the mouth, else it must not be true, that the Apostle Peter has said, that he who has not the fear of God, and the brotherly and lively love, that the same is blind, and feels with the hand after the way. Heretic-master: No, he says that he is like the blind. Jacques: My lord, with leave, he says, that such a blind feels after the way, it is a sign that he has not yet found it, shall I then follow such people? Heretic-master: Your Menno, is he so righteous, holy and unblameable? Jacques: I have not so much conversed with him, to have found anything in him, that were blameworthy. Heretic-master: With whom have you then had your conversation, your Lenaert, is there not to say upon? is he unblameable? Jacques: My lord, do you know anything to say upon him, or to reprove him in any matters? Heretic-master: I do not know the rascal. Jacques: Then do not defame him, for you should have enough to do therewith, to prove that he is such, as you name him. Heretic-master: That were not hard for me to do, for he has seduced folks enough, to be so named. Jacques: My lord, see well to it, that you yourself are not one, who seduces that people. Heretic-master: Is it not one born out of Zeeland? and of a village? And he named to me the Village, but it is forgotten to me. Jacques: I do not know of where he was born. Heretic-master: What figure was it of a man, and what beard had he, and what clothing had he? Jacques: My lord, you ask still well diligently after him, I think that you would gladly betray him, do you know no other way, my lord? Heretic-master: I desired him no evil. Jacques: I hear well that you say it, yet you would well desire him here in my place, would you not my lord? Heretic-master: Yes I, were it that he would convert. Jacques: And were he not willing to convert to your understanding, would you not want to set him at the fire? Heretic-master: I would let the Judges meddle therewith. Jacques: Well, would you then wish him no evil, would you well want that one did that to you? Thereafter seeing that he could not answer me, and that there were two or three persons, who hearkened thereto, before the door, besides the jailer, who is always with the prisoner, he began to relate to me a long relation, saying, that I should not search so far in the Scripture, but must let myself be instructed by more learned than I, and that I must believe, that a sinful man and evil of life, might as well have the faith as another, and hear his words, and not do after his works. Jacques: Must I believe that by the Scripture or without Scripture? Heretic-master: I have proved it to you by the Scripture. Jacques: By what Scripture? Heretic-master: Of Judas and Demas, who had the faith, and were yet evil of life. Jacques: My lord, it seems to me that our words are child's play, have I not answered you thereupon, and proved to you, that it does not befit, that we shall take those who are fallen from the faith, for Leaders and Shepherds? Heretic-master: Yes, where think you to find unblameable Shepherds, as you desire them? Do you not see that the world is filled with knavery? Jacques: Since you know none, I know well, and such I will follow. Heretic-master: Where are they? Jacques: They are unknown to you, do you not know, that when the Prophet thought, that all the righteous in Israel were killed by Achab and Jesabel, that the Lord said, that there were yet seven thousand left over, who had not bowed their knees

before the Idol Baal. Heretic-master: That was for the persecution's sake at that time, that they were so scattered. Jacques: So it is also yet today for the persecution's sake, that they are scattered, and unknown to the world. Heretic-master: But must you for a Menno, or any other, for a man alone, who seems to be of good conversation, must you therefore follow him, and forsake all the other Bishops and Pastors, who do not walk so right? Jacques: My lord, think you, had Achab the King of Israel forsaken the counsel of the four hundred Prophets, and followed the single counsel of the poor Micheas, that he had done ill? Heretic-master: No he surely, for Micheas was a Prophet of God. Jacques: Did the others not say that they were also? and gave the poor Micheas a blow on the cheek, for this, that he prophesied against them, and said to him: Think you that the Spirit of God is departed from us? Heretic-master: They boasted of the holy Spirit, but with wrong, for they were it not. Jacques: Achab did not know that, for for this, that Micheas alone had prophesied against the four hundred Prophets, the poor Man of God had to be led into prison, well hardly to water and to bread, until Achab should return from the battle of Ramoth in Gilead, but he found that the counsel of the four hundred Prophets, cost him that life, as Micheas had foretold him. Heretic-master: Those are Scriptures which are happened in past times. Jacques: Paul says, that it is all written to our instruction: and it happens also yet so today. Heretic-master: Well then, you will then not hear nor follow any Shepherds, unless they do the same, which they teach, no? Jacques: No I, for there stands written, that the light of the body is the eye, is it that your eye is evil, the whole body shall be dark. Heretic-master: You will then not do after the counsel of Jesus Christ, namely, after their words, and not after their works? Jacques: To whom does he speak that? Heretic-master: To his disciples. Jacques: Of whom does he speak that? Heretic-master: Jesus Christ says: On the seat of Moses sit the Scribes and Pharisees, what they command you that do, but do not after their works. Jacques: What seat was that, of wood or of stone? Heretic-master: On the seat that was there. Jacques: How might so much people sit on one seat? was it so great? or was it not of the Law, whereof Christ would speak? Heretic-master: It is a matter of the Law which they proclaimed. Jacques: The Law was a command of God, and not of men, and when Christ said that, he did not choose them to feed or to lead his flock. Heretic-master: Since he said: Do after their words, and not after their works, did he not take them for Shepherds? Jacques: Have you not read, what the Lord says? Unless your righteousness be more, than of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not come into the Kingdom of the Heavens. See there they are already outside, how shall they then lead another? Heretic-master: Do after their words only. Jacques: Have you no other Pastors among you, to proclaim that word of God, but such Scribes and Pharisees, to whom so many maledictions of God are promised? Does the Prophet not say: Blessed is the man, who has not sat by the Godless? And Christ admonishes us, to beware of their leaven. Heretic-master: You must not so understand that, but you must believe, that a godless man may well speak good things. Jacques: There stands written: That praise is not comely in the mouth of the Godless, for this, that they are not sent of God. And how shall he preach, is it that he is not sent? Heretic-master: It is well true, it is not comely, but he does not say, that it is not good. Jacques: Is it not comely, it is not

acceptable, for an unrepentant man, what repentance may he proclaim? for a Thief who admonishes his fellow, to steal no more, shall his word bring fruit? shall his fellow not say: Is it ill done, why do you it yourself? You Hypocrites, do out of your eyes the beam, and then you shall see the mote in my eyes. Heretic-master: You twist all Scripture in contrary after your sense and understanding, you must not so found upon yourself, but give your understanding captive under the understanding of those who are wiser than you. Jacques: My lord, I speak always with leave, that, if a better be proved to me, that I will follow. Thereafter he stood up, and said: It is time that I go hence, see that you well consider, and pray God diligently. Jacques: I know of no considering, since you can prove me nothing else. Heretic-master: What should I prove you? Jacques: I have prayed you, that you would show me, what Shepherds I must follow after, and whether they are such, as the Scripture ordains, that they ought to be in life, doctrine and conversation. Heretic-master: Follow after those whom your parents have followed. And then he went from me. Here I took an end of writing, because I was in the end overrun by many people and gainsayers.

§ This Confession of Jacques is translated out of French into Netherlandish Dutch.

A song of Jacques
To the tune of Vanden xliiij. Psalm. Ofte, Die Vogelkens inder muyten.

Very wondrous, O Lord,
are Your works renowned;
You protect, near and far,
all who keep Your teaching.
When storm and tempest come
and assail that house,
strengthened through Your Spirit,
they stand fast against the roaring.

Jacques was seized with cunning,
treacherously taken,
led before the sophists
at the city of Leeuwarden.
There God gave him to speak
very much at that hour;
abundantly appeared
wisdom through his mouth.

After many slanderous words
which the councilor began,
before all who listened, Councilor:
"Is it not a wondrous thing

that we let ourselves be led astray
thus?"
Jacques:
"Yes, my lord." Councilor:
"I speak of you, who depart
from the holy Church's teaching."

"You people let yourselves be deceived
by the fine idlers,
who fly along the lands,
beggars, vile folk."
Jacques could not endure
hearing the scolding words,
for he was not deceived
but stood on God's Word. Jacques:

"On men we do not lay
the ground
of our faith surely;
according to Jeremiah's saying,
cursed
is he,
the man who puts his trust
in men, brittle as glass,
and for his arm holds
the flesh made of ashes." Councilor:

"Speak out your faith
of the sacrament of the altar." Jacques:
"Do you mean that breaking of the bread?" Councilor:
"Yes," he spoke pertinently. Jacques:
"I believe and confess it,
as it is ordained
by Christ in former times,
our worthy Savior.

"And in the same manner
used by
the apostles,
and as the after-left
Scripture of Paul
reveals." Councilor:
"Speak your mind more at length."

Jacques:
"As it is written;
I desire not to gloss
God's delicate words." Heretic-master:

"Say, will you still confess
that you received baptism
from your teacher in former times?" Jacques:
"My word shall stand;
yes, yes, as I have confessed,
I confess still openly
before you all on the spot:
yes and no is not with me."

The heretic-master, as if blinded,
suspected before many
that the child should not partake
of this sacrament. Jacques:
"Left behind to be used
are the sacraments
for the holy vessels
in God's fine congregation.

"For those who have of both —
ears for hearing,
and hearts to discern
with understanding — for those it is,
and not for the little children,
innocent, passing along,
whom one cannot instruct
with any reason."

They had very much discourse
over this proposition;
Jacques has freely confessed,
using Scripture always,
that priests, mass-merchants,
after the wise midwives' baptism,
were all rebaptizers
with all their heap.

Herewith we close this song;
do take it in good part.

God will, through His virtues,
keep us to the last
from the false prophets
coming in
sheep's clothing;
Lord, make the secrets of Your truth
known to us quickly.

The confession of a woman named Claesken, who for the testimony of Jesus Christ has left her life, Anno 1559.

Question and answer between the commissioner and Claesken
The commissioner first asked me of my name, whence I was, and of my age, and yet more other such things. Secondly he asked me: Are you baptized? Claesken: Yes. Commissioner: Who baptized you? Claesken: Gielis of Aachen. Commissioner: That seducer, he himself is gone off from his faith. How did he do, when he baptized you? Claesken: He baptized me in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Commissioner: Where did you receive baptism? Claesken: At Workum in the field. Commissioner: Was there yet more people by? Claesken: Yes. Commissioner: What people was it? Claesken: It is forgotten to me. Commissioner: By what cause came you there? Claesken: It is forgotten to me. That I might well say of both with the truth. Commissioner: Are your children not baptized? Claesken: My two young children not. Commissioner: Why have you not let your children be baptized? Claesken: Because I delight in them so well, as the Lord has given them to me. Commissioner: Why did you delight in Abraham and Sicke so well, and not in Douwe? You have indeed let Douwe be baptized. Claesken: Then I did not know it. Commissioner: What did you not know then? Claesken: That which I know now. Commissioner: What do you know now? Claesken: That the Lord has given me to know. Commissioner: What has the Lord given you to know? Claesken: That I cannot understand in the Scripture that such is fitting. Commissioner: How long have you not been to church? Claesken: In nine or ten years not.

These are the questions which he has asked me; but he had many more words, and when I did not answer him so readily, he said that I had the dumb devil in me; the devil transformed himself into an angel of light in us, so we were with the heretics all. Then he read the articles to me, as I had confessed them, and said to me: It should come before the lords; desired I it, he would write it yet otherwise. I said: You need not write it otherwise.

Question and answer between the heretic-master and Claesken
Heretic-master: Why have you let yourself be baptized? Claesken: The Scripture testifies of a new life. John cries first of repentance, Christ Himself also, the apostles after: they taught the people to do repentance and amendment, and then they should let themselves be baptized;

so I have betaken myself to repentance and amendment, and have let myself be baptized. Thereagainst he said not much.

Heretic-master: Why have you not let your children be baptized? Claesken: I cannot understand in the Scripture that such is fitting. Heretic-master: David says indeed: In sins am I born, in sins has my mother conceived me. Therefore, because the children are born in inherited sin, they must be baptized, shall they be saved. Claesken: May a man be saved through an outward sign, so Christ has died in vain.

Heretic-master: There it stands, John 3: One must be born again of the water and the Spirit; therefore the children must also be baptized. Claesken: Christ does not speak that to the children, but to the understanding; therefore I have betaken myself to the rebirth; we know that the children are in the hands of the Lord. The Lord said: Let the children come to me, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.

Heretic-master: Stephen's household was baptized, there might by adventure well have been children among them. Claesken: We do not stand on adventure; we have a certain assurance. Thereagainst he said also not much.

Heretic-master: What do you hold of the holy church? Claesken: Thereof I hold much. Heretic-master: Why do you then not go to church? Claesken: Of your church-going I hold nothing. Heretic-master: Do you believe well that God is almighty? Claesken: Yes, that I believe well. Heretic-master: Do you believe then also well that Christ consecrates Himself and comes into the bread? Paul says: The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? And the cup which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? Claesken: I know well how Paul says, and so I believe indeed.

Heretic-master: Christ said: Take, eat, this is my body, and Paul likewise. Claesken: I know well how Christ and Paul say, and so I believe.

Heretic-master: Do you believe well that Christ consecrates Himself and comes into the bread? Claesken: Christ sits at the right hand of His Father; He comes not under men's teeth. Heretic-master: If you abide by that faith, you must eternally sink into the pit of hell, so say all the heretics; and Gielis of Aachen has led you astray, he himself is gone off from his faith, because he confessed that he had erred. Claesken: I stand not on Gielis, nor on any men, but alone on Christ; He is our Foundation, whereon we have built ourselves, as Christ teaches us in the Gospel: Whoso hears my words and does them, I shall liken him to a wise man, who built his house on the rock; though there come storms, and fall against that house, yet it falls not. These are now the storms which fall against our house, but Christ is our assurance, He shall well keep us.

Heretic-master: You understand it not; there are yet many other Scriptures, whereof you know nothing. Claesken: We need no other Scriptures than that holy Gospel, which Christ

Himself with His blessed mouth has spoken to us, and sealed with His blood; can we keep that, we shall well be saved.

Heretic-master: You should let yourself be instructed; the holy fathers have instituted church-going over fifteen hundred years ago. Claesken: The holy fathers have not had such holiness; those are men's commandments and institutions; the apostles have also not used such holiness; I have not read thereof.

Heretic-master: Will you be wiser than the holy church? Claesken: I desire to do nothing against the holy church; I have betaken myself under the obedience of the holy church.

Heretic-master: You should think: Will I now know better than the holy fathers over fifteen hundred years? You should think that you are simple. Claesken: Though I am simple before men, I am not simple in the knowledge of the Lord. Do you not know that the Lord thanked His Father, that He had hidden it from the wise and understanding, and had given it to the simple and innocent to know?

Once there were also two monks with him, who should also instruct me; they knew not much to say, but that we were people of broken minds, unfit for the faith: we learned always, and could never come to the knowledge of the truth. I said: When the day of the Lord comes, you shall well find it otherwise. See to it, that you be not then those who shall say: These are they whom we had in scorn; see, how they are now reckoned among the children of God, and their portion is among the saints. Then they said: See, she condemns us. I said: I condemn you not, but I say: You shall look to yourselves. Now our life is accounted for madness, and our end without honor; but when the day of the Lord comes, it shall well be found otherwise. The beginning and the end was that I had the devil in me, and that I was led astray. I said: Is Christ then a seducer? He said: No, Christ is no seducer. I said: So am I also not led astray; I seek nor desire nothing else, than to fear the Lord with my whole heart, not knowingly to transgress one tittle of His commandments. When he had called to me yet longer beforehand, he said then: I can now say nothing else; you may consider. I said: I dare not consider otherwise; I know well that I have the truth at hand.

When I then came before him again, he said: Yes, Claesken, how have you considered? Claesken: I have considered, that I desire to abide thereby, whereto the Lord has called me. Heretic-master: The devil has called you; he transforms himself into an angel of light in you people.

The sixth time when he examined me, he asked me: When Christ held His Supper with His apostles, did He then give them His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink? Claesken: He gave them bread and wine, and He gave them His body for redemption.

Heretic-master: Christ says indeed plainly: Take, eat, this is my flesh; thereagainst you may indeed say nothing. Claesken: Paul says: I have received from the Lord, that which I have given you: The Lord Jesus, in the night when He was betrayed, took the bread, and gave

thanks, and broke it, and gave it to His apostles, and spoke: Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. And after the Supper He took the cup likewise, saying: This cup is a new Testament in my blood; as often as you drink it, do it in remembrance of me; and as often as you eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, you shall proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Thus Christ has left His Supper behind to us, that we shall remember His death thereby, that He has given His body for us, and shed His blood for us. Such a Supper I well desire to hold with God's people, and no other.

He remained by his theme: one must eat Christ's flesh, and drink His blood; Christ's words and Paul's words brought it so plainly along.

Claesken: Because the words stand so plainly, therefore I can well understand them; but it is as Paul says, that those who do not convert themselves to the Lord, they have a covering before their hearts; but whoso converts himself to the Lord, from him the covering is taken off from his heart. We have betaken ourselves to the Lord; therefore nothing is hidden from us.

Heretic-master: John in the 6th; there Christ says also plainly that one must eat His flesh and drink His blood. Claesken: There it stands also, when the Jews murmured and said: How can this one give us His flesh to eat? Then Christ said: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, you have no life in you. Again He says: Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, he has eternal life. He said: Flesh and blood is of no use; the words that I speak, they are spirit and life. Whoso believes in God, and walks in all righteousness, they are temples of God, wherein God will dwell and walk, as Paul testifies.

The seventh time, when he asked me, he said: Do you not believe that the apostles ate Christ's flesh? Claesken: Christ took the bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and His body He gave them for redemption. Heretic-master: Do you believe nothing else? Claesken: I believe nothing else than Christ has spoken. Heretic-master: So I testify over you, that I am clean of your blood; your blood come upon your own head. Claesken: Therewith I am well content. Heretic-master: Herewith I give you over to the lords.

Then he examined me yet once more, and asked me: Do you still not believe that the apostles ate Christ's flesh? Claesken: I have told you. Heretic-master: Say it now. Claesken: I shall say it to you now no more. Heretic-master: Do you still remain alone in baptism? Claesken: You know indeed well that one ought to baptize the penitent. Heretic-master: That is all true, when a Jew comes, who is not yet baptized. Do you still remain alone in infant baptism? Claesken: Yes I. Heretic-master: Do you believe then nothing else? Claesken: I believe nothing else than Christ has commanded. Heretic-master: So I testify over you, that you must be tormented eternally in the pit of hell. Claesken: How dare you condemn me so horribly, whereas the judgment yet belongs to the Lord alone; I am not frightened thereby; I know well better — when the Lord's day comes, it shall well be found otherwise. Then I

asked him: What says my husband? Heretic-master: Your husband remains also still alone; the Lord must enlighten you. Claesken: We are already enlightened; the Lord be praised.

Of my baptism he made not many words, nor of infant baptism; but all his talking was that one must eat Christ's flesh and drink His blood, and of the institution over fifteen hundred years ago, and that I was simple, and that I had not even once read the Testament through. I said: What do you think, that we run upon the uncertain? It is not hidden from us what stands in the New Testament. We leave our dear children, whom I would not leave for the whole world, and we set all we have thereupon; should we yet run upon the uncertain? We seek nothing else than our salvation; you may indeed not prove to us with the holy Scripture, that we use and believe one tittle against the Lord's word. It was all with him that we had it all from the devil, and that we had the proud devil in us. I said: We know that the proud are thrust from the throne. He had such long discourse, that it sometimes seemed to him as if I would listen to him; so I had to speak sometimes, because I would not have it seem so to him. I could not bear it from him, so horribly as he spoke against the truth.

Here follows a letter of the aforenamed Claesken, to her friends after the flesh and also after the spirit, written out of prison, in the year 1559, the 14th of March; and at the same time or thereabout, with her dear husband and her brother Jacques, she was put to death for the testimony of Jesus.

May the Lord, through His great grace and mercy, grant all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, that they may be satisfied.

My hearty friends, N., my hearty prayer and desire is once more to you, that you would well look through and search out the Scripture (which is holy), and learn to fear the Lord of heart; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; the foolish despise wisdom and the instruction of wisdom.

Wisdom preaches; abroad on the streets she lets her voice be heard; at the head of the streets she cries; in the doors of the city gates she brings her words forth, saying: How long shall the people love childishness? And how long shall the foolish desire shameful things for themselves, and hate wisdom and knowledge? Turn you to my chastisement; see, I shall bring forth my spirit to you, and I shall show you my words. For I have called, and you have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and there was none that looked thereon. You have despised all my counsel, and my chastisement you have not regarded; therefore I shall also laugh at you in your destruction, and mock you, when an unforeseen calamity shall come upon you, and destruction shall overtake you as a storm and wind, when there shall come upon you affliction and destruction or distress. Then shall they call upon me, and I shall not hear them; early in the morning shall they rise up, and not find me, because they have hated my teaching, and have not received the fear of the Lord, nor followed it, and have slandered my counsel, and despised all my chastisement. Therefore they shall eat the fruits of their way, and be satisfied with their counsel; but whoso hears me shall rest without distress, and use abundance, when all fear of evil shall be taken away.

See, my dear friends, take this to heart, that the Lord will not hear those who now do not fear Him, and how precious the fear of the Lord is, to whoso will receive it, for it is to be likened to nothing. The fear of the Lord is glory and gladness; it is the crown of rejoicing. The fear of the Lord brings delight into the heart, and it shall give gladness and joy in length of days; and to those who fear the Lord it shall be well in the uttermost, and in the day of his dying he shall be blessed. The love of God is honorable; those to whom wisdom reveals itself in the sight, they love her through the sight, and in the knowledge of her good deeds. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, and the fear of the Lord is godliness; the knowledge of godliness shall keep the heart and make it righteous; gladness and joy shall it give. To the God-fearing it shall be well in the day of life, and in his uttermost he shall be blessed. The perfection of wisdom is the fear of God; the fear of God is a crown of wisdom, fulfilling the will and the fruit of salvation. The root of wisdom is the fear of God; but to sinners wisdom is a cursing. The fear of the Lord drives out sin, for he who is without fear may not be justified. Be not unbelieving, for wisdom shall not come into an evil-willing soul, nor into a body that is subject to sins.

My heartily dear friends, take to heart how great the difference is between those who fear God and those who do not. Search out the Scripture well, that you be not like those cities whereof Christ says in the Gospel, because they did not take His mighty deeds to heart, which happened in their presence; so Christ testified over them, that it should be more tolerable for those of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such cities. Therefore, dear friends, the Lord shows you now also such mighty deeds through us before your eyes; let it be a strength to you, as Paul says: that many brothers have taken a confidence in the Lord through his bonds, and are become bolder, to speak the word without fear.

My dear friends, mark well: when the Lord did His mighty deeds, He did them not for one man's sake alone, as we read in John, when He raised Lazarus from the dead, but that the people should see His mighty deeds and believe in Him; although there but some believed in Him, and the some were offended in Him, and said: Has He made the blind seeing, could He not then do that this one had not died? Thus it goes today also with those who do not believe; for though they well see how strong and mighty the Lord is with us, it is yet an offense to them, and they say that we do it of stubbornness. And when we then say that the righteous must be persecuted, they say that we are persecuted for rebaptism. Thus it is an offense to them; but to those who believe God, it is well known that we must suffer for righteousness; to them it shall (I hope) well be a strength, and to us a proving, and to eternal salvation, through the grace of God.

My dear friends, take to heart how great the glory that is promised to those who fear the Lord with their whole hearts, and how great distress shall come upon all souls of men who have not been obedient to the Gospel; these shall suffer pain, eternal destruction, from the

face of the Lord. Therefore betake yourselves to obedience of the truth, and change your minds, that you may prove which is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.

And have your meditation day and night in the law of the Lord, and be also not hindered from praying continually, as the Scripture shows us in many places: Whoso prays, he obtains; whoso knocks, to him it is opened. Therefore, my dear friends, betake your hearts to change; so the Lord shall give to you sooner than you pray Him; for blessed are they who are of good will. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Therefore have with sorrow a longing after the Lord, and say: O Lord, show me Your ways, and teach me Your paths; lead me in Your truth, and teach me; for You are God, who helps me; daily I wait for You. Remember, Lord, Your goodness, and Your mercies, which have been from the world's beginning; remember not the sins of my youth, and my transgression, but remember me for Your great grace and mercy's sake. The Lord is good and upright; therefore He teaches sinners on the way; He leads the miserable right, and teaches the miserable His way.

Thus, my heartily dear friends, do yet true repentance, and confess your sins before the Lord with your whole heart; the Lord is found by those who have a broken heart, and a stricken mind. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that you may be exalted in eternity. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord, who will lead you in all truth.

My hearty dear friends, take it to heart, for out of heartily fervent love it is done, which I have to your souls; because I am so sure and assured, that there is no other way whereby one may be saved. Therefore I warn you out of a pure heart; it shall also in eternity not be found otherwise.

Therefore, though some have much to prattle or to talk, they do it therefore that they will not take the cross of Christ upon them, and be persecuted therewith, as Paul speaks thereof; but take you for an example, that you shall follow Christ's footsteps, and that the whole Scripture compels us, that we shall betake and prepare ourselves to suffering, which Paul also says: If we suffer with Him, we shall also rejoice with Him; as Christ's suffering comes much upon us, so comes much comfort to us through Jesus Christ. And as we read that all holy men of God are proved through much affliction and suffering, and how gladly they would receive that suffering: yea, they rejoiced so highly that they were worthy to suffer for the name of God.

But those who do not love the Lord aright, they want to be all discharged from that suffering, and have this temporal life dearer than they have their Lord and God; although Christ says: Whoso seeks to keep his life, he shall lose it; but whoso loses his life for my name and for the Gospel's sake, he shall keep it in eternity.

Not that one must all die for the word of the Lord; but the mind must so stand, that we would rather die than that we should knowingly and willingly transgress one of the Lord's commandments. Therefore Christ says: Whoso loves anything dearer than me, he is not worthy of me.

Therefore, my hearty friends, whom I love with my whole heart, pay heed to no men's saying, but look only on Christ Jesus, how He has gone before us in affliction and suffering. Love your Lord your God with your whole heart, and with all your strength and power. Yea, though the whole world then stood and stormed against you, no one may hurt you, when you have God for a Father, and when you have a true love to God, and to His saints; for love can do all, and where there is no true love, there it shall well soon be in pieces, when persecution and distress comes. But whoso goes to commend himself to the Lord, and has love, to him nothing is heavy. Had I not experienced it myself, it were not possible for me to know that it is so light. Therefore Christ says: My yoke is sweet, and my burden is light.

Yea, dear friends, so stands my mind still, and so dear I have my Lord and my God: though I might by a thought keep my life, and I knew that it did not please the Lord, I would yet rather die than think that thought. Not that I boast; the Lord knows well how vile I have confessed myself before Him; but through the great grace and mercy, and love shown to us, that we are chosen to His heavenly kingdom — now I feel first in me the unspeakable grace and mercy of God, and the love, and how we ought therefore to love Him again; yea, so high and great are the grace and the love before my eyes, that my sorrow is turned into gladness.

I must further tell you of my sorrow, which I had before I was imprisoned: now I mark upon the apostle's words, that I have had godly affliction, and that godly sorrow works to salvation. Yea, such sorrow I had sometimes, that I did not know whither, that I sometimes cried with a loud voice to the Lord, and said: O Lord, yet crush for me that old heart, and give me a new heart, and mind, that I may be found upright before Your eyes.

I said to my dear husband: When I measure my life by the Scripture, it is as if I shall go to the ground. I may well say with David: My sins are gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are become too heavy for me. I said: My dear husband, yet pray the Lord for me; I am so assaulted: the more I set my thoughts on the Lord, the more the tempter comes at me with other thoughts. And so I cried then to the Lord, and said: O Lord, You know indeed well that I desire nothing else than to fear You. My husband comforted me then sometimes; he thought I did nothing that might not well stand before the Lord. I said: I have not my first love; therefore I grieve that I cannot sleep. There is no hope of dying to sins; I fear to live long. Though I set myself yet so much after amendment, I remain all equally vile. I miserable man, whither shall I go?

I would have written you somewhat more, but then the message came to me that we should travel. My hearty dear friends, so glad a sentence my husband and I, and our brother, have

heard; we showed one another such love, and had such a glad mind. I thanked the Lord so greatly, that all the lords heard it; they hushed me, but I spoke all equally boldly. And when we had heard our sentence, we spoke all three, and said that they had condemned the righteous blood, with more other words. My dear husband spoke so kindly, and said so much; yea, we thanked the Lord with a glad countenance, that all the people looked on. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord. Hasten, that you may come to us, and that we may live with one another in eternity.

This is yet another letter or confession of the same Claesken, now set here anew. When we were before the whole full council, we were addressed by the council's procurator general, who held before the lords in general what we had confessed before the commissioner, and made a long speech, how long we had not been to church, and that we had not let our children be baptized, and that we were rebaptizers, and said: according to the placard we had forfeited our lives, and our goods were fallen into the king's hands. Thus he summoned us before the lords, and addressed us on life and goods; and when he had told them all how and where we had received our baptism, he asked us whether we would abide by our baptism. We spoke boldly and undaunted, with a glad mind, that we had received one baptism after the Lord's command; our brother said: If one could prove him otherwise with the Scripture of the Lord, he desired not to do against the Lord's word; and my husband said he desired to abide by his baptism; and I said as our brother had spoken, that we had received our baptism after the Lord's word. So he then said every time: After your opinion.

Then he asked us whether we desired no advocate. Our brother said: The Lord is our advocate; therewith we went away. We went merrily and gladly from the council, although it would cost us our lives. Since that time my husband and our brother have once been before the pastor of oude Hoef, and on the Sunday in the fast we were all three before the heretic-master, our brother first, who had a long discourse with him, and proved to him with the Scripture, that he knew not to say against it, except that it was of the devil; for in hell there were many, and ours should be in the worst; then my husband was before him, and then I was fetched.

When I came before him, he began of infant baptism, and of my baptism, and that one must eat Christ's flesh, and many other. I said: You need not begin any preamble; it is not given me to dispute with you. I tell you flat out, I desire to abide thereby, whereto the Lord has called me. He said: The devil had called me. I said: Is the devil now so of nature, that he leaves off the evil, and does the good? It goes with us as the prophet says: Whoso turns himself from evil, he must be everyone's prey; so it has gone with us from the first day that we left off our vain evil life; then we were hated of all men, as Christ says: You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. He says: Fear not those who kill the body, and have no power to do more; but fear Him who may condemn soul and body in hell. Yea, Him we fear alone.

He would have it all: I should tell him of infant baptism, and of eating Christ's flesh. I said: It is not worthy that I give you answer to your questions; so uselessly you ask; I have told

you enough; I tell you no more; we have had enough thereof. I said: Wake up and mark; you see indeed well that it is in no man's doing, that the Lord gives us to do, that we may leave our dear children — yea, that we so gladly will leave our life — for the praise of God. I said: See to it what you do; we are God's holy people, God's elect; though all your learned men agreed, who are in the whole world, they yet may not prove to us with the word of the Lord, that we believe or do against the word of the Lord.

He said: You yet indeed believe not that the apostles ate Christ's flesh, and drank His blood; and Christ said: Take, eat, this is my body. I said: Christ took the bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to His apostles; when He took the bread, and broke it, and gave it to them, bread was indeed no flesh; He gave them indeed not His living body to eat, where He stood living by them; but He gave them His body for redemption — not them alone, but all those who believed in Him. One might not say so much to him; he kept his old verse.

Our brother had proved it to him so clearly of all things with the Scripture, that he knew not one tittle to say against it. Our brother spoke so loudly, that those who stood outside by the chancery might hear it, how rightly he proved it to him. And I spoke also so loudly as I could, with a glad mind; what the Lord gave me in my mind, that I spoke without fear, which would fall all too long to relate. His speech was always, that we had the devil in us, and how the devil transformed himself into an angel of light in us, and how we had the proud devil in us, and how we must eternally be in the pit of hell; that he did so many times, every time when we were before him. I said: As low as you thrust us into the pit of hell, so high are we exalted with the Lord.

Of infant baptism he knew nothing else to say, than Christ says: You must be born again of the water and the Spirit. I said: The children cannot understand the new birth; Christ spoke that to the understanding; therefore we have laid off our old life, and have put on a new life. We know well that our children are saved before the Lord. Then he came forth with David, how he was born in sins; and our brother had expounded it to him so clearly, but he remained all equally uncomprehending. And when we had ended our discourse, I asked him what my husband said. He said my husband remained also alone. I said: What will you do with my poor husband, who cannot read a letter? Then he said: You shall yet have greater damnation than your husband, because you can read, and have led him astray. Therewith I parted from him.

A song of Claesken
To the tune of Een Liedeken met vruechden ghoet.

A little song with good cheer
we tell with singing,
of the pious woman,
sweet Claesken,

who in former times lay imprisoned
at the city of Leeuwarden.
She came before the sophists,
where the inquisitor sat,
who fished after her ground;
but she confessed the truth plainly,
let herself not be caught with deceit or cunning.

Concerning her baptism he questioned her;
she, without bending,
boldly declared the Scripture,
which testifies of a new life and repentance:
John and Christ clearly
first set before the people repentance,
also the apostolic company,
and then
that they should receive thereafter
the praised baptism;
thus she had done according to the teaching of these.

Heretic-master:
"Do you believe also that Christ, God's Son,
comes into the bread through the consecrating?" Claesken:
"No,
for He sits in the Father's throne,
into teeth to be consumed,
and He comes nevermore."
Heretic-master:
"Do you remain believing thus,
you must go down to hell,
eternally shunned by God,
and this is the teaching of all heretics;
you are led astray," he spoke further besides.

"When Christ with the apostles ate
lovely His Supper,
His flesh He gave them not to eat,
and His blood to drink in general?" Claesken:
"He gave them bread and wine;
but the body to be buried
has thus this fine Supper
left here to us,

that we shall be mindful
of His bitter death at all times."

Claesken received the tidings suddenly
that she should depart from earth;
then she was so very glad
that she had to spread the great gladness,
for she, by herself alone,
might not keep such to herself,
but made it known plainly
with Scripture out of good faith
to her friends of both kinds,
after the flesh, and who build spiritually.

She thanked the Lord so greatly
that all the lords heard;
they hushed her, but just as loudly
she cried, and spoke boldly with clear words
over the righteous blood:
"You have given judgment."
Her husband spoke also very sweetly,
and Jacques besides,
though the water-flood was ready;
one saw in none fear nor trembling.

In the fifteen-hundredth year,
thereto fifty and nine,
these dear sheep, a pair,
at Leeuwarden, a city lying in Friesland,
were drowned in the water
and shamefully extinguished;
but God remembers His people,
who in His time shall avenge
His elect here weakened.
O people,
fear God, cease from sin.

This is a letter of Adriaen Pan, being imprisoned at Antwerp, and he was put to death there, in the year 1559.
Grace and peace of God our heavenly Father, through the merit of Jesus Christ His beloved Son, with the right enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, wish we to all lovers of the eternal truth, Amen.

My hearty, dear and desired brothers, whom we love out of the ground of our hearts, and carry you in our hearts, as those with whom we are one soul and one body: although we are now robbed of you after the appearance, you are therefore not the less but the more in our hearts; and we pray you all, that no one turn away for our affliction's sake, into which we have now entered; for we hope that it shall be a joy to you to hear, for we know surely that it is for the right truth:

None of you suffer as a misdoer, says Peter, or as one who stands after other people's goods; but if you suffer as a Christian, you are blessed, for the glory and Spirit of God rests on you, but with them He is spoken against. Paul says that the suffering of this time is not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us; yea, that never eye has seen, nor ever came into man's heart, that God has prepared for those who love Him. As much as Christ's suffering comes upon us, so much comfort comes to us also through Christ.

My dear brothers, how should we not be of good cheer, when we perceive such comfort! My dear friends, the more affliction we are tried in, the more we are comforted. That we well perceived, when we first came into their hands, when they overran the house, as if they would have destroyed it with all that was in it; then my heart was strengthened, as if I had been another man; my wife was indeed a little fearful, before they laid hands on us, but when she saw that it must be, the fear went from her, as if she had drawn off a garment, and she lifted up and sang: Thus be mindful, and wait on Him, for He shall come as a thief in the night. For we had not yet waited for them then, for we had packed our things, and thought to travel away soon; but the Lord has ordered it otherwise — praised must He be in eternity. And when they delayed with haste, I would well have sung: Never more joy was in me than is now in these times. But I restrained myself, that I did not sing, for I thought: much trial is yet impending for me; but the Lord be praised, who does not let us come to shame.

They began to reproach us much, of Munster and of Amsterdam, but I said that I had no guilt therein, but that it was for the right truth that we suffer; also, I am not thirty-three years old — how should I have been present there? Some denied, some complained. But I said: Weep not over us, but weep over yourselves and over your children. It seems to me that we might well have said with David: Though I were compassed about by a hundred thousand men who came at me, I would not fear them; yea, they have all come about me like the bees, they surround me, but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.

My dear brothers, this we do not say out of any boasting, but out of gladness, and that we thank our God for His great power and strength which He grants us, and to the joy of all lovers of the truth who might hear it. Pray for us, that we may remain steadfast to the end. And we pray you, take our little writing in good part. The 15th day of our imprisonment, and the 9th day of May. My wife and I greet you all very much, all who are known to us, or who might inquire after us.

Another letter of Adriaen Pan, which he wrote after he was condemned.
Grace and peace of God our heavenly Father, through the merit of Jesus Christ, with a right enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, wish we to all lovers of the eternal truth, Amen.

My dear N., I remember you still in this end of my life, and pray the almighty God that He will comfort you with His Spirit, and instruct you with all manner of spiritual wisdom and understanding, that might serve you to salvation. Further I let you know, that I was on the rack the 2nd day of June, and the 16th day I was led into the court. There they asked me whether I was baptized or rebaptized. I asked whether I might speak. They allowed it me. I said that I believed all that is written in the Law and the Prophets. That which Jesus Christ and His apostles have taught and commanded, by the same I desire to live and to die. Upon the confession of my sins, that they are sorry to me, and upon the confession of my faith, I am baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Thereupon they have condemned me; so I expect nothing else than that they shall do their will with the body — the Lord will receive the spirit.

I am also well ready to live and to die for the Lord's name. I cannot enough praise and thank my God, that He has called me thereto, that I may suffer for His name. O my dear N., I am indeed so well of cheer; the Lord (I hope) shall also give me strength to the end. I cannot say that I ever had a gladder day on the stone than when I came into their hands and when I was condemned. My dear N., be yet well of cheer, it is soon done here; and let us yet not fear those who kill the body, but Christ tells us whom we shall fear. I and my wife greet you most heartily with the Lord's peace. And take my little writing in good part. I would well like to write you somewhat more, but I do not have the gift very well; yet I thank the Lord for all that He has granted me. Greet for us the dear friends very much, who are known to us, or who inquire after us. Fare well. By me, Adriaen P.

A song of Adriaen Pan
To the tune of Als de winter gaet van henen.

The darkness goes away
when the light comes on;
the truth has appeared,
lying may not stand;
but when one will punish the evil here,
the world is on its legs
and makes great noise.

At Antwerp lay in bonds
such a dear man;
God's Word he had at hand;
his name was

Adriaen Pan.
His wife sat at the same place;
it was not to her shame,
for she also confessed God's name.

Adriaen has written
to his brothers boldly;
love has driven him,
stronger than
hell or fire;
though he was robbed of them after the flesh,
he had them in his heart beside him;
that he proved well this time.

How that we, my dear friends,
into more
affliction are brought,
how that we find more comfort,
that we have experienced,
when the assault first happened:
then they overran the house,
as if they would destroy it.
Then my heart became so fine,
strengthened, that I seemed quickly
to be another man;
my wife was indeed
at first a little fearful,
but when it had to be at the last,
she sang there undaunted.

See, the fear went from her
as one does off a garment;
joy came risen from the heart,
and she sang aloud.
Pan would also gladly
have sung along herein for his need,
but thought on the trial at hand.

They asked, like those who err,
whether he was rebaptized;
he spoke freely, undisguised:
"I believe all the prophets and the law,
and thereafter

that which Christ has commanded
and the apostolic company."

He desired to remain
thereby until death,
and confessed with firmness
before them
his baptism freely;
thus is that sheep with speed
given over to death
by the fierce, enraged wolves.

See, by his own speaking,
no gladder day ever appeared to him
on the stone
than he had without waiting,
when he was first captured
and when they passed the judgment
that he should go to death.

He is with the sword
most miserably slain;
think how it grieved his wife,
who went great with child,
who after the childbirth was drowned.
O how very small of worth
one esteems the people who think on God.

Thus are
fallen asleep
sweetly in the Lord
these two dear sheep,
as one wrote with ink and quill:
one thousand five hundred, and at the end
fifty-nine; O lads,
will you be saved,
fear God.

Here follows a confession, written by Hans the fat one (Hans de vette) at Ghent, where he, being one of twelve, lay in bonds, in the year 1559. And afterwards all twelve were killed for the testimony of Jesus.

On the first Friday after Pentecost were laid in prison at Ghent for the word of the Lord the following, whose names are: Peter Coerten of Menin, Kaerle Tanckreet of Nipkercke, Proentgen his housewife of Belle, Jacob Spillebont, Abraham Tanckreet, and Mayken Floris of Nipkercke, Anthonis van Cassele, Hans the smith, and Marcus his brother, Hans the fat one, and Miertgen his housewife of Waestene, and Tanneken the housewife of J. de S.

These were handed over by treachery to the Procureur General, who with three thief-catchers seized them and took them prisoners out of their lodging in the evening. The next day we were visited by the authority, who asked each of us separately our names, and where we were from, which we told them. After that they asked us whether we confessed another baptism than infant baptism, and whether we also had received another. And we all renounced the idolatrous infant baptism, and confessed that we had received a Christian baptism, except Marcus the smith, who confessed that he had not yet received it, but had he had opportunity, he desired it with all his heart. After that they asked us whether we desired any learned men to instruct us; they would send us such as we desired, clergy or laymen; and they said they would not hurry us. But because they mostly asked us each separately one and the same question, I said, I who wrote this, that through the Lord's grace I desired no other instruction than I had received, even if an angel came from heaven. Besides this, about eight days later they sent one named brother Peter the baker, who had partly spied us out, with another companion of his, two false prophets, whom they call Jacobins, as I think. After we came before them, we came after some words to speak of infant baptism, which he confessed as a doctrine instituted by God, saying that circumcision was a figure thereof, also that the apostles had baptized whole houses, and Christ had commanded, John 3. But when I had proved to him that he had not spoken rightly, and that the apostles had baptized none without faith, as one clearly finds in the Acts of the Apostles, he sought to speak of another article. But he said we could not agree. But I said that I first desired an end of the first, and I prayed him that he would amend himself, for I proved to him that their service was a foul, stinking idolatry against all God's commandments, and human planting, and that one has enough in God's commandments, that one need add no lies thereto, and that it does not avail to look to what God has not commanded. Then said he that I was seduced, and had looked too much upon their abuses, and that there were indeed some abuses in their church, but the principal thing was good, he said, which was maintained therein. And after many words we parted from each other.

After some days came the Dean of Ronse, who is an inquisitor in the land of Flanders, and with him came the same Peter the baker who had first been with us, with still more other false prophets. After I came before them, the Dean asked my name: I said that I was called Hans the fat one. Then he asked whether I was married. I said: Yes. Then he asked me whether my housewife was also from Waestene. I answered: Yes. He asked how long I had

been married. I said, not very long. He asked me in what church, and by what parish priest it had been done. I answered him, whether one finds in Scripture that a parish priest must be thereto. Then said he, that whores and knaves gather without a parish priest in the world. Then said I, that I had done it according to the showing of Scripture, Paul admitting thereto, to shun fornication, that it is better to marry than to burn, and whores and knaves on the contrary do the contrary, who much rather burn than marry, as one sees and hears in the evil world in so many thousands. Then said he, that would be a small matter, had I no greater matter, that might well be passed with that, but that I should tell him only where it was done. I said that I did not think to tell him. Then he conjured me by the living God, that I should tell him, but I kept silent thereon. Then he asked me why I had not remained in the faith of the Roman church, and in her service. Whereon I answered, that I was separated from her, that I should not be partaker of her plagues, for darkness can have no fellowship with light, nor Christ with Belial, nor the righteous with the unrighteous, etc. Therefore one must separate out from her midst. Then he asked me what I held of the seven sacraments, which he named to me in part. But I answered that I held nothing of them at all, for all her horrible idolatrous service which she maintained, but because we are commanded by the Lord to confess his name before men, I said that I would well confess my faith to him. He said that I should do it. Then I began to make my confession: namely that I believed in one God, a Creator of heaven and earth, sea and waters, and all that is in them, one who also created man after his image. Him alone must we serve, honor and worship, and love, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our thoughts, for he alone is good. Herewith renouncing all idols, whether golden, silver, stone, metal, wooden, breaden, or of whatever make or being they might be, as they are despised and forbidden in Holy Scripture, for we know that an idol in the world is nothing. And while I still spoke, the Dean of Ronse said to me that I made it too long to write it all down; you would make us so much work, said he, if you would thus confess your faith from the beginning of the Bible; I believe also, said he, that which you have said there, but what say you, said he, of the sacrament of baptism used in our church, unto which everyone must come, would he be saved? Then said I that I held nothing of infant baptism, because it is not commanded by God. He said that circumcision was a figure thereof, and that all the children who were not circumcised in the Old Testament, or in the New Testament not baptized, must be damned. Then said I, following his words: the little girls in the Old Testament then must be damned. Then he was angered, and said that that was only philosophy wherewith I came forth. Then said I that he should be ashamed to say that the children were damned, unto whom the Lord says the kingdom of heaven belongs. He said that I lied therein. And another priest said to me that one of Paul's disciples describes that he had learned infant baptism from Paul his master. Then said I that Paul writes that we should not let ourselves be moved from our minds, neither by spirit, nor by angel, nor by letter, as sent from them, or also were an angel to come from heaven who would teach us otherwise than is written in the Holy Gospel, he is accursed. I also said to him that he should prove to me where the Lord had commanded children to be baptized, or that he should prove that the apostles had baptized children, which he could not do. Again

he asked me how long I had been baptized. I said: not yet a year. He asked where, and who had baptized me, but I did not tell him. Then he conjured me three times by the living God, and by the baptism I had received, that I should tell. Then said I that Caiaphas conjured Christ likewise. He said that Christ spoke. I said that Christ spoke for himself, but when he asked concerning his disciples, he spoke not. Then he asked me what I held of their sacrament of the altar. I said that I held nothing of it other than an unclean, foul, stinking idolatry, and an abomination before God. He said: How? do you not believe that he is therein in flesh and in blood? as he walked on earth, or as he hung on the gallows of the cross? Far be it, said I, that I should believe that Christ's flesh and blood is here on earth, for Christ himself said to his apostles that we should have the poor always with us, but him we should not always have. Then he told me that he was not therein in the sacrament thus, but that it was in spiritual substance, and that I did not understand myself therein, but that argument had been built up many hundred years before my time, for when Christ held his Supper, said he, he took that bread, and gave it to his disciples, and said: Take, eat, that is my body. I said that the bread which Christ gave to his disciples, he gave it to them in likeness of his body, which should be broken for them, as in many places of Scripture he has depicted himself by likenesses, namely in John he says: I am a true vine, for in being he was no vine, but he likened himself to a vine: so was that bread which Christ broke to his disciples spiritually a figure of his body, for he speaks, John 6: Flesh and blood is profitable for nothing, but the words that I speak, they are spirit and life. He said that that was not spoken thereof, for were Christ not there, said he, how could one eat to one's damnation thereby. But I said: were Christ flesh and blood, one could not eat to one's damnation thereby, for Christ himself speaks: Who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. Therefore one may not understand these words literally, but spiritually, namely, if one should go to the Lord's Supper with the congregation of Christ, whereof Christ is the head, and he were still a drunkard, or a covetous man, or an idolater, or one such like, such would be unfit to break the bread with the members of Christ, not discerning the body of Christ. Then said he, that there were many among us, as drunkards, adulterers, or the like, and that he well knew such. Then I asked him: Who? He said: J. de R. I asked him where he lived. He said: I will not tell you. I said that I well knew, if there were such in our congregations, that one knew well, one would put them away and shut them out according to the sound of Scripture. Then he asked me again who had baptized me. And when he could not learn that from me, he conjured me, but I did not tell him. Then said his clerk: I wager you a pot of wine that you will tell it well before fourteen days. But I would not wager. Then he asked me off, how often I had held that Supper. I said that I had held it sometimes, when it was convenient time, with many dear brothers and sisters. He asked: Who? What are they called? whereupon I named one to him, whom he asked by name. Then he asked of some whether I held them for my brothers, or whether they were only friends or newcomers, for I have learned such Flemish, said he, of newcomers, of friends and of brothers. I said: I thought you were a Brabander, can you know so much Flemish? I know scarcely, said he, what I am, I am by chance a foundling. Yes, said I, there stands in the Revelation of John of a beast that climbed

out of the sea; you may be of her kind. Then he asked me whether I did not believe that Jesus Christ had taken on flesh and blood of Mary. I said that I believed that the Word, which in the beginning was with God, whereby the world was created, that the same was become flesh. Then said he that he was David's son after the flesh. I said: Is he David's son, as Christ himself speaks, how then does David call him a Lord? He said that Christ brought that forth with the Pharisees to bring forth an argument, but Matthew describes his lineage, said he, from Abraham to Mary. Then said I that Matthew brings Christ's birth only to Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom is born Christ, and Luke says that Jesus was held for a son of Joseph. Yes, said he, do you not believe that Mary is Christ's mother? I said: Yes, Christ speaks: All that do the will of my Father, that is my mother, sister and brother. Then said he that Christ is of the woman's seed. But I said that the women themselves have no seed, for as the woman is of the man, so is the man through the woman. Then said he that he was of Mary's substance, and of her blood. But I answered that Christ speaks to the Jews that he is from above, but they from beneath: you are of the world, said he, I am not of the world. Thereto the apostle further speaks that the first man is of the earth and earthly, but the second man is the Lord himself from heaven and heavenly. Then said I to them that they should yet amend themselves of their unrighteousness, persecution, and false idolatrous doctrine. They said: We have the right doctrine. I said that Paul nevertheless commands that one should shun such who forbid to partake of the food which God has created for the benefit of believers, and who forbid to marry, and who have a brand-mark in their conscience, for it is better to marry than to burn, but you on the contrary and against Scripture forbid to partake of the food, and forbid to marry, and you have rather to burn than to marry. The Dean. We do not forbid to marry. Hans. You do indeed; you well know that in the Fast and many more other days by your commandment one may eat no flesh nor marry, and you yourselves also have entered into such a bond that you may not marry, but you commit such uncleanness that it is shameful to say, as one daily sees in the bastards which are brought home to you, whereof Paul says that one should not eat with such, namely unclean, drunkards, etc., but one should give them over to the devil unto the destruction of their flesh. The Dean. We are not so evil, we will not give them over to the devil, so much better are we. Hans. Yes, poor man, will you be better than Paul? But it does not help what one says to you, for you will not amend. But will you speak with us on the market, or in any public place, we are ready, in hope whether some of the unlearned might thereby be drawn. The Dean. That shall not be; who would judge there? sailors, fishmongers, or such people? that would be right for an uproar. But we are so much the more foolish that we speak so much with you; one should only simply tell you our faith, and if you do not believe it, straightway do justice thereover. We had also many more other words, as of invoking saints, of the pope of Rome, of confession, fasting, purgatory, and the sleep of the saints, which would be far too long now to write, but the aforesaid I have set down according to my memory, as it many times happened: but since it is already long ago, I could not set it word for word exactly, but because I well know that it does not further, what one says to them, and that they are bold and shameless, I sometimes cut them off at the shortest,

holding out to them to speak in public, which they refused, and they have asked many same questions of our brothers and sisters who are with us in bonds, who are all of good cheer until now, the Lord have praise, for they dreaded the false prophets much more before we spoke to them than afterwards, but the Lord knows to give his elect in such hours a mouth, as he has promised, better than we could think: for those who outside of bonds seemed weak are so bold that one marvels thereat when one sees and hears, the Lord must alone have praise from eternity to eternity, Amen.

The Dean also asked me whether we do not pray for him. I said: Yes. How do they call me, said he, among you? Do you call me Saul? I said: I have sometimes heard you called the inquisitor (then they all laughed) and sometimes the Dean of Ronse. Then said he: That is my name. But we had still many more other words, but I leave it partly for lack of paper, that I write no more, but I pray all those who see this, take it from me for the best. And if it is possible, leave hereof a copy at Antwerp at our acquaintance, and send one westward to our acquaintance.

A song of Hans the fat one (Hans de vette)
To the tune of O Heere ghy staet altijt in mijnen sinne.

Be of good cheer, O brothers of worth,
For our God, strong and merciful,
Shall himself take up the fight in need,
And stand by us in water and fire.

Twelve friends, taken at Ghent by guile,
Have set themselves so boldly to the defense,
Against the deceitful sophists,
That they came to shame with their doctrine.

One of them, called Hans the fat one,
Has written his disputation finely,
Which he had with the false prophets,
Where one asked in this wise:

Ronse.

Why do you not remain with us all
In the faith and service of the Roman church clear?

Hans.

That her plagues should not fall on me,
I am separated out of her midst.

Considering that fellowship with the light
Darkness shall not have,
Nor the unrighteous with the righteous,
Nor Christ likewise with Belial.

Ronse.

The sacrament of baptism in our church
One must come to, would one be saved;
Say what you hold of such a work.

Hans.

Nothing, for infant baptism is no divine command.

Ronse.

Circumcision is a figure thereof,
For in the Old Testament the little children
Uncircumcised, and those in this time of grace
Remaining unbaptized, are damned therewith.

Hans answered thereon in general:
Little girls in the Old Testament, according to your word,
Must then be damned altogether;
That is only philosophy, he spoke, angered.

Hans.

But you should rightly be ashamed to say
That the innocent children are damned,
Of whom the Lord says by name
That to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.

There a priest also cried among the crowd
That one of Paul's disciples wrote
That he had learned infant baptism from him;
See what an argument he drove here.

Hans.

Though it were so that from heaven descended
An angel who taught another ground
Than Christ in the Gospel declared,
He would be accursed, Paul witnesses.

Ronse.

From whom did you receive in former days
The baptism, in what town, place, or house?
But he got no answer to his questions,
Whereby greater cross might have come.

Then the Dean straightway conjured him
By the living God, and his baptism too,
Which he had received, that he should speak,
Giving him answer thereof on the spot.

Hans.

Caiaphas also conjured Jesus Christ.

Ronse.

Christ spoke, when he was conjured.

Hans.

He spoke for himself, but when asked of his elect
Disciples, he was silent at that time.

Though we have here especially sung
Of the confession of Hans the fat one,
All twelve spoke with new tongues,
Spreading the praise of the Lord aright.

When one had written fifteen hundred
And thereupon nine and forty years,
These dear friends left their life,
Testifying the truth openly.

finis.

A confession of Hans van der Maes, which he wrote lying in prison at Waesten, in the year 1559. And he was killed there for the word of the Lord.

Anno 1559, in October, I was brought before the Inquisitor to confess my faith there: who, when I came before him, asked me my age, my name, and where I had been. Thereafter he asked me whether I was rebaptized. I said: I know only one baptism, as stands to the Ephesians, which is the baptism of believers, as Matthew and Mark relate in their Gospel, and also as Peter relates, Acts 2, to the people who heard him: Repent of your sins, and let everyone be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, unto

forgiveness of sins; they who gladly received his word were baptized. Mark in the same chapter, and read it well: They broke the bread, a fear came upon them, they were all one soul, and had all things common, which a little child cannot do at all. Thereafter he asked me why I believed that the Gospel was true. I answered: Because in the mouth of two or three all words stand. And now there are four evangelists, as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, who all alike witness and speak of one Christ and Messiah, who is God's Son: and God his Father, that there is also one God, that is good to mark in the creation of the world, and the signs and wonders which we daily see: as corn growing, grass, apples, cherries, nuts, as one may see. Further one may yet mark that the Gospel is true: for I have read that Christ says: Blessed are you when men despise you and speak evil of you for my name's sake, and lie therein. And Christ says further: For my name's sake you shall be hated of all men. When I read it, I believed it, and now I find it true in me and in others, and believe that the Gospel is true. Now everyone may know, see and understand that it is so, as Paul says: All who will live godly must suffer persecution. Thus I say: By all these witnesses, who may not lie, one may well speak freely, and say that the Gospel is true. Let everyone look well to it; therewith they tormented me sore. After that they asked me concerning the Roman church, whether I did not believe that it was the right church, which is founded on the Stone, which is Christ. I said: No. Then he asked me what church I believed was the right one. I said: The assembly of the believers in Christ's name, as Christ says to Peter: You are Peter, and on this stone I will build my church, that is to say: those who have such a faith as Peter had, as one may well mark to the Corinthians, where Paul says: What fellowship has the temple of God with idols? You are the temple of the living God, as God speaks: I will be their God, and they shall be my people. So all believers, who assemble in Christ's name, are the right church. Still they asked me whether the sacrament which the church uses, in the Mass, is not flesh and blood, after the priest has consecrated, whether it is not the body of Christ in flesh and in blood. I said: How could that be possible, for there stands in the first chapter in the Acts of the Apostles, that he ascended to heaven, and in the seventh chapter Stephen says: I see the heaven open, and the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God. And Peter in the 1st Epistle in the 3rd chapter says that he is risen, and gone into heaven to the right hand of God, so then he is not there. Then he asked whether he is not well able to be there through his divine power. I said: He cannot against his word: he is almighty, that I confess, but against his word he does not do. Then they said further, when he held his Supper with his disciples, that he gave them his body, as also stands in the text, for he said: Take, eat, this is my body. But thereto I said that he did not give his body, but a piece of bread, for as one may mark, it was straightway delivered by Judas into the hands of the Jews, and suffered also, and was hung on the cross, so he could indeed not give his body to eat, and as he himself says: From now on I shall no more drink of the fruit of the vine, which is wine, which he before called his blood. Read to the Corinthians in the first Epistle, in the 10th and 11th chapter, there you may get broader understanding: so he gave not his body to his apostles, but it signified his body. After that he asked me what I held of the service one does in the church. I said: For great and horrible idolatry. Then said he: Do you then hold it for

the Whore of Babylon? I said: Yes, as Revelation 13 stands, of the beast which makes itself worshipped, whoso will not worship it, or the mark in his hand, or in his forehead, &c. Which sets herself against God in his elect. Then he said to me that we could not prove that our church, namely of the rebaptizers (as they called it) had been above forty years, and their church had lasted, &c. Then said I: We do not set our church in register books, as the Roman church does; one would find it too soon, for everyone seeks to bring it to naught or to kill, and she has not (as the Roman church has) the emperor or the king to help, but the emperor or king or prince seek it diligently to bring to naught. But I will well prove to you that it is of one thousand five hundred and fifty-nine years, for Christ is the stone of the foundation, and it is since that time that he was crucified. Then said they: Yes, the Roman church, for from Peter she is instituted, he was the first, thereafter all holy popes, all holy doctors, as Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard, who are the four doctors of the holy church; will you not believe these, since they were such learned men? I said: I believe only God's word. Still they asked me whether I did not believe in God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, three persons and one true God. I said: I find only one person in Scripture. They asked who it was. I said: Christ, him one has seen and heard, but the Father no man has ever seen; who could say what person it is, for he is invisible. The Holy Ghost also no man has ever seen, except one has seen as a dove descend upon Christ, but a dove cannot be a person. Then said they: Do you not believe that there are three persons? I said: No, unless one proves them to me with Scripture, but I confess that they are three in being, but nevertheless one true God. The Father is not the Son, nor is the Son the Holy Ghost: the Father I confess for the Father, Jesus Christ for his Son gone out from him, the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son both, but nevertheless undivided one true God. Then he asked me whether Christ had not taken on his flesh and blood from Mary. I said: One would have to prove it to me. They said: He is of David's seed. I said that he is born of David's seed, but that he should have taken on his flesh and blood from Mary, that Scripture does not testify. Read Luke in the first chapter, where the angel said: You shall conceive, and still thereafter, when Mary said: How could it happen, since I have known no man? The angel answered and said: The Holy Ghost shall come from above into you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you, therefore also that Holy which shall be born shall be called God's Son. Consider this; he says: That Holy. Paul says further that the first Adam is of the earth earthly, but the second the Lord from heaven himself. Read in 1 Cor. 15, there you may well mark it. Also Heb. 10, where Paul says: Therefore when he comes into the world, he says: Offering and gifts you have not willed, but a body you have prepared me. Also John 16, where Christ says that he is gone out from his Father and come into the world, and many more other places as in 8, 9. Search the Scripture, John's Gospel and Epistles. Then he asked whether he had taken no substance from Mary, as sucking and else. I said that she had offered him, when he was born, she wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger, further one finds that she bore care for him, as when, he being twelve years old, he was lost, then they sought him when they came from Jerusalem; there stands that they sought him with diligence, and were sorrowful. Then he asked whether he had not sucked. Answer.

Christ spoke, when the woman said: Blessed are the breasts which you have sucked: Yes, woman, blessed is he who hears my word and keeps it. Question. What think you? Say your mind. Answer. Where I have no information in Scripture thereof, thereof I dare not speak; the mind does not avail. Still he asked me whether Christ was not of David's seed. I said: How could he be of David's seed, for Christ himself said (when the Pharisees asked whose son he was, whether he was not David's son) How comes it that David calls him a Lord? where he says: The Lord has said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I lay your enemies as a footstool of your feet. David calls him his Lord; how then should he be his son? They knew not what to say. Then said I: I confess that he is born of David's seed, and not from David's seed. Then said they: There stands Gal. 4 that he is made of a woman. I said: That fits ill, that a woman should make a child; and do not all other Scriptures say: Born of a woman? He said: I could well show in forty places that he is of David's seed. But he would not prove it. Then said I: If she received him of the Holy Ghost, it cannot then be of David's seed.

Still he asked me where men go when they depart from this world. I said: They sleep in the Lord, as Scripture testifies, namely the believers. He asked where the souls go. I said: Paul says that he would well be asleep after the flesh, and be at home with Christ; so is my mind. Then he asked where the other souls go. Answer. Scripture relates not thereof; I could not say where they go. Question. What think you thereof? They go somewhere. Answer. I leave it in God's providence.

Then he asked what I held of the resurrection of the dead. I said: As stands to the Corinthians 15, in the 1st Epistle, where Paul says that this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruptibility, and that this same body should so rise. He knew not what to say thereto. Then he asked me where the children go who die without baptism. I said: Where it pleases God. He asked whether they should be saved. Answer: Christ has blessed the children, and said: To such belongs the kingdom of heaven. Question: You say then that they are saved? Answer: If they have the kingdom of heaven, they are happy enough. Question: Watch, they are damned, that is clear. Answer: One reads to the Romans 5, where it stands that as by one man's disobedience death comes, so by one man's obedience life comes over all men. Still he asked whether I would not be subject to the authority. Answer. Yes, my lords, so far as it is not against God's commandment, for Peter says that it is more lawful to be obedient to God than to men. Then he asked me whether I would not swear before the lords. Answer. No. Question. One must be subject to the authority, Paul and Peter teach it. Answer. Christ says: You shall in no wise swear, neither by your head, but your words shall be, Yes that is yes, and No that is no; all that is added thereto is of evil, and further, 2 Cor. 1, James 5.

Thereafter he asked whether we were not bound to speak the truth. Answer. Yes we are. Question. Tell me your companions. Answer. To accuse our neighbor is not the truth; Christ does not teach that. Then he conjured me by the living Son of God, Jesus Christ, that I

should tell them. I said: I do not regard your conjuring; it is sorcerers' work. Then said he that we were bound to do against God's commandment, for the sake of the conjuring. They tormented me sore, with the one who was brought with the palsy, saying, through the faith of those who brought him, that his sins were forgiven, and so through the faith of father and mother, the children also in baptism. But he does not say: Through their faith of those who brought him, but there stands only: Seeing their faith. Out of love I have written so much; if I have not written you aright, take me for the best, but I think to have written you according to the right Scripture; take it in thanks. Fare well. I greet the friends everywhere very heartily, praying that they pray for me. Know that I am of good cheer, praised be the Lord. The grace of the Lord be with you all. Amen.

A song of Hans van der Maes
To the tune of Vanden xij. Psalm. Or, Tyrannich werck vol archs ghedronghen.

Tyrannic work one now finds on all roads,
Wherever you will turn or go in the world.
Such Hans van der Maes thoroughly proved
When he was laid on the rack.
What great smart and pain openly
Has he received,
Being in the hands of the cruel,
Where he boldly confessed the truth.

Question.

Why do you hold the Gospel true?

Answer.

He answered:
Because every word
Stands powerfully in the mouth of two or three.
Four evangelists are heard:
Matthew, Mark, Luke in agreement,
John further,
Who all give testimony
Of one Messiah and exalted Christ.
They all say that he is God's Son.
One God there is; it is to be marked therein,
As in the fair creation of the world,
Signs and wonders which happen,
As corn, grass, apples growing,
As one may see.

Still one may mark it also by this,
Which Christ the praised has spoken.

Blessed are you when men despise you,
And speak all evil of you
For my name, and load you with lies,
You shall also be hated by all.
When I read it, I believed it as it stands.
Find the deed
In me and others to be true,
And believe the Gospel finely.

Question.

The sacrament which one uses in the Mass,
After the priest has consecrated,
Is that not the body of Christ surely,
In flesh and blood, as one uses it in the church?

Answer.

How could that be? Luke, honored,
In Acts teaches
In the first with a fair declaration
That Christ ascended to heaven.

Question.

What do you hold of the service in the church?

Answer.

For great, horrible idolatry.

Question.

Do you hold it for the work of the Whore of Babel?

Answer.

Yes, as it stands in the Apocalypse.

Question.

You shall not be able to prove
That above forty years, namely,
Your church, called rebaptizers, has been.

Answer.

We set it in no register books,
As is the Roman church's nature,
For everyone to bring it to naught seeks it.
It has not to its help the emperor highly declared
(As the Roman) or renowned prince;
Everyone assails it.

But it is from Christ's times;
We confess him the stone of the foundation.

Question.

Will you also obey the authority?

Answer.

Yes, if it is not against the divine commandment
(He spoke), my lords, in all ways.

Question.

Will you also swear before the lords fine,
For you must be subject
Your authority,
As Peter and Paul both teach.

Answer.

No, Christ says:
You shall in no wise swear.

Question.

And ought you not to speak the truth?

Answer.

Yes we ought, Hans said to them.

Question.

Of your companions explain to us.

Answer.

Thereon he answered with discretion
That one lays guilt upon the neighbor;
That is no truth.
Christ does not hold such before us.
Then they conjured him strongly.

Hans spoke: Your conjuring I do not regard;
That itself is sheer sorcerers' work.
Then those fierce dogs fell upon us rudely
With pains and torments heavy and great.
But being in such need
Which God commanded,
Thereof he would not turn away,
But remained steadfast therein as a hero to the end.

O you regents of the city of Waesten,
Mark, and see what you do;
Amend your life yet with great haste,
For you shed the innocent Christian blood.
Do as those of Nineveh, wise:
True repentance.

See, the day of the Lord shall draw near;
Then you must give account of your matters.

finis.

This is a Testament of Lenaert Plouier, which he left after him to his children, when he lay imprisoned for the word of the Lord at Antwerp, and there left his life, in the year 1559, reckoning the beginning of the year from Easter.

Dear and much beloved children, N., being years old, &c. When your father is taken from you, not for evil-doing's sake, but for the testimony of Jesus, and because I have loved you even unto death, I would also well, when you have come to your understanding, that you should be seeking your salvation, as Christ has taught us. Therefore I have written you a little admonition, that when you have come to your understanding, remembering this, you may seek your salvation.

Therefore dear children, see that you are obedient to your mother, and hold her in honor, for there is written: Honor father and mother, that you may live long on earth, and that it may go well with you, for whoso curses father or mother shall die the death. Also not rebellious or contradicting, not quarrelsome, but friendly: also not lying, for there is written: The mouth that lies kills the soul, for a liar has no part in the kingdom of God, yes his part shall be in the fiery pool. Also direct your hands gladly to the work, help your mother win

the living. Also gladly learn to take a book in hand, that when you have come to your understanding you may seek your salvation. Also always seemly in your words, as becomes children, and when you have come to your understanding, then take a Testament in hand, and see what Christ has left and commanded us thereafter, for all Scriptures inspired of God are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that a man of God may be perfect, fitted to all good works, for the grace of God has appeared, which is wholesome, to all men, and teaches us that we shall deny the ungodly being, the worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously in this world, for man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of God's mouth.

See dear children, that the Lord's word is a food of the soul, wherewith the soul must live, and whoever does not fit himself to live according to these words, to him is eternal damnation promised, as Christ says: Verily, verily I say unto you: Except one be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God. Therefore Christ says: Amend, and believe the Gospel, for the axe is set to the root of the trees; every tree that brings forth no good fruit shall be cut off, and thrown into the fire. Therefore dear children, see to it that you flee this punishment, for whoso is not obedient to the Gospel shall suffer pain, the eternal perdition from the face of the Lord.

Oh dear children, see what a punishment shall come upon those who are not obedient to the Gospel: eternally to miss the face of God, and eternally to suffer pain. Therefore dear children, prepare yourselves while you have time, though there arise some pressure and tribulation over those who seek to be obedient to the Gospel; it shall not last long beside that which is eternal, for through much pressure and tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore Peter says: Do not marvel when you are tried through fire, as though something new happened to you, but rejoice therein, that you are partakers of Christ's suffering, that in the time of revelation you may have great joy and gladness. Also Christ our teacher and master himself had to go through pressure and suffering into the kingdom of God, and the servant may not be better than his master, but it shall be enough for the servant that he be as his master. Therefore he says that he is not come to bring peace on earth, but the sword, for he saw well beforehand that the world could ill suffer, as from the beginning she could not suffer, for they have persecuted the prophets from the beginning, though they boasted to have God for a father, yet they could not suffer the good which the prophets said and warned them. Therefore they also persecuted them, yea stoned and killed them; yea Christ himself they did not know, though he did so many signs and mighty deeds among them, but they crucified him.

Oh dear children, take this to heart, which Paul says: Those who will live godly must suffer persecution, and yet do not leave off seeking your salvation for a little suffering, for this suffering is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us, for as Christ's suffering comes much over us, so comes much comfort to us through Christ, for there stands: See, the Satan shall cast some of you into prison, and you shall have ten days

tribulation, but be comforted, I will give you the crown of life, for you have kept the word of my patience, so I will also keep you for the hour of temptation which shall come over the whole world, to tempt those who dwell on earth. See, I come quickly; hold what you have, that no man take your crown. Whoso overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of my God; he shall go out no more; I will write the name of my God upon him, yea to the overcoming will I give to eat of the wood of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God, yea he shall have no harm of the second death, yea whoso overcomes shall be clothed with white garments, and I shall not blot his name out of the book of life, and I shall confess his name before my Father and before his angels, yea whoso overcomes, him will I give to sit with me on my throne, as I have overcome and have sat with my Father on his throne.

Yes dear children, see what fair promises are promised to the overcoming. Therefore fear not men, who may here do us some suffering a short time, for after this pressure we shall yet rest from all our labor, under the altar, with those who are also killed for God's word's sake, and shall appear with many thousand saints, clothed with white garments, palms in their hands, crying with loud voices, saying: Salvation be to him who sits on the throne of our God, and to the Lamb. They shall hunger no more nor thirst, nor shall the sun fall on them any more, nor any heat, for the Lord will be their light, and shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and his name shall be in their foreheads, and there shall be no night, and they shall need no light of candles, nor the light of the sun, for God the Lord shall lighten them, and they shall reign from eternity to eternity.

Thus dear children, take this to heart, look upon these fair promises, promised to the overcoming, and not to the apostates, for they are written in the earth. Thus dear children, see to fearing the Lord, while the Lord gives you time, for he shall come when one does not think. Therefore be watchful and be expecting him, against his coming.

This is the Testament which I leave after me to you, written at Antwerp on the Steen,2 where I lay imprisoned, for the testimony of Jesus. By me, your father, Lenaert Plouier.

A song of Lenaert Plouier
To the tune of Wel hem die in Godts vreese staet.

The Testament of Lenaert Plouier
To his children merciful
He has in good faith
Held forth God's word before them.

That he was laid prisoner at Antwerp,
It was for no evil deed,

The Steen, the prison at Antwerp.

But for the testimony
Of Jesus Christ, sure.

As a good father unto death
He has admonished his children out of great love,
Where he lay still;
It would well be my will,

When you came to your understanding,
That you would take your salvation,
As Christ our Lord
Has admonished in his doctrine.

Therefore dear children see
That you would not be disobedient
To your mother,
But hold her in honor thereafter.

For Scripture thus teaches:
Honor your father and mother,
That you may live long
And it may go well with you here besides.

For whoso so seeks evil
That he curses father or mother,
He shall therewith earn
That he shall die the death.

Also be not rebellious,
Nor contradicting at any time;
You shall also not quarrel,
But remain friendly.

And do not go about with lies,
For it is clearly written
That every lying mouth
Kills its soul through sin.

Also gladly direct your hands
To the work and labor;
Help mother win the living,
Helpfully out of love.

In speaking be also seemly;
Always aim at your words,

As altogether
Becomes good children.

But when you come to your understanding,
Take a Testament in hand;
See what is left us
From Christ, to grasp.

For all Scripture of the Lord,
Inspired, is profitable for doctrine,
For instruction, for reproof,
For correction, to establish righteousness.

That a man may be perfect,
Fitted thereto for good works,
For God's grace has before
Appeared wholesomely.

It teaches us to deny all
The ungodly being in this vale,
That one shuns the world's lust
And lives uprightly thereby.

Man lives not by bread alone,
But by every word out of God's mouth pure;
See, that is the soul's food,
And live in such a wise.

Plouier has admonished his dear children,
Besides this, much more,
When he was in preparing
To depart from earth.

Should we set it all in song,
The song would fall far too long;
This is for his little ones,
And to edify everyone.

finis.

The testament of Gielis Bernaerts

Here followeth a testament, written by Gielis Bernaerts to his housewife, as he lay in prison at Antwerp, where he was put to death for the word of the Lord, in the year 1559.

Grace and peace must be multiplied with you, my dear and well-beloved housewife and sister in the Lord, for according to his divine power, all that serves us to life, and to the godly walk, which is given us through the knowledge of him, who has called us through his glory and power, through the which the greatest and most precious promises are given us. Also my most beloved, that you through the same are also partakers of the divine nature, if you flee the perishable lusts of this world, as you have also done, and through the renouncing of the same, and the receiving of the new birth, and the faith, and the proof of obedience, which you have shown in the baptism, in the which you have put on Christ, and thereby are become partakers of the divine nature, and that is not come to pass for the sake of the works of righteousness which you did, but according to his mercy has he made you blessed through the washing of the new birth, and renewing of the Holy Spirit. If you go on herein to the end, and be patient in all that befalls you, so shall you inherit that which is promised you, and praise God and thank him for this, for all his glorious good deeds which are done to you, and bless God the Father through Jesus Christ, though pressure has now come to you through my departure for the Lord's sake. And know that he according to his great mercy has born you again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an imperishable, unspotted, incorruptible inheritance, which is kept for you, and all who stand in the same faith, you who are kept by the power of God in the faith unto blessedness, which is ready to be revealed in the last time, in the which you, my dear and beloved housewife, shall rejoice, you who now for a little time long, if it be needful, are grieved in manifold temptations, for know, my most beloved, that we are tempted in manifold ways, that it might thereby be made manifest whether we love the Lord rightly. Thus be comforted, my most beloved, though much more pressure should still come upon you, for know that we must enter into the kingdom of God through much pressure and suffering. And as Ecclesiasticus also says, in the 2nd chapter: My son, if you will be God's servant, so prepare yourself for temptation, and suffer, when men would draw you off therefrom, hold fast to it, and yield not, for as gold and silver are tried through the fire, so must they that love God be examined and tried through the fire of tribulation. But my most beloved, as James writes in the first: My dear brothers (writes he), count it for sheer gladness when you fall into manifold temptation, and know that your tried faith works patience, but let patience have a perfect work, that you may be perfect and wholly whole, and that you lack nothing, for when we are in pressure, then is our patience and endurance needful to us. Thus I beseech you from the ground of my heart, and from the inmost of my soul, that you would be comforted, and with patience and endurance let the trial of your faith be made manifest, as Peter says, that the trial of your faith may be found much more precious than the perishable gold, which is tried through the fire, unto praise, honor, and glory, when now Jesus Christ shall be revealed, whom you never saw (and yet have loved, in whom you now also believe and yet saw not, or see not, for the faith's sake you shall rejoice with unspeakable and glorious gladness, and bring off the end of your faith, to wit, the blessedness of your soul). And then shall all the suffering, pressure, contempt, persecution, sighing, weeping, lamentation, have an end. Thus be comforted, and see that all this

suffering must pass away, that might happen to us here, and all glory and all delight of this world must also pass away and become as nothing, but always look upon the coming glorious promises, which are made us, and which shall be given us (we that believe, if we continue steadfast), for he is faithful who has promised it, for the Lord does not delay his promise: but be comforted, and trust in him, for he shall not forsake you, and cast your care upon him, for he cares for you, for he is a God full of all graces, who has called and chosen you hereunto, as Peter relates: But the God of all grace, who has called us to his eternal glory through Jesus Christ, will make you, you that suffer a little time (mark, a little time says he), perfect, strengthen, confirm, and establish in that which you have received, to wit, the faith in him and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be praise, honor, and glory, from now to all eternity, Amen.

After all hearty and friendly greetings to you, my most beloved elect and well-beloved housewife and dear sister in the Lord, I have received your letter, in which you write to me, that I should write you a testament, which I will not refuse you, if the Lord gives me time, for could I have helped you with my blood, I would do it, and now I can help you not, but with my writing, and that all to your comfort, done of me from right brotherly love, and from the ground of my heart, and with the same intent to complete this, as I have begun, through the Lord's help and grace.

So know, my dear housewife and sister in the Lord, how God visited his people in times past, when they were in Egypt, in the bondage of King Pharaoh, whom they had to serve and were in bondage to about four hundred years, and when he would deliver them, he raised up for them Moses for a leader, through whom he delivered them out of the bondage of Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea, and King Pharaoh with all his host (wherewith he chased after them) therein drowned and smothered, and brought to nought, and delivered them out of his hands, and they thus came into the wilderness, to go forth to the land that was promised them, and the Lord God gave them laws and customs through Moses their leader, that they should walk thereaccording, but they remained not in his laws, wherefore God became angry, and swore in his wrath that they should not come to his rest; over whom swore he, but over the unbelieving? And we see that they are not come in therein, and that for their unbelief's sake. And now this being thus come to pass, the Lord has spoken through the prophet and said: Behold, the days shall come (says the Lord) that I will accomplish a new testament over the house of Israel and over the house of Judah, not according to the testament that I made with their fathers in the days when I took them by the hand, and led them out of Egypt, for they remained not in my testament. Therefore have I also regarded them no more, says the Lord, for that is the testament, that I shall make with the house of Israel after that day (says the Lord): I will give my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and everyone shall no more teach his neighbor, nor say to his brother: Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest, and I will be merciful to their unrighteousness and sins, remember all their unrighteousness no more, which testament he has now in these last times

revealed, given through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the true Moses, who has taken us by the hand, and led us out of Egypt, wherein we all sat, and served the hellish King Pharaoh, under whom we lay captive through the sins, from which bonds and bondage we are delivered through Christ, who through his death and shedding of his blood has delivered, reconciled, and freed us from the hellish King Pharaoh, whom he has brought to nought and smothered in his blood, with which he has fulfilled that old testament, for all had to be fulfilled that was written in the Law and the Prophets. So is the fulfilling then come to pass, and that new confirmed with his blood, which he had promised through the Prophets, as related above, and it is preached to us through the gospel, and confirmed with signs and wonders by him and his holy apostles, whom he after his resurrection sent out to preach to all peoples: whoever would believe, being baptized, should be blessed, and he commanded them also to teach to observe all that he had commanded them. And now, my most beloved, we are that people, that God had provided from the beginning of the world, and has made a better testament with us, than he did with Israel, for they had to offer daily for the sins, wherewith they yet could not satisfy. For burnt offering and sin offering he has not willed, nor has God had pleasure in those that were offered in the Law, but then he spoke (to wit, Christ): Behold, O God, I come to do your will. There he takes away the first, that he might set up the other, through which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ done once. And every priest was then instituted, that he should every day do divine service, and often make one kind of offerings, though they could not take away the sins, but this one (to wit, Christ), when he had offered one offering for the sins, which is eternally of worth, sat down at the right hand of God, and waits that his enemies be set for a footstool of his feet, for with one offering he has perfected forever those that are sanctified, for the Holy Spirit also witnesses that, for after he had said (as it stands written there): This is the testament, that I will make with them after that day, says the Lord: I will give my law in their minds, and in their hearts will I write it, and their sins and unrighteousness will I remember no more: But where such forgiveness is, there is no more offering for the sins, as Paul writes.

Now my dear and beloved housewife, we have then a free and sure access into the Holy through the blood of Jesus, which he has prepared for us to a living and new way, through the veil, that is, through his flesh, and we have a high priest over the house of God, which is the congregation, which he has cleansed through his blood, that it should be holy without wrinkle or spot, of which you are a member, for it is the body of Christ, and we the members of the same body, and Christ the head and priest of the house of God, as is related. So my most beloved, continue diligently therein, and always go to it with true hearts in a perfect faith, in our hearts sprinkled from the evil conscience, and our body washed with pure waters, to wit, laying off all uncleanness of the heart and of the flesh, and doing all righteousness and holiness, and hold fast the confession of hope unshakably, for he is faithful who has promised it, and do take heed to yourself always, that I beseech you, my most beloved, to the stirring up of love and of good works, for because you are a child of the new testament, I write you this for a testament, according to your desire of me. So is

now my desire of you, my dear sheep, that you are, despised of men, but chosen of God and called to his testament, for he has left us the testament behind, that we should thereby remember his death, to wit, the breaking of the bread, thereby proving that he was broken for us on the gallows of the cross, and that we thereby should also be mindful that we are delivered through him out of the hand of our enemies, and this has he left us for an eternal testament, to observe, as was commanded the children of Israel to eat the Passover lamb, to observe yearly for a remembrance, that they were then delivered from King Pharaoh, and that was all a figure and shadow, of which we now have the true substance, and in the true observance of our deliverance, through the true Passover lamb Christ, and communion, wherein you are surely included, for it is not long ago, that we proved it among one another, through the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine, that you are partakers of the new testament, and of all the glorious promises, which are promised to the children of the new testament. So is that now my prayer, that you hold yourself faithfully therein to the end, that you may inherit all the promises, for the overcoming shall possess all. For he that overcomes, shall sit with me on my seat; he that overcomes shall be clothed with white garments; he that overcomes, will I confess in heaven before my Father, and write his name in the book of life, and more other fair promises, as you well know is promised to all overcomers.

Thus my most beloved, see that you remain faithful, for you are traveling in the wilderness, where you must yet be tried, as Israel was tried in the wilderness forty years long, that God might thereby make manifest what they had in their hearts, so know that they all perished, that remained not steadfast therein, and could not inherit the promise, as is related above. But now we have a better testament, which is eternally of worth, and not as Israel, a law written in tables of stone, but in the tables of our hearts. So my most beloved, now we have a better testament, so walk better therein, and remain firm in the faith, and let that be made manifest through the fruits of faith, and the law which is now written in your heart, through the Spirit of God, let it be read out of you, and that through the fulfilling of the works of the Spirit, and that you may so be a letter of Christ, which may be read by all, whom you manifest, as Paul testifies of those of Corinth: that they were a letter of Christ, prepared thereunto through their service, not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables, in their hearts, for Christ says also: Let your light burn before men, that they may see your good works, and praise your Father. For since we now have a new testament, given through Christ, who is our leader and lawgiver, his commandments must we keep, him must we follow after (as I have well written you in the other two letters), his image must we express, as the Father's image is expressed through him, as he said to Philip: Philip, he that sees me, sees my Father, how say you then: Show us the Father? Believe you not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak to you, I speak them not, but the Father that is in me, for he does the works.

Now my most beloved, now you have heard the gospel through God's grace, which is preached in all the world, and have believed in the same, and been obedient to the same, and

yet are (as I hope through the Lord's grace), have put on Christ, so let him now be expressed through you, as the Father's image is expressed through Christ, through words and wondrous works, so do you now also always express him through a pure Christian walk, and so follow Christ rightly after, for he is the true Moses, who is gone before us; follow him piously after, whatever befalls you in this wilderness, be it pressure or discomfort, suffering or persecution, take good courage, Christ is before, follow him boldly after, for the servant may not be better than his lord, nor the disciple above his master, nor the wife above her husband, nor the maid above her mistress: But it shall be enough for the servant that he is as his lord, the disciple as his master, the wife as her husband, the maidservant as her mistress. Thus dear sister in the Lord, be comforted, and mark the longsuffering and patience of Christ, and all pious witnesses, who from the beginning until now have followed Christ after, and he has not left them uncomforted, nor leaves us, who sit here for the same testimony, uncomforted, but wonderfully comforts and strengthens, through the power of the Holy Spirit, wherefore eternal praise must be done to him. Thus take good courage, hold fast to it with praying and beseeching, and prove thus, that you are a child of the new testament, that the law of the Lord is written in your heart, and is so read: whereunto strengthen you the merciful Father, through his Son, and the power of his Holy Spirit. Herewith I will commend you, my dear housewife, to the Lord (for I had no more paper) and to the word of his grace. Written from my bonds on Monday. By me Gielis Bernaerts, your dear husband.

Here followeth yet a letter, which Gielis Bernaerts wrote to his housewife

Grace and peace of God the Father, which is done us through Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord, may he comfort you in all your pressure, through the power of his Holy Spirit, which Spirit is a comforter of all the afflicted, who is sent us from the Father through Jesus Christ his Son for a teacher of all believers, and a comforter of all the afflicted, who are in godly sorrow, which sorrow works to blessedness. This same only, undivided, unchangeable, eternal, almighty, strong God, spoken in three names, to wit: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, in essence, and as John in the first epistle in the fifth stands: There are three that give testimony in heaven: The Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: And these three are one, this will be your comforter to the end, that I beseech him from the ground of my heart, through his dear Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

After all hearty and friendly greetings written to you, my most beloved and beloved housewife and sister in the Lord, whom I love as my own soul, according to the spirit and flesh, for you are flesh of my flesh, and I with you, so I cannot leave off (when I consider your sorrow) nor omit always to comfort you with my writing, as long as I have time. And know, my most beloved, how the parting from you also falls heavily upon me, but I comfort myself with the Lord's word, that he has said, that all must be hated and left: father, mother, wife, children, and that he that takes not up his cross daily, cannot be his disciple: and when I also consider, that the union of the flesh cannot stand eternally, which we had made with one another, and now the parting according to the Lord's will has thus come to pass, so I let my will go outside therein, and put myself in the will of the Lord, so you also, my most

beloved, that I beseech you, give yourself over to the Lord, for he is your living and your dying, as Romans 14 stands. Live we, so live we the Lord; die we, so die we the Lord, for we are the Lord's: and when I consider, my most beloved, the unity wherein we yet stand, to wit, in that spiritual body of Christ, for we are together baptized through one Spirit into one body, then I rejoice that you stand in that communion also with me, and are become partakers of the divine nature: yea, branches on the vine, which is Christ; sheep of the true shepherd; children of the promise, born of the free woman; heirs in the kingdom of God, with Christ in the kingdom of his Father, for we are born through him of God, through that imperishable seed, through the word of truth, which he is: for he is that Word of the Father, and the Word is become flesh, through which Word and Spirit we are come to this communion, and are become flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, and are members of his body, to wit, of his congregation, of which he is the head, and when I see this in, that you stand with me herein, so I rejoice, so do you also, my most beloved, that I beseech you, for this unity shall remain standing eternally, if we remain faithful to him, with whom we stand united herein, and commit no whoredom, and so shall we hereafter together enjoy all those glorious goods with him in his Father's kingdom:

But know, my dear sheep (that you are), how that Christ, when he had left the glory of his Father, and came upon the earth, had to take it again through much pressure and suffering, and he, that is the head, and we the members, is he thus gone before, the members must follow, and there is but one way, and one door, so must the members follow through the same; the body may not go into the house divided: thus, my most beloved, will we be the members with the head, to wit, come with Christ into the house of his Father, and enjoy those glorious goods, we must go in the same way, and enjoy all that may befall us, for will we have dominion with him, we must suffer with him: are we then children, so are we also heirs, to wit: heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ, if we otherwise suffer with him, that we may also be lifted up with him to the glory: for I hold, that the suffering of this time is not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And Christ says also: Verily, verily I say to you, you shall weep and howl, and the world shall rejoice, but you shall mourn and be sorrowful, yet your sorrow shall be turned into gladness. For when a woman bears, she has sorrow, because her hour is come, but when she has borne the child, she remembers the anguish no more, for gladness' sake, that a man is born into the world. Thus my most beloved, take an example here at the words of Christ, that it must be so with us, until we have borne Christ.

Thus my most beloved, mark well the Scripture, how it always speaks of pressure and suffering in this present time, and there stands always comfort by, as he says: Blessed are you that are grieved, for you shall be comforted. And again: In the world you shall have pressure, but fear not, I have overcome the world. Again he says: Fear not, I will not leave you orphans. And as he also says through the prophet Isaiah: Can a mother forget her child? Yea, though she did it, so that she forgot the son of her womb, so will I not forget you. Thus my most beloved, be comforted with these words, and with all those glorious goods,

which you are become partakers of through the faith, and that you now weep in this time, which ought not to astonish you, for you surely well know, that to us here in this time nothing else is promised but pressure, suffering, persecution, and weeping, but there stands: Blessed are you that weep here, for you shall yet laugh; woe to you that laugh here, for you shall weep. Thus it is better to weep here, than hereafter, for the time that is to come, shall endure eternally, and that which is now at hand, must soon pass away. Thus my most beloved, cast your care upon the Lord, for he cares for you, and be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, in all patience and longsuffering with gladness, and say always thanks to the Father, who has made us worthy of the inheritance of the saints in the light, who has delivered us from the power of darkness, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be praise, honor, and glory, from now to all eternity, Amen.

Herewith I, your faithful husband, will have commended you, my most beloved housewife, to the Lord, and to the words of his grace, Amen. May the Lord strengthen and confirm you through his Spirit, that you may keep, that which you have to the end, and so receive the crown of life, and await with patience the time of your deliverance. The peace of the Lord be with you, and with all them that fear and love the Lord, and keep his commandments. AMEN.

Yet a letter of Gielis Bernaerts, to his housewife

The grace and peace of God the Father, and the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, through which Spirit we are together baptized into one body, of which Christ is the head, and we the members among one another, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, and he is the Savior of his body, and no gates of hell can overmaster or withstand it, if we remain firmly knit in love among one another, and let ourselves not be led astray, but hold fast the faith in Christ Jesus, and not be negligent of the grace, which is done us of God through Christ Jesus his only begotten Son our Lord, to whom be praise, honor, glory, and thanksgiving from now to all eternity, Amen.

After all hearty greetings written to you, my beloved housewife and sister in the Lord, of whom I am now bereft through the bonds, wherein I am sitting, for the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the faith in God, which I hope to seal with my blood and death, and so to go into rest by all the saints of God under the altar, which altar is Christ, and also await all my fellow brothers and sisters, where we shall then gather together, and remain from eternity to eternity, and so be in gladness eternally, whereof no more parting shall be heard, but we shall in eternity reign with God and the Lamb and all saints, there shall no sighing nor weeping more be heard, but all tears shall then be washed from our eyes, our pressure shall be turned into gladness and joy, our weeping into laughing, our parting into an eternal gathering, where nothing but gladness and joy shall be: for never have eyes seen and never have ears heard, nor is it ever come into man's heart, that God has prepared for his elect, but God has revealed it to us through his Spirit, therefore let us take good courage, and be patient in the pressure, for knowing that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven through

much pressure and much suffering, and let us always be steadfast in prayer, and hold fast to it with praying and beseeching in the Spirit, that he will always comfort, strengthen, and confirm us, that we may always be steadfast, in all the pressure and suffering, that may befall us, in which suffering he shall not leave us uncomforted, for as the suffering of Christ comes much over us, so comes much comfort to us through Christ.

Now my most beloved, we may well be comforted, and take good courage, and be merry in hope, that we have obtained such glorious promises, and await such an unhoped blessedness: for we that were once far off, are now come nigh, yea we that were once guests and strangers, are now become citizens with the household of God, built upon the ground of the apostles and prophets, whereof Jesus is the cornerstone, and are so built together to a holy temple, as Peter says: You, as the living stones, build yourselves up to a spiritual house, to offer spiritual offerings through Jesus Christ, which are acceptable to God, for he has loved us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and has made us to kings and priests to God and his Father, as Peter also writes in his first epistle in the second chapter: But you are that elect generation, that royal priesthood, that holy people, that people of his own, that you should proclaim the virtues of him, who has called you out of the darkness to his imperishable light, you that in times past were no people, but now are God's people, and have been those over whom God had no mercy, but now he has had mercy on you, for this must we know, that we have been without God in the world, when we served the lusts of our flesh, and walked according to the course of this world, and were its friend, yea, what is more, praised of it, but (alas) despised of God, for as James says: Who will be the world's friend, shall be God's enemy, and then were we of them on whom God had no mercy, for as Christ says: You cannot duly serve two lords, the one you must hate, and the other love. And when we make our parting with the world, and renounce our own life, to live no more according to the will of our flesh, but to live according to the will of God, so will he then have mercy on us, and turn us from lies to the truth, from the darkness to the light, from the service of idols to the service of the living God, and then, we that were no people, become God's people, and may then proclaim all the virtues and glorious good deeds, which the Lord has shown us, and has received us for his children, for it is to such a people, that the apostle Peter has written, who were so turned about, and changed into a new being of life: You are that elect generation, &c. And mark, my beloved, how he in the beginning begins his epistle, as to a people, that were scattered everywhere for the faith in Christ Jesus, so it may not astonish us now either, though we also are chased, scattered, taken, and killed, for as you hear and may read, it has been so from the beginning, and shall so remain to the end, for the darkness cannot overcome the light.

Now my most beloved, let us not fear, God is our leader, and is God with us, who is against us? Who also has not spared his only Son, but has given him for us all, how should he not have given us all things with him, God it is that justifies, who will condemn, for Christ it is that is dead, yea much more that is raised, and is at the right hand of God, and prays for us. Since we know such, yea, what is more, that he keeps us as the apple of his eye, and has said:

I will not forsake you nor neglect you, so that we dare say: The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do to me, and as he has also admonished us, that we should not fear them, that may kill the body, for they have no more power thereafter, but let us fear him, who has power to cast soul and body into hell. As he also says through the prophet: Who are you that you are afraid of men, or of the children of men, who yet must pass away as hay. Thus my most beloved, fear not for that which may yet befall you, nor remain uncomforted, but be comforted outside the bonds, and be patient in the pressure, as I through the Lord's help am in my bonds, and let us remain firm in the faith and in love, and say with the holy Paul: Who may separate us from the love of God? Pressure, nor anguish, nor hunger, nor peril, nor sword, for as it is written: For your sake we are killed all the day, for we are counted as sheep that are appointed to death, but in all these we overcome far for his sake, who has loved us. Thus my most beloved, take good courage, and be comforted and patient in all your pressure, and stand firm in the faith, steadfast to the end, that, as we are now separated from one another through much pressure and suffering, we may meet one another in the day of the resurrection, and so be eternally with one another in gladness, and reign with the Lord and all saints and all angels of God from eternity to eternity, Amen. Hereunto strengthen you and me, with all that love the Lord and keep his commandments, the almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the power of his Holy Spirit, Amen, herewith remain commended to the Lord, and to the word of his grace, Amen. The peace of the Lord be with you.

Here followeth yet a letter, which Gielis Bernaerts wrote to the brothers and sisters, after he was sentenced

Grace and peace of God our heavenly Father, and his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who has given himself over for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world according to the will of God his Father, to him be praise, honor, glory, and thanksgiving from now to all eternity, Amen.

Now my most beloved housewife and sister in the Lord, and all dear brothers and sisters of the congregation at Ghent. My heart has still been inclined (after my sentence, that I was condemned to death) to write a little to you, and to my beloved housewife (whom I now commend to you, and to the word of God), from right inclined mind, and right unfeigned brotherly love, which I have to you all to the death. So is my brotherly admonition and writing to you all, that you should not fear them that may kill the body, for they have no more power thereafter, and as Peter says: Fear not for their threatening, nor be affrighted, that you be not troubled, but sanctify God the Lord in your hearts. And as he yet says (dear brothers and sisters in the Lord): Wonder not, when you are tried through the fire, as though something new happened to you, but rejoice therein, that you are become partakers of the suffering of Christ, that you in the day of his revelation and glory may have great gladness and joy, rightly has the apostle admonished us therein, that we should rejoice, for I may now write with the truth, for it has all befallen me now, save the death, but the judgment is gone over me: first I had great joy according to the Spirit, when I was delivered over in bonds,

though the flesh was much come upon with thoughts and musings, so was I joyful according to the Spirit, that I was chosen of God thereunto, to suffer for his name. And secondly, when I had confessed the faith before the authorities, and was then sorely tormented, and felt that God was with me, for he gave such power, whatsoever suffering and torments they did me, so they got nothing out of my mouth, but what served to the Lord's praise, and to my blessedness, wherefore they were angry, and asked, whether I would say nothing yet, for (said they) we have power to torment you thus every day. I said: The body is already done, do therewith what pleases you.

And when all this was done, then was my joy yet much greater, then could I not speak out the Lord's praise, nor thank him fully enough for his grace which he gave me, that I was worthy to suffer for his name, and to seal the word with the blood, for the scars which I then received, and the pain remained in my members to the last day, the Lord be eternal praise, for I had well deserved it, to be chastised for my sins and misdeeds' sake. And thereafter I was twice led before a monk. The first time he wanted to know my faith. I said: Ask the authorities, before whom I have confessed it. And he began to recount much of the incarnation and of the baptism. And when he had said all, I asked him, whether he would thereby prove his ground, or in such wise that I asked him, and meant to prove the contrary to him, but he would not hear my defense, and began to speak many slanderous words of Menno and his books which he had read much, as he said, and found much lying therein. I said: Fetch them all here, and let us deal therewith a week long. He said: You are not the man, one shall not have so much trouble with you. And yet many words that we had of his doctrine and congregation, that were too long to write, and so I parted from him. And thereafter I was once more fetched before him, then was he his second time, and he wanted to deal much of the sacrament, baptism, and incarnation. And I said: You would not let me make answer, when I was last with you, so I desire now not to speak with you. Then was he not well content, and he said, he would make me speak well with the margrave's instruments, and asked, whether I was ashamed of my faith. I said: I have not been ashamed to confess before the authorities, but with you folk I desire not to have to do. And we concluded among one another all to do so, and I would advise everyone to do so, for it furthers not, what one deals with them. For they are fleshly men. And thereafter I was condemned to death, and then was my joy complete, that I had such joy, that I could not speak it out, that my deliverance was so near, and took the apostle's word to heart, that he says: Rejoice therein, that you are become partakers of the suffering of Christ, that I in the day of his revelation may have great gladness and joy, and that he further says: Blessed are you, if you suffer for the name of Christ, for the glory and the Spirit of God rests upon you, but with them he is spoken evil of: and when I thought hereupon, and upon more other reasons of the Scripture, and when I saw, that pressure and suffering went past so quickly, and that such fair promises were made me, and that I should go into the rest with my dear brothers and sisters that are gone before, and lie under the altar, and await all our fellow brothers and sisters, that must also follow us yet, then all pressure had to depart from me, when I beheld this with the Spirit. Thus my dear B., this I write you not from boasting, but to the comfort

and strengthening of your minds, that you should not fear them that may kill the body, for they have no more power thereafter, but that you, dear brothers and sisters, should always be of manly courage, and always remember your leaders, that have said the word of God to you, as Paul says: Remember your leaders, that have said the word of God to you, behold their outgoing, follow their faith after.

Thus my most beloved, be always diligent among one another, with admonishing, with reading, with praying, and leave not your assembling, but admonish one another to love and good works, and be firmly knit in love, and be hospitable among one another, have one heart and one soul always among one another, that when you come into bonds, if it be the Lord's will, the courage may then stand free. Herewith I will commend you to the Lord and to the word of his grace, Amen. Now Adieu, Adieu all together, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Written by me, Gielis Bernaerts, to you my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, from the ground of my heart, and from right love, Amen.

A song of Gielis Bernaerts
To the tune of Van den 103. Psam. Ofte, Languer me fault.

Blessed be God in heaven's plain,
Spread his good works abroad;
Gielis Bernts lay imprisoned on the Steen,
At Antwerp, in good cheer.
It was the Lord's Spirit,
Who strengthened him most,
And gave him such strength,
That he the enemy's might
Has cast down,
Though their torment did harsh violence;
He fought through as a hero.

When he was delivered over in bonds,
At first that journey brought him
Very great comfort and joy to hand,
Though yet the flesh
Perceived many thoughts,
And musings came upon it;
So was he yet gladdened,
For God's name full of virtue,
To suffer at that pass,
And was rejoiced,

That his flesh, brittle as glass,
Was chosen thereunto.

Secondly, when he had confessed
The faith before the authorities,
And was also in his body tormented sorely,
And felt with certainty
God united with him,
Who lends great power;
Whatsoever torment or grief
That man did him,
They got nothing at all
Uttered from him,
But all was to God's praise
And his blessed lot.

They, being kindled with anger thus,
Have asked him,
Whether he would say nothing thus,
And spoke quite ungentle:
We have the power
To torment you freely,
Every day as we please.
He spoke to them calmly:
My flesh is ready;
Quench your desire.
Then Gielis rejoiced
Yet much more, and remained fresh.

God's praise he could not speak out enough,
Nor fully with voice,
Thank God for his gracious favor,
That he counted him worthy
To suffer for his name,
And with his blood, fit,
To seal God's word.
Scars are traced,
Which he then received,
To the last term;
The same clung to him,
In his flesh, round about.

Having received the sentence of death, yet he wrote a letter,
Proving in the end
That he from pure heart had loved
His known little friends;
Great love drove him
To write out of need
To the scattered flock.
O faithful servant,
He forgot not his wife either,
Comforting her,
She being in distress about him,
For he had no remorse.

One thousand and five hundred has been spread abroad,
Fifty-nine thereto,
When Gielis Bernts was led to death,
At Antwerp within the city.
He stepped forward unafraid,
The battle has he waged,
Fulfilled his offering,
Pleasant to God's honor.
Friends, this is the path
To the promised land;
See that you take God's word,
It points to the right city.

The testament of Jan Geertsz

A testament made by Jan Geertsz, being imprisoned in the Hague, who was burned there for the testimony of Jesus Christ, in the year 1564, the fifteenth of December.

Grace and peace from God the heavenly Father, with His Son Jesus Christ, be with you, Amen.

My hearty and most beloved brothers, and sisters in the Lord, I let you know that I have received your writings, which I have read through with great gladness, for your writing is, in the first place, to a steadfastness of the faith, and to a perfect end, and that through Jesus Christ, unto which I also am desiring, with whole heart and mind, of the heavenly Father, not for me alone, but that with all God-fearing it may come to an upright end, after the will of God, as I hope, for I have suffered blows and great pain, and that after the words of John, for the brethren, that I desire not alone, but it is also God's will, to die for His name, word, and truth, be it also whatever death it may be, for I had not thought that it would have

lasted so long, but since not one hair can be harmed on me without the Lord's permission, so I desire to await that end with Him, patiently with endurance, as befits a Christian.

Thus, my most beloved B. and S., my hearty prayer stands to you, and to all God-fearing, that you will pray the Lord for me, your weak brother, that I may bring this end of my faith to a close, for the prayer of the righteous avails much, and is mighty, though they do all cunning, to take from me the beautiful treasure which I have received from God, but I trust the Lord that He will well keep me.

Secondly, dear B., it is to me with the Lord a great gladness, that I perceive that the Lord's vineyard grows great, and His little branches spread themselves wide, unto upright fruits of the most high God, after which I have longed so long, now then I thank my and your God, that I hear such things, as you have written, and I rejoice now, that the Light rises in all corners and nooks, and shines over all mountains, as I hear that from many friends, who come to comfort me in my bonds.

Thus, my dear friends, be diligent, each one according to the gift which he has received from God, and lay it out alertly at interest, that you may win much: And hear the word which the Lord says: O good and faithful servant, over little you have been faithful, over much will I set you, go in unto the marriage of the Lord. Thus let each one build at the house with living stones, that it may become a glorious priesthood, and that they may offer God with spiritual offerings, which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and we may always be well of good cheer in the Lord, for His might is so great, with those who fear the Lord, that all must yield before Him: Death, Devil, Hell, Fire, and sword, all who stand built upon Christ, all that cannot hinder, for we can do all through Him who makes us worthy, and through His love it is all overcome, and that drives out fear, as I may well say, for when I was brought in the King's Saddle, and stood there almost an hour, before the lords came, and saw all things prepared to torture me, then I thought often in my mind.

O Lord, unless You stand by me now, all is lost with me, and I prayed Him that He would give me a mouth, to speak to His praise and glory, and also again to shut it, whatever might be to the blasphemy of His holy Name and of the neighbor, when I thus spoke, and they set me to be tortured, then there was no fear nor misgiving in me, but sternly and fiercely, they laid it on with me, so that the President said: Why will you not tell the truth? Answer: Because Christ spoke nothing else than what tended to the honor of His Father and His Godhead, and otherwise He kept silent.

And the same I also desire to do; all that touches His honor and the teaching of His commandments, I desire not to keep silent, before Emperor nor before King, Duke nor Count. Then it was straightway: seize him freely, a drowning calf is good to venture. See, my dear Bro. and Sust., how mercilessly they dealt with me, yet the Lord was with me, blessed be He; I was not myself, but the Lord ruled my mouth, so that they could not get it after

their will. See, my dear friends, how faithful the Lord is; him who hopes in Him He does not let be ashamed.

Therefore I write once more that you be always well of good cheer in the Lord, and admonish one another at all times, for Peter counts it useful and profitable to be, that each help the other bear his burden, and that in love, for when one member suffers, so suffer they all, and when one member is glorious, so rejoice all the other members.

Thirdly, so let I you know, how that my wife has been here with me, and brought me your friendly greeting, which was very dear to me to hear, and also that she desires after the best to come, after her weak ability, for she confesses that the life which she has led so long, that it is evil, as we may all well confess together, that in former times it also was of no avail with us, thus stands my prayer to you, my dear Brothers, that you will take a looking after her upon you, and admonish her to a better life, and that in love, and if it were the case that you might win something, and you write that over to me, that would be a great joy to me, and if you write something to me, before I offer my sacrifice to God, so send it to my old Mother, or to N., so shall I well get it.

Thereabove I have given her some spices, namely, a nut dressed with three or four claws of ginger with some little cloves, that she should give that to J. C. or another, that one shall cut that into pieces, and divide orderly, as an eternal greeting, and that in the Lord, and here upon the Earth an eternal adieu in Christ, peace and separation, as though after this there were no more, before we come together by Christ, and see one another there in His glory, Amen.

My most beloved brothers, I have dwelt with you, and am also glad that you are thus valiant with the building of the City and Temple of Jerusalem, which so many years has been ruined and decayed, therefore be not dismayed, brothers, though you be mocked and scorned, as Israel, when they built the walls again (mark it) then they became stronger and mightier in the working, though the enemies were raging, that the work should have no progress, yet they did not leave it, but kept so much the more diligently watch, in the one hand the spear or the sword, and in the other hand the trowel, and were well of good cheer, for God was with them, and fought for them, see, my dear friends, let us take an example, how pious these heroes have been, they were not dismayed before their enemies, so let us also do, however much they cry or write, yes, scorn and say: See, this people comes, and will lay a new foundation to the City, and do not know an A for a B, whence comes this to them? where have they learned that? We have lain in high schools and spent our money thereon, should now these asses come and teach us, the one is yet a cobbler, the other a weaver or fuller, and these will allege the Scripture, let them do their craft, that belongs to us, we will also not suffer it, there must be set against it Fire, Water, Sword, yet let us not fear nor be frightened, however much the dogs bark, the lions roar, for God who is with us, that is a strong God, who will well keep His own, and they shall well keep the field.

They can nor may do otherwise than what the Lord permits them, my dear brothers, take this simple writing in good part, it happened mostly in haste, the day after I received your letter. Herewith I will once more commend you to the Lord and the word of His grace. Greet yet the friends in Vlielant, that I greet them heartily, with the Lord's peace, that they may piously fight for the law of the Lord, pray the Lord for me, I desire to remember you again, forget me not in your prayers, think as if you were also a prisoner, fare well, the fear of the Lord keep you all, Amen.

I send you here also yet a greeting, if it might a little refresh you in your assault of the gainsayers of baptism, which I have had with a Lutheran priest; this following is the answer upon his writings, which he has also sent to me, after we have many times spoken with one another; the Lord be with your spirit, Amen.

Another letter of Jan Geertsz, to the Lutheran priest

My most beloved good friend, herewith I will say Adieu to you, for I expect neither with you, nor with any other men after this time, to dispute or to write, for Paul says: discharge yourself of strife or unspiritual babbling and unprofitable disputations, for they further much to an ungodly being, for their word eats around them as the canker disease, therefore I desire also to be discharged of you, and to live my soul in rest with God, fare always well.

See, my good friend, here is my defense and weapon of my faith, and that partly shown briefly, see, herewith, and with no others, neither iron nor steel, spear nor sword, will I storm the kingdom of Antichrist, for spirit must be overcome with spirit, and flesh with fleshly weapons, therefore I say with the Apostle, the weapons of our knighthood are not fleshly, but mighty before God, to overthrow all that exalts itself against the truth, for our strife is not only against flesh and blood, but against the Princes, and mighty ones, against the lords of the world, against the spirits of wickedness under heaven, therefore must all Christians put on the harness of God, that they may stand against the cunning assault of the Devil, and also be ready in all things, therefore also Peter says: be sober and watch, for your adversary the Devil goes round about as a roaring lion, and seeks whom he may devour, resist him in a firm faith, that is our weapon, wherewith we are content.

First, it knows no war, but whatever comes upon him, he must bear patiently with endurance for the Lord's sake, for Christ has taught His own nothing else than to love their enemies, thereabove He forbade His disciples, when they asked Him: Lord, will You that we cause the fire to come from heaven and destroy this people? No, He said, do you not know whose children you are: Be merciful, as your heavenly Father is; He threatened not when He suffered.

These examples we follow after with all diligence, after our weak ability, and commend thus our souls to God, in His grace, as to the faithful Creator. Hereby you may see or understand, what people we are, what spirit we have. See, my good friend, with these my weapons and defense will I you, as a little and unregarded David, meet the great Goliath and

presumptuous hero, who mocked and scorned God's army, and trusted in his might, even as you trust in your learning, and are bold upon the name, Rabbi, and through the great esteem and regard of your understanding, might, and power, you also begin to say with Goliath: Am I a dog, that you come to me with a staff? I can and will give your flesh to the birds under heaven to eat, that said Goliath, and you no less: For without might, you say, am I deceived and dead: Yes, my friend, I well know that I and my like are always accounted small and unlearned by you.

See, here you have with your measuring brought it so far, that I with my sling and stone with boldness well dare step out and say to you, as to Goliath, the Philistines' champion and protector: See, you have come out to me, and trust in your spear and shield, but I come to you in trust of God, in the name of the God of Israel, and will today give your flesh to the birds of heaven to eat, and thus kill you with your own sword, that is, with your own writing or disputations, which serve me to overcome you, not through the spirit of the universities or higher schools, but through God's word and power, and that in German, Dutch, and my mother's tongue, to the higher honor of God, and to your shame, and that dumb, burden-bearing beast shall make your folly appear, so long you have, Balaam, beaten me, poor ass, until I spoke through God's power, so long you have, Goliath, mocked and challenged me and the army of Israel, that I kill you with your own sword, which I would not have done, had you not bitten with such sharp teeth, and set the pen so high, how could I leave that, if I am now thanked ill for it, as I also well suspect, so you may blame yourself, for one cannot be silent and speak God's words.

O men, men, it were so well counseled for you with Gamaliel, that you let God's people in peace, for if that work is of men, it shall well come to nought, but if it is of God, you cannot bring it to nought. Therefore you may well look to it, that you do not grip amiss at the sword of the Lord, and be not accustomed as those who fight against God; will not longer persecute Jesus of Nazareth, and leave Israel unvexed.

To come now to the understanding and beginning of your letter, which you have sent to me, to understand all reasons and account of the faith, so I find that you are greeting me in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, whereupon I answer you: since you boast yourself for a Christian, and account me as a rejected man, and unbelieving, also laden with a false opinion, so I say that you do not write rightly, for John says: If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, receive him not into your house, and greet him also not, for he who greets him has fellowship with his evil works. Still says Paul: If anyone lets himself be called a brother, and yet is an adulterer and the like, and also an unbeliever, that they shall not possess God's kingdom, therefore because they may not possess God's kingdom, one shall also not eat bread with them, to the destruction of their flesh, that they consider wherefrom they are fallen.

Secondly, you call me your brother, why am I your brother? seeing we are yet different in faith, is it therefore because we are all created of God the Father? I say no thereto, for

should we be brothers after the spirit, and after the teaching of Christ and the Apostles, so we must in one faith, custom, be driven of one Spirit, which now is far different, for this brotherhood must come out of the heavenly rebirth, through the hearing of the godly word, out of the earthly into the heavenly; this brotherhood is not ascribed to the unbeliever, nor comes it out of the fleshly descent, as Paul well gives clearly distinction, where he says: Draw not in a strange yoke with the unbelievers, for what fellowship has the righteous with the unrighteous, the light with the darkness, and Christ with Belial, the believer with the unbeliever, or the temple of God with the temple of idols, etc.

For brotherhood stands therein: be diligent to keep the unity in the spirit, to remain in one hope of the calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; mark your baptism, be it with a midwife, or with confirmation, and with the like you let yourselves content, and do not think thereupon, that God above all, and in us all, will have His word a place. Since you are to me, and I to you, so contrary, in faith, teaching, life, and spirit, why do you call me brother, I ask once more, or am I a heretic and a faller-away from the truth, why do you not shun me? when I am once or twice admonished, for that is a command of the Scriptures, but (alas) you are not obedient to the Scripture inspired of God, but you choose to damnation.

Thirdly, so I find in your beguiling, teaching letter, as that one is only accusing and appealing me in error and misunderstanding of baptism, without any other articles, what shall I say hereto? are then all your little gods to you an abomination? and your false teaching and custom of the churches, shall that then be off? but I think no, that deceitful gain is all too sweet to you, but I well know your meaning, that when you had robbed me of the one, you thought to get the other also, after your own word. O what a brother you are to me, fair in the coming, but my Teacher and Master Christ Jesus has warned me before you to be prudent as serpents, but simple as doves. Yes, such a brother you are to me, as the old lying prophet, who deceived the man of God through his lies, for God had commanded the man of God to prophesy against the altar, and in the same place he should eat no bread, nor drink water, until you come again to your land: But that seed of serpents, the old prophet said: Eat bread with me, and drink water; the man of God answered: God has forbidden me that. But the deceiver said: I am also a prophet of the Lord (as you), and the Lord has spoken with me, that you shall here eat bread and drink water. Then the man of God went in with him, and broke the commandment of the Lord, therefore he is, to punishment of his disobedience, slain on the way by the lion.

Before that example my soul is greatly affrighted, for after deceit and transgression of my Lord's word, He would send the lions, dragons, and bears, that they might get dominion over my soul, and kill it, for when my faith is sick, and wavers, then I were an overcome, and certainly dead man, but the anchor of my faith stands fast.

Fourthly, of your unwise or willful grossness, that you will prove your infant baptism with the circumcision of the Law or with that covenant-sign of Israel, for the circumcision which you understand upon baptism (says Paul that it is done without hands in the spirit) to the

putting off of the sinful flesh, whose praise is not of men as hand-work on Israel, but is done of God, is then now your infant baptism in the spirit, without hands? and that to the putting off of the sinful flesh, and to sins which they have not yet done, for that sinful to put off, is this, says Paul, kill your earthly members, as whoredom, adultery, uncleanness, unchastity, evil lusts, mark whether this can be understood upon your children, etc.

And with these your infant baptisms, you make that one calls us rebaptizers, though one does not baptize twice, nor let baptize, but once, and that after the truth, after the commandment and custom of the Apostles, and therewith we are well content.

Fifthly, I will let you hear our confession and custom, that our baptism is not out of opinion, but out of command of the most high God. After this I hope neither with you, nor with anyone, to write nor to dispute, as is foresaid, for great presumptuous valiancy have I yet not, but a sure mind, and firm faith of my ground, hear brief account: Of the circumcision I confess, that it was a sign of the covenant of Abraham, to him and all his seed, also an entrance of the congregations of God of Israel, and the outward circumcision of Israel has been a figure upon the future inward circumcision of Christ, as one may clearly understand in the spirit of the New Testament, as Paul also relates, that is no circumcision which outwardly happens in the flesh, but the circumcision of the heart, that is the circumcision which happens in the spirit, and not in the letter nor law, whose praise is not of men, but of God; also you who in Christ are also circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, which happens without hands, through putting off of the sinful flesh.

Furthermore, what is it for a people who are buried with Him through that baptism, hear yet, you are risen, whereby? through faith, what faith? what faith have the godfathers and godmothers, through whom God works, after your understanding, mark freely here no children, but believing and understanding ones, and this will be your strongest proof.

O friend, do not set yourself willfully against the prick, lest it fall heavy on your heart, to speak with God, and to drive away His word and truth so boldly, for if you will yet hold and have the outward circumcision as a figure upon baptism, well then, who makes you infant-baptizers then so bold, that you will baptize them before the eighth day? and why do you baptize the little maids? for in the Law they are not circumcised, and herefrom it must follow, that the little maids should remain unbaptized, for the true being must rightly have its course. Out are you with your figures of baptism, but we have a better account of the figures of baptism, and that shall Paul and Peter well help us keep, with their spirit and testimony.

The entrance through that water, into the ark of Noah (says Peter) signifies to us baptism; he who dares deny me that, he may also well speak against us, we who yet are accounted small and unlearned of them, yet taught of God.

Our second witness of the figure of baptism is the high Apostle Paul (who proclaims the counsel of God): the children of Israel's going out of Egypt through the Red Sea, and that

they were baptized under the cloudy pillar through Moses, that was a figure, and to us for a teaching.

But we of the true being in the Spirit and New Testament, so we confess a clear ordinance, teaching, and commandment of God, thereafter the rule, custom, and clear examples of the Apostles of baptism, that is enough of our account.

Christ's commandment is this: Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to all creatures, teach them to keep what I have commanded you, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, he who believes and is baptized shall be saved, he who believes not shall be damned. First, a grave of sins, an entrance of the congregations of God, a putting on of Christ, and an escape of the wrath of God, a bath of regeneration, and a seal of good conscience or assurance with God, and he who rejects this rejects God's counsel.

The Apostles' custom has been this: If you believe with whole heart, it may well be done.

A letter to his acquaintances

After all friendly greeting, B. and S. in the Lord, here is that which you are desiring of me, after my weak ability, after your longing, as it is in me, wherefore I thank God the Father with His beloved Son Jesus Christ heartily very much, that He leaves not His own, but always helps keep the field, for His eyes of grace always see upon His own, and His ears always listen to their prayer, for there stands written: When you go through water and fire, I will be with you, so I give Him alone praise, honor, for His great help and working, which He has shown to me, poor sinner, in my distress, suffering, and pain, yes, so, my dear B., that the dogs, lions, and bears have had nothing on me, however much they bark, roar, and growl, for the Lord was my keeper, as I set my hope of faith upon Him, that He will also keep me, through His great grace, unto the end, for if God is with us, who shall be able to harm us, and if the Lord keeps the house (as David says) who shall be able to harm it.

My friends, if I could now write out to you my heart and mind, that I would well, as it was in me when I hung, and received those heavy blows, for the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, for His word and bitter suffering, which He has suffered for us poor sinners, was so in me, that I thought of nothing else, see, my b. and s., how the Lord can keep and protect His own, who trust in Him, yes, as His eye-apple.

Yet it shall please you to know, my dear B. and S., that they first came to me with questions, that is, what my name was, and from where I was born, how old I was, and how long I had dwelt in Texel. Secondly, when I received that baptism. Answer: Five years. Question: In what place did it happen? Answer: I do not desire to tell you. Then they said again: One shall well make you tell it, and pointed to the executioner, and has further said: When one asks you after the truth, you should indeed tell the truth. Answer: All that concerns the faith, that I desire well to tell you, but such has God not commanded me. Thirdly, whether my wife were also such. Answer: No, she, which is sorry to me. Fourthly, who had done it. Answer: I do not desire to tell you. Question: Has N. been it? Answer: It is not commanded me of

God to tell, and though I told you, yet he dwells not in the King's lands. Question: Christ, when He was set before the magistracy, He has given answer when one asked Him, why do you not also? Answer: When one asked Him what touched the honor of His Father and His Godhead, He has answered, otherwise kept silent.

And all that you ask me, that concerns His law, word, commandment, prohibition, that I desire to confess before Emperor, Kings, Dukes, Counts, Princes, and other lords, and not to keep silent. So he has straightway with short words said to the executioner: seize him. In sum, when one seized me, I fell upon my belly, and prayed the Lord for His help, so he straightway said to the torturers: seize him up. So they fell upon me, and have dealt with me as one has dealt with the Lord our Master, when one shook out His clothes, and they have bound my hands on my back, without mercy, and bound my eyes and drawn me up, and then they struck me, and flogged no otherwise than as if upon a tree it had been, so that the rods snapped like hemp stubble, and said: speak, have you a dumb devil within, one shall well drive him out, but the Lord (blessed be He) shut my mouth, so that there was not once said: O woe, or that any sound came out, for the suffering of our Lord (as is forewritten) and His testimony was so in my heart, that it is unspeakable, in sum, when they saw that all my limbs failed me, they said: let him down, whether the dumb devil might then speak better, and letting me down, I fell with my head against the planks, so they seized me, and set me on a bench, there I would have swooned again for them, had they not held me.

There they stood as lions and bears, I should give answer to their questions, they said, but the Lord was my helper and strength, to Him be praise, laud, of His grace, yes, that there came nothing but nothing out. Then the President said: Have you no coarse rods to drive out this dumb devil? So he said: no, but rope I well have. And they would have bound my eyes again, then he said: Let him see it, and when he struck, I thought: O Lord, You see it well, and my eyes closed shut.

Yes, my friends, though they had struck so long as there had been breath, I think that they would have gotten nothing, so was the strength of the Most High with me, and when they saw that it might not help, they fetched the weight of a hundred pounds, and hung it on my feet, then my heart went to the Lord: Keep, keep my treasure. In sum, after all their desire they have gotten nothing. So they asked whether I could well do Latin. I answered: Yes, I, as much as it is. Question: Could you well do French? Answer: No, I. Question: Where did you go to school? Answer: At Delft. Question: What time? Answer: When Delft burned. Item, whether I had well read Menno's or Dierc P.'s books. Yes, said I. For Boshuysen had taken my learned books, namely, the new Creature of Menno, and the spiritual restitution of D. P. They asked where I had come by them. My mouth was shut. Then it was: Fetch water, candles, the dumb devil must out of it. But the Lord was my keeper, for which I cannot thank Him enough. At last it was: unbind him, he must cool off a bit, one shall well come to him better. Now in parting, I said that they should look to what they did, the day of the Lord would also come with them all, and so they parted from me.

My dear B. and S., herewith I say you my last Adieu, with Christ's peace, I would have written somewhat more, but the time cannot suffer it, and if it pleases the Lord, so I desire to stand with Him at a stake. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

A song of Jan Geertsz
To the tune of Wilt ghy wesen een oorlochs man

It is a perilous time
The good Lord must keep us
Satan's servants, seized with envy
Severely persecute God's servants.
A Christian has not to fight
With flesh and blood, after Paul's writing
But against the world's princes with diligence
And spirits that drive in the air.
There was an upright Christian man
Called Jan Geertsz by name
In the Hague they brought him
Taken, as one of evil fame.
He had much strife with a priest
Who was of great estimation
And esteemed small that Christian sheep
Though very gifted with God's grace.
As David and Goliath
The strife once with one another began
By these two we liken that
Who here fight with other swords.
The priest has trusted on his art
For he was a Master of many
On the name Rabbi was he bold
As though nothing might fail him.
He has challenged David to the field
So long, that he once prepared himself
Who laid the highly famed hero
Low through the sharp sword of God's word.
You trust upon shield and spear
Said he, and come thus to me striding
But through trust upon the Lord
In the name of the God of Israel it shall appear,
That I give today your flesh
The birds of heaven to eat

And with your own sword this time
So you shall be smitten dead.
For your writings serve me most
To overcome and to slay you
Not through the spirit of the high schools
Or of the universities.
But through God's word of great power
And that in my mother's tongue
To His honor highly esteemed
And to your shame all together.
For through that dumb, burden-bearing beast
Shall your folly be made manifest
With beating you, proud Balaam, brought
Me, poor ass, to speaking.
You call me your fitting brother
Though we are different in faith
Should we be brothers together
It must be after God's Spirit and teaching both.
In custom we must be one
Being driven of one spirit
That now much differs between us two
After the Apostles' teaching written.
You boast yourself a fine Christian
Rejecting me as laden
With false opinion
Thus you do wrong, ill-advised.
Comes there anyone at any time
To you hung with strange teaching
Him you shall not greet with mouth
Nor also receive into your house.
For whosoever is greeting him
Has fellowship with his evil works
That makes John certain to us
In the second epistle for strengthening.
Friends, to conclude, mark yet
How the scribes err
And that they cannot stand
Against the truth unconcealed.

A beautiful confession and comforting epistle of Mayken Boosers

A beautiful confession and comforting epistle of Mayken Boosers, being imprisoned at Tournai, where she sealed her faith with her blood, and was burned there to ashes, in the year 1564, the 18th of September.

The eternal, unfathomable grace of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost, be with you all together, my beloved friends and brothers, I let you know that I am healthy after the flesh, but after the spirit it might well be better, for I find weakness in me, but my hope stands on God, who strengthens the weak, comforts the oppressed, after whom my heart always longs, to be fit before His eyes, that I might to His praise accomplish that which He has begun in me.

Therefore I pray you, my beloved B., that you forget me not, as I well mark that you do not, for which I thank you very much, and hope the Lord shall keep you in His holy truth. Further I let you know that the lords asked of me to know who were baptized with me, and whether there were none in the city, and they would know them by first name and surname. I said: What I do not know, I cannot tell. It might not help at all. They said that the executioner should undress me. I was ashamed, and prayed them friendly, that they would believe me, it profited not at all. Then I said: Your will be done, and I undressed me. Then they led me to the rack, and bound me to draw and stretch. Then the Commissary said that I should name them to them. I said that I might not do that, then they bound me there off again, without naming anyone, for which I thanked the high God, but Pier and Jorge they had already known from the very first, therefore I also had to name them, but their surnames I did not know.

Herewith I will commend you to the Lord, and the word of His grace. The Lord will keep us all in one faith unto the end of our life, Amen.

Another letter to her parents

Out of the innermost of my heart I greet you, my beloved father and my most beloved mother, with all those who are within your house; it shall please you to know that I am healthy and unchanged of mind, the Lord be eternally praised, so I expect through God's goodness that it also stands with you. Further, I thank you heartily for your friendly greeting, written to me, whereof I have greatly rejoiced, hearing your mind and good favor, and for remembrance's sake, I will write you something of my imprisonment.

First, the Commissary asked me how old I was when I was baptized. I said: About 23 or 24 years. They asked why I had let that be done. I said: Because God had commanded it. They asked whether I did not know that I was already baptized before. I said: I know nothing thereof, also God has not commanded such. They asked whether I had had no godfathers nor godmothers. I said: It may well be, they may have died. Then they said one would send me learned men. I said: You ought to be wise enough to speak against me, but they would send learned men.

Thereafter they sent the parish priest of the Church of Our Lady, who came and said why I had not been in his church so long, and that he had had no knowledge of me. I said that I had kept myself quietly in the house. They asked where my church was. I said: It was unknown to them, for if you knew it, you would no longer let it in peace.

We had many words together of baptism. I said that Christ had sent His apostles out into all the world, and first teach all nations to keep all that He had commanded them, and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. No children can learn, but he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. Then they said that the Apostles had baptized whole households. I said: Yes, then they rejoiced that they had become believing in God, that the children could not do, God has called the children to Him, and has said that of such the kingdom of heaven is, but He did not command them to baptize.

There they came forward with Adam's sin, how they were born therein. I said that Christ had died therefor. I asked them whether they would wash off sin with baptism, for the young children yet have no sin, therefore they cannot die to sins, and rise through that baptism into a new life. Then the lords said: Your saying is: He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, is it not? I said: Yes.

Then they asked whether Christ were not flesh of Mary. I said that Mary had conceived Him of the Holy Ghost, as the angel spoke to her: The Holy Ghost shall come from above into you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you, therefore that Holy which shall be born of you shall be called God's Son. They said once more whether He had taken no flesh of her, since He had not brought it from above. I said that I well believed John's testimony, where he says: The Word is become flesh and has dwelt among us. They asked whether I did not believe that He is Mary's Son after the flesh, and God's Son after the Spirit. I said that He is God's own-born and only-born Son, who is from beginning of days, without end of life, and now at the last, He is born of Mary through the power of the Holy Ghost; therefore He is not of the earth, earthly like Adam, and shall also not return to earth, for He is the Lord from heaven, and had He now flesh of our flesh, He must also see corruption, for God said: You are earth and shall return again to earth, but that was not only of Adam, but of all who came from him.

Then they asked me whether I did not believe that in the Sacrament Christ's flesh and blood were. I said: No, He is ascended, and sits at the right hand of God His Father. Then they asked whether I would not believe that all the saints are in heaven. I said: What I have not read, I cannot answer, but thus much have I read: The righteous souls are in the hands of God, and the pain of death shall not touch them. Thereupon they said not much, but they asked what I held of Mary. I said that she was a pure and holy vessel, and blessed above all women, for she was worthy to conceive and bear the Son of God. They asked whether I did not confess that there is a purgatory. I said: Of two ways I find written, the one very broad leading to damnation, the other very narrow leading to eternal life. Still they asked what I

held of the Pope. I said: The Pope I know not, but if it is his teaching which one holds here, I hold him like his teaching.

There have been many more words, but these I write for shortness of time. Fare all well.

Another letter to the brothers

My most beloved and dear brothers in the Lord, I let you know that my heart is well comforted and of good cheer, the Lord be eternal praise, for He keeps us through His right hand, and helps us out of the midst of our enemies, for without Him it were lost with me, for they come to assail me in so many ways, spiritual and worldly, as one might have seen this Sunday, how Montsiuer Massaert with an alderman, with yet another worldly learned man, who esteemed me for the ugliest sect that ever has been under heaven.

But when I related my faith to them, then I made them all weep, so that they could scarcely speak, and at last they parted friendly from me. No more at this time, but remain always commended to the Lord, who keep and preserve you in His holy truth. I hope it shall shortly be done with me, for I have nothing dearer than that I might please the Lord, and die blessedly, Amen.

A testament to her children

A hearty and favorable greeting be written to you all, my beloved children, your mother who is now in bonds for the right truth, hear yet, for it has so pleased God that all who will live godly must suffer persecution. Thus I am well content and comforted that the servant follows his Lord; His blessed will must be done with me; had it pleased Him, He would well have hindered these bonds.

My dear children, it has been so from the beginning, that the righteous must suffer, and the unrighteous always the upper hand, but their day shall soon come, that they shall lament, and cry for misery: Mountains fall upon us, and hills cover us before the face of the Lord. O alas, when the righteous shall shine as the sun, and the godless shall go into the eternal fire. O beloved children, search the Scripture, shape yourselves thereafter, that you may hear that lovely word: Come, you blessed, possess the kingdom of your Father, pray the Lord for wisdom, and learn to fear God, so you get the right understanding, and do not set yourselves like the world, in pride, in dancing, jumping, and in vain babbling: but prove by your walk a godly life, adorn yourselves with the holy women, receive the Scripture and live thereafter, that your soul may be saved, and that we after this time come together, the almighty God, the King of all kings, give you His grace, after the riches of His goodness, to become strong in the inward man, and that Christ may dwell in your heart, and He lead you in all truth.

I pray you, my dear children, be peaceable among one another, that is a fruit of the Spirit, help one another willingly without any gainsaying, and be always mindful of the poor, give willingly of all that you have, make yourselves friends of the unrighteous mammon, love that which is eternal, and not that which is temporal, seek that which is heavenly, and not that which is earthly, for all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as a flower of the grass, which

today stands and tomorrow is cast into the oven, the glory of man passes away, but the word of the Lord abides eternally, and love not the world, nor the things that are therein, namely the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, which is not of God but of the world, and the world shall pass away with all that is therein, but he who does the will of the Father abides in eternity.

My children, do after the Lord's will, I, your mother, hope to go the way before you, mark wherein, and how I go before you, and do not look upon the world's honor, but account it honor to suffer for the name of our God. For He who was the most high King has not been ashamed to leave His glory, and is come into the world, and has suffered the most despised death for us, and is beaten and misshaped without guilt, that there was nothing whole on His blessed body. So dear has He had us, and therewith left us an example, that we shall follow after His footsteps. He is that light which is come into the world, that all who follow Him should not walk in darkness, but have the light of life: The Lord grant that the same light also shine upon you, and you walk therein. Amen.

Another little letter of this same mother to her children

My children, I greet you very heartily, and send your writings back again, that you may acquit your promise which you have made me therein, and be always obedient to those who instruct you unto righteousness, and punish in your transgression. Fare well, and herewith, on this world, Adieu, my dear children, fear God, shun all evil.

Another letter to her father and mother

My most beloved father and mother, I commend me out of the innermost of my heart to you, with praying to the Lord, that He will comfort you and me, with the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Lord, which He promised to send His disciples, and said: I go to the Father, and shall send you another Comforter, whom the world cannot receive, for it knows Him not.

Thus, my dear father and mother, be comforted and await with patience what the Lord will do with me, His comfort I also await patiently, and what has passed there, I account not otherwise than a wind, whereof I have no heaviness, the Lord be praised, in whom I hope, for He it is who comforts the humbled and thrusts the proud from the seat, though here is now distress before eyes, so we yet well know that the day of the Lord shall soon come, and then all godless being shall be brought to nought, and God who shall judge there without respect of persons, and give each one reward after his works, thus, my dear and most beloved father and mother, do not think upon me, let the Lord accomplish His work, I hope that He has provided me, poor unworthy one, for an offering which may be pleasing to Him, for I have hoped on His goodness, and that He will not go with me into judgment, for should He judge me after my deserts, I were worthy of the eternal death, but the Lord, I hope, shall have mercy on me.

I let you yet know how I have once more been fetched before the dean, but each kept his own, and in parting he said to me: If you remain in this faith, you are eternally damned. I said: How do you speak so? seeing God shall judge. Yes, said he: I dare well say that, for it shall so happen. Then followed me master Claes, and asked: Where have you kept yourself so long, I have long sought you. I said: Now you have me indeed. 'I do not,' said he, 'if you were in our hands, we would hold you longer than these shall do, is my opinion.' Herewith I will commend you, my dear father and mother, to the Lord, who will keep you and me unto the end, make no sorrow for me, but rejoice that the Lord accounts me worthy, for these my limbs, which the Lord has given me, I will gladly leave for His sake. Fare always well.

Another letter to the friends

O my hearty, and most beloved B. and S. in the Lord, I greet you once more with the Lord's peace, the same to remain with you into eternity, Amen. I let you know how these my enemies still always keep tormenting me of baptism, but of the becoming-man of Christ they say nothing to me; the dean related my faith to them, and they asked me nothing, except whether I also believed that Christ was David's Son. I said that He was the living God's Son. O, O, said the dean. The lords asked: Stands there not written of the seed of David after the flesh? The dean answered them, for there was no hearing, he often called me liar, because I withstood him, that he could not prove to me that the Apostles had baptized children. They all alike overfell me, and said that no one could come into the kingdom of heaven, unless he were born of water and Spirit. They asked me in haste whether I also did not confess such. I said: The Scripture does not belong to the children, but to the old, who have ears to hear. Then they rose up, and said: You carry an opinion.

Thus, my dear friends, I expect to be fetched before them once more tomorrow. Thus I pray you that you will pray the Lord for me, that He will rule my mouth, to His praise and honor. Herewith I will eternally commend you into the hands of God, and pray friendly that you will take my simple writing in good part, for I seek nothing but out of my heart's simplicity to please God, for I wish nothing but, O might I thus in my calling please the King of kings, and the Lord of all lords, so were I well born at a blessed time. Herewith peace, separation, after this time no more. Hold this for an eternal Adieu.

Hereafter Mayken Boosers was burned to powder at Tournai, and has given her soul into the hands of the LORD.

A song of Mayken Boosers

To the tune of Het daghet in den Oosten

They who trust in the Lord
Never came to shame
Be they young or old, men or women
God strengthens them with the hand.

There was a woman named
Mayken Boosers, who was taken
She has trodden the narrow paths
Toward the right city.
To her came
The church's parish priest
And took account of the faith
Of that simple sheep.
For she had not appeared
In his church for long
Thus he set himself on his legs
And took his way to her.
(That woman had kept herself
Quietly in her house
Which did not repent her
Though the cross came thereby.)
Question. Where is your church (was the saying)
Answer. It is not known to you
For did you know it, you would apply yourself thereto
That you would not leave it in peace.
Will you also well believe
He spoke finely
That all saints here above
Are in the kingdom of heaven.
She had not read such
She gave sweetly to understand
But of this she had read
In the good book of Wisdom.
The righteous souls
Are in the Lord's hand
Death's pain shall not destroy them
Touch them on any side.
Many came to assail her
With many a cunning
Worldly and spiritual servants
Cunning foxes, Antichrist.
But she stood against her enemies
Like a heroine
So that they all came to shame
Who would go in to her.
Montsiuer Massaert, with alderman

And yet another worldly man
Have also taken hold of the matter
And fought against Mayken.
That she were of the worst
Sect that ever was in the world
But they gave way before her at last
Slain by God's word.
It has clearly appeared
That they wept, a few
Yes, that they could scarcely more speak
Being wholly overcome.
Thus they parted at last
And went friendly away
For there was no longer to abide there
But dishonor alone.
Brothers, praise, laud God's works
Without ceasing much
Who thus wonderfully comes to strengthen
His tender little members.

Hereafter follow yet some confessions and epistles, left by offered children of God, which have never been in print, having each particularly a song therewith.

A confession of a woman, named Weynken Claes Dochter of Monickendam, being a widow, who was put to death and burned at The Hague. In the year 1527

On the 15th day of November, Weynken Claes Dochter was brought prisoner to The Hague, from the castle of Woerden, and the Count of Hoochstraten, Stadtholder in Holland, came there on the 17th day of the same month. On the 18th day, the aforesaid Weynken was brought before the Stadtholder and the full Council of Holland. There one asked her: Woman, have you well slept upon and considered the things that my lords have laid before you? Ans. What I have spoken, I stand firmly by. Ques. If you speak no differently, and turn from that error, then an unbearable death will be inflicted on you. Ans. If that power is given to you from above, then I am ready to suffer. Ques. Do you not then fear death, which you have not tasted? Ans. That is true, but I shall never taste death, for Christ says: If anyone keeps my word, he shall not taste death in eternity. The rich man tastes death and shall taste it eternally. Ques. What do you think of the Sacrament? Ans. I hold your Sacrament for bread and meal; if you people hold that for a God, then I say that it is your devil. Ques. What do you think of the saints? Ans. I know no other mediator than Christ. Ques. You must die, if you remain by this. Ans. I am already dead. Ques. If you are dead, how can you speak? Ans. The Spirit lives in me, the Lord is in me, and I am in him. Ques. Will you have a Confessor or not? Ans. I have Christ, to whom I confess: But nevertheless, if I have

offended anyone, I will gladly ask them to forgive me that. Ques. Who has taught you this opinion, and how do you come to it? Ans. The Lord who calls all men to him: I am also one of his sheep, therefore I hear his voice. Ques. Are you then called alone? Ans. No, but the Lord calls them all to him who are burdened.

After many other words of like sort, Weynken was led back into the prison: And between the two following days, she was tempted and assailed by many kinds of people, namely by monks and priests, and women, and by her closest friends. Among others a woman also came to her in simplicity, and lamented her in this manner: Dear Mother, can you not think what you will, and be still and silent, then you would not die. Then Weynken answered, saying: Dear Sister, it is commanded to me to speak, and I am called to it, so that I cannot be silent. Ques. Then I fear that they will kill you. Ans. Whether they burn me tomorrow, or put me in a sack, it is all the same to me: as the Lord has ordained, so must it happen, and not otherwise; I will remain with the Lord. Ques. If you have not done otherwise, then I hope that you will not die. Ans. It does not lie with me, but when I come down from the Hall above, then I weep much, and it grieves me that I see all those fine men, that they are so blinded, and I will pray to the Lord for them.

How the monks assailed her

Two black or preaching monks also came to her, one as a Confessor, the other as a Teacher, showing her the cross, and said: See, here is your Lord, your God. She answered: That is not my God; it is another cross through which I am redeemed. That is a wooden God; throw it in the fire, and warm yourself by it. The other asked her, that same morning on which she was to die, whether she would not receive the Sacrament; he would gladly give it to her. She said: What God would you give me, who is perishable? whom one sells for a heller or a doit? And to the priest or monk (who rejoiced that he had said Mass that day) she said that he had crucified God anew. Then he said: It seems to me that you are straying. Weynken answered: I cannot help it; my Lord, my God, to whom be honor, praise, and thanks in eternity, has made me thus. Ques. What do you think of the holy oil? Ans. Oil is good on a salad, or to smear your shoes with.

In the middle of the week she was brought to the Court, and when she came into the Hall, the monk went to her, holding the cross before her face, saying: Yet recant before the sentence is given. But Weynken turned from the cross, saying: I remain with my Lord, with my God; neither death nor life shall separate me from him. When she stood before the Judge, the monk whispered in her ear, saying: Fall on your knees, and ask the lords for mercy. She answered: Be silent; have I not told you that you shall not draw me away from my Lord?

Her sentence and her death

The Dean of Naaldwijk, as commissioner and inquisitor, read the sentence from a letter in Latin, and repeating it in Dutch, spoke in short that she had been found in a misbelief concerning the Sacrament, and that she remained immovably by it; and therefore he

concluded that she was a heretic, and handed Weynken over to the secular arm, with the protest that he did not consent to her death. Thereafter he went out of the Council, with his two assessors, as ecclesiastical men.

Immediately it was read by the Chancellor, that she (as they said) had been found obstinate, which might not go unpunished; and that she would be burned to powder, and all her goods confiscated. Then Weynken spoke: Is it all over now? I ask you all, if I have wronged or offended anyone, that you will forgive me that. Then the monk said to her: Kiss now your Lord your God one time. She answered: That is not my Lord. In going down from the council chamber the monk said to her that she should call upon our dear Lady, that she would pray for her. She answered: Our Lady is well content in God. Monk. Call upon her. Weynken. We have Christ who sits at the right hand of his Father, who prays for us. When she now came from the Hall and went to the gallows or the place of justice, the monk said: Look upon your Lord once, who died for you. Weynken. That is not my Lord my God; my Lord God is in me, and I am in him. Mon. Look around; will you condemn all those lambs, and are they all damned? Weyn. Not all; that judgment belongs to God. Mon. Do you not fear the strict judgment of God? Weyn. God comes not to judge sinners, but to give peace. Mon. Do you not fear that judgment which you will suffer in a fire? Weynken. No, for I know how I stand with my Lord. On the scaffold a bystander spoke to Weynken, saying: Mother, turn to the people, and ask them, if you have offended anyone, that they forgive you. She did that. Thereafter she helped the Master put the powder in her bosom. Here the monk tempted her again with the cross, which she thrust away from her with her hand, and turned around, saying: Why do you tempt me; my Lord my God is above. Thereafter she went joyfully, as if she were going to a feast, and she did not once flinch her face for the fire. The monk said: Will you not steadfastly and firmly remain with God? Weyn. Yes indeed. Monk. Now you must go immediately into the fire; now recant yet. Weyn. I am well content; the Lord's will must be done. Monk. That is not the Lord's will; the will of God is your sanctification. The executioner spoke: Mother, remain with God, and let no one draw you away from God. Meanwhile this pious heroine went alone, undaunted, to the bench, and joined herself to the stake at which she was to be burned, and said: Does the bench stand firm too; shall I not fall? Thereafter the executioner prepared the cords with which he would strangle her; the woman took off her neckerchief or veil, and put the rope around her neck. Then the monk cried: Wendelmoet, will you also gladly die as a Christian person? Ans. Yes. Ques. You renounce all heresy. Ans. Yes. Ques. That is good. Besides, are you also sorry that you have erred? Ans. I have indeed erred before; I am sorry for that, but this is no error, but the right way, and I remain with God. When she had spoken that, the executioner stepped up to strangle her; and when she felt that, she shut her eyes humbly, as if she had fallen into a sleep, and gave up the spirit, the twentieth day of November. Anno 1527.

A song of Weynken Claes Dochter
To the tune of: Het was een Joden Dochter

The Lord must be praised
For his goodness
That he always wants to be
With those who are newly risen
And have laid aside evil.
This one can clearly see
In the woman Weynken Claes
Born of God
Whose word she had chosen
For her comfort and solace.
They had her brought as a prisoner
To The Hague before the authorities
With questions they assailed her
Whether she would stand by the things
That she had said before.
What I have spoken
I stand firmly by, she declared
They might well stoke the fire
To burn and to smoke
She was not afraid of that.
A washer who spoke there
Asked yet concerning the Sacrament
Thereupon Weynken told
That it was meal that one grinds
And the bread blinds a devil.
He said: You must die
If it be that you remain by this
But to inherit the kingdom of God
And to obtain the crown
She was strengthened by God's power.
Thus the sentence was given
That she should be burned
But driven by God's Spirit
She willingly gave her life
Over into the Lord's hand.
The monk one saw running
Around the woman with his cross
With lies in heaps
He there unraveled
To bring her into confusion.
He tormented her so greatly

That it was a pity and a grief
The executioner was dismayed by this also
Mother (was his utterance)
Let no one draw you away from God.
She helped put the powder
Herself into her bosom
See what appeared there
Of her own accord she walked
To the stake like a heroine.
She spoke: shall I not fall off
And does the bench stand firm too
There the monk went raving
And with his false prating he would
Gladly have surprised the woman yet.
But she herself went and joined
Very joyfully to the stake
It went well to her liking
But the sophists were writhing
And the godless all together.
The executioner stepped up to strangle
Then she closed her eyes humbly
Having hidden in her heart
A Comforter not to fear for
Longing to be home
Thus sweetly fallen asleep
Is Wendelmoet in the Lord
But monks and priests
Who gape after Christian blood
Shall never be satiated.

finis.

This is the Confession of two dear friends, the one named Fije, the other Eelken, who were put to death at Leeuwarden for the testimony of Jesus

In the year 1549, about three weeks before Easter, two dear men were captured in Born in West Friesland, named Fije and Eelken. These same were brought before the lords, where they boldly confessed their faith.

First they asked Eelken, saying: Who has permitted you to gather the people together to teach? Ans. God has permitted me. Ques. What is that which you have taught? Ans. Ask those who have heard, what we have taught among one another, for you have indeed a woman captive who has heard it. Then they asked the woman what she had heard from

Eelken. Ans. He has read the four Evangelists, Paul's, Peter's, John's Epistles, and the Acts of the Apostles. Then Eelken was asked again: What do you think of the Sacrament? Ans. I know nothing of your baked God. Ques. Friend, look well to what you speak, for these words cost necks. What do you think of the Mother of God? Ans. Much. Ques. What do you say; has the Son of God received no flesh and blood from Mary? Ans. No; I hold that which the Son of God testifies of it. Ques. What do you think of our holy Roman Church? Ans. I know nothing of your holy Church, and I do not know it; I have never in all my days been in a holy Church. Ques. You speak wholly spitefully; I am moved with you (said a councillor), and fear that you will lose your neck. Are you not baptized? Ans. I am not baptized, but I long greatly for baptism. Ques. What do you think of these false teachers, who run about thus, and baptize the people? Ans. I hold nothing of those false teachers, but I have greatly longed to hear a teacher who was sent from God. They said: We have nevertheless heard that you would be a teacher. Eelken said: Who has made me a teacher? They said: We do not know. Eelken said: You ask me that which you do not know; how then should I know? I know no one who has made me a teacher, but God has given me all that I have asked of him. They said: Now we have written all these articles which we have just asked you; if there is now anything here of which you repent, we will gladly leave it out. Ans. Do you think then that I would deny God?

Eelken and Fije both received their sentence, and so they were brought together, where they embraced each other, yes, they kissed each other's hands and feet, out of great love, so that all men marveled at them who saw and heard it; those in white cowls and the servants ran and said to the lords: Never have men loved one another as these have. Eelken spoke to Fije, saying: Dear brother, do not blame me that you have come into suffering through me. Fije answered: Dear brother, do not think that of yourself, for it is a power of God.

After the sentence, they were kept yet, until the third day. Then Eelken was first executed with the sword.

Item, when Fije's sentence was read, he did not hear it, because of his great joyfulness, and not knowing what had happened or would happen to Eelken, but he sang and leaped, praising and thanking God, and said: This is the only way. And they laid Fije in the boat where Eelken lay beheaded, and the wheel nearby on which they would set Eelken.

Item, the stake at which Fije was to stand to be burned; and in the boat Fije's hands became loose from each other, but he sat quite still: Then the monks said: Bind him again. The executioner said: Bind him yourselves; but the jailer commanded him that he should bind Fije again. Some women who saw it wept greatly: Then Fije spoke: Do not weep over me, but over your sins. Further he said to the executioner: What will you do to me? Ans. You will see that well. Yes, yes, said Fije, do your will; I have already given myself over into my Lord's hands.

Item, the brothers went outside by him with the common people, and when Fije saw some of his acquaintances, he cried, saying: Friends, rejoice with me; such a wedding is prepared for me. And when he came up the gallows hill, some brothers spoke to him, who greatly rejoiced with him, saying: This is the narrow way, this is the Lord's winepress, on this hangs the crown; But when the jailer heard that crying out, he cried, saying: Let no one lay his hand on this man; he forfeits life and goods.

Item, the executioner had forgotten his tools: and ran into the town to fetch them. Meanwhile the jailer, with the two monks, had Fije in the little confessional, greatly tempting him with bread and wine, but they won nothing: For Fije did nothing else but sing and leap, praising and thanking God; when they could not prevail over him, and the executioner came back, they said to Fije: Why are you so hard-hearted, since you say that you are members of Christ? Why then will you not do works of mercy, as to receive this wine and bread for wine and bread, for our sake? Ans. I am not hungered for your wine and bread, but a meal is prepared for me in heaven. When they could not prevail over him, they said: Go, you heretic, go. The jailer said: I have seen many a heretic, but in all my days never a harder heretic than this one; but Fije, standing ready for death, spoke to the executioner: Master, have you completed your work? He answered: Not yet. Fije said: Yes, here is the sheep for which you have come. Then the executioner stepped up, and tore Fije's shirt open, and took the cap from his head, and filled it with gunpowder.

Fije, standing at the stake where he was to be strangled, cried: O Lord, receive your servant. Thereafter he was strangled and burned, and thus fell asleep in the Lord: The common people cried, saying: That was a pious man; if that is not a Christian, then there is not one in the whole world.

A song of Eelken and Fije

To the tune of the 55th Psalm. Or, Mijn Liefken siet my oeuel aen.

According to your promise, O good Lord
Send comfort from above
To those who hold fast your doctrine here
They are brought into grievous misery
The world cannot bear
Your little people, gracious
They threaten them with great danger
Sword, water, fire
Strengthen us in these evil days.
They brought two prisoners forth
Named Eelken and Fije
Who confessed God's word
Boldly and joyfully

And standing before the lords
They asked Eelken swiftly
Say, who has permitted you that
You had gathered
The people together to teach
God, he answered them plainly
Further concerning the Roman Church
They asked him, and the Sacrament
But he mocked their works
One said: I am concerned
With you; fear therefore the more
If you have been baptized again
No, but greatly
I long for it.
Seeing the steadfastness, the council
Of these two pious lads
Judged them according to the placard
In joy one saw these sheep
Kissing each other lovingly
Yes, also hands and feet
See the glow of fiery love
That broke forth from the heart
Which is not to be quenched.
The joy was so great there
That Fije did not hear
His sentence unto death
Said from word to word
So greatly did he rejoice
Did nothing but sing and leap
He thought of no constraint
But praise and thanks
He gave to the Lord with joy.
Eelken the fine was greatly pressed
To go to confession by mouth
I acknowledge myself to be a sinner
And my sins are grievous to me
He said; therefore they said
That he had confessed
But he spoke to God, not to the priest
So they soon
Had him prepared for the sword.

The living with the dead both
They had carried in one boat
The women made lamenting there
Fije spoke gladly, without sadness
Do not weep over me
But over your sin
(Thus spoke Christ's mouth
As Scripture witnesses
When he went to death.)
Two monks were also in the play
Who tormented him, namely
With much bread and wine
That he should eat that
For your bread and wine
I do not hunger at all
A meal is prepared for me in heaven's company
A free meal
He said with joyful countenance.
The monks were angry and wrathful
That their wares could not avail
They cried foully: you heretic, go
The jailer was dismayed
I never saw in my days
Such a heretic as this
I have seen many, but none
(He said in common)
So hard and unyielding.
Master, have you completed your work
Not yet, the executioner said
Yes, here is the sheep present
Said Fije with clear understanding
And when at the stake
He was standing in the fight
He cried: O Lord, receive your servant
Thus is he rightly
Resting with the beloved company.
Brothers, conduct yourselves as befits
The Lamb's wedding is all ready
Let faith and love be fitting
And remain steadfast in virtue
Put on the wedding garments

That you may be a worthy guest
With joy the new wine
They shall drink fine there
And God's bread shall satisfy.

finis.

The confession of Peter Witses the mason, being prisoner at Leeuwarden, who was strangled and burned there at a stake for the testimony of Jesus. In the year 1553

Question and answer

Ques. What is your name? Ans. Peter Witses. Ques. How old are you? Ans. 27 years. Ques. When were you last at confession? Ans. I confess every day, and acknowledge that I am a sinner. Ques. What do you think of the Sacrament? Ans. I hold it in great value. Ques. What do you think of the Sacrament which the priest gives at Easter? Ans. I hold nothing of that. Ques. Christ said: Take, eat, that is my flesh. Ans. It is true, but he spoke to those who were obedient to him. Ques. Are you also rebaptized? Ans. I know of no rebaptism; I am baptized once, and that according to God's doctrine. Ques. How long ago is it? Ans. About a year and a half. Then Peter was brought into a cellar, and when he had sat there about an hour, he was fetched again before the lords, and he was asked anew. Peter, you are seduced; will you not let yourself be instructed? Ans. Yes, gladly; whoever casts reproof and instruction from him is unsaved. Take a Testament and instruct me. Ques. We are no teachers; will you not let yourself be instructed by priests? Ans. God is the best priest; he will instruct me well; thereby I will well remain, by God's grace. Ques. Somewhere there has been a reed-land vagrant; he has preached something to you before. Further they said that they had read in the Old Testament how many children had been baptized there. Peter answered: I have not read of that; I have read that Christ commanded the believers to baptize, Matt. 28, Mark 16. And that it was practiced by the apostles, Acts 2, 8. And how Peter taught: Repent, and let every one be baptized in the name of Jesus, then you shall receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit; that is promised to you and your children, etc. He also recited John 3. Then they said: Peter, you are seduced; are your brothers also of the same mind? He answered: What do I know of my brothers? I can speak of that which God has given me; that I know. Further he recited, as Christ says: Go into all the world, preach and teach; whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. Item, how Christ came to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him, that he might first fulfill all righteousness for us, to be an example, that we should follow in his footsteps. And after Christ's suffering the apostles practiced it, who were his body and congregation.

Of their supper he confessed that he held nothing of it at all; and they admonished him with the Gospel, which he regarded as wholly right, but not that it was said concerning their congregation; for Christ spoke (he said) to his apostles: Take, eat, that is my body, which shall be broken for you. Also the cup: Drink all from this; it is the cup of the new Testament

in my blood, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. The Christians shall observe it, as Paul teaches to the Corinthians; there we have it clearly. They said their supper (which they eat and drink) to be true flesh and blood, asking me whether we also did not eat and drink it so. Ans. Christ said that it profits nothing to eat flesh outwardly, but the word is spirit and life. And our congregation is not outside Christ's body.

A short exhortation of Peter the mason

Christ has spoken, Matt. 24: There shall many come in my name, saying: I am Christ, and they shall seduce many; well rightly, for when one confesses one's sins to them, they forgive them (as they say); they have made good use of the time since the Gospel has been hidden, and they do it still. Paul has also prophesied of it, to Timothy; and Christ, Matt. 7: Beware of false prophets, etc. Item John writes much thereof in 10. Item Jude, and Peter: But they are as unreasoning beasts, which are born by nature to be strangled and caught. They blaspheme that which they do not know. Item, they weave spiderwebs, and hatch out basilisks' eggs. Item, they plaster the wall with bad lime, and put pillows under men's arms, for though the church flees into holes, the confession remains forever; they may not withstand, for they deny God's power; they love the broad way; Christ's cross is a foolishness to them. Of these God gave me somewhat to speak. I see nothing else but the desolate abomination of which Daniel the prophet speaks, and Christ, saying, that it will hardly be that he shall find faith on the earth. But be of good cheer, and fight in the faith, well knowing that it is the word of truth, and cannot fail; thereon I have built through Christ's grace, and he will preserve me, and all my days I will trust in him; knowing and trusting that there is no power, no might, no glory in heaven nor on earth, but only from him; therefore look carefully, prove yourselves in your conscience what you seek; every work will become manifest. Read and search diligently, for it concerns us all much. The authorities may do no one harm to seduce him, but the erring spirits come with false snares under Christ's name; but we are sufficiently warned, Matt. 7:24; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3, 4; Tit. 1; Rom. 16; Phil. 3; 2 Pet. 2; Jude 2.

My dear friends, they pursue me with questions as much as they can; Do teach the young and simple hearts rightly the distinction concerning that supper of the Lord, for I know what is to come upon me. If the house is rightly built on the cornerstone, it cannot fall; let every one look well to it, for the time of temptation is at hand; well knowing that it will not always remain with talk, for God has suffered himself; if they have touched him in his blessed body, they will do it to us too; let us arm ourselves with God's word, for the word of God is the right door. It is the bread of life. The time of weeping has come; therefore our redemption is near. Let us pray for grace; it is time that judgment begins at the house of God; if it begins with us, what end will there be for those who do not believe the word?

My brothers, do not forget us poor sheep in your prayer, we who for the truth's sake are in the bonds of the authorities. Have regard to those who dwell with you, for Christ shall say: I was naked, and you have clothed me, etc. Pray and watch; the desolate abomination draws near. Do not cease; be of good cheer, for he who is in us is greater than he who is in the

world. I desire kindly that you be diligent, that you do not let yourselves be seduced, for these are now the perilous times. You shall know that all the time (when I was led before them) I have destroyed my own thoughts in me, and have prayed the almighty God that he would open my mouth according to his good pleasure; Praise freely; it has happened that he gave the miserable sufficient comfort; They gave me right in many things when I spoke with them in a meek spirit, through God's grace. My dear friends, take it in thanks; the Lord will keep you all from the evil seducers; pray and watch, it is a perilous time; and do not forget us in your prayer, and come to us sometimes; it edifies so well; the Lord will keep us all, Amen.

To his wife

My dear chosen wife, remain with God, and do not mingle with the evil, for if the righteous departs, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, says the Lord. The time of my departure seems to be near; with God it must happen. When the parting comes, do not fear, but guard your mouth. My dear wife, remain by the grace of God which is given to you.

A song of Peter the mason

To the tune of the 75th Psalm. Or, Trueren moet ic nacht ende dach.

Moaning and lamenting are in the world
Oppression comes from all sides
In quiet one may not live
Through Satan's envy
But this happens as Christ says
To the righteous unto salvation
Therefore rejoice herein.
There was a man of good repute
Peaceful with his wife
Peter the mason by name
Who earned his bread faithfully
Yet they sought him
Brought him into prison
And kept him against justice.
When he stood before the blind lords
He boldly confessed
Of confession, baptism, and sacrament
According to God's righteousness
As Christ testifies in his doctrine
Then he had to go down into the cellar
There he was kept a while.
When about an hour had passed
He came again before the lords
Peter, you are seduced, said one

Will you not let yourself be taught
Yes, gladly, he answered
Unsaved are they who the reproof
And instruction hate.
Take a Testament in hand
And instruct me, O lords.
We are no teachers
Will you not for edification
Have those who are priests
God is the best priest
He will enlighten me well.
Then they brought him to the bench
They tormented him terribly
He was stretched there very long
And miserably disjointed
He was piteously disfigured
But he did not renounce the faith
But confessed God's name gloriously.
Thus he received the sentence of death
According to the Emperor's statutes
To the gallows he had to go
Suffer disgrace outside
With Christ his sweet saviour
But when they noticed the pious spirit
They had his mouth shut.
When he stood thus at the stake
In pains and sufferings
With a ball in his mouth
He spoke yet in such a manner
I girded myself when I was young
Walked whither it suited me
But when old, another shall gird me.
Thus he praised God at the stake
Very highly
He felt in himself the taste of love
He made his offering thereby
Commended his spirit into his Father's hand
When fifteen hundred in number
Fifty-three was read.
Thus our friend has in the Lord
Sweetly fallen asleep

Let his example be a lesson to you
O all Christian lads
If you are captured or hunted
Patiently bear your cross
Strengthen yourselves with the Lord's weapons.

finis.

A letter of Willem the dry-shearer (droochscheer), written in the prison at Antwerp, where he was put to death for the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ, Anno 1557
Grace, peace, and mercy from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who has called us to his imperishable kingdom, and has chosen us before the foundation of the world was laid, and has cleansed us through the washing of water in the word, that we should be blameless before his eyes,

Written to you, my beloved brother N., and to my dear sister N. although I lie here in locks and bonds, for the testimony of Christ; and am ready to seal it with my blood through the Lord's grace; yet I am not so neglectful as to forget my members in my prayer; which I mostly do with tears before the Lord; for you are still walking in the wild wilderness, among dragons, lions, and bears; who always run and seek to murder that innocent blood; which cries for vengeance since Abel's time; for they bring us to death, as the Jews did Christ; for we are grievous for them to see, because we do not conform ourselves to them. Therefore they take counsel, and say: Let us condemn him with the most shameful death; For as he has spoken, so shall it be granted to him. Therefore, my chosen in the Lord, we will not fear their threatening and beating, though they run like mad dogs; the Lord has their hearts in his hand; they cannot hurt us by a hair, without the will of our Father.

The Lord preserved the three young men in the fiery oven, Daniel in the lions' den, Ezekiel in Jerusalem, Moses in Mesopotamia, Elias on the mountain. Yes, all who trusted in the Lord never came to shame, for his strong hand, says the prophet, is not diminished; And though a mother should forsake her own child, yet I will not forsake you (says the Lord); for whoever touches you touches the apple of my eye. Therefore let us prepare our souls for temptations; our redemption draws near. And the day of tribulation is now here; therefore let us always hallow and magnify our Lord, that we may inherit all the beautiful promises which he has promised to the Christian generation; that we may not grow weary or faint in our spirit, but be fervent in spirit, joyful in hope, patient in tribulation, and steadfast in prayer.

When Israel went out of Egypt, they were very glad that they were delivered from the service of slavery; but when they came into the wilderness, where it did not please the flesh well, then they were very discontent, and murmured, so that they would have turned back again, to which they had no right; for they had taken all their ordinance out with them, so that they should have no cause to turn back again; therefore they did not come into the land of

promise, but Caleb and Joshua; for these were well encouraged, so that they destroyed their enemies like a piece of bread. The Lord was also with David, so that he slew the giant Goliath; they bound a sword on his side, to strike the giant therewith, but David was not accustomed to that, because he was a shepherd, and he laid the sword off again; and took his sling, and cast the giant therewith on the forehead, so that he fell to the earth; then David took the giant's sword, and cut off his head. Therefore, my chosen brothers and sisters in the Lord, let us not turn aside, to the right or to the left hand; for we have so great a King, who will not forsake us, if we remain faithfully with him; he is so faithful who has promised it, that I cannot doubt it; for the city is full of all good things, into which we shall come, but it lies far away. Know, dear brother N. and sister N., that I give you a song for a remembrance, and therewith will commend you to the Lord, until we come upon Mount Sion, and sing there the new song, with all God's chosen.

And dear brother and sister, when I made this song, there came upon me so great a torment and temptation, that I was greatly perplexed, for it seemed to me that the Lord had wholly forsaken me. And I fell on my knees and wept very bitterly to the Lord, and asked for strength and power, and the Lord heard my prayer, and raised me up again; for he does not let us be tempted above our ability, but therewith gives an escape, so that we can bear it. And I received again such grace and joy, that for gladness I made this song, for the edification of my neighbor. Greet J. de H. much for me with the peace of the Lord; and you, N., greet your master also much for me with the peace of the Lord, and say good night to your wife for me; I cannot give her the peace: For there is written: Woe to him who comforts man in or upon a vain hope. Know, dear friends, that I was greatly joyful when I went to the court, that I thought there was never such joy, as that I should confess my Lord my God before the world; and the bailiff asked whether I was rebaptized, and the Holy Spirit spoke through my mouth, and said that I was baptized according to Christ's doctrine, and that they were the rebaptizers, for they baptize again against Christ; therefore the name belongs to you with which you name us; and I asked them that they would leave me with my brothers, for we have one faith; but they gave me no answer. Thus, my dear friends, we will await you under the altar.

A song
To the tune of: Ghy die Christum hebt aen ghedaen.

Christian brothers, be now joyful
Since you are yet called
Out of very many nations
Free yourselves from the evil life
And fight without avoiding
Like valiant servants.
We have no common strife
Against flesh and blood alone

But we must strengthen ourselves
Against the high rulers certainly
And spirits that work in the air
As we perceive.
The city is very delightful and good
But it lies far away; in haste
I shall yet come into it
But for it battle must be fought
That I (who will not shrink)
Have well perceived.
Though I am laid fast within walls
It is for the truth, I know well
The city's inheritance I shall yet be
Partaker of, but the path is not broad
As we clearly read
It in Ezra praised.
It is only a man's footbreadth wide
Here water, fire on the other side
O Lord, direct my goings
From the devil's raging deliver me
Toward you is all my longing
Receive me.
O Jacob's little worm, undaunted
Yet fight the battle valiantly
With the Spirit's fair sword
Hasten to the mountain of Sion
To receive there the crown
From God's Son.
Farewell to brothers and sisters fine
It seems to me we must part
Commend yourselves to God at all times
Until we come into the Father's divine kingdom
Where they shall suffer no more
But rejoice.

The Lord be with you, and strengthen and confirm you to the end.

This is a letter of M. Gielis Mathijsz, written in the prison at Middelburg, in the year 1564.

The firm foundation of God remains eternal.

Grace, peace, and the overflowing love of our God, with the heartfelt unspeakable love of His Son our Lord Jesus Christ, with the excellent gift of faith, has been revealed to us by God the merciful dear Father through Christ Jesus, and given to His saints, whom He by His fatherly love has now chosen, called, and ordained thereto, yea delivered from the chains and heavy bonds of the eternal darkness of unbelief, wherewith this evil, wicked, perverse world is bound, and has according to His fatherly mercy begotten us again to a living saving hope, and translated us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, through whom we have the forgiveness of our sins through His blood, that we, my dear sheep, might henceforth serve Him in all obedience, righteousness, and holiness without fear all the days of our life. Thereto help and strengthen us, the merciful dear Father, with the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Since you have been desiring of me, through your writing, and also through greetings which I have heard from you at diverse times, and also in past times through the writing of your dear housewife, who also desired the same of me, you shall know that I have many times purposed in my heart to do so, according to my small gift, although I trust that there is properly no need of it; yet I hope it will make you the more sure and steadfast. But because I have had so much else to write, and have also been busy with other things, I have not been able to bring it about very well; nevertheless I have at all times borne a fatherly care for you, praying many times with a fervent heart, according to my weakness, to my God, that He would keep you both under the shadow of His wings in this dreadful perilous time, full of all wickedness, and that He would fill you more and more with His Holy Spirit, and open the eyes of your understanding, that you, my dear sheep, might rightly learn to know the devil's snares and spread nets, which he now daily sets so manifoldly for the reborn.

Although they are in some part not unknown to you, well knowing what he has in mind, wherefore you have also been watchful until this time, wherein I am greatly rejoiced, and also because your faith grows and increases in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom I have begotten you in my bonds through tears, with the power of the Holy Spirit, together with the others, and you have become my followers and the Lord's, and have received the word of the gospel of the cross of Christ with much sighing and godly sorrow, and have become obedient from the heart to the form of doctrine in which you now stand, so that you have become an example to all in Middelburg who would better their lives and take up the Lord's cross, not only to them, but many saints are thereby gladdened when they behold your obedience and humiliation in the fear of your God, which I hope will from day to day spread and become manifest still more.

That it may rightly appear, my dear sheep, that you are rightly born again from above out of God the Father, and renewed through the renewing of your mind, remember that your walk must be heavenly, namely after the new man which is created after God in all righteousness and holiness; for since He is holy who has called and chosen you to this service, you must also lead a holy, chaste, and godly walk in the fear of your God, according to your ability, for

whose servants we have become, his servants we are, as the apostle also relates, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto life.

God be eternal praise and thanks, my dear sheep, that you have been a servant and maid of sin, but are now washed and cleansed with me through the bath of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which God the Father has abundantly poured out upon us through Christ our Saviour, not for the works of our righteousness which we had done, for we were children of wrath by nature, like the others, but God the merciful dear Father, who is rich in mercy, through His great love wherewith He loved us, when we were dead in sins and unrighteousness, made us alive together with Christ, or through Christ His dear Son, through faith.

Therefore, my heartily dear sheep in Christ Jesus, whose soul I love with my heart, for whom I bear a fatherly and godly care, I admonish and beseech you as a prisoner in the Lord, that you would often remember the day in which the merciful dear Father had mercy on you, and took away the covering from your eyes and heart, which still hangs before the eyes and hearts of so many thousand men, who still walk such heavy ways, and do not know the way of the Lord, because they are drunken with the wine of the Babylonian whore, namely of the false doctrine wherewith the whole world is covered; but you, my sheep, have become sober, and are separated from among them. I also hope that you will no more touch her uncleanness, that you may not perish with her plagues.

Therefore be sharply watchful in righteousness, that you, my dear sheep, after my departure, may not come to shame in this dreadful perilous time, for you may now openly see and hear that now indeed is the time of which Christ Jesus with His holy apostles so diligently warned us, as Christ Jesus Himself said, that love would grow cold in many hearts, but he who remains steadfast to the end shall be saved. O my worthy sheep, consider the words of Christ rightly, and let them go to your heart; it is plainly not spoken of the world, for in her the love of God cannot grow cold, for she has not received it nor knows it, but it is spoken of the true Israelites, and you see that it happens abundantly among them, which is indeed lamentably to be bewailed, that the devil and the spirit of the old serpent has gotten such power and might in this present time through the manifold subtle crafty snares which he daily sets to catch again in his net of unbelief the souls of the reborn (who have escaped him through the knowledge of God), whom he also gets again, my dear sheep, some through false doctrine, not only through the Roman Antichrist, for there are now many antichrists in the world. Therefore he has put on another cap, which is no longer like the Roman one, well knowing that his game would soon be up with it; therefore he has now changed himself, and presents himself as an angel of light, and does his diligence so to come among the children of light, to do his work there anew, for, my dear sheep in the Lord, before or in time past he came with men's statutes and commandments, but now he knows that men want to hear Scripture, therefore he comes now and brings forth much Scripture, so that it well-nigh seems to be right, as he also boldly did against Christ, and brought before him from the

prophet David, that it stood written that He would send His angels, who would bear Him up on their hands, so that He would not dash His foot against any stone. See, my worthy dear sheep, he indeed spoke the Scripture as it stood, but it was not spoken or prophesied to such a meaning; so also these, though they bring forth much Scripture, and also boldly say, "It stands indeed so," wherewith he lightly catches in his spread net the wavering, and those who itch in their ears to hear something new. The others he catches through the incoming deceitful riches, which nowadays bring men into ruin and damnation, for covetousness is a root of all evil, although some still have a lust thereto, that their temporal goods increase, and are so busy therewith that meanwhile they forget the godly exercise, and entangle themselves in many sorrows. O, it will go with them, my dear sheep, as it did with some of the Israelites: those who had gathered much had no surplus, and those who gathered little had no lack. Therefore, when one has food and covering, O that one could be content therewith, for we have brought nothing into the world; it is manifest that we shall also carry nothing out, for we see, my dear sheep, that the words of our dear Lord Jesus Christ are true, namely, that the deceitful riches choke and press down the good seed, namely the word of God, whereby many also come again to shame. The third he catches through loss or robbery of their goods, not once rightly considering or bethinking that they have found with the merchant the fairest pearl, which is indeed well worth all that, and is not once to be compared therewith. The fourth, through the cross and suffering, namely persecution. The fifth, through the beseeching and praying of father and mother, friends and kindred. The sixth, through wife and children. The seventh, through their own evil lustful flesh. The eighth, that they grow weary on the way of righteousness, and turn back again to Egypt and Sodom, to live a little time in rest and peace with the Babylonian whore, and thereafter to be tormented with her in eternal pain.

See, my heartily dear chosen sheep, all this works and drives the one spirit, the old serpent, who neither sleeps nor slumbers, but always goes round about us, seeking whom he may devour. Therefore resist him with a manly mind and believing heart, and let yourselves not be frightened, though they so lightly forsake the commandments of the Lord. O, do not look at the slack, slothful, and ungodly, but let all unfaithful servants and false disciples depart from their Lord and Master; yet we hope to remain by Him, and you with me, and are ready to suffer all that is laid upon us by Him. O, what should we do or undertake if we forsook His commandments? Where should we flee or run, where He would not find us? Ah, heaven and earth must be obedient to Him with trembling; mountains and caves must be affrighted before Him, and cannot stand before Him; how much more the children of men, who dwell in houses of clay. O my dear sheep, wherewith shall they excuse or justify themselves when He visits them, who now so unfaithfully depart from Him? O, O, lamentably is it to be bewailed, that they have gotten such loathing of that noble heavenly bread, and that the only medicine, whereby all souls of the reborn are healed, has become to them so deadly an enemy. Yea, my worthy sheep, we may well sigh and lament with the prophet over the destruction of Israel, and over Jerusalem the fair city of God, and that because so many Israelites fall in this wild wilderness of this evil world, and are again

destroyed and slain by the crafty spirit of the serpent. Also because some watchmen have become apostate, and the citizens of Jerusalem also become lazy and sleepy, although the ranger of the host does not rest nor keep holiday, but seeks with diligence day and night whom he might find idle or sleepy, to sow then his tares in the fields of hearts, as he (alas) has not a little done in my time, and will do still more and more, according to my thinking, for the more God's people grow and increase, the more he will rule among them, and will also not cease until he gets some of them again to his will; and it is also permitted him by God to afflict the godly, and also to seduce them, that the others might be tried.

See, my heartily dear and much beloved children in the Lord, therefore my fatherly prayer and humble desire to you together, for the eternal salvation of your souls, is that you henceforth take right care, that you may remain on the way of righteousness, and be at all times mindful how you must henceforth walk in the house of God, which is the congregation of God, to which you have come, wherein I was greatly rejoiced when I heard it, thanking and praising my God for His great fatherly goodness and grace which He has shown you, and has received you for His son and daughter, yea for the right heirs of His heavenly goods, because you have so willingly put yourselves under the yoke and rod of the cross, and have counted your gain with the holy apostle Paul as loss, that you might win your soul in Christ, as you have also done. Therefore take heed to yourselves, and do not depart nor waver to the right or to the left, that you do not fall from your own steadfastness, and that the eternal fire do not become your inheritance; but as you, my dear sheep, have now put on the Lord Jesus Christ, so walk on in Him, and remain fast grounded and rooted in His doctrine, that you do not grow cold or lukewarm in love, and so at last lose what you have received and so willingly accepted.

Also I beseech you through the mercy of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, that you be not negligent to thank and praise God the merciful dear Father through Christ His dear Son, day and night, for His great unspeakable benefits which He has shown to us poor miserable creatures, and has provided for us and chosen us from our mother's body, and that because we should rightly confess and profess His name among this evil adulterous generation, and so hold the beginning of the Christian life firm to the end; for although, my heartily dear sheep and much beloved children, you have now become right heirs of eternal life through the obedience of the gospel, and stand written with me and all saints in the book of life, yea are brought to the multitude of many thousand angels: O my worthy dear sheep, yet He can so soon root us out again, and write our apostate names in the earth, if we do not faithfully walk in the commandments of our God according to our weakness, to the end of our life; for we know that the glorious promises of the godly, and the crown of eternal life, lie not in the beginning nor in the middle, but he who endures and remains faithful to the end shall receive it from the hand of the Lord, for it is manifest that it did not help the outward Israel (of whom we have a clear example), my dear sheep, that they were delivered out of Egypt by the strong hand of the Lord from the service and slavery of Pharaoh; yea, all the benefits which the faithful merciful dear Father showed them on the way were for the most part all

lost, or in vain, although He fed them with angels' bread, and gave them all that their soul desired, and yet they became impatient and murmuring, and did not receive their trial in the fear of God or in patience, wherefore the Lord was also wroth, and destroyed three and twenty thousand at one time. O my worthy chosen sheep, consider it; it has indeed happened for our instruction and admonition, as the holy apostle also relates, that we should not fall into the same example of unbelief.

For what would it avail us that we are now also separated from that spiritual Egypt and Sodom, and delivered from the service of the hellish Pharaoh through the Red Sea of the blood of Christ Jesus, and baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit upon the confession of our faith, and so with denial of ourselves have entered into the true ark of Noah, Christ Jesus — O my worthy dear sheep, it cannot all help or save us if we do not keep the fulfilling of the commandments of our God, for the apostle John says: He who says that he knows God, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, and in him is not the truth.

But you, my dearest, have always been obedient, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence; therefore work out your salvation with fear, and walk worthily always after the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ after my departure, that you always stand even well, in one spirit and mind, and let yourselves in no wise be frightened by all your adversaries, whether inward or outward, which is to them a proof of damnation, but to you of eternal salvation, and that of God.

For, my worthy dear sheep, it is not enough that you believe in Christ, but you must also suffer for His name, if not with bonds or imprisonments, then with the daily strife and assault, which now come up many and manifold, and may come up still more for you, for God tries and tempts His chosen in many ways. One esteems or regards bonds and imprisonments as the greatest trial of faith, but, my worthy dear sheep, I write and confess to you at this time that with me it is the least, beside the perils and assaults which I have proved in the wild wilderness of this world, and which have come to my shore, or which I saw before my eyes, so that I often did not know for anguish of my heart and spirit whither to turn, sighing and weeping to my God over the manifold subtle crafty snares which the old serpent is now setting, fearing whether I might yet be snatched into her snares by human weakness and the craftiness of my own flesh, since I saw and heard that such high strong deep-rooted trees were torn up with roots and all, and such high mountains brought to so lamentable a dale and valley, and therewith I felt that in me dwelt no good. Therewith I thought that in His righteous day much chaff would be found, when He shall survey His own — O, so shall He also see them who shall have no wedding garment on; wherefore I also stood greatly troubled, fearing whether I might not remain standing at His coming through my daily failings and defiling walk; wherefore I also often prayed Him with tears that He would make me, poor miserable, fit by His fatherly mercy, that I might suffer for His name's sake bonds and imprisonments, and also go into death for His holy testimony;

then I should be sure of my soul's salvation, and not think to come to shame in the day of His wrath; whereto He has now chosen me through His fatherly mercy, and made me worthy, to testify for His holy testimony before this evil adulterous generation in my bonds; wherefore I am also greatly rejoiced in my soul, and am heartily sorry that I cannot sufficiently thank or praise my and our merciful dear Father for His unspeakable great benefits which He has shown to me miserable creature, and is still daily showing, for I trust in His fatherly grace and mercy that He will henceforth make me fit and worthy to go into death for His holy testimony, for He knows how long I have longed to be at home, and that because of the manifold perils which I see on the way.

Therefore, my heartily dear sheep in the Lord, since I still have a fatherly care for you, and love you with a godly love, I cannot forbear, since I am yet a little while in this hut, to admonish you a little through my writing, beseeching you that you do not think that I rule over you, but seek with all kindness to build you up to the full age of Christ, that you, my dear sheep, might be found a right epistle of Christ, not written with ink or paper, but through the Holy Spirit of the living God, with whom you are also sealed to the day of your redemption, who has written God's customs and rights in your hearts and minds, whereby you have now become an epistle of Christ, which is seen and read by all men, who behold your holy chaste walk in the humiliation of your heart, and low esteem of yourselves. Therefore, my dear sheep, I beseech you once more: though you are humbled, humble yourselves still more, and though you are clean, cleanse yourselves still more, yea though you have become holy, sanctify yourselves more and more, that you may be found pure and blameless children of God among this evil perverse generation, among whom you shine as a light in the world, wherewith you hold forth the word of life, to me a joy in the day of Christ, that I may not have labored in vain on you; for though I shall be offered, and the time of my departure is now at hand, yet I rejoice, and am glad in my mind, for your sake and for the others, whom I have begotten in my bonds, who in time past were unprofitable to the house of God, but now useful and profitable, whom I also love for the truth's sake, and desire that they shall have a part herein with me, hoping that it will also delight them in spirit and faith, for an assurance and strengthening of your mind together in Christ Jesus.

So is yet at last my friendly prayer to you together, that you would heartily love one another out of a pure heart, as those who are born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, namely of the living, powerful, and saving word; and remember the words of Paul our fellow brother, where he says: The sum of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, yea it is the bond of perfection. O how blessed is he who is rightly girded with this bond, for he lives not to himself, but to his Lord, and he takes the words of Christ to heart in all things, also where He says: Be merciful as your heavenly Father also is merciful.

Therefore, my dear sheep, I beseech you yet through the mercy of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, and also for the eternal salvation of your souls, that you do not forget beneficence

and fellowship, for it not only supplies the need, but much praise and thanks also comes thereby to God, for with such offerings one pleases God. Remember also the words of the wise man, where he says: He who has mercy on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will repay him the good again. Yet he says: He who gives to the poor shall suffer no want, but he who turns away his eyes shall greatly decrease. The righteous uses his goods to life, but the godless uses them to sin. There is a giver who distributes, and always has more; another spares where he should not, and yet becomes poorer, says he. Further Tobias commends to his son that he should also remember the poor, and says: Turn not yourself from the poor, so shall God again look graciously upon you; where you can, there help the needy, and if you have much (says he), give much; if you have little, give of that little with a faithful heart. For alms deliver from death, and it puts out sin, says he yet. Whereupon Sirach also says that alms quenches sins, and it shall excuse him in the eternal dwelling. Wherefore Christ also commanded that one should make friends with the unrighteous mammon, that when you have need, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. For Christ has well and rightly spoken: The poor you shall always have with you. Wherefore He will also say in His righteous day: All that you have done to these my least, that you have done to me. From this follows, my dear worthy sheep, that the words of Paul shall also be true, namely: He who sows sparingly here shall also reap sparingly, but he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully, for God loves a cheerful giver, etc.

My heartily dear sheep in the Lord, though I write this thus, yet I know that you are taught of God and His Holy Spirit, and that you will do more than I can write; yet out of heartily Christian love I write it to you, that you might also consider the time past, in which you were so diligent in manifold unrighteousness, wherein you also spared no cost, in many costly banquets or meals, yea in pride and pomp, of which God has an abhorrence. O consider but once, my dear sheep, what joy you had then at that time. O, should you not now do so much the more diligence in the things which God has commanded you, to gather your treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moths eat them. O, one might now sometimes also know how to find a piece of money or two, to give to the poor saints, as well as one once knew how to find two or three pounds Flemish to squander in unrighteousness. O my worthy beloved children, I write this not that your mind should thereby be oppressed, but because your love should from day to day increase more and more, for you do not know how long your time shall last, or when the robbers may get it into their hands.

Henceforth, my faithful sheep, is yet my fatherly prayer to you, that you dwell together in all peace, loveliness, and unity, the one helping bear the other's burden in love, for you do not know how long you shall dwell together, and remember that you are called children of peace, for your King and Prince is a King and Prince of peace, wherefore you must be found children of peace, as I also well trust that you are, although I write this thus. Herewith I commend you to the great Shepherd of the sheep, whom I faithfully trust that He will keep you together under the shadow of His wings, if you only remain by His customs and rights, and do not by any means depart out of His hand; so I am also sure that no one shall pluck

you out of His hand. Once more I beseech you, and that through the wounds of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, and also for the eternal salvation of your souls, that you would take my writing and faithful warning now at the last of my life to heart, and after my departure do not let it lie idle by you, nor then esteem it as a dead history or fable, but receive it as a testament, and let it be to you an eternal remembrance and memory, and remember by me how I have been an example to you according to my weakness, and follow my footsteps, which I hope to go before you through the power of my God, namely, to remain by the truth to the end, to testify to you and all who seek to fear God out of a pure heart, that this is the right grace of our God, as Peter says, yea the certain way and highway to eternal life on which you now stand. Therefore let no one snatch away from you this course in which you now stand, nor make you waver, but always do more diligence to make your calling and election sure. O, if you do this, my worthy sheep, you shall not fall, but an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be abundantly ministered to you.

Therefore watch sharply; once more I beseech you, yea watch sharply in righteousness all the days of your life, for it is well needful. Also it is my friendly desire that you would receive this little recipe in love, for I have indeed done it out of Christian love, and desire herewith to take my adieu of you all, until eternity. Amen.

Furthermore, my heartily dear sheep in the Lord, how it stands with me and with my fellow-soldiers, you shall know that it is still to the furtherance of the gospel; also you shall know that the Lord faithfully stands by me in my strife and defense, and has given me strength to keep the field, and has also delivered me from the mouth of hell and the lion's jaws. I think that I have been some ten or twelve times against them in the fight, but the others they have not tormented so much. In sum, I hope that the fight is fought, the course ended, the faith kept; now henceforth the crown of glory is laid by for me, which I hope shall be taken from me by no creatures, for faithful is He who has begun this good work in me, who will without doubt help me perform it well, according to the good purpose of my mind, that I may come through the Jordan unharmed. God give us His grace. Amen. Divide this among one another, and confess godly, ruminate diligently, understand wisely; O, if you do this, it shall appear that you together seek your salvation, and hold my writing in worth. Finished the 6th of October, in the 23rd month of my imprisonment. Once more, my dear children, keep yourselves together godly in the cross of Christ, and do not depart from it.

Another letter of M. Gielis, which he wrote to his wife

Strength of spirit, and thereto a steadfast mind, I wish my flesh my blood in all their pressure, strife, and sore need. Amen.

My worthy dear wife, whom I have married before God and His congregation. Since the time of my departure is now at hand, you shall yet be pleased to know that my heart and mind stand troubled with you, well willing to write you something, yet having ill convenient time, since it stands thus with us, and that even now some eight or ten officers watch and guard us, so that I feel little strength of spirit by me, to write you yet a little, since it comes so

unexpectedly upon us, for we had not heard one word, and Willeboort my faithful companion was already partly undressed, when our host and hostess came upstairs, saying: Master Gielis and Willeboort, come down; and we coming down, saw the Stadholder there, and the Bailiff came there also, and laid this before us, with whom I had some words. In sum, my heartily dear chosen flesh and blood, I shall now go the way of all the prophets and witnesses of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, wherein I am to this present time very merry and well minded, yea find such joy and comfort in me, that I cannot well write it to you, and find as yet no fear at all in me, but am most of all troubled with you, for your great immoderate sorrow's sake, which you have, yet trusting to my and your God, that He will with the temptation give a way out, through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, wherewith He shall comfort you.

O my flesh my blood, I beseech you through the bloody wounds of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, be patient in your pressure, that you be not found as one who would strive against God, but say much more with Mary: See, Lord, be it to me according to your will, for as the hour of gathering was there, see, so the hour of parting stood already known before the eyes of the Lord, and He has thereto provided and chosen you out of His fatherly mercy, that you should now also suffer pressure and pain for His name's sake; and though, my chosen sheep, I am now in greater gladness, since my pilgrimage is now come to an end, yet I beseech you, be comforted in the Lord, and receive in patience and pain, bow your heart down and suffer. O I know that your sorrow is very great; O if it were God's will, and I might go into death for you. Yea though I should taste two deaths for you, I would not shun them, for they fall not yet heavy upon me; O then I should indeed be assured that you would not be deceived by any strange lovers, nor seduced by the noonday devil, and not led astray by your own flesh, although I yet trust this from the ground of my heart, that you shall follow the footsteps of my faith, namely, to remain by the truth to the end. O, O, the cause of my writing, and my last and great desire, is that you remain by that which you have received of God, and is dealt out to you out of great grace. O depart not nor waver through your great sorrow or any rising strife, which is not known to you, but in all your undertakings, pray with confidence to God the merciful dear Father; He shall not leave you, of that I am sure; and though, my worthy chosen sheep, we are now separated from one another a little time, we shall hereafter in the resurrection of the dead meet one another again, and shall be eternally with the Lord. O then our little sorrow shall be changed into an eternal unspeakable joy, and all our tears shall be washed from our eyes, and we shall hear: Come, you blessed, into the kingdom of my Father, which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world. O my worthy dear sheep, comfort yourself with these promises, with the words of the gospel, where Christ Himself said: Blessed are they who now weep, for they shall be comforted, but woe to him, says He, who laughs here, for they shall weep. For the time shall come that they shall cry: O mountains, hills, fall on us, and cover us from the face of the Lord. O, O, then it shall be an end with all our persecutors, executioners and torturers, and with all destroyers. Yea the word of the prophet Isaiah shall then be fulfilled, where he says: O you destroyers, think you that you shall not also be destroyed? And you

despisers (says he), think you that you shall also not be despised? When you have made an end of destroying, men shall also make an end with you, but for you, my flesh my blood, the Sun of righteousness shall rise with me and all saints; happiness and an eternal welfare shall embrace us. O my worthy sheep, how gladly would I comfort you, and come to your help in your pressure, but it cannot well be at this time; but I beseech you heartily, remember my words which I once had with you, and follow them, I beseech you, and let them be to you an eternal foundation stone.

Furthermore I beseech you heartily, and that for the eternal salvation of your soul, that you keep yourself in quietness, and bring up your child (which is come out of my body) in the fear of the Lord, as I trust you. Once more, my heartily dear chosen sheep, I beseech you from the ground of my heart, and out of the innermost of my soul, remember often what I once said to you, and also wrote a little, namely, that you remain all the days of your life by that which you have so willingly accepted of your own desire, which is the right ground, foundation, and way to eternal life; O, there shall in eternity no other be found, than this way of the cross is; and if it should so be, that the merciful dear Father would yet try you through His fatherly rod of the cross, namely with bonds or imprisonment, I beseech you for the eternal salvation of your soul, that you would not be afraid of our enemies, for it is not to be written or uttered, how God the merciful dear Father comforts those who have wholly given themselves over to the Lord, so that I had not thought that such a heart and mind could be, so that it gave me well-nigh wonder how they can depart from God's word; yet the comfort of the coming glory they have forgotten, and are become negligent, and the oil of righteousness and love is gone out in their earthen vessel. Therefore, my faithful heartily dear flesh and blood, be warned, lest through sloth and negligence you find yourself deceived with the negligent foolish virgins; therefore be awake in the spirit, and bestir yourself from day to day, to lay off more and more, for, my dear sheep, it is well needful that you be watchful, for not all shall come into the land of promise who are separated out of this present spiritual Egypt and Sodom, and that through the power and might of the old serpent, who indeed neither rests nor keeps holiday, by day nor by night, but goes round the host, seeking whom he might find sleepy. O, resist him strongly in the faith; take a manly believing heart.

Furthermore, heartily dear sheep, my desire is yet that you would frame yourself to all humiliation, and fashion yourself to be small in your own eyes, and regard not what is high, but make yourself like the lowest, and be always ready, and frame yourself thereto, that you may hear God's word, and remember the words of Christ: Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst. O my dear sheep, have a burning love to the congregation of God, and forget not to share of what the merciful dear Father has granted you; remember that mercy boasts against judgment, for with such offerings one pleases God. Yet I know, my heartily dear sheep, and I well trust you, that you shall herein follow the doctrine of our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

Herewith I take, my dearest, my adieu and leave of you, my flesh and my blood, on this earth, and commend you into the hands of almighty God our Saviour Christ Jesus, who can keep and build up you and your child together, and strengthen in all need, as He is also faithful, and will do it well, if you, my worthy sheep, only remain by His customs and rights, and do not grow weary in the way of the cross, though it falls anxious and heavy upon you. O if you, my worthy sheep, could take courage, and could praise and thank your God that you are found worthy to suffer also for His name's sake. O remember the words of the wise man, where he says: In little we are afflicted, but in much we shall be rewarded, for God tries His chosen as gold in the fire. Therefore, my worthy heartily dear sheep, let your tried faith work patience, and let patience have a perfect work in you. And remember yet the wise man's words: A patient man is better, who is a lord of his mind (O mark it), than one who wins cities. Further says the prophet Jeremiah: O, it is a costly thing, and a great matter, to be patient, and for one who is forsaken to wait for the help of the Lord. Therefore possess your soul yet a little time with patience, I beseech you from the innermost of my heart. O my heartily dear sheep, once more I beseech you, hold yourself godly. O if you love me (as you abundantly do), follow the footsteps of my faith, for the time is fulfilled, the days are expired, my years are ended, which I have walked in the wild wilderness with many perils; now I have not run or fought at uncertainty, wherefore I rejoice in the spirit that God the merciful dear Father has stood by me, so that I have fought the fight, and ended the course; now henceforth the crown of eternal life is prepared for me, which God the merciful dear Father shall give me, not to me only, but to all who love His coming; and I shall now come into that worthy land, which I have tasted and seen in faith, wherefore my inward man has a desire thereto, so that I do not dread my enemies, nor am affrighted at the Jordan, though in some eyes it is wholly dreadful to behold; so we are sure and certain that our faithful God of Israel shall be with us, and shall make it ready through His strong arm, so that we shall come through it unhurt, thereby giving courage to the young godly Israelites. In sum: to all who would fear God from the heart, we are through God's grace a savor unto eternal life, and to those who hate us, a savor of death. Adieu, my flesh my blood; under the altar I hope to await you all together. Let my blood be to you an eternal testament and memory. Leave, until eternity. Amen.

O hold yourselves godly, I beseech you, on the way of righteousness, for I testify to you before God and His angels with my blood, that it is the right way and highway, yea the right grace of our God, on which and in which you stand. The grace of God be with you. Amen. The 24th of October, in the morning at five o'clock. In the year 1564.

Another letter to his wife

My heartily dear chosen wife, and sister in the Lord, I wish you much strength and comfort from God the merciful dear Father, through the comfort of the Holy Spirit, wherewith He comforts all oppressed troubled hearts, which are burdened for His testimony's sake, as indeed it stands with you at this present time, so that it presses you somewhat sorely, although you are yet well so much taught through the Holy Spirit, that you well know it is

our Lord and Master's will, to whom we have bowed our knees to serve Him, and to be faithful in all need, pressure, and assault, for thereto He has chosen and called us both, that we should keep His name under much pressure and pain, and should not let ourselves be wearied by these few strokes and fatherly chastisements, for thereby He makes us right heirs of His heavenly kingdom, when we receive them in patience and longsuffering, and are exercised thereby, whereto the merciful dear Father must strengthen us with the power of His Holy Spirit. Amen.

Furthermore, my heartily dear wife, since I well suspect that your heart stands greatly troubled and sorrowful for my sake, and you (as I well suspect) would still gladly hear and know how it is with me, I cannot forbear; I must write you a little, how it has gone with us. Yet I wrote it to you on our last night (as I thought), and I asked the Bailiff whether I might write a little more to my poor sorrowful wife. He said: Yea, but we might not go upstairs again, and had to remain in the kitchen, and Huyge would not yet consent that I should write, unless he might keep it, and give it to the Bailiff himself, as I think he has done; yet I hope you shall yet receive it.

Furthermore, my dear sheep, you shall first know that my mind still stands unchanged, and I am ready to await with patience all that is laid upon me by God the merciful dear Father, and through those who are enemies of the truth.

Furthermore you shall know that we had heard of no trouble of the flesh, until in the evening about nine o'clock, when Huyge came upstairs with his wife, saying: Master Gielis and Willeboort, come down; there is a person who desires to speak to you. Then our wives, especially Mayken, began greatly to cry and weep. I asked him whether we should not come up again; he gave not much answer thereto. So I at once pulled off my sack, and put on the old serge, and gave my blood, that is the child, a kiss, and taking off my cap, I spoke with few words to God the merciful dear Father, that He would keep it the days of its life; and my heart was a little sorrowful thereover, but it did not last long. When I now came down, the Stadholder stood there a little while; thereafter the Bailiff also came, and might look upon me, saying: Well, Master Gielis, the time is here, or such words. Then I stepped a little nearer to him, and I was wholly merry in mind, and spoke most friendly with him, saying: My lord, I have known you eight or ten years, and regarded you as a reasonable man; how comes it that you will thus surprise us? We have indeed heard not one word of it. Then said he: It is indeed time enough; it shall not yet be, but make yourselves ready against tomorrow morning at five o'clock. Then I had yet some words with him, saying: O man, man, what a great burden you lay upon yourself; I would heartily wish that you were not a judge over us — not for our flesh's sake, for we are very well minded thereto. And I took a jug that stood there, and offered him a drink. And when he was gone, I began to write a little, and wrote until near five o'clock; then he came again and said that the officers should bring us upstairs, and how it went upstairs at the town hall, you may have heard; coming from there, they shut us both up in a room, and being fettered, I could not well write you anything.

And further you shall know that the Bailiff with the Stadholder the next day, that is this morning, had us called down again, and brought us both alone into a cellar, which was very dark, so that they had also stopped up the window, and said: Here you must remain until it is otherwise. The Stadholder said: We are all mortal; we ourselves do not know when we shall die. I said nothing; when I stood in the cellar, the Bailiff looked at me, and I lifted my eyes heavenward, and said: O God, keep us, or some such word or two. It seemed to the Bailiff that he wanted to say: Yea, it comes through you, yet he uttered not so much, and went away with the others; and our God was not far from us with the comfort of His Holy Spirit, and made my heart merry, that I had to lift up a song and sing. After noon, we got an end of candle; then I began to write this, and would gladly have sent it to you before night, but I could not bring it about; therefore take it in love.

O my heartily dear sheep, I suspect that our hour is fast approaching, for it seems that the Prince of this world will come tonight; therefore I beseech you through the bloody wounds of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, and for the eternal salvation of your soul, that you would never let my example go out of your heart, and when my blood comes to understanding (which I hope you will bring up in the fear of God), admonish him and set it before him; and you, my dearest, forget not either, but let my blood be to you an eternal testament and remembrance, how I have been an example to you according to my weak ability — yet I would fain have been able to walk holier and more blameless before you; but you know that according to my weak ability I have sought to please the Lord, and have walked with boldness on the way of the cross according to my weakness, which is also my hearty desire for you; and do not forsake this same, but my fatherly prayer to you is that you do more diligence to make your holy calling and election firmer and firmer, for the day of the Lord is not far, in which He will give every one reward according to his works; and then He shall, my faithful sheep, find the lazy, slothful, negligent, who now bear the name that they are Christians, and bear the vessels well, but the oil of love and righteousness is gone out therein. Therefore, my flesh my blood, I beseech you kindly that you do not look at the lazy, slothful, negligent, fearful, but prove and examine yourself daily whether you also walk rightly in the faith of the Son of God; thus looking into yourself, you may prove and know what you still need to lay off. O, always strive after humiliation, for a humbled heart can the better prove and examine itself, for he always bewails his weakness and littleness before the Lord, fearing lest he at last, in this perilous dreadful time, through the manifold subtle snares and nets, should come to shame; wherefore such a reborn child of God also has a hearty longing to be at home, and to be delivered from this miserable spotted garment of the flesh, well knowing that it walks in sore perils, wherefore it also rejoices when it hears of the cross of Christ; it is also not minded so lightly to flee before the godless, except when the case requires the need, but the slothful, lazy, negligent, who sometimes let themselves think that they are rich enough, and that they lack nothing — those same are meanwhile (as soon as they hear that the godless but make the least move to root out the righteous) so amazed or dismayed, and sometimes that is not yet enough with them, but they come to their neighbor (to whom they should speak a bold heart) and make him also dismayed. But you, my faithful

sheep, be bold, I beseech you heartily, and look not at the aforementioned, nor at those who now so unfaithfully depart from the Lord, whether through the cross or persecution, or through some false doctrine. O, if they had well examined themselves daily beforehand, and had had taste in heavenly things, they would not so lightly let themselves be seduced, nor be so sore afraid of the cross, but would heartily desire to confess the name of their God among this evil perverse generation, and still pray their God from the heart, that they might be a stranger in the land, to the praise of their God, and to the edification of their neighbor.

Furthermore, my heartily faithful dear chosen wife, whose soul I love as heartily as my own soul, my Christian and fatherly prayer is that you would take care all the days of your life, that you may come where I shall be in a short hour or time, that we may not be separated in the eternal dwelling. O, O, if it might be God's holy pleasing will, and it were possible, that I might drink the cup of bitterness for you, yea though it were thrice, methinks I would so gladly do it from my heart, that you might also be kept; O, then I would take my journey with a much merrier heart, and would indeed have no afterthought that you would then yet be snatched away from the simplicity of our dear Lord Jesus Christ — yet it is also without afterthought, so long as you remain as I now leave you, for you have a horror and fear of the judgment of the godless; whereupon my desire is with Sirach, that you remember that in all your undertakings, as he says: My son, remember always the end, in all your undertakings, so you shall never sin, namely such sins as might keep you out of the kingdom of God; as for your daily weakness and trespasses before your God, that shall not condemn you, or keep you out; thereto comes the holy apostle John, and says: If any man sin, we have an advocate with God, who prays for us, which is Christ Jesus, the high priest, who is entered, namely into the holy of holies, and has made an eternal offering and reconciliation for His people and kindred, and is set at the right hand of God His Father for an advocate and intercessor for our daily stumbling and falling, as the apostle says. See, my faithful heartily dear sheep, to this spokesman and advocate I point you, and not to the deceased saints, as the blind leaders of this world do; therefore take your refuge to Him in your great need; remember that His ear is not stopped, that He should not hear you, and His hand is not shortened, that He should not be able to help you, for He turns His eyes to His saints, whom He has bought so dear with His own precious blood, and listens to their crying, sighing, and weeping, for He already calls them blessed who here weep and suffer for righteousness' sake, of whom you are now one. Therefore, O my flesh my blood, comfort yourself with these promises, I beseech you, for they who sow here with tears shall hereafter reap again with great joy. O, think not, my worthy dear sheep, that your tears shall be in vain, which you now weep, for they are all come before the face of the Lord. Therefore suffer yet a little time, I beseech you, for He will not leave you long, I hope, but will also take you away from the evil to come, and bring you to certain rest in His chamber, as the prophet Isaiah says, because you uprightly desire to walk according to your weak ability, to the end, whereto the merciful dear Father must help you, through the help and power of His Holy Spirit; faithful is He who will without doubt do it well.

Furthermore, my heartily dear chosen wife and sister in the Lord, since I cannot yet well draw my fatherly careful heart from you, but would so gladly, out of the innermost of my soul, set you in all things according to your weakness perfect and blameless before your God, my humble friendly desire is yet that you would heartily love your neighbor, and would always remember the poor holy household of God, as you have indeed until now had a heart thereto; let your love herein not break off, but much more increase; remember always Christ's words, where He said: The poor you shall always have with you, and it is also manifest that there are always poor among the house, or in the house of God. Remember that it is a great acceptable work of the Lord, wherefore Sirach also says that the alms of man is like a purse on the way with him, and it shall excuse him in the judgment; yea, it quenches sin, and covers its multitude, for mercy boasts against judgment, said Christ. Therefore do your diligence herein also, as I well trust you, and though there is no need to write you this, yet I hope it serves you all to the best, that you may not slacken after my departure.

Furthermore I beseech you yet, my heartily dear sheep, that you always keep company with the godly, that you may get more godliness and fitness, and be desirous after the wise unadulterated milk, namely to hear God's word, that you may thereby grow and increase in all good works, and keep yourself in quietness (you know what I mean), I beseech you heartily, and wait for the day of your redemption; perhaps it is not far. Herewith I take my leave and eternal adieu of you, my flesh my blood, and beseech you yet once humbly, for the eternal salvation of your soul, and for all the great love which you ever had to me, that you would be mindful of my writing, and my hearty praying and admonishing, whether through writing or with the mouth, after my departure, and do not let them lie by you as a dead history or fable, but use them often as a little recipe serving to your health, and keep them in the little coffer of your heart, for an eternal treasure and memory, for it shall bring you more profit and usefulness than many pieces of fine gold and silver. O, the time approaches sore, wherefore I shall cease from writing, and from all things; therefore my hearty desire is: if you love me, and the eternal salvation of your soul, fulfill my desire according to your weak ability, and do not depart to the right or to the left, whether through the cross of bonds or imprisonments or anything else, and if God the merciful dear Father makes you worthy to suffer for His name's sake, fear not, for I never thought that bonds and imprisonments could make so little strife for one who has denied himself, and has a hearty longing for home; therefore fear them not. Now, my heartily dear chosen sheep, and dear sister in the Lord, my time is fulfilled, the days are expired, the years are ended; a good fight I have fought, my course is finished, I have kept the faith, so that my enemies are put to shame, who set themselves against me, for through my God I have kept the field, who has delivered me from the lion's jaws and the mouth of hell, and shall also deliver me from all evil, and save me at His coming, and deal out to me the true land of promise, which I have seen through faith, and tasted of its fruits, wherefore I also have a hearty longing therefor. O, help me thank and praise the merciful dear Father, that I have come through the wild wilderness of this evil wicked perverse world, and stand now before the Jordan, through which I have but to go; though it is somewhat dreadful to behold, yet I fear it not at all, for I

am sure that my God shall stand by me, and shall make it ready, that I shall come through it unhurt and safely, for faithful is He who promised it to me, and shall not leave nor forsake me, so that I may say: The Lord is with me, I fear not what man can do to me. I am being fetched.

A song of M. Gielis Mathijsz
To the tune of Rosina hoe is v ghestalt.

My yoke is sweet, my burden is light,
Said the Shepherd of the sheep;
Little friends, be edified hereby,
Who gather joy in God's Word.
When suffering and affliction meet you,
Be not dismayed, but watch the battle;
God will stand by you with all speed.

At Middelburg within the town
Were Christians imprisoned,
Who confessed the truth plainly;
Homeward was their longing.
One among them, Master Gielis by name
(Whom God the Lord had richly gifted) —
The other was a competent leader.

And his received pound he did not
Hide in the earth;
Also in bonds, with pen and mouth,
He taught undaunted.
God's Word he declared most faithfully,
As may well appear at the day,
To those whom he has begotten.

Though he had to sit a long time,
It did not weary him,
Daily expecting battle
With his confederates,
Against that subtle deceitful seed
Of the old Serpent, who with his snaring
Like a lion goes about the host of God.

But he stood against him like a hero,
So that no one could harm him,
And ever kept the field

Through the Lord's grace,
Who most mightily stood by him
Through His Spirit, so that least and most
All had to go away from him vanquished.

When the Bailiff had said to him,
"Prepare yourself against tomorrow,"
To him he then showed kindness,
Coming from the hidden heart.
His mind was wholly merry and rejoiced;
Taking a jug, offered it to the man,
Gladly willing to counsel him to virtue.

The spirit was highly gladdened that time
That his time had come,
To be delivered from the flesh,
And to journey with the godly
To that renowned, fair, delightful land,
Promised by God for a portion,
To those who keep His pleasant word to the end.

Now the faith is kept at last,
The battle is fought,
The course is knightly run;
Now they rest in peace
With the blessed under the altar,
Who the glorious reward, the crown of life,
Are all expecting there.

finis.

A letter of Clement Henricksz, which he sent from the prison at Amsterdam, and afterward at the same place was strangled at a stake and burned, in the year 1569, the 17th of December.

I wish you, my dear and beloved in the Spirit and according to the truth (as I hope), and in a knowledge of the faith, and in a mind of Christ Jesus, and a clear sight, and an open heart in all godly matters, and in God's word, therewith to make a right distinction, and to measure, which is light or darkness, lies or the truth, yea flesh or spirit, that you may remain undeceived, and fast by God's word, that you may receive full reward.

Furthermore, my dear and much beloved, I cannot well forbear to write you a little, how it still stands with me in my bonds, and how the mind still stands wholly to fear the Lord out of a whole heart, and out of whole strength, and out of whole soul, for which I can never

fully thank and praise the almighty great and all-wise God, for His unspeakable, yea incomprehensible grace, which He has shown me through Jesus Christ with helping hand until now, and is still daily showing; for this I thank the almighty God, and bow the knees of my heart before the Father full of grace and truth, who is the right Father full of grace, and a God of all comfort, who can comfort us when we are in pressure and straits.

Therefore, my dear and faithful, keep well this good treasure which is committed to you, and is given of God out of grace, for faith is a gift of God, and thereby the elders obtained a good testimony and assurance in their hearts, through that old word of the Spirit of Christ, who had beforehand testified with their spirit that they were God's children, and also heirs of all the glorious promises; therefore they also all willingly forsook it, and yet esteemed it for far more and greater riches, to suffer affliction with the children of God, than all the temporal pleasure of this world, for they looked to the recompense, and to that which is eternal and not temporal, for faith frames itself after that which does not now appear here, nor is now seen here with fleshly eyes, which the inward hidden man and the eyes of the heart see, and therefore hold as firm as if they saw it before their eyes, and could grasp it with the hand, for they esteem and hold Him faithful who promised it, that He will also do it, for He cannot deny Himself.

Therefore, my dear and faithful, do not look at that which is visible, for that which is visible is temporal, but that which is invisible is eternal. And Christ says: He who loves anything dearer than me is not worthy of me. And yet Christ says in another place: He who leaves behind house, farm, land, sand, father, mother, yea also his own life, shall receive it a hundredfold again. Therefore we must also now forsake all here, and have nothing dearer than the living God, and that then prove with works and with deed, that we are God's children, and no bastards. The righteous must go through much suffering into the kingdom of heaven, but the Lord helps them in all their suffering; He does not let His own be tempted above their ability, and with the temptation He has set a way out; but the godless He keeps to punish in the day of judgment.

Therefore, my dear and much beloved, remember Joseph, who was tempted by the Egyptian woman to commit whoredom with her, and she had caught him by his coat or mantle, and would not let him go, and he ran away from her, and let her keep the coat or mantle, rather than he would commit whoredom with her. Therefore, my dear and much beloved, when we are caught by the coat or mantle by the whore of Babylon, let rather, through the Lord's grace, your earthly coat go, than that you should commit whoredom with her, namely your earthly life, well knowing that our mortal coat must first be put off, before the immortal can be put on. And if our earthly house of this dwelling perish, then if we have a building in heaven, a house not made with hands, but eternal.

Furthermore, my dear and much beloved, I have yet taken a little upon me, to write you yet a little of the words of Christ, that He says: If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father for you, that He will give you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth,

whom the world cannot receive. It is yet a little time, then the world shall see me no more, but you shall see me, but you know me, says the Lord. Yet Christ warns us in another place, where He says thus: Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are rapacious wolves; by their fruits you shall know them: Can one gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? A good tree brings forth good fruit, and an evil tree brings forth evil fruit, and every tree that brings not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. Herewith I bid you adieu, until the coming again, with that undeceiving word of His grace. The peace of the Lord be with you, from eternity to eternity. Amen. Take this little writing in good part. By me, Clement Henricksz, unworthy prisoner in the Lord, written in my bonds out of love.

A song of Clement Henricksz
To the tune of Te Munster staet een steynen huys.

Whoever builds on the stone, Christ,
His building may abide,
And remain to the end;
So, whoever you are, hold to it,
Though they should take your life.

A young man at Amsterdam,
Clement Henricks named,
Was cast into prison;
There much strife befell him
From the false prophets.

The two-edged sword, God's Word,
He took for his strengthening;
He overcame priests and clerks;
God gave him strength and comfort
Against the devil's works.

See, when they summoned him:
"Tomorrow you shall die,"
One saw him acquire joy,
Rejoicing greatly unto death,
That he should inherit the crown.

"I had (said he) never a gladder hour
In all my life
Than God has now given me" —
So God strengthens the creature
Driven by His Spirit.

The Bailiff at the last hour
Assailed Clement sorely,
To talk him round still,
Came forth with his loose device,
Speaking the word before all.

Albert Marcus, of shrewd counsel,
And more wise of mind
Who were present there,
Had much ado with Clement,
But they could not prevail.

So they waited for the clanging of the bell,
To deafen the folk
Who might praise the Council,
When they heard neither speech nor song
From Clement, thus put aside.

With the clanging of the bell he came out,
Stepping most merrily,
With lovely manners;
But little heed the clamor gave,
Through the violence they did.

Tyrannously they drove him on,
With pulling and pushing,
Which grieved many;
So piteously the Christian man
Was swiftly bound to the stake.

The hangman, spiteful and fierce,
Swiftly took his speech from him,
With throttling and breaking —
He thought he had done very well,
That Clement's song stuck fast.

One heard a sound increase there
Among the folk:
"He is in the rest of the Lord" —
This cry went among the crowd.
Who could turn such aside?

Thus God's friend has in God at last
Fallen asleep at the stake;

The monks and priests
Have no more claim on Clement —
They may well stand gaping.

Brothers, it will avail us nothing
To bear a Christian name,
But to be undaunted
In bonds, suffering, and sorrow —
That will please God well.

finis.

Register

Here follows a Register or Table of what is contained in this Book, set out by the folios, that one may easily find what one desires to read or to sing, since a little song is now newly appended after each Confession or Letter.

1. The confession of Stephen, taken out of the New Testament. Fol. 4.
2. The confession of Michiel Satler. Fol. 8.
3. The testament of Anneken to her son Esaias. Fol. 13.
4. Some testaments of Jan Claesz, to his wife, children, and all his kin. Fol. 17.
The sentence over Jan Claesz. Fol. 23.
5. The confession of Elisabeth. Fol. 25.
6. The confession of Hans van Overdam. Fol. 29.
A letter of Hans van Overdam to the authorities. Fol. 40.
7. A letter of Hans the cheese-buyer. Fol. 45.
How Hans van Overdam with Hans the cheese-buyer went to death. Fol. 47.
8. A letter of Jeronimus Segersz to his wife. Fol. 48.
Also a letter of Jeronimus to the brothers and sisters. Fol. 54.
Also a letter of Jeronimus to his wife, wherein he warns her against the false prophets. Fol. 61.
Also a letter to his wife. Fol. 67.
9. A letter of Lijsken, to her husband Jeronimus Segersz. Fol. 69.
Also a letter of Jeronimus Segersz to his wife. Fol. 71.
Also a letter of Lijsken. Fol. 73.
Also a letter of Lijsken to her husband. Fol. 76.
Also a letter of Jeronimus Zegersz to his wife. Fol. 76.
Also a letter of Jeronimus Zegersz to great Henrick. Fol. 79.
Also a letter to his wife after he was condemned. Fol. 81.
10. A letter of Peter Bruynen. Fol. 85.
Also a letter of Peter Bruynen. Fol. 87.
11. A confession of Jan the old clothes-buyer. Fol. 88.

12. A letter of Peter van Weruic. Fol. 90.
13. A prayer, admonition, and confession of Adriaen Cornelisz. Fol. 95.
14. A letter of Jooskint. Fol. 111.
Also a letter of Jooskint. Fol. 116.
15. The confession of Claes de Praet. Fol. 123.
16. A testament of Jorian Simonsz to his son. Fol. 135.
Also three little admonishing letters of Jorian Simonsz. Fol. 138.
17. A confession of the faith of Jacques. Fol. 142.
Also a confession of Jacques. Fol. 144.
18. The confession of Claesken. Fol. 182.
Also a letter of Claesken. Fol. 186.
Also a confession of Claesken. Fol. 190.
19. A letter of Adriaen Pan. Fol. 193.
Also a letter of Adriaen Pan. Fol. 194.
20. A confession of Hans the Fat (de Vette). Fol. 196.
21. A confession of Hans van der Maes. Fol. 203.
22. A testament of Lenaert Plouier to his children. Fol. 209.
23. A testament of Gielis Bernaerts to his wife. Fol. 212.
Also a letter to his wife. Fol. 218.
Also a letter to his wife. Fol. 220.
Also a letter of Gielis Bernaerts to the brothers and sisters, after he was condemned. Fol. 223.
24. A testament of Jan Geertsz. Fol. 226.
Also a letter of Jan Geertsz to the Lutheran priest. Fol. 229.
Also a letter to his acquaintances. Fol. 233.
25. A confession or epistle of Mayken Boosers. Fol. 236.
Also a letter to her parents. Fol. 237.
Also a letter to the brothers. Fol. 238.
A testament to her children. Fol. 239.
Also a letter to her father and mother. Fol. 240.
Also a letter to the friends. Fol. 241.

Here follow the Confessions and Letters which are newly added here.

1. A confession of Weynken, daughter of Claes, of Monickendam. Fol. 243.
2. The confession of Fije and Eelken. Fol. 247.
3. The confession of Peter Witses the mason. Fol. 251.
Also an admonition of Peter. Fol. 252.
4. A letter of Willem the cloth-shearer (droochscheerder). Fol. 254.
5. A letter of M. Gielis Mathijsz. Fol. 257.
Also a letter of M. Gielis to his wife. Fol. 266.

Also a letter to his wife. Fol. 270.
6. A letter of Clement Henricksz. Fol. 276.

End of the Register.

A Little Songbook, Treating of the Offering of the Lord

A little songbook, treating of the Offering of the Lord, in which old and new little songs, gathered out of various copies, are brought together to be joined to the Offering-book, because it touches the same matter, as of betrayed, captured, and killed, concerning the slaughter-sheep of Christ, who have faithfully obeyed the voice of their Shepherd Jesus Christ unto death.

Item, a Register is made at the back here, to find each little song at its folio.

Matt. 10:22. For My name's sake you shall be hated of all men, but he that remains steadfast to the end, he shall be saved.

Of the Bitter Suffering of Christ, Humble

Of the bitter suffering of Christ, humble,
Abundantly Scripture relates
The pure love of His house, unfailing,
Has so fiercely pierced Him through
That He, descended from His Father's bosom,
Our ransom here has paid.

Isaiah the praised prophet
Witnesses of this Christ openly
That He our sins' heavy sicknesses
Has Himself truly borne;
Who without sin was, pure and clear,
Was reckoned for a sinner.

The Son of God, whom we shall hear,
To fulfill all prophecies,
In the garden with bended
knees
Cried: O fatherly Mind,
If this bitter cup cannot flee from me,
So must Your will be done.

Christ Jesus, thus standing composed,
The base vessels
of the rebellious Jews
Came to Him very wrathful and fierce
To capture Him with torment,
But none of them dared quickly
Lay hands on Christ, indeed.

To catch Christ, the Jewish grounds
Much sought have they found;
For thirty pence, well considered,
The innocent blood was sold.
This treachery, wrought through Satan,
Judas cunningly accomplished.

The Jews
(when Christ revealed Himself)
On the earth fell at that time;
But Judas, filled with hate and envy,
Said: Greetings, Master, to You,
And with a kiss, like a hypocrite,
Betrayed the blessed Lamb.

Christ,
thus for our misdeeds,
Was betrayed by him who ate His bread;
To the
smiters He offered His pure body,
Which received many a blow,
Showing great fervent love,
Obedient
unto the death of the cross.

The disciples all together,
Pure Christ
thus seeing
captured,
One did the denying,
The others went away;
Thus they left Christ, the pure grain,
In the cross's press standing alone.

Christ for all the members of His body
Has trodden the winepress alone,
And with Him was neither great nor small;
Thus, little friends, all together,
Consider what Christ, the holiest grain,
Suffered from the unclean Jews.

Being captured by the Jews,
On His cheeks they struck Him quickly;

But Christ
as a good little lamb
That opens not its mouth,
The pricking and beating of the unwise Jews
Bore with great humility.

Falsely
have they (without ceasing)
Thought base causes against Christ;
Fast in hands
with bonds
tied,
As one who had wrought it all,
Being brought into Pilate's house,
There Christ was examined.

Though Pilate found Christ innocent,
Many times, yet he bade
Him be
beaten,
Thinking thereby to wash his hands
And let Christ go free;
But the accusers (seized with envy)
Would not accept it thus.

To release was Pilate's will,
To still those who were wrathful there;
When the stiff-necked people heard that,
They cried: Release Barabbas.
Thus that base knave Barabbas came free,
But to death must go that Lamb.

Mocked as a fool, Christ got for reward
A crown of sharp thorn-twigs,
Which they wrung very enviously
Into His head, so that blood sprang out;
Thus, to take the road to the mountain of the cross,
Was ever the Jews' song.

"Away with Him, crucify Him," cried openly
All the crowd being present there;
Pilate, for the great friendship of the Emperor,
Commanded Christ to be crucified;

Thus, as lightly as that judgment closed,
They forced Christ toward the cross's death.

Going toward the hill of Calvary,
The little Lamb standing ready at the slaughter-bench,
Very abundantly blood-red sweat
Ran out of Christ, being stripped;
Thus by the fierce cruel Jews
Was Christ outspread on the cross.

Christ on the cross, with
broken limbs,
Has spoken: I thirst (very fine);
The stiff-necked Jews, full of venom,
Gave Him gall for wine;
Thus all Christ's good deeds are
Rewarded with affliction and torment.

Christ,
the virtuous youthful bold
green Vine,
for our misdeed,
Was so miserably hated,
Cursed, mocked, and despised,
That He seemed to be in countenance
No
man, but an evil worm.

So piteously was Christ beaten
That they who saw Him, as Scripture witnesses,
Shook
their heads at that very hour
And curled their mouths;
From the head to the ground of the feet
Was His body unsound.

No one had any pity
At that time with Christ's sorrow;
The Father's justice could not
Redeem His Son, see;
The fulfillment of the Scriptures' meaning
Must first be accomplished in Him.

The scribes, to Christ's blame,
Without shame have thus spoken:
"Others He helps well, fiercely pierced through,
But in Himself that fails;
If He is
the Son of God (as is told),
Let Him come down from the cross."

Christ being very blasphemously crucified,
The envenomed evil Jewish seed
Divided His fine seamless coat
Among the evil soldiers;
Thus was fulfilled what stands written:
The casting of
lots
for my garment.

The
foxes and the little birds also
May have a dwelling here;
But God's Son had, in the cross's distress,
No stone whereon His head lay;
Thus, of all comfort on the dying day,
Men saw Christ forsaken.

Thus is
Christ
with the
murderers,
With grievances fastened to the cross,
And has said: O my God, my God,
Where is Your servant left?
Thus on the only Son, plainly,
Is accomplished the Father's justice.

Many signs God let come to pass,
As the rending of the rocks openly,
Darkness in the clear shining of the sun,
Rising of the dead truly,
Likewise heavy quaking of the earth,
And such terror thereafter.

The Son, who believed His Father,
With head bowing undaunted,
Gave thus
His spirit into God's hands,
And through the cross's deadly
tempest
Has so fulfilled it all, least and most,
In heaven's and earth's forest.

All Scriptures of the cross's suffering, sorrowfully,
Are figuratively ended in Christ;
But all who will (turned from evil)
Enjoy His cross's torment,
They must here, as known little members,
Follow the excellent Head.

Must
Christ, through much painful suffering,
Pass finely into sweet glory,
You who are members of His good body,
Obediently do likewise,
When you must tread the cross's press,
Consult not with flesh nor blood.

As members of Christ, without growing cold,
Keep in mind what is declared here;
At length it is revealed,
That one may keep it the better;
Be
hearers and doers renowned,
Show thus the Christians' nature.

Farewell to each who tastes the Spirit's virtues;
Thus we simply close this song.
Of the suffering of Christ there is meaning;
Let each now diligently see to it for himself
That the suffering of Christ, full of sorrow,
Be not in vain accomplished.

Rejoice, You Children of God, All the Time
Rejoice, you children of God, all the time,
And now be glad;

Praise God the blessed Lord,
His name is highly to be praised.

His light shines now as clear as day,
Which one may not well endure;
Of that
we will sing.

There was a sheep of Christian nature
At Bolsward within the city,
Named Frans,
righteous
and plain renowned;
He lived in God's peace.
He would not swear an oath;
Therefore the lords were very displeased
And let him be captured there.

On a sledge he was sent
To Leeuwarden before the lords;
They asked him there in presence:
Why will you not swear?
And hold no Supper with us
In the church, in that holy hall;
There you will not be either.

"You noble lords, understand me well;
We have a clear doctrine;
Matthew five, Christ speaks freely:
In no wise shall you swear.
You are not believing nor pure;
Thus I will not be in common with you;
Your sins I will not eat."

Then were the lords very disturbed,
The priests there besides:
"We are no thieves, nor murder
Have we committed.
It seems to us you have a false doctrine;
There are yet many more heretics;
Them we will utterly root out."

"You noble lords, hear," he spoke,
"And do not be disturbed;

You high priests, teach me;
According to God's Word I will hear.
I have so well considered;
The Bible I have brought with me;
Out of it, then, teach me."

The lords went to counsel,
Jezebel's priests with them:
"He has despised us with the Mass,
Nor holds aught of our customs;
We have
so strong a mandate;
Thus he must die — that is our consent;
That must one be obedient to."

In the year forty-five counted,
Right on the day before Palm Sunday,
Was Frans set before the lords;
Therefore praise God now with psalms.
That sentence went there hard and fierce;
Yet it pleased him altogether well
That he should burn to ashes.

He spoke: "I thank you, wise lords;
The Spirit must enlighten you,
That you better yourselves speedily
And be edified in God's Word.
I will forgive you all that;
I journey now to a
holy
city,
Into my Father's inheritance."

As a
slaughter-sheep he was led;
Many wept at that
hour.
He spoke: "Be comforted and prepared
Now to die to your sins.
Believe, this is the right street
Whereby
one goes to life,
But few are they who find it."

The hangman had his office prepared;
That sheep stood unbound.
He spread God's Word there,
Which the Christians understood;
He spoke there many a comforting word
To the God-fearing for comfort,
Who stood around to behold.

He put off his clothes
And before
all prayed;
He spoke:
"God
will receive my soul
And lead it into His peace."
To the post he stepped very sweetly,
Embraced it gladly with his arms;
He
longed for his Father.

With a
rope, well fast and good,
The hangman would strangle him;
The rope broke (be of good cheer, hangman);
He fell into fear and sorrows.
On the body no fire is spared
Of turf and wood, after such a manner,
To burn him to ashes.

Now hear, God's people, very wondrously:
The flesh one could not burn;
That body remained just alike,
Whatever they set to with hands.
God showed there His great power:
The fire
lost its rightful strength;
It could not burn him.

This wonder one saw openly;
The lords, kindled with anger —
He was counted God's martyr —
They would yet avenge it
On the hangman and his kin:

"Not wood enough was brought there,
As
Christ was stolen."

This is a man of God's nature;
His house
he has behind,
Built upon the Rock, well preserved
Against rain, storm, and wind.
This is Christ's faithful Bride;
He heard
no stranger's sound.
Let us be his followers.

Praise God in all eternity
For His wondrous deeds;
He shows us His graciousness;
His Word makes us full.
His Spirit can also enlighten us,
Who is a true Guide
All toward that eternal life.

Awake, princes and kings all;
Acknowledge God the Lord;
Believe God's
Word, great and small;
Give Him praise and honor.
He will
alone be the Judge;
His children He helps out of pain;
Who can
fight against Him?

When this little song was first sung,
That was on Palm Sunday;
Though we hear such clanging,
Let us yet not despair.
O Father, help us out of need,
Your children small and great,
Through Christ our Lord.

Sadness I Will Now Set Aside
Sadness I will now set aside
And sing with gladness
Of
Mary van Beckom I begin,
Who for God's Word had to suffer.
Her mother drove her out of the house;
It came loudly in the bishopric of Utrecht;
The stadtholder was informed of it;
Thus he sent after her.

Gosen van Raesvelt came galloping
To catch this maiden,
With many
men, stocked and staffed,
And hung with great pomp.
To Beckum's house where Mary was —
She had to rise from bed very quickly
And go away with Raesvelt;
She was
ready without fright.

She, seeing there many a man suddenly,
Spoke to her brother's wife:
"Will you travel with me now at this time
And keep me company?"
Ursula answered freely thereupon:
"I will gladly go with you;
If
Jan van Beckom will suffer it,
We will
rejoice in the
Lord."

When Mary desired that of her brother,
He gave consent in this;
Thus has
Ursula, the worthy woman,
Shown faithfulness to
her sister.
Here was love in the heart great,
Stronger

than the bitter death,
Yea, firmer than hell —
O lovely company.

Her mother had come to her
Out of Friesland,
lying very far away,
With her sisters at that time;
This could not move her.
She took her farewell
Of her mother without delay;
She
chose to suffer discomfort
And went with her sister to the battle.

They were led toward Deventer,
Before the blind sophists;
Human ordinances, set after their manner,
They brought forth with cunning.
"We hold to God's Word diligently;
On the pope's ordinance we reckon nothing,
For thereby (without fail)
The whole world errs."

Brother Gruwel is also fetched thereby;
He would teach them much,
But as was fitting he could not
Prove his own scripturally.
When he could not overcome them:
"The devil
speaks out of your mouth,"
He spoke at that very hour:
"Away, away to the fire."

They
rejoiced highly
That they were found worthy
To suffer with blessed Christ;
They praised God at those hours,
Saying: "Now it has happened to us
That they said of Christ:
'He must have the devil in him,'
As we read."

Thereafter they brought them to the house
At Delden, high of walls,
To draw them off with confusion
They practiced many devices;
Of that they had very little praise.
They made from the Burgundian court
A commissioner come there
To turn the women from godliness.

When he had come there,
He put forth very fine things;
But the decked-out peddler's wares
Were not worth a bean.
Of Masses was his foundation,
The pope's statutes without end;
Therewith he could not prevail
Against Scripture — he had to fail.

Further he asked them quickly
Whether they were Anabaptists.
"No," they said, "we are once well
Baptized according to Christ's teaching;
For to the believing the Lord
Has commanded that, near and far;
So
did the apostles here on earth,
According to Christ's worthy command."

There may be but one baptism right,
As Scripture witnesses to us very beautifully;
Whoever is moved therewith
Has worthily put on Christ,
Blameless in life and doctrine
Through the Holy Spirit of the Lord —
This
is their conscience a firm covenant
Whereby they stand on Christ's ground.

He asked whether they in the sacrament
Also eat God wholly.
"How can you ask so blindly?
Of the Supper we make much.
God will have no

equal,
On earth nor in the heavenly kingdom:
'I am, I am, other none besides Me,'
He speaks through the prophet's teaching."

Also we find written finely
How
Christ has left behind,
For remembrance of His death, bread and wine —
That He gave His flesh for our benefit.
As
often as we will break this bread,
We shall speak of His death,
As Paul's teaching witnesses to us,
Until Christ the Lord comes.

When they now held for heresy
All that the pope ever instituted,
Then on the thirteenth of November
The bench was convened at Delden.
Mary and Ursula came soon
To stand before Pilate and Caiaphas;
There they were sentenced to death,
But they rejoiced in this.

Now it happens to us according to Christ's teaching:
That the disciple does not go above
His Master, nor the servant the Lord;
Thus they went praising God.
When the people beheld their steadfastness,
They shed many a tear;
When they were led to the stakes,
They sang with joy and spoke.

"Weep
not for what is done to us;
We suffer not as sorcerers
Or other
evildoers," spoke Mary wisely,
"But to be with Christ is our desire.
Praised be God that we this hour
Have lived to see," they said all around;
"Convert

yourselves, remain standing on God's Word,
So shall it go eternally well with you."

When now the time of suffering came on,
Mary joyfully uttered:
"Dear sister, heaven is opened,
As
Stephen has spoken,
That we now suffer in
short time;
Therefore our soul shall eternally be gladdened
And live with Christ our Bridegroom;
Thus I will
give you the kiss of peace."

They prayed
God in the high throne:
"Forgive them yet the sins,
For they know not what they do."
Yet one heard them utter:
"The world is now very deaf and blind;
Have mercy on Your daughters and child,
And let us not depart from You;
Take our soul into Your eternal kingdom."

First they took Mary, who prayed very sweetly
To the authorities, without ceasing,
That they would yet not shed
That innocent blood any more.
She fell down on her knees
And spoke her prayer all to the Lord,
Fervently in her needs,
And prayed
yet for those who killed her.

Thereafter she sprang with free courage
Upon the wood with gladness;
I could not tell it so sweetly
As she was ready to suffer.
"To You, Christ, I have surrendered myself,
And know that I shall live eternally with You;
O Father in heaven's forest,
Into Your hand I commend my spirit."

The hangman cursed with evil courage;
The chain was not to his liking.
"O friend, think how evilly you do,"
She spoke out of fervent love;
"My body is not worthy of this,
That Christ should be blasphemed over it.
Better your life from this hour,
That you burn not in hell's ground."

The preacher
was thereabout,
Who is a teacher at Delden;
He turned Ursula around,
But she turned herself with force:
"Let me see the end of my sweet sister,"
She spoke out of a pressing mind,
"For the glory wherein she shall go
I desire
from the heart to receive."

They came nearer to her side
And asked with cunning words;
"Your sister was miserably burned;
Will you not turn aside?"
"No — for the death you do to me
Will I not surrender the eternal good.
Would you drive me from the truth?
No — by Christ I will remain pious."

They would yet spare sweet Ursula,
Bringing the sword to hand.
"No," she spoke, "my flesh is not too good
To burn for Christ.
Say
good night to Jan van Beckom,"
She said to one of her Meyers,
"That he
serve God without fear;
I shall be an offering to God."

When Ursula came near the wood,
She struck her hands together:
"Our Father,

who are in heaven's tent."
"Yes," spoke the priest, "there you'll find Him for certain."
"That
I seek Him there in
this need.
Must I die the temporal death?
Would I confess Him in the bread,
I might lengthen my life."

When Ursula stepped freely on the wood,
It slipped away under her foot.
"Methinks I fall off," she spoke.
Very quickly the tyrant heard the reason;
He cried: "Hold — she will turn aside!"
"No — that block escapes me, no doubt;
In God's Word I will not fail;
By Christ I remain steadfastly."

Thus are these little sheep to the end
Both
remained steadfast,
And have with their death presently
Given God's Word a seal.
They are with great patience
Fought through in godliness,
And
have left us
An example — take hold of this.

O Lord, hear yet our complaint;
Shorten these
days,
And pour Your Spirit without
delay
In our hearts.
Give us also strength in need
Thus to fight unto death,
That we with great longing
Receive the
crown with them.

When One Wrote Fifteen Hundred, Thereto Fifty-One Years

When one wrote fifteen hundred,
Thereto fifty-one years,
Then were robbed of life
Four pious Christians truly,
At Ghent, within the city;
There they were burned.
They lived with God in peace
And remained steadfast to the end.

From Lier they are come,
A city in Brabant;
At Ghent they were discovered,
The capital in Flandersland.
There they were betrayed
By a Judas with his servant;
Their four, quite unburdened,
Confessed their faith rightly.

Led they are out of their houses,
All to the count's Steen (castle);
They used no abuses,
But confessed the truth purely.
There they sang
Many a beautiful spiritual song,
With friendly tongues,
Giving God
praise and
thanks.

Many monks and sophists
Fell upon them,
Whether with false cunning
They might bring them off the right track;
But the
Christians, as was fitting,
Withstood them with God's Word,
So that they had to be ashamed,
Who seek
the murder of souls.

They received their judgment
According to the Emperor's mandate,

Because they have departed
From the fleshly, blind Christendom,
And stepped into God's congregation,
Which through
God's Word bears spiritually,
Confessed a baptism after faith;
Of no infant baptism does Scripture declare.

On the day that they should die
And had received that judgment,
One saw not their love grow cold,
But stand as pious witnesses.
"This is the day," spoke
Naenken,
"For which I have so longed."
Goris,
Wouter, and
Grietken opened
Their mouths, and thanked God.

Without strangling they were sentenced
To burn, each at a stake.
Then said the praised woman:
"We thank You, Lord, for this matter."
Grietken spoke with good intent:
"Spare three stakes, beloved councilor;
All four we will well die at one,
For spiritually we are all of one mind."

Eight monks came there
To torment that godly seed,
But they accepted not
The false prophets' counsel.
"Pull off your long clothes,"
Grietken said to them,
"Before you would teach
another,
Make yourselves first ready."

As slaughter-sheep they were led
To death,
as Paul teaches,
Willingly prepared thereto,

And in no wise desiring revenge.
The monks went along:
"Stay behind," they said;
"We know you well — leave us in peace,
For to hear you we are not prepared."

On the scaffold came
Joris first
And spoke to the people very gladly:
"Know that we die not
For theft,
murder, or heresy."
This same
Naenken said;
Then the monks became wrathful.
Thereafter they led up
Wouter,
Meek as a lamb.

Thereafter they all four
Fell on their knees,
In prayer after Christian manner,
Where the burnt offering should happen.
They kissed one another on the spot,
Very friendly on the mouth,
All with the kiss of peace;
This was the last hour.

To the people one saw them speak,
Friendly with glad countenance,
Which the monks would avenge
And stood before them very evilly.
One out of the people cried against that:
"Hear, you raging antichrists,
Stand back out of the way;
Let the women speak sweetly."

Wouter spoke at the same time:
"Citizens of Ghent, hear my admonition;
Know that we suffer not
As heretics or Lutherans,
Who in the one hand the pot with beer,
In the other have the Testament,

Handle God's Word in drunkenness,
Whereby the truth is shamed."

By the
throat they were hung up
With a noose, but not strangled;
Where they now were in constraint,
They cared for one another,
Saying: "Let us piously fight,
For this is our last torment;
Hereafter we shall rejoice
With God in gladness without end."

Now hanging in the pain,
Before the fire was kindled,
Goris fell out of his noose;
Thereafter the fire caught very hard.
Wouter saying out of distress:
"O brother, be of good cheer."
Then cried Goris with firm trust:
"Strengthen my
faith, O good Lord."

They made their offerings
According to the Lord's Word,
Saying:
"Father, into
Your hands
Receive our spirit."
Their faith is in the fire, as fine
As gold,
proved very neatly,
Not
fearing
for the pain;
No torment hindered them.

By the lords of the Emperor's council
These four murders happened;
The city lords of such deeds
Also did not refrain.
They went and defiled themselves
On an innocent Lamb;

Eight days thereafter, in the heat
Of the fire, a woman took her end.

When she in prison
Was tormented by the monks,
She spoke with certain words:
"For my faith I am set
At a stake — let me be burned.
What will you do for your faith?
Better yourselves, or
you come to shame;
Mark
yet this bold woman."

Katherijn was her name;
Her judgment she received:
Living to stand in the fire's flame,
As the four
had
done.
Thus she went with haste;
A brother, meeting her,
Bowed down to earth with longing,
And they greeted each other friendly.

To the scaffold she went without leading;
She spoke: "Undo my hands,
That I may prepare myself for prayer,
That the Lord may protect me."
She kneeled with her hands together,
Made God a fervent prayer
For strength in His name;
That He also gave her unspotted.

She was bound to the stake
(Strengthened by God's Spirit),
Not fearing the devouring,
Spoke boldly, undaunted:
"For the true faith
I am led to the fire;
What you are able to do to me,
I am boldly prepared to suffer."

When she was bound to the stake,
The seducer came to her
To utter his soothing words.
"Be silent, I am weary of your tormenting,"
She spoke; "refrain from comforting me;
Comfort yourself, leave me in peace,
For He for whose name I suffer here
Comforts me
now in this place."

She cried with firm trust
To God in her need;
Before all men's eyes
She was burned to death.
Fear not for this,
You who love God's Word;
He will not leave His own as orphans,
For through His love He looses it all.

You authorities, awake yet;
How remain you thus long blinded?
They are too wondrous matters,
That you know Him not,
Who has given you the power
To wield that worldly sword.
Those whom you murder and take life from
Are dear and precious to Christ.

I May Well Sing Sorrowfully

I may well
sing sorrowfully
In this time of need,
For those who fulfill God's Word
Are miserably killed,
As one may behold
Of the world's wise, unthinking,
How they kill men and women
By day and by night.

Two women they have taken;
Is it not a great sorrow?
Whither they should come

They themselves knew not.
Into a house they brought them
And set them by a fire;
The bailiff (schout) examined them,
But he found them firm in the faith.

He asked them further
All concerning the Roman Church;
They ventured thereupon:
"It is
not but devil's work.
Now hear what we confess
Of your great Baal:
It is nothing but devilry,
And your works all together."

Of the priests' bread he spoke,
Whether it was not God perfect;
Thereupon they related to him
That it was a covered devil.
God lets Himself not be shut
In silver nor in gold;
Thus these two bold maidens put it aside.

They went without burden
Past the
Babylonian
whore:
"O pit of murderers,"
Spoke
she, "O devil's choir."
The bailiff's servant spoke: "Tell me,
How speak you such high words?"
Then she went to explain to him
That
many a soul is murdered there.

They read the one her sentence:
That she had despised
Infant baptism in presence
And desired not their sacrament.
"Moreover you run together
In

assembly," spoke the council,
"Which may not beseem you,
For it is against the Emperor's placard."

Then she spoke with good counsel:
"Baptism
belongs to the believing;
I will prove it with Scripture.
And where may you so shut up God?
Why do you not make us like
My pleasant brothers and sisters?
For we turn not from our faith —
That you burn us not also."

The second, to her benefit,
To whom they also read her sentence,
They would let go free,
For she was not baptized.
"Fall away from your faith,"
They spoke without confusion;
"Believe as we all,
And go home again with us."

"You lords, know this,"
She spoke at that term,
"That the spiders eat your bread-god;
Of that I will not be partaker."
To the gate they stepped,
Glad, as to a feast,
And prayed God:
"O Lord,
receive our spirit."

This seemed good to the lords,
For they remained furious in heart;
Their feet run swiftly
To shed innocent blood,
As one saw them hanged,
Leading in common,
Bringing three brothers toward death,
Whose names here follow plainly.

Henrick Dircksz, without delay,
Came walking, singing:
"Blessed
are they who weep here;
They
shall receive shining clothes.
One shall reward them,
As the Lord Himself promises,
And thereto
crown eternally
All who steadfastly fight."

"This is the Lord's fitting Sabbath,
For which I have long yearned.
Not worthy to suffer for Your name,
But, Lord, You make me worthy."
He spoke: "Hear my confession;
It is
not for theft nor murder
That we must suffer here,
But for that pure Word."

Dirck Jansz came unburdened;
He spoke: "Hear my meaning.
Though all men
despise us,
Therefore God does not.
You lords, think that here above
Is a
Judge over all;
Think freely and believe
That He also shall once judge."

When he now stood to fight,
He spoke:
"This suffering is not great;
Christ had to suffer much
more,
Who shed His blood for us.
Strength and power He shall give us
Soon to suffer for His name.

O Lord, open their eyes also,
That they may stand in the judgment."

He spoke: "Hear, my beloved;
We
suffer for no sect.
Other, no faith shall you find,
Now nor in eternity, perfect.
O Lord,
have mercy on me,"
He spoke with heart's desire;
"Receive me in Your arms,
Me, poor sinful man."

Adriaen Cornelisz came also along;
He spoke, pious and well-minded:
"This path Christ has trodden before,
And His dear wise apostles.
The servant
is not above his lord,
As Scripture confesses."
Then he fell down on his knees
And made his prayer in time.

When he had lain there
With his head all on the earth
And had kept very still silence,
He stood up all undaunted:
"They think
to root it out,"
He spoke with good words,
"But know, where they kill one,
A hundred shall rise again."

"And fear them yet not,
All who destroy the body;
But fear only Him
Who can kill soul and body.
Though we must here taste bitterness,"
He spoke, standing on the bench,
"But fear that
eternal,

eternal enduring,
For eternal is so long."

These died willingly,
And lie now truly
Under the
altar and rest,
As Scripture clearly witnesses to us.
With clothes that shine
They are clothed very beautifully;
New
wine shall pour for them
The Father in heaven's throne.

They
have now suffered
In Babylon's forest,
Because
they
would not worship
That image nor its beast,
Nor receive their mark
In forehead or right hand;
Thus they had, before long,
To be very grievously burned.

Now hear, you princes of the beasts,
Who here oppress God's children,
Thereto you false spirits —
How you
drink the great abomination.
Scripture sets before us,
And as I feel therein,
How
the beast and its fellows
Must go into the fiery pool.

He who first devised this little song,
Hear his voice out of love;
The Spirit wrought that in him.
O friends, pray for him,
That he, as these five, may confess,
And be firmly minded

To make such an offering
Wherewith one wins the eternal
crown.

You Christians All Together
You Christians all together,
Prepare yourselves for the fight;
Be not ashamed of God's Word
Before men full of spite,
But piously confess,
That Christ may not deny you,
According to His word,
There in the angels' circle.

Beware
of false prophets,
Who come in sheep's clothing,
Who eat
widows' houses;
Within they are evil wolves.
For God's Word through hate
They seek
to suppress,
As it has well appeared
At Ghent, as hereafter stands.

When one wrote fifteen hundred
And fifty-four clear,
David, very pious of life,
Was captured there.
He was very young of years;
He has at Ghent, in the city,
Piously confessed his faith,
Boldly, openly.

When he was in torments,
In affliction and sorrow,
Of their sacraments
They asked him the meaning.
He spoke: "I reckon it nothing;
I hold to none of them,

Though you should all at once
Kill me by your command."

A priest spoke threateningly,
As a hypocrite:
"You are strayed so far,
That you now so suddenly
Confess your faith here;
One shall hurt your body,
Will you not bethink yourself
Before the time passes?"

David answered thereupon
With very sweet little words,
As befits Christians:
"I am
ready with courage
Now to shed my blood,
Yea, here in this very place;
God is
my salvation,
Who keeps me here now."

The priest, with bold speech:
"It shall not go so well with you
That you in this very place
Shall yet shed your blood,"
He spoke with cruel courage;
"But one shall with shame
Burn you at a stake,
There on the dismal market."

In the court (vierschaar), before all,
He received sentence:
That he had fallen
Into heresy,
Against the plain faith.
He spoke: "Is it heresy?
One shall at no time
Show it to me with Scripture."

There was also condemned with him,
Where they were assembled,

A pious praised woman;
Leuina was she named;
It befell her for God's Word.
She left behind six children,
But it did her no hindrance;
Christianly was she renowned.

When they came upon the scaffold,
David would make his prayer,
As befits Christians,
But they hindered him
And thrust him onward,
All with disturbed minds.
Patient was he to win
The crown set by God.

Now standing in distress
At the stake with humility,
David spoke to the woman:
"Rejoice, sweet sister."
Yet he said with haste:
"What
we suffer here now
Compares at no time
To that eternal good."

When they would make their offerings,
They cried mostly:
"Father, into Your hands
We commend
our spirit."
Gunpowder one gave them first;
Thereafter one saw them burn
Openly, with straps' bands;
But a wonder appeared at the last.

After the burning, when the fire
And brands were out,
David moved his head yet;
This wonder one saw plainly.
The people made admonition:
"See, one sees him yet live."

The executioner was thereby;
Hear what he has done.

He took (it has clearly appeared)
The fork in his hand
And therewith stabbed
Three times into his bowels,
About the heart's side;
The blood ran out of it.
On God
stood all his hope;
Thus he came not to shame.

When that now was accomplished,
One perceived at that time
Yet life in him.
The executioner bound very quickly
A chain to stake and neck
And made his neck break
With force — and stabbed:
Who knows whether he was dead?

Do not despair,
Little flock, of torment;
It is the Father's good pleasure
To give you the kingdom very indeed.
Remain firm on the
foundation,
Which is Christ exalted;
Though
they seek your life,
Affliction takes here shortly an end.

When they in their schools
Bring you before proud princes,
God's
Spirit shall openly
Speak in such clamor
Through your mouth soon;
Thus praise the Lord;
Through you let His praise rise
At all hours here.

Those who would
live godly,
As Scripture signifies to us,
Are all driven away;
We complain of it aloud.
Lord, that You Your dear Bride
Will graciously pity,
Receive into Your arms —
Thereupon I make conclusion.

When One Wrote Fifteen Hundred Years

When one wrote fifteen hundred years,
And fifty-one thereto truly,
The twenty-first of July also,
A sister first, a brother thereafter,
Went
at Ghent with God in peace.
Each at a stake they were set;
The brother was named
Gielis, the sister
Lijsbet.
It happened at one after noon,
That less heed should be taken of it
Than one was not accustomed to take.

As slaughter-lambs they went to death,
Which grieved many a man sorely,
When they came upon the staging.
Their prayer they poured out very devoutly,
Gielis and Lijsbeth, both together.

While
Lijsbeth spoke her
prayer,
The executioner broke the laces of her bodice,
Which (when she rose) one saw fall
From her body; therefore she stepped quickly
To the stake without much talking.

For in her shift she stood there,
With two linen hose put on,
Which the executioner had made her pull on.

"Satan,
you find always new inventions
To mock God's people therewith."

Christ's
clothes, for comfort and admonition —
They were also taken off Him
Before He was hung on the cross.
That course His servants must go;
Reward as He, one sees them receive.

Thus was Lijsbeth greatly ashamed,
As well befits honorable women,
That she stood bare — that pained her.
Many people who stood assembled to behold
Suffered therefore also affliction in heart.

Standing at the stake with humility,
Spoke Lijsbeth: "I thank You, wise Lord,
That I
may be found worthy
To suffer for Your sweet name."
Yet one heard her further utter:

"O Lord above all power,
Now am I set on the
touchstone,
Whereon one proves the elect.
My affliction and suffering cast me down,
And comfort me, God — tarry not."

Gielis spoke: "O dear fine sister,
Be patient in your
suffering;
Comfort yourself piously in the Lord."
"So do I," spoke Lijsbeth, "my brother;
From Him I part nevermore."

Thereafter cried Gielis with great sound:
"Lord, blot out all their sins,
Who make me here now taste death,
Not feeling Your strength and virtue;
They know not what they make."

With loud voice cried Gielis yet:
"O Son of
David, have mercy on me;
Help me now out of the lions' teeth."
Also he cried: "Heavenly Father, O,
My
spirit I commend into Your hands."

Thus these two little sheep took an end,
Condemned by the Emperor's council at Ghent,
By
virtue of the mandates,
Whereby one
shames Christ's
members.
Let each imprint this in his heart.

O men, fear not the Emperor's mandate,
Since it stands against the truth,
But take God's judgment well to heart;
He shall help you out of all evil
And deliver from all sorrows.

O God, I Must Complain to You

O God, I must complain to You
My heart's sorrowful suffering,
That Your shepherds are slain,
Who have pastured Your little sheep
And with Your Word, O Lord,
Fed
them at the right time,
Blameless in life and doctrine,
As hereafter follows suddenly.

A bishop must be blameless,
A husband of one wife, sober, hospitable,
Apt to teach, praised,
Obedient children thereby,
God's steward without ceasing,
A lover of honesty,
To pasture Christ's flock,
Righteous, holy, as Paul says.

No
wine-drinker nor quarrelsome may he be,
Nor desirous of shameful gain,
But friendly, not contentious, praised
Also by those who are without.
There
might be no priests but good ones,
As it stands in Leviticus;
They must be perfect, humble,
Not crippled, lame, nor obstinate.

Such a man, with God's Spirit very mighty,
You have given us, O worthy Father,
To be partaker in all,
In suffering, also in beautiful gladness.
O
good Shepherd,
Your life
You laid down indeed for Your little sheep;
Thereto this shepherd has betaken himself,
Fearing also no torment.

Judas was a traitor
Against Jesus, God's Son.
Be comforted, O shepherds all together;
He was
also chosen fairly.
It is the Father's good pleasure
That those who proclaim His name
Help bear
Christ's
cross,
Following in His footsteps.

O Lord, when the tidings came
Of Your servant and wise shepherd,
The devil went to embolden the man;
The margrave (marckgraaf) went with speed
With
a great crowd,
Stocked and staffed,
To burden God's messenger,

As
Pharaoh's
servants undaunted.

Like wolves that rage and roar,
They came springing before that house
And caught (through the Father's patience)
The man of God, fearing no cross,
The praised seventh of June,
About the eleventh, clear,
In the year fifteen hundred at this,
And sixty-one years.

The ninth day truly,
He confessed his faith very humbly,
And of
his office very mightily,
And of the good apostles,
How they have commanded
In all
cities indeed
To appoint elders openly
And bishops very precisely.

When the lords and margrave heard this,
They made their mockery thereof blindly;
On the rack with him, as enraged,
Very
bloodthirsty, evil,
unheard-of.
It did not trouble him,
Though the pain was great;
He shut his mouth,
For the
woman was
in childbirth's need.

What pain he had to endure,
When they questioned with pulling so stiff;
The cross he began to taste;
A cord broke on his body.
O little sheep, take hold of love,
Though you must receive much pain,

And
lay down life for the brothers,
As your shepherd has done.

Twice tortured in four days
With torments so great,
And once beaten with rods
All to the red blood.
He suffered it with trembling,
Though the pain was strong;
He had surrendered himself to the Lord,
Though he should die on the bench.

The twentieth day,
fortunately,
He came before the lords to the court,
Treading very humbly,
Following after
Christ's
footsteps.
Being set before them very gently:
"Are you rebaptized?" spoke the bailiff outright;
"Ask after my true faith;
After infant baptism he asked him there."

On the Steen I confessed,
Before my lord the margrave bold,
Of infant baptism also,
That it is not of God;
They are
institutions of men —
That he spoke with clear words.
The bailiff, to know was his desire,
Asking again openly.

"Are you rebaptized (without deceiving)?"
Spoke the bailiff, "say yea or nay;
For
I know, you people will not lie;
Therefore speak the truth purely."
"On my faith, according to Scripture,
I have let myself be baptized indeed,

As Matthew twenty-eight purely
And Mark sixteen stands known."

When he now had confessed
Faith, baptism, doctrine, and deed,
He might no longer speak in peace;
The lords closed a council.
"O dear undaunted citizens,
Eleven years I have dwelt here;
No one can complain of me —
(For no wrong had he shown.)
My life and common doctrine
Agree all with God's Word."
"That is yet true, my dear pure brother,"
Spoke a brother, as was heard there.

The thief-leaders are risen up
For their gain very quickly,
Investigating withal
Who this brother was.
"If I might answer for myself
Against those priests plainly
(In public, that all men might hear),
Who were with me on the Steen,
As one saw happen with Paul
Before Agrippa the bold king —
But speaking they forbid us
And thrust us all into a corner."

When he came out of the court,
Like a little lamb not defiled,
He went to declare the Same
Who
delivered Daniel
out of the pit.
"This is for the name of the Lord,
And not for evil — imprint this well."
"That is true," spoke a brother moreover;
"The love was made known there."

Yet there were four brothers besides,
Girt
with love's cord,

Who lifted up their voices
And cried: "Fight piously, O dear brother."
Joos spoke boldly and gladly
To the people in common:
"Thus
must all God's children suffer;
Dear citizens, this is for the pure truth."

"This is the way," he spoke undaunted,
Of all God's beautiful saints,
Which the prophets have walked,
And many pious worthy men.
The people one heard complain
And lament with discretion,
Speaking freely, undaunted:
"As a lamb he is led."

The twenty-first day, devoutly,
Going where he must die the death,
Speaking also with mighty words
Between two executioners and many great tyrants.
One let him neither sing nor speak;
They all thirsted for his blood.
One saw them pull and stab
That Lamb in all humility.

When he came to the place,
Nearing his fatherland,
They made him step to that little house
Where he found himself in travail;
When he stood before the hut
Where the burnt offering must happen:
"O holy Father," spoke the shepherd of the flock;
One saw him look heavenward.

Into the little house he went very humbly,
Where he, living, must be burned.
A cord with a furious knot
The executioner's servant took in hand;
Into his mouth he would thrust it,
To stop the excellent speaking;
But through him has yet appeared
God's Word very pertinently.

He
cried out beautifully,
With fervent fine heart:
"O Lord,
Son of David,"
He spoke, "have mercy on me."
Joos, driven by God's Spirit,
Remained steadfast in need;
One saw the executioner tremble there,
Seized with great fear.

Living at the stake, yet brighter,
He kindled the fire with fierce
tempest;
He cried:
"O
heavenly Father,
Into Your hands I commend my spirit.
O Lord of hosts," he said,
Standing in the fire in great pain,
"You who
have separated me from my mother's body,
Stand by Your servant in the last need."

"For whose name I now suffer,
Hear the voice of Your servant clearly."
The fire burned with great wideness;
Once more he cried: "O heavenly Father,
Into Your hands I commend my spirit mightily,
Yet in the fire — mark this well:
Fight piously, my dear brother, unitedly,"
Spoke a sister who had pressed through.

What sorrow there was in common;
They bewailed the innocent blood
With sighs and with weeping.
One heard
good and
evil rumor with speed.
On a horse sat the margrave,
Bloodthirsty, bold, obstinate,

With his presumptuous disciples;
He called upon the executioner — understand this well.

Now, little sheep, be not dismayed
By your shepherd, in all humility;
What he has borne before you
He has confirmed with his blood.
He wishes you, for a lesson,
Grace and peace all together;
Take his offering for a mirror and lesson,
To be persevering in the clear truth.

O little sheep, rejoice;
Take rightly our brother's meaning.
He lamented that he might not write to you;
Broken was his right hand.
Therefore let us be diligent,
Clothed with God's Word,
Praised in pure love,
Always
subject to the truth.

A song
A new song, mark this, take note,
It happened at Antwerp, in the year
Of sixty, see, and do not marvel at it:
A diligent brother,
With a great crowd
Of thief-catchers, hear,
Was brought forth
From the Steenpoort
Into the court.

Willem was his name, O he was so glad,
A freeman tailor within the city.
When he now came before the lords,
And they
Asked him also
Whether he was rebaptized, — untie us this, —
On what do you hope? The bailiff did the speaking.

He spoke to them: Why do you ask
After my baptism clear,
And not after my life,
So that each one for true,
And you all together,
A judgment thereof
Might give thereafter?
For I
Am a prey; ask after my faith,
So that this deaf world
May do thereafter without faltering.

The bailiff without mercy, he asked
Sorely
Whether he was rebaptized,
As he had once confessed.
What is
Your desire? You desire no more
Than a word, O Lord,
To tread me down.
He spoke as a good servant: Judge yet justly
And consider;
Thus went his words.

The bailiff, altogether, heart as a stone,
Was not content,
Asked again with snares.
Willem spoke: Hear reason, you have before
Asked me alone;
May I now not also ask?
The bailiff spoke: Wait,
Give first
Account
Of all your deed;
Then I shall make mention of it.

I would well wish, spoke Willem quickly,
With good intent,
That you once
Thought
On the day,
Very fierce,

Which shall burn
Like an oven, rebel;
Do yet guard yourself thereagainst,
When the godless wretch
Shall burn as straw,
Though he do it unwillingly;
Thus do yet take heed thereto.

Willem spoke without fear: In Mark clear,
In his sixteenth there,
You may read it:
All who believes for true,
And is baptized
Together, he shall hereafter
Be blessed.
One asks you nothing, hear me, spoke the bailiff very subtly,
On that term,
Concerning this.

Willem spoke further, as he had done:
The children unfit
Cannot believe.
Still he spoke soon,
Also unconcerned:
Will you understand this,
Yet it is for the deaf?
On my
Faith pure,
Understand this plainly,
Am I baptized alone;
Therefore I am despised.

The
Lords unwise, with all speed,
Made him
Rise to his feet, and
Went fleeing within.
With good courage he spoke very sweetly:
You burghers,
Do penance!
The bailiff went to forbid him.
Willem spoke: Lord bailiff, let me speak boldly;

Not long, I hold,
Shall I be allowed to speak of you people.

Straightway, understand, the lords evil
With their counsel
Came, hear well.
Willem spoke: Take note, my lords, it profits you,
And point not
To the placard,
If you will not be lost.
Think yet on the day
Which no one may pass by,
When you shall cry alas,
Unless you
Must be born again.

They have straightway, all alike in a round,
Him with one mouth
Condemned.
O Lord, make known
Their evil device,
That they become healed
And read the Scripture.
Make that their heart,
Hard as a board,
Yet sweeter becomes;
That I pray you with this.

In the morning early time, on the market wide,
With little joy,
They brought him;
To the stake without strife,
Strangle with envy,
Without longer respite
They went to smother him.
O God, O Lord,
See yet once down
To your
Members
Tender,
For they greatly despise them.

Prince gentle, my song avows,
Is now sung
To the end.
I was there present,
And near him,
When he was sent
Before the old and young.
There he confessed
His faith readily
Before
The authority.
God must all tongues praise.

A song
In bitterness of soul
I lament this great misery,
That one thus sees destroy
Those who confess God's word openly.
Many have the heavenly bread
Paid for with red blood;
The Pharisaical rascals
Bring them mostly to death.

A brother good of nature
I have had after the spirit,
Who had to suffer death
At Veurne within the town.
God's word he confessed plainly
Where he sat imprisoned.
The kingdom of God shall befall me,
For He promises us that.

However they pull and tear me
And torment with grief,
And do not therefore fear,
You who see them kill the body.
My soul — as God advised —
Thereon they have nothing;
God shall His poor orphans
Comfort, whatever befalls them.

His wife whom he loved
He comforted with words sweet;
She was with child,
He feared her misfortune.
And spoke: My flesh, my blood,
Regard not what one does to me;
And you, perceiving God's Spirit,
It would all be well with you.

From all his brothers together
He took loving farewell;
He would not be ashamed of the word
When he
Climbed the scaffold.
As an innocent lamb
Humbly he came;
But the
Wolves who
Came there
Remained all equally grim.

With seven cruel strokes
He received death;
Yet one had to saw off the head
Before the martyrdom was done.
All who beheld this
Were all one tear.
How can you, God, bear it,
Who thus withstand your spirit?

His poor pregnant wife
Made great lamentation;
She died of great grief,
And also the fruit with her.
This bitter suffering heavy
One might behold there.
O God, you
Are faithful;
You will well avenge hereafter.

O chosen brothers,
This does the serpent's venom.
Are you born of God,

And fear no such torment?
Though that hellish swine
Shows upon us an angry face,
The word of God must go forward,
Sealed with blood.

Though we are despised,
Persecuted in the earthly vale,
And must a
Gazing-stock
Be
To the world great and small,
As
Little sheep from the stall
Scattered are everywhere,
God shall well heal us,
When it pleases Him.

Brothers who testify the word,
The peace and the new commandment,
And will
Bow no knees
Before Baal the idol,
Though we are the world's mockery,
Called fool and sot,
Will you suck comfort in God's word —
That I pray you in conclusion.

A song
Hear, friends, I give you
A song;
Be not disheartened herein.
What there in the south country
Has happened,
Let us go forward in God's ways;
For
The righteous souls are
All in the hands of God, hear me;
The second death is to them no
Pain.

It has happened, that many men saw,
In the year of fifty-nine plainly,
November the twenty-ninth day,
That before the world very shamefully
Jan Jansz Brant was taken.
His wife was heavy with child, has followed after;
They held them both, I have understood.

The man (it seemed) was provided of God
Altogether to suffer that good,
Brought to Geervliet to that castle;
The Lord helped him fight.
When he his goods squandered, drank up,
He might well dwell there, without constraint,
But in his godly life not long.

They brought their learned men to him;
He remained steadfast.
This is the right way, spoke he,
Altogether to the eternal life,
Which by so
Few is found, hear,
By fewer walked, was his word.
Yet some know this
Well straightforward,

That this is the right way plain;
Too strait, too narrow is it to them.
It does their flesh pain in common,
However he has instructed them.

Stiff-necked they remained equally,
And were embittered against him much more
Than any evildoer of dishonor.

The
Darkness was so great,
They might not bear the light;
They would have killed him
Already on the fourteenth day.
For money they gave yet respite,
Through prayer, who would not lose him;

A month he lay there with
All the time.

Ready he was to die willingly,
As there was well found.
Into the sack freely he stepped;
The executioner bound it to,
And cast him from the high castle-bridge.
The sack burst in pieces;
The people were greatly disturbed through that pressure.
This was very horrible to them;
Many people were not content.
The man cried out of that water clear:
How you murder me, was his word.
The executioner ran for a staff very stiff,
And thrust the man full on his body;
That grieved many a man and wife.

Thus has happened the sacrifice
Of this little sheep, take note.
The dear man
Jan Janszoon Brant
Rests now
From all his works.
He is called, to his profit,
Altogether to
The glorious Sabbath, take note;
Of this Isaiah fifty-eight speaks.

His wife — what a more miserable thing —
Remains there going
Hidden.
With great cunning they assailed her,
Exhorting much to fall away.
Imprisoned, she has borne her child;
The Lord knows how she is minded.
He can keep those who love Him.

Lord, you can strengthen the weak;
To you be
That little woman commended.
You pour your Spirit at all times
On each who will not go astray.

Lord, strengthen through your good nature
The weak, and keep the pious,
That we
In one fold
May be gathered.

This man's example is for you;
Praise God yet in these things.
With
Psalms and hymns now,
In your hearts will you sing.
To pray is more needful well;
Much singing may make vain play,
For our nature is so rebellious.

Now brothers and sisters all,
I greet you herewith together.
Let us fight piously in the earthly vale.
God's children must by name
Be ready to their Father's will.
Who confesses Christ in godliness
Shall be clothed
With white silk.

A song
Rejoice, be glad, great and small,
Who here now mourn,
Who here now mourn,
One with the Father in common,
With that chosen grain,
Believe in Him alone,
As now at this hour.

A daughter young of years, hear,
Has confessed her faith,
When she came before the lords forth,
Out of love undisturbed,
Not regarding the word of men,
But fought to the death.

The margrave, praying,
Janneken sweet,

Has thus begun:
Will you fall away with all speed,
I shall be good to you,
Do after my will,
Life
I shall give you.

Your life I do not desire,
Which you will now give me.
Your promises are as a reed,
To bring into distress
All who look upon men;
They shall live in wickedness.

Then said to me
A blind preacher,
Balten is his name,
That God was in the sacrament;
That I have not confessed.
It is God despised
In your body.

But I said to him: Read wisely
The Our Father, as it is called.
He read that He is in the kingdom of heaven;
Who shall be His like,
Who does not fail us,
Though you will crush us.

Are you not a liar
As now at this time?
For you read yet now clearly
That He is by His Father;
There He is alike.
How will you envy Him?

The bailiff asked with words quick,
In the court,
Whether I was not rebaptized;
That he spoke on that occasion.
With words equally quick,
Speak freely in the open.

Ask after my faith freely;
That I shall confess to you.
Or were you ashamed of it now, you,
So will you tell me,
So may I, wherever it be,
Rejoice in the Lord.

One baptism I confess
Rightly,
After the faith,
Which touches not at all of children bad,
But which speaks of amendment;
This now well consider:
How are you thus deaf?

We have done enough thereto
To win you.
Had you let yourself be advised,
And then also fallen away,
So it had gone well,
After our mind.

My flesh you have now loved,
But not my soul;
You had it so gladly devoured,
But the Lord has perceived
That she shall be His child,
Though you will destroy her.

Though you are now very excellent,
Lord bailiff of name,
You shall lament it in the end,
That you were not acknowledged
For a shepherd, sir,
In the judgment fit.

You lords,
Will you convert all,
So you may live.
Will you be of God's number,
Stand off from the narrow judgment
Here in this earthly vale;
God shall you all forgive.

The more they tormented me fiercely,
The more I rejoiced.
Beware
Of the false prophets well,
Who come quickly with cunning;
Guard yourselves from their net,
Set yourselves well to the fight.

Envied
Was I by
Cain's
Seed,
Will you hear this,
Because I follow the Lord's counsel;
They will with evil cunning
Drown me obstinately
In the
Tub, smothered.

I commend to you (O Lord) my spirit,
Which I have received.
Bring him into your eternal forest,
There I become unafraid,
Even before that fierce beast;
Thereafter is my longing.

Antichrist with his gods alike,
And also his subjects,
Who become rich with merchandise,
That is not praiseworthy,
For a little temporal thing
To forsake the Lord.

You must one praise, O divine Lord,
For your benefits,
Which you give very abundantly
To all who
Take a turn
And do all after your teaching;
You shall satisfy them.

Farewell to brothers and sisters in common,
Will you prepare yourselves.

Found yourselves on Christ the
Stone;
There is also no other,
Who with the Father is one,
Who will guide you all.

A song
I must a song
Begin,
That I shall go lift up.
It happened at Ghent within,
That there was treason well.
Ten first went through it piously,
All through the Lord's power;
But two were with child,
Therefore they had to wait.

Four first fought through,
Thereafter yet six, without guilt;
God's word they confessed clearly;
The Scripture was therein fulfilled,
As
You shall yet hear here.
All who sing or read this,
Thus fear the Lord and have patience,
For this must be so.

When they came from the castle,
All six, hear this report,
The lords without shame
Asked them: Will you fall away?
They said: No, freely unconcerned,
To the lords for an answer.
But is it that we have done wrong,
Will you regulate yourselves thereafter?

Straightway they went to set them
On wagons, two monks
Thereby,
Who hindered them with much speaking,
With lies; also they cried.
But had these little sheep free,

Unhindered, been able to speak,
The monks' lies, hear me yet,
Had appeared much better.

The six nonetheless spoke
Of gladness that was in them,
When they rode to the stakes,
On the two wagons very quickly.
They thought there
The smoking flax,
Which Christ made to burn,
To quench all on that occasion;
But the people spoke their great shame.

One word or two with need
They spoke in the open:
Fear
Not those who kill the body;
No power have they hereafter.
Who after
The flesh lives (this stands very clear),
Said they, must die.
O man,
Convert yourself yet altogether,
Or God's kingdom you must miss.

A little house was of wood
And straw, set on the market;
Was this also not very bold?
There
They thrust them in with violence.
They spoke little, untormented;
One lived there with them as dogs.
Great lies have told
Those monks with their mouths.

When they were in the little house,
Made of wood and straw,
One heard their behavior
Of gladness, that is so.
But the monks were very wicked;
They spoke, without reason,

And said that this was of need,
That one thus did them away.

They cannot find it,
Namely, all in God's word,
That one may devour
All who do not hear them.
But after the placard so they go forward;
They are yet not mighty
To root out with burning or murder;
God's word is to them too powerful.

But were it not of the Lord,
So had they done it quickly;
For all strange doctrine
May not remain standing.
Mark Gamaliel's admonition;
Acts five you shall find it:
That which is of
God shall not perish.
Be yet no more as blind.

You lords, let yourselves be advised,
And do once
True
Penance,
Or it shall harm your soul much,
Is it that you do it not,
And shed no more innocent blood;
It would be required of you.
I warn you out of sweet love,
And do yet not persist.

Those who now are called spiritual,
These do God's people most harm.
Their
Venom they shoot out;
On God's word they regard not.
But what king or pope commands,
That is praised of them.
Lord, pour us with your Spirit,
That we fear them not.

O men, take this true,
For it is testified to you very openly,
With goods, blood, in the open;
For God's word they are killed.
The Lord stood by them in the need,
That they remained steadfast.
They ate of the living bread;
Therefore they shall live.

And the other two women,
Who had been heavy with child,
Were beheaded,
But not in the open.
On the count's castle there one did it to them;
All steadfast they remained.
The eternal life hereafter
Shall be given them.

Friends, let us thank God
For all His great goodness,
That He the right
Branches
Always so greatly rejoices.
Friends, do as much as you can
To praise God the Lord;
Have always in His words gladness;
That makes the soul rise again.

Who this way will tread,
Let him make himself ready thereto,
Altogether to the city full of peace;
But the way is not broad,
As Christ Himself says to us,
That few walk thereon,
But many on that which leads to hell;
Each see to what he does.

Stand up all from sleep,
I
Pray you, O men all;
The Lord's day shall approach.
Join yourselves to that
Little

Number,
Who are reckoned in this vale
For fools and madmen;
Know that these shall be blessed,
Though one says
That they rave.

Who composed this little song,
His heart constrained him thereto,
To edify his neighbor,
So that they become not weary.
Friends, take this yet now in good part;
That is to you my prayer.
Pray for me, as I do for you,
For we
Are members together.

A song
O Lord God, eternal exalted Father,
To you I lament all my need.
All who here godly will
Live,
Are persecuted with great contempt.

When one wrote a thousand and five hundred,
And thereto yet sixty years,
Then the common people were greatly astonished
At two Christians, brought into the court.

They were set all before the lords,
As slaughter-sheep at the same time.
The bailiff sought to humble Goris;
He asked him whether he was rebaptized.

I am baptized after Christ's teaching,
As He commanded His apostles fine:
Going, preach to all peoples near and far;
The believer, baptized, shall be blessed.

In the name of the Father mighty,
Of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Must it happen, as Scripture testifies truly;
They must be taught and believe first.

The bailiff was seated high;
He asked
Joachim thereafter very quickly,
And desired of him to know
Whether he also was baptized.

I hold to
One baptism
Fit,
To one Lord, to one God.
The lords went to assemble;
The emperor's mandate was their command.

Joachim spoke freely without faltering:
We thank you, my good lords.
God will forgive you people
Your blindness of the unwise heart.

When they came out of the court,
So they spoke without grief,
(In no wise seeking high names)
We are not
Ashamed of the gospel.

One heard there the voices sound,
As they went along the street.
A little song (mark this)
They sang, as this verse
Hereafter stands:

O Lord, you stand always in my mind,
My soul longs to be with you,
My heart is broken
Through your love.
O when shall I come before
Your face?

And fear them not, spoke Joachim mightily,
All who kill the body quickly;
Hereafter we shall rejoice mightily.
Adieu, my dear brothers, spoke Goris well.

One saw them go hence
As roses in the faith adorned,

The
Narrow way with great longing,
All to that new Jerusalem fair.

When they now came on the place
Where the burnt-offering had to happen,
They gave there the kiss of peace
To one another, all after Paul's bidding.

When they were bound to the stake,
Where they should make their offering fine,
Joachim one heard praying:
O
Father, be merciful to me.

I
Thank you, worthy Father,
That you me
Worthy have made
To suffer for your great name.
Stand by me now, and draw near to us.

Goris spoke with good manners:
Lord, you know how I have sought you;
Therefore I must now die on the spot,
That I for my salvation have wrought.

You burghers, do yet not fear,
Though we die for the truth openly.
Christ
Has gone before us in this,
For He is
Our beloved Captain.

When they stood at the stakes,
Patiently awaiting the
Crown,
They have unlocked their mouths
And sang this fair farewell song.

Farewell to brothers and sisters in common;
We must now part,
Until we come to Christ alone,
Our Captain and none other;

Prepare yourselves thereto;
There I will await you.

These saints, good of fame,
Cried oftentimes in greatest need:
O
Heavenly honorable Father,
Into your hands I commend my spirit.

O you saints
Born of God,
Receive this for a glad tidings:
Here they have lost their life,
But now
They lie
Under the altar.

In the
White garment they shall shine,
Like the sun in the Father's
Throne;
New wine shall God pour them,
And
Heavenly bread for their reward.

No ear could
Ever hear,
Nor has any eye seen,
How Christ shall gladden His chosen
In His wedding feast.

O
Brothers, let us yet not fear,
Though we are killed in the world,
We shall rejoice in the heavenly being,
All with that dear great number of saints.

O Lord, make me worthy,
And will you strengthen me through your power,
That I may suffer for your name steadfastly,
And thus testify your great might.

Farewell, brothers, that I have wrought this;
It is done out of sweet love.

Whether I might edify anyone therewith;
It is composed of two good
Saints.

A song
Hear,
God, heavenly Father,
Our complaint in this time.
O Lord, be our keeper,
O God, blessed Father.
Satan is seized with envy,
To destroy our souls,
And to make your members die;
That he proves with great spite.

O Lord God almighty,
I lament to you my need,
That for the mighty truth
So many die that death,
And suffer here so many a blow;
With beheading, drowning, burning
They come here to shame.
Is it not a great misery?

This one has well been able to behold
At Antwerp in short time,
How many one
Saw oppressed,
Who have died for the truth.
So we say, O fine Lord:
Give your servants courage in this,
When they are so persecuted,
That they behold your face.

Jonker Jan van Jmmercelen
Has
Come within the town,
Become margrave — how should I hide it —
In the year fifteen hundred flat
And fifty-five, understand well that.
He began to dismember

Those who sought to live in peace
And walk the right path.

First also before:
Peter with the crippled foot (Peter met den cruepelen voet),
Jan the dry-shearer (Jan droochscheerder), hear,
Hans the embroidery-worker (Hans borduerwercker), know this,
Frans the sword-scourer (Frans sweertveger) with speed;
These remained bold;
On the market they left their life,
And await the sweet Bridegroom.

Tanneken vander Leyen,
A young daughter of Ghent,
She shall weep no more;
In the Scheldt she ended her life.
Bartholomeus the pot-baker (Bartholomeus potbacker), acknowledged,
Thereafter
Rommeken,
Praised;
God had chosen them out;
They died on the market in presence.

In the year of fifty-six
Two went into peace,
Very wise and also prudent:
Abraham, who did very well,
And
Jan de Cudse
Also;
On the market they left their life,
Meekly, take note of it,
At Antwerp within the town.

In the year fifty-seven:
Marten the say-weaver (Marten saeyweuer), quickly,
Joris the old-cloth buyer (Joris doudecleercoper), not cunning,
Willem the dry-shearer (Willem droochscheerder) at that time,
Peter the baker was also there;
Victoor went not aside;
On the market they had to suffer,
In the
Flesh, frail as glass.

Homeward was
Jeronimus's longing,
With
Lauwereys van Gelder, behold,
Peter the miller was caught also,
Jacob van Iperen, take note of this,
Marten the Walloon (Marten die Wael) they forgot not;
Because they trusted in God,
They were beheaded;
This happened on the Steen.

Margriet, Jeroon's wife,
And
Janneken op Dexterlaer,
Claerken was also faithful;
On the Steen drowned, not openly,
Into the Scheldt cast thereafter;
There one has seen them drift
On the water, with fair white bodies;
That appeared well so clear.

In the year fifty-eight, take note:
Jacob the mason (Jacob die Metser) with the bridle on,
Bold as the strong,
On the market before many men.
Lowijs the weaver (Lowijs die Weuer) got not off from it;
On the Steen beheaded without faltering;
Janneken also remained there,
And
Nohele
In the tub then.

Frans Tibau they would not spare;
On the Steen beheaded without noise.
Little Dirck (Cleynen Dirck) — God shall reward him —
On the Steen beheaded, understand it all.
Henrick the leather-buyer (Henrick leeruercooper), without falling away;
Anthonis would humble him;
Dirck the painter (Dirck die schilder) had to pass with him,
To kneel before the executioner, very mad.

Hans the German (Hans de duytsch)
Would rather choose

On the Steen to shed his blood
Than to lose God's kingdom;
That he proved with valiant courage.
For the evil he shall have the good;
They killed him with violence,
And cast his body into the Scheldt,
As
Foolish men unwise.

Hans the smith (Hans de smit) would not yield,
Nor
Sander also there;
Hans van Borculo, enlightened through it,
And
Peter in de vette waer,
Geert the parchment-worker (Geert perssement wercker), honorable,
Arent, all without grief —
They went to shed their blood
On the market before the whole crowd.

Grietken would not deny;
Tanneken spared not her body,
Nor also
Stijnken van Aken,
With
Lijnken, Henrick's young wife,
Remained by the truth steadfast.
These they went to drown
On the Steen, take note of it,
Bound crooked — is it not a foul deed?

In the year fifty-nine
Last past:
Hear, Fransken the midwife (Fransken de vroeyvrouwe),
Naenken the leather-seller (Naenken leervercoopster), with good manners,
Pluenken vander Goes also obtained rest.
They died in the tub undisturbed.
Gielis van Gent has received the sword;
With
Adriaen, hanged on the stake,
They died on the Steen in good agreement.

Mariken Frans, with good trust,
And
Neelken, a daughter swift,
They would hold God's kingdom;
Betken proved also as well;
Mayken Cadts sought nothing else;
Magdaleenken, born of God,
And
Aechtken van Sirckzee, chosen —
They were not rebellious.

The old
Mayken, full of good manners,
Is
Worthy of double honor.
Grietken Bonauentuers has suffered,
With
Mayken de Corte, by the sword.
The
Crown
They have desired.
How can the margrave acquire it,
To make little women die by the sword
So miserably, that it grieves everyone?

Andries Langedul without delay,
Mattheus the pot-baker (Mattheus potbacker) with him,
And
Lauken vander Leyen,
Were as a lamb tame,
And
Heard after the Lord's voice;
They remained in the truth uncorrupted;
Therefore they died by the sword,
To come into the new Jerusalem.

In the year sixty, take these words:
Anthonis Claessen, understand this,
Joris has trodden
The narrow
Path;
Thielman proved also with the deed;

Hans the baker (Hans de backer) was not desperate.
Therefore they are drowned in the tub;
New
Wine shall be poured them
By our delicate Father.

Gommer the mason (Gommer metser), a pious brother,
Peter of Spain (Peter van Spaengien)
Had to stand by him;
Jacob the goldsmith (Jacob goutsmit), keeper of his soul;
In the tub they had to soon.
Deaf Betken (Doof Betken) would not go off,
And
Betken van Gent without mourning,
Nor
Lijsken the smith's (Lijsken smits) at any hour —
In the tub they had to go their way.

Lastly, understand our poem:
A brother,
Lenaert Plouier,
Janneken would not yield,
Always in being gracious;
Mayken van Aken has suffered here;
They shall receive the
Crown
In the eternal life, very fair;
They are tried
As gold in the fire.

These have all suffered,
All for the truth pure,
At Antwerp all within the town,
And trusted in Christ their grain.
We pray you, brothers in common,
Will you
Search through God's word,
Shun all false devices,
And found yourselves on Christ alone.

Jan the bag-maker (Jan de Tasmaker) sits yet imprisoned,
As we set this down — take it in thanks;
After God's kingdom was his longing.

He was in the flesh so weak,
And he was more than once on the rack;
But to not burden his brothers,
He would not spare himself;
Fiery love constrained him thereto.

O hold it to our good,
That we have here composed.
Hasten yourselves to virtues,
And walk always in the light,
With an open clear face.
It has happened out of pure love.
Farewell, brothers and sisters in common;
See that you edify your neighbor.

A song
When one wrote fifteen hundred
And thereto yet fifty years,
Many a man was astonished,
The last of January for true,
Of pious Christians four,
Bold and unafraid,
Offered up within Lier
In Brabant, whose blood very dear
God shall require of the evil kind.

When they caught these little sheep,
There lacked no violence;
They followed those who went before;
Fat were they, this freely told.
God had them himself everywhere
Chosen and picked out;
Therefore they, as slaughter-sheep do,
Not shunning storm, hail, nor rain,
Were brought to the slaughterhouse.

Being
Led to the council,
They asked after their people's faith,
To confess which each endeavored,
Before those lords blind and deaf.
Strength they received from above,

And through their mouth spoke God's Spirit.
They sought not to escape
Through hypocrisy or other things,
But they spoke freely, unafraid.

To answer to you people
You are set, spoke the bailiff very neatly.
Goyuaert spoke before all who heard it:
Concerning my faith — each mark hereon —
That I have boldly confessed;
No other I shall choose.
I am therewith also content,
Though you should dismember me,
I abide by it without falling away.

Shortly thereafter was read to them
The mandate of the emperor's council.
What say you people of this?
Do you well understand what stands herein?
Spoke the bailiff, high of courage;
Whereupon answered
Goyuaert with very cool blood,
Speaking as the wise,
Meekly and not sharply.

God has given us
Through Christ an eternal command,
Which Mark has described to us
Well in his sixteenth chapter:
That all
Who
Believe
And are baptized thereafter
Shall become blessed, but God shall bereave
Of blessedness, and condemn
All who do not believe — this is clear.

But the emperor, great of might,
After the world's blind opinion,
Has hereagainst with power
Made
Another command happen:
That all who let themselves be baptized,

First confessing the true faith,
Without grace or any hope,
One shall tie to a stake
And burn with fierce tempest.

These two mandates
Stand against one another.
Hear, lords and rulers:
One of the two we will despise.
Let no one be hidden from this:
God's command we will keep.
Though Satan teaches in his schools
That we are heretics and err,
Against God's word we do nothing.

Being brought into the court,
Anneken, pious and well-disposed,
Was asked in the open
By the bailiff quickly with speed:
Do you desire no grace
Before the sentence goes over you?
She spoke with ripe counsel:
I shall desire early and late
Grace of God, my refuge.

Of seventy-five years,
A woman,
Mariken acknowledged,
Was asked: Will you declare
Your sins before the priest gentle, sir?
She answered without being disturbed:
I am sorrowful and it grieves me
That I have let hear
With their mortal ears
My sins, those cruel priests.

When Goyuaert, a pious brother,
Was led to the court,
He has as a bold defender
To a heap of priests said:
Pull off your long clothes,
Put
Sacks on, strew without respite

Ashes
On your head, and will you learn
As those of Nineveh to convert;
Amend yourselves, for it is more than time.

When he in the judge's house
Was set by the officers,
Spoke the bailiff, all with deceit,
To excuse him and the law:
Will you desire no grace?
Whereupon Goyuaert spoke excellently:
Your grace I will ward off from me,
For what I may not do without
God shall give, the highest judge.

Goyuaert, seeing the brothers,
Spoke to them with joyful mind,
His face turned from them,
He comforted them with words sweet,
Saying: I pray the Lord
That you all may thus sit
As I sit at this time,
To increase Christ's honor
Through His Spirit full of comfort and joy.

The bailiff could not bear it,
Those words; therefore he was dismayed.
Silence, spoke he, at this time;
Your preaching counts not here.
Lord bailiff, spoke Goyuaert very quietly,
Five or six words I speak but,
Which God to me, free of strife,
Through His grace and will,
Gives to speak — does that fall so heavy to you?

He heard yet murmur
The simple people, speaking unwisely,
Which he let not pass,
But he spoke (giving God praise):
This one has all seen happen
From the time of the true
Abel,
And wonder not, good people,

For
After all Scripture's
Interpretation,
The true suffer much contempt.

The
Officers who stood by him
Spoke both with words fierce:
You may not here endure
The bailiff wills it not, so be silent quickly.
Straightway has there closed
His mouth the almighty Lord,
Which many a man has grieved,
And said: What remains closed there
In his heart? O might he speak more.

Gielis, a brother of four,
Was not asked one word,
Nor in any manner
Has he also uttered anything.
God showed there well indeed,
As each might mark finely,
That better is to be silent
Than to speak, before those who stand against
God's words, which are friendly.

I must relate without jesting
How the priests yet stood together,
When one led Goyuaert without dragging
Again to the Steen.
One of the principal
Went away to be out of sight;
He feared greatly Goyuaert's speech.
The others cried in general:
Domine, domine, stay with us.

On the day that these friends died,
They were all four gathered;
Joy they obtained with one another,
And sang together unabashed,
With friendly accord:
Blessed is
The man, called and good,

So that one heard it lightly on the market;
Yet they sang as undisturbed
The forty-first Psalm with humility.

The bailiff went to the prison
And spoke: Goyuaert, are you not advised?
Whereupon Goyuaert made a lesson:
Unless
You amend yourselves soon,
God's punishment shall swiftly
Come upon you.
The bailiff straightway looked out of the window
And spoke: Shall God then condemn
This whole heap, not excepting some?
Whereupon Goyuaert gave him answer.

God's word without adding thereto
I have spoken to you, lord bailiff.
But here are, I hope, those who honor God
And fear, people young and old.
The bailiff, very ill content,
And obtaining little praise,
Went quickly to
Anneken stepping,
And spoke with fair-seeming words:
Anneken, what say you of it?

Anneken with gladness
Spoke: Lord bailiff, be this known to you,
That in this town at two times
Great honor has been done me:
First, when I married my husband;
Second, when he was emperor.
But with eyes I never beheld
Joy that did not fade in me
As I do now at this time.

Goyuaert, going to death,
Made a very fair admonition
To all who stood there,
Reproving the mocking contempt,
And spoke: Know that we do not die
For

Theft, murder, or heresies,
But because we seek God's inheritance
Through His will to obtain,
And confess His words unfeigned.

The executioner spoke: Will you refrain from speaking,
Or I shall stop your mouth.
Goyuaert spoke: Let God allow
With me a little while.
Amend yourselves, you; short is your life.
Hearing this, a brother spoke:
God will
Give you strength.
O yes, spoke he, God's power exalted
Through His Spirit becomes not weak in us.

The monk would speak
To Mariken, but Goyuaert looked on
And spoke: Flee with your false tricks,
You seducer; of you we are weary.
Go to your people without delay;
Of you we have no need.
His courage one saw fail there,
Seeing that there was nothing to get
But contempt; therefore he took his leave.

When they came within the ring,
The guild-brothers stood greatly amazed.
Then spoke Goyuaert, as was fitting:
How stand you thus
With staff and stave,
As did also the Jews
When they brought Christ to death?
We stand here as His messengers;
In time we had well fled,
Had we feared this distress.

After this fell together
The four friends on their knees,
When they perceived the stakes
Where the burnt-offering had to happen.
After the prayer, rising, they kissed
One another with joyful face.

Thereafter Anneken with desire
Lifted up a song, as the rested:
In you I trust, O my Lord.

The officers who stood by them
Spoke: Will you be silent here, you?
Whereupon one heard uttered
Goyuaert: No, sister, sing freely.
And he helped her sing without mourning;
The officers were angry therefore,
And the bailiff, for at the same hour
He called an officer with sourness,
Who very hastily to him came.

He
Said to him something in his ears;
Thereafter he went very swiftly
To the executioner's servant, who with disturbance,
As soon as he received the tidings,
Set himself to work at Goyuaert,
To bridle
In short time.
But Goyuaert closed, as the strong,
Standing boldly in the ring,
His teeth, and guarded his mouth.

With a laughing mouth
Spoke Goyuaert before wife and man:
I would at this time
Yet well sing with the bridle on.
But Paul says:
Sing God in the heart.
The executioner showed that he was unwise,
Envious and evil of bearing,
When he set Anneken, which grieved many,
In the smock, a woman sweet.

An officer asked Gielis:
Is here none of your people whom you see?
Which Gielis ill pleased,
And answered: Know you nothing else
To torment me herewith?
What say you? has Goyuaert asked.

He asks after our fellow-companions.
Goyuaert spoke: Though I could count
Twenty, of one nothing would be uttered.

You think, spoke Goyuaert, to smother,
By killing us, that godly word;
But through this seeing and hearing
There shall yet a hundred come forth,
And mark the truth.
Standing at the stake he spoke yet:
Amend yourselves, show penance with works,
And will you strengthen yourselves with God's word;
No time of penance comes hereafter yet.

An officer having with wine
A bottle, spoke without delay:
Do you desire at this time
To
Drink? Goyuaert answered finely:
We have no desire to drink
Of your wine, weak and feeble;
For
New must our Father shall pour us,
Without diminution,
In His kingdom an eternal drink.

When the people thought that the old woman,
Standing at the stake, was strangled,
Her Bridegroom being faithful to her,
She cared for nothing;
But a song she has lifted up,
Giving God praise and thanks,
Which when Anneken perceived,
She sang with, without faltering;
Fiery love constrained her thereto.

Standing bound to the stakes,
Each at his neck with a halter,
Boldly with laughing mouths,
Lifting their eyes kindly up,
They have with nodding
Lovingly comforted and greeted one another,
And through yet more other tokens

One saw them convey to one another
Pious trust and strong courage.

It is also clearly shown
That one sang and spoke too much to them,
When one, for his speaking, stuck
A bridle in Goyuaert's mouth;
Which when the people saw,
Some held
Their mockery therewith,
Others one heard say:
How may one thus torment this people?
Their speaking, singing is yet all of God.

Praise, thanks, honor, glory, and honor
Must happen to God in eternity,
Who all His tender little members
Can provide with strength and joy,
So that one cannot force them,
With entreaty, violence, or torment,
To the
Death they teach and sing,
Which the evil cannot permit,
For God's powers are unknown to him.

A song of four friends, offered at Leiden
Alas, I may well sigh
That now befalls such great misery,
For God's people must flee here
Or suffer great torment,
As one sees at present
Within Leiden and other lands,
Wholly blinded against the confessed word.
So now they go to burn God's people.

Willem, very young of days,
They first brought forth;
He spoke without dismay:
"We suffer not as thieves by force;
We are not so minded.
Though they take our life here —

Murderous generation, who await a strict judgment —
O Lord, be pleased to forgive them this."

Mariken, young of years,
They brought forth second;
She spoke: "Lord, be pleased to declare to us:
This we suffer for Your word,
As Peter found fitting.
Few pursue this way.
I am not worthy — hear —
That I suffer for Your covenant;
But You, Lord, shall make me worthy."

Dieuwercken came with gladness,
Singing a new song,
Awaiting better rest,
As Esdras clearly declares to us.
"Citizens, avenge not this,"
She spoke; "Lord, behold us,
For this befalls us for Your Word and for nothing else;
On You alone stands our trust."

Mariken Jans also
They led to death;
She went to tread the narrow path
That is a man's footstep broad.
Rest is foretold to her.
She spoke: "Hear together, least and most:
There is no way prepared other unto salvation.
O Lord, receive my spirit."

You lords, wise of counsel,
Behold once what you do;
You do your soul great harm,
That you shed innocent blood.
Do upright repentance,
As the people of Nineveh did;
Hasten with speed before the glow comes;
Better yourselves, like Nineveh the city.

Therefore, that we now suffer
Is not for any sect;
We seek not to strive

But with the sword of the Spirit perfect,
Which is pure, undefiled.
We seek to harm no one.
All who cloak the false doctrine, as Peter relates,
They blaspheme the way of the Lord.

Do not all together fear —
Christ speaks — though you suffer pain;
For you shall be blessed
When they oppress you
For My name.
Know that this is foretold:
The dragon shoots his venom under holy guise;
Very soon it shall be avenged by God.

He who first sang this,
God has stood by him;
He was compelled thereto,
To make a small admonition
Concerning the right path;
He has also trodden it.
As these have done, so he followed after,
To live with God in peace.

A song of six women, killed at Antwerp
Babel's Council's mandates
Are thus fulfilled
Through her servants, such rulers;
Rob, capture with might,
With many a Judas betrayed,
Who all seek their gain,
Shamefully great, to their own harm,
That covetous, bloodthirsty household.

When one wrote one thousand five hundred
And fifty-nine years,
Then these robbers plundered,
Captured there
Six believers indeed,
Some of Christ's disciples.
My joy had to vanish
When I saw them in such torment.

On the twentieth day in May
Came the robbers with might
Into the Margrave's Leye,
Which he had brought along with him,
To rob at that time,
As fierce tearing wolves.
The sheep that they found
They led away with them.

Boldly, without dismay,
They came armed with sticks and staves,
To accomplish their plots;
After the spoil they came galloping,
And had in their band
A Judas, the lost child;
Willful wanderers in blindness,
Who were all of one mind.

Through the traitor's cunning snares
They had spied out the houses
Many days before;
At last so it came to pass
That they took the houses
By force against right, truly.
They may well be ashamed;
Their bold violence is open.

Thus they took at that time
Two houses in with speed;
Six women they found there,
In the faith strong as men of courage.
According to the flesh, one may well think,
Unawares they were dismayed,
For women's hearts are no stones
Where it so storms and flames.

The robbers, skillful in their doings,
Ran through the houses everywhere;
Those they sought in their searching
They found not; it was their misfortune.
Therefore it had to spite them
That their plan so failed;

The traitor's best profits
Were sorely hindered there.

The Margrave was impatient
That his plan failed him;
The innocent prisoners
He looked upon very fierce and cruel,
And spoke to them in anger
(For he found not the one sought):
"I wish that you at Hoboken
Together stood on the heath."

They answered sweetly:
"The Lord, full of grace, renowned,
Who so faithfully guards His own
As the apple of His eye,
Has kept him safe from your hands
Until these days.
God's will and good pleasure
Must come to pass over us."

At Hoboken on the heath
He did not send the sheep;
But into the Margrave's Leye
He took with him all whom he found.
The rest he had to leave behind;
He will not acquit himself thereof thereby.
If not today, then tomorrow,
When it suits, and with time.

Time and hour, evening and morning,
The princes' hearts vainly devised,
Men's counsels full of care —
It all stands in God's power.
Without God's patient permitting,
Not one leaf falls from the tree;
According to His will He lets us be oppressed;
The good strayed from the evil.

The robbers brought the spoil within;
With the prisoners they came walking,
Who bore their seed, spiritual of mind,
Sowing it with mournful admonition.

God the Father from above
Shall prepare for them in the great day of the East
Imperishable shoes;
Therefore they are gladdened and comforted.

Thus mournfully, with haste,
They came in short time
Into Antwerp the city,
Where much innocent blood is shed.
Into the prison they went to shut them,
In dark, unclear pits;
There they lay piteously in misery,
In severe torments heavy.

Thus violently they seized
The innocent gentle ones;
The sergeants boasted greatly,
Made merry good cheer.
The spoil they thus divide;
Thus scattered the pilgrims' earthly goods:
The covetous get the jewels,
The bloodthirsty get the blood.

Although the pious lose
This temporal life, nevertheless
Through faith they choose
The eternal for their gain.
God shall never forsake them;
Thereon they are very well cheered.
Babel with her practices
Cannot separate them from God's sweet love.

God's love conquers very mightily
Where faith works through love;
Faith is God's gift truly;
Through love we are strengthened therein.
God's love poured out in our hearts
Through the Spirit of truth sent,
Who comforts His own in sorrows,
Who suffers torment for righteousness.

In suffering, distress, and tormenting,
These were boldly minded.

They went to examine them
Before the perverse judges blind,
With Pilate washing their hands,
Thinking to wash themselves innocent clean,
With the Emperor's placard acquitting themselves,
But remain blood-guilty stained.

To increase God's eternal praise
They spoke from hearts unafraid:
"We believe the word of the Lord:
One Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
These three are one God truly;
From Him come all sweet gifts.
His commandments unanimously
They confessed right and good."

They went to torment two maidens;
Little did the tyrants heed
That we all in pain appear,
Brought forth through women.
Of this natural experience
They have learned no reason;
They make thereof little mention;
Thus they are tyrannically perverse.

God, who wonderfully and mightily
In His weak members reveals Himself,
Through His love mightily strengthening,
Has well kept their mouth,
So that they in suffering's sorrows
Were comforted, boldly fine;
With God they leapt over the walls,
Fearing no torment.

In May they were captured,
Taken in hand by the robbers;
In suffering was their longing
To be delivered from the flesh,
To fight without fainting,
Their fight to a blessed end,
To keep the faith,
To win the excellent crown.

On the eighteenth of July clear,
First three maidens, modest of manner,
They brought into the court,
Where violence against right is practiced.
On the eleventh of October following
Came to the court three women indeed:
An old woman, twofold in honor,
An honorable widow, with a daughter of Ghent.

They were sentenced at two times,
From living body to death,
Horribly seized by the wolves.
Is it not a great tyranny!
Four they drowned
In the water, as one smothers beasts;
Two beheaded; these six dear bodies
Were thus murdered by night.

Christ has suffered for all,
To His own for a worthy example;
So these have followed after Him,
Their lives not spared unto death.
In Christ steadfast they remained;
Their names are not set here,
But stand written in life's book,
With all who live after the Lord's law.

Babel's tyranny you may trace,
Because her kingdom is disturbed.
They have with burning, smothering
Killed many for the Lord's word;
Persecuted those who fear God in peace,
Driven from the land, for life and goods;
Robbed, made widows and orphans.
O, vengeance cries the innocent blood.

A song of Jorian and Clement
Hear, friends all, here in this earthly vale,
Make now a joyful sound,
And be pleased to take joy.
The way very narrow tread with the beloved number
Whom men here count mad,

Yes, for fools and deaf ones,
Whom men strangled and also burned,
As one might see at Haarlem on the sand,
When two died there.
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue;
The crown is earned for them.

From the gate they came undisturbed
And went joyfully forth,
Yes, danced and leapt.
It was never heard what happened there:
Their brothers with one accord
Pressed to them all
And kissed them on the mouth;
Through burning of love, grounded in the heart,
It came forth.
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue,
As was perceived there.

In the bailiff's house they brought them, causing an uproar;
That was to them a great cross.
A priest they had fetched there;
With noise he came and made uproar:
"You have an evil error
In which you greatly err."
He said: "In the worthy sacrament,
Which is Christ's flesh present."
They said: "It is a lie."
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue;
They remained undeceived.

It happened there that the clear word of God
Boldly, openly,
Went to be declared on the bailiff's street
Before the world's crowd, without fear or dread,
For their betterment,

At night, when they went to burden them.
Who hears and keeps it shall be blessed,
Delivered from the eternal hellish pain.
The world shall weep,
But these in joy.
Thus is my heart gladdened,
And it is awakened to virtue,
For God shall grant it to them.

When now the day came — mark this assault —
The little sheep, with forbearance,
Stepped out of the bailiff's house.
Much people, O woe, who looked there very sorrowfully
And made great lamentation;
But they besought them
And spoke all with sweet little words:
"O, be pleased to show true repentance;
Cease from sins."
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue,
As was found there.

They were set before the world's violence;
The king's servants for money
Read to them there.
The placard told; its content reported thus:
They must be tormented
And thereafter sentenced.
The New Testament had to stand back;
The Emperor's placard had to go forward;
They had to die.
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue,
For they are now God's heirs.

Then fell straight these two fat little sheep
Into a fervent prayer
To God with great longing.
The bailiff, stained, would gladly have hindered them;
Sorrowful seemed the law;

They let their heads hang.
Thereafter they spoke to the lords
With laughing mouth, with joyful mind,
Without anger.
It was great joy
That gladdened the heart very much
And also awakened to virtue,
That one saw this happen.

There stood ready two stakes — hear the account —
Also peat and wood in plenty;
Thereto they led them.
For no evil deed, but through obedience,
They died for the truth,
Yes, to spread God's praise.
God gave them assistance in all need;
They remained faithful unto death.
Let us rejoice
With great joy,
Be gladdened of heart,
And always strive after virtue,
Now and at all times.

Pious unto the end remained Jorian and Clement;
Christ they confessed
Before princes and lords.
They shall indeed the excellent crown
Receive in heaven's tent,
To reign with Christ,
With white garments clothed,
As Esdras saw them stand on Zion's mount,
With joyful songs.
Of great joy
They shall be gladdened,
Rewarded all for their virtue;
Be pleased also to long for this.

When their strangling and burning was done,
They thought to proceed
To burn their books.
God ordained it soon
Otherwise than was planned:

The people gently approached with zeal
And grasped thereafter with hands.
The lords all fled;
Then they threw the books among the crowd;
The people grasped with longing.
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue;
They were joyfully received.

A maiden indeed had confessed her faith
Before the lords blind,
Who was with child;
When her bearing was ended with torment,
Then she thought decidedly
To walk her brothers' ways.
But the bearing cost her life;
The Lord delivered her from the flesh.
Her courage she did not quench.
Never greater joy
That more gladdens my heart
And also awakens to virtue,
That God took her into rest.

Princes unwise, I pray you with humility
That you let God's good children
Dwell in your lands.
Be not furious; shed no innocent blood;
Consider well what you do;
God's people you go to burn.
O, it is so evilly done by you
That you touch God on the apple of His eye
With your doings.
When they of joy
Shall then be gladdened,
Rewarded all for their virtue,
You shall remain outside.

A song of Calleken Strincx
When one wrote one thousand five hundred sixty-one years,
On the fourteenth of August it happened openly
At Ypres within the city,

That I found God's promises true.
With Paul no peace
Did I find also.

When I made accord — friends, mark this well —
With drunkards, idolaters, and thieves' brood,
The world praised me.
That I must leave this, I wisely bethought myself,
Or partaker I should be
Of their plagues herein.

Fornicators, fleshly minded,
Have no part, as Paul unfolds,
In God's chosen kingdom.
They must leave this earthly life,
Turn as a child,
And first be wholly renewed.

Two commandments are given us together;
The first we find written in Mark:
How Christ calls at once:
"The believing baptized shall go into life,
Where repentance of sins
Is found therein."

The old Adam must here be laid off,
For God's congregation, of which Paul says,
Must be pure and clean.
Who does not forsake all, and separate himself
From Babel,
Are none worthy
Of Christ's congregation.

The Emperor's commandments are in his lands all:
Whoever fulfills such a command shall be burned.
Mark, dear little friends:
If you follow Christ, you come into bonds all,
But the crown of life
Stands fair before you.

It is needful that the days here be shortened;
The innocent blood cries vengeance that is shed,
From Abel's times until now.
If the righteous is scarcely preserved,

What shall the godless suffer,
Accursed ones?

Just as straw, writes the prophet soon,
Is in a glowing oven quickly consumed,
Much more quickly in dishonor
Shall the godless perish before God's countenance,
In the day of the Lord,
With heavy terror.

When that terrible judgment of the Lord shall happen,
Into rocky clefts and caves you persecutors shall flee
And cry: "Mountains, cover us!"
When you shall behold the Lord's countenance,
There shall be no places
For escape.

How should one fear the world's stern rulers?
They seized the limbs of a weak maiden;
They treated her so
That she was carried for dead from the bench.
How shall they excuse themselves
In the day of the Lord?

Before Annas and Caiaphas God kept her mouth;
Her fellow neighbor she did not burden.
They saw her gnash her teeth;
Then they took the Emperor's placard unsparingly
And delivered her in bonds
Into Pilate's hands.

Treasure, goods, and money they presented her at that time,
Had she been willing to forsake her divine Bridegroom
Or to join them.
She spoke:
"Who denies Him, He shall finely deny
Before the Father exalted,
So it stands written."

On the eighteenth of October, at daybreak,
To be the Emperor's friend, the judgment went forth.
She spoke before the court's countenance:
"You have condemned me to the fire, fulfilled the King's command;

So fear the dread of God's judgment,
Which He shall hold."

Farewell, friends; this is for a testament:
How Calleken Strincx has here ended the course,
Kept the faith mightily,
And fear neither sword nor fire; follow Christ excellent;
His promises are true.
Be mindful of this.

A song of question and answer
An eternal joy that does not pass away
Comes always before me;
That is the Lord my refuge,
Who lets me hear His voice.
Then I get such joy;
My heart is gladdened
When He comes to behold me.
The Lord through His Spirit
Wards off from me all tempest;
On Him alone stands my trust.

Never was greater joy in me
Than now in these times.
My sorrowing passes from me as quickly;
God's word makes me glad.
When I think of the eternal good,
Then I have such courage
That I cannot tell it.
Of joy and delight
I find no strife,
Though they torment me.

Rightly has the Lord said:
"I shall leave you no orphans.
I make ready for them the place
Who do not deny Me here;
But who confess Me here,
Them shall I at all times
Confess all together
Before My heavenly Father.

And fear not, you little flock;
I alone am your deliverer."

How could I be burdened
When I find such comfort
That He keeps me as His apple of the eye,
Saying: "My beloved,
Can a mother her own child
Forsake? Mark this well.
Even were she to do it,
So shall I nevermore
Forsake you; do after My teaching,
But bring you into heaven's place."

Such comfort I have received;
No fear comes upon me.
The Lord God has done that
With His sweet admonition.
Now I fear neither sword nor glow;
For that I thank the sweet Lord,
That He so comes to strengthen me.
Who trusts in the Lord —
It is a wonder what he beholds
When God comes to work in him.

But God's work is not seen
With fleshly eyes;
It must all happen in the spirit,
Otherwise it cannot avail.
Who therefore does any diligence,
It is all lost time.
They must first be born again
Of water, spirit, and fire,
After Christ's manner,
Risen in a new life.

No men may meddle with this;
They must first repent,
And put off their self-conceit,
And follow the Lord's word.
As Christ speaks truly:
"If anyone will follow Me,
He must first deny himself,

And bear his cross freely;
Follow Me out of love;
The truth he shall taste."

Praise, honor, and glory be to God renowned,
Who has declared to me His fair truth
Out of great love,
From His high throne.
He is a bountiful host;
He gives each what he desires,
Who pray in spirit and truth;
To them He gives such a mouth
Which no man ever withstood,
Through His mercies.

Thus I pray all pious people
Who practice virtue,
And do not look upon the great heap
With all their evil manners;
For in Esdras one finds written
That far more shall perish
Than shall be saved,
As the great flood
Is greater than a sweet drop.
This is God's word, highly praised.

When I was led before princes
With a joyful mind,
The Lord through His mercy
Hastened to help me.
Then I uncovered my head
And asked with perfect words:
"My lords, what is your desire,
That you have thus captured me?
I have done you no wrong;
Prove it to me, I shall defend it."

"Are you baptized?" asked a counselor,
Whereupon I answered:
"I am baptized after Christ's teaching,
As behooved me."
Then they asked after the sacrament,
Whether God was not present.

I said:
"He is risen;
He sits at the right hand
Of His Father triumphant,
Where I hope to be."

Then they asked me all about the church;
They looked at me very sternly.
I said:
"It is not the Lord's work,
All that they maintain,
But against the pure truth."
That I proved to them all,
Who sat there round about me.
I asked: "God's children fine,
Must they not be spiritual?"
They said, "Yes," with their mouth.

"How comes it then that you are called spiritual,
And the other worldly crowds?"
Then I proved to them with broad words
That they were all sects;
For Christ speaks Himself, see:
"For the world I do not pray,
But for them whom You have given Me;
For they also are not
Of the world, as I am not.
Therefore they are driven out."

Then I asked: "My lords, what say you now?
Can you prove otherwise to me?
Then I will follow you from this hour
To my best ability."
Then they said with speed:
"When the Lord broke that sweet bread
And said: 'Take, eat, this is My body,'
That was given for you soon —
How will you understand this?
Was God Himself not fittingly there?"

Then I asked also with swift words:
"That bread of which we speak fine,
Whether that was Christ's body

That should be broken for us,
Which there hung on the cross
And received so much suffering —
Prove that to me, I shall believe it;
And say that nevermore,
Or you do Christ dishonor,
And you make the people err."

His supper — mark this —
He has not held
With thieves, murderers, or such people,
Or drunkards, or corrupters of women,
Or covetous, unchaste, full of hate,
Full of cruelty, obstinate.
Of such it stands written
That they all alike
Shall miss God's kingdom,
Unless they better their lives.

Though Judas was also among the number,
His work was hidden;
But Christ knew well beforehand
That he would betray Him.
Thus no one may say,
Be it wife or man,
That anyone was therein
Who had done otherwise
Than after Christ's admonition;
They were spiritual of mind.

Then they asked me whether Christ the Lamb
Was not flesh of Adam.
I said that He came from above,
From His heavenly Father.
As Christ speaks with plain words:
"I am the living heavenly bread,
Who am come down from above.
That bread — hear this sound —
That I shall give you
Is My flesh for the life of the world."

Further I said: "My lords, be well aware of this,
What Paul makes known:

That the earthly Adam, nor flesh and blood,
Shall inherit God's kingdom.
Were Christ of Adam's nature,
He would not be pure and clean;
He would also have become earth,
As God Himself says plainly:
'You are earth, and shall hereafter
Be turned into earth.'"

Then they asked me at the same time:
"Is God not so mighty
That He makes that flesh, so brittle as glass,
Like unto Himself, so mightily?"
I said: "My lords, hear;
He cannot act against His word.
Understand this, all together:
God speaks: My known word
Shall eternally stand fast;
Otherwise He would be a liar."

Then I said: "My lords, I poor guest,
What do you know to say of me?
Have I done anyone wrong?
What will you lay upon me?
If there is anyone who complains of me,
I pray you make it known;
I will satisfy them.
Say then, my lords, freely,
Why do you then come
To persecute me without misdeed?"

"We do not capture you for your misdeed,
But for those poor souls
Whom you pervert with your evil counsel;
You would destroy them all
Were they to let you fare;
But it is better now.
Were your teaching
Of God, good and upright,
As you boast and say,
You would teach openly enough."

The Lord speaks with pious words,
As there stands written;
He says:
"You shall not give that holy thing
Before the dogs,
Nor the pearls — take this meaning —
Cast before the swine,
Lest they at any hour
Turn freely against you
And tear you.
Therefore it may not be."

Then I said to the lords blind,
With loving speech:
"A man is known by his work,
And the tree by its fruit.
A good tree brings good fruit,
Which the evil does not.
What fruits can you discern in us
But love, peace, and joy,
And patience in suffering also,
Unto death without fainting?"

Then said to me a priest expressly:
"I do not believe, mark it,
So firmly that there is a God;
I believe, above all:
If you in this faith
Remain always equally deaf,
I tell you without sparing:
You are accursed,
And shall the eternal time
In hell have to suffer."

Then I said to him with cool blood:
"How dare you utter this?
Judgment belongs to the Lord;
He shall well avenge the evil.
But it is your manner
To make such an uproar;
I tell you without much talking
That your whole brood

And the idolatry practiced here
Shall yet wholly fall."

He said: "The images do no harm
That stand at every corner;
They cause no one suffering or grief;
They are the books of the simple."
He said: "Hear if you will:
Whether the letter or the image —
Is it not alike for learning?
Are they not both dead?
Therefore I tell you plainly
That with images one may well honor God."

Then I said with fearless words
That to us the holy Scripture
Is given by the Holy Ghost
For upright labor;
But images and idols
God has so strictly forbidden.
Who make images or idols
Are accursed,
As God Himself declares;
The hellish pain he shall taste.

Then they asked me about my church quickly,
And where I held it.
I said that it was a church
Strong of faith and mild,
Baptized all together
In one spirit and one body;
That is the bride, the queen,
The woman who bears the man-child,
Before the dragon bold, unafraid.
To such a church I belong.

To the Ephesians one finds plainly,
All of this pure church:
That Christ is the head of her,
Flesh and bone of His bone.
This church lives no more of itself;
But her life is the Lord.
Her flesh is dead;

From above she has descended,
As John relates to us;
This church remains uncorrupted.

Your church, when one well observes it —
It might well grieve everyone —
Is set against the truth;
But God shall root it out.
For there one sees nothing else
Than idolatry.
It is loathsome before the Lord's eyes;
Yet everyone says commonly:
"It is God's bride and no other."
O God, how can You suffer it!

Thus I pray you, let each take heed,
And take counsel with God;
Beware of the innocent blood,
Or you miss God's grace,
Which He richly bestows
On those who always remember Him.
But whoever assails or approaches His chosen,
Touches His apple of the eye —
And upon him falls God's wrath.

I pray you, brothers and sisters all,
Be pleased to rejoice with me;
Found yourselves upon the rejected stone,
And fear neither torment nor suffering;
Rejoice through gladness,
And make your lamps ready;
Let not love faint;
Hasten, go with speed
To meet your Bridegroom;
He will hold the supper with you.

A song of some prisoners at Ypres
Moved am I within
To make known
How we with heart and mind
Outside Ypres, indeed,
Sought to live in peace;

Toward the heavenly city
Our way was very excellent.

Money, goods, friends, and kin
We left openly,
That we all our days
Might follow Christ,
And also our own life
We have surrendered,
To live alike after His word.

With the work of our hands
We earned there our bread;
They come not to shame,
But through His great grace
God will feed His own;
Thus we praise and laud Him
Who redeemed us through His red blood.

This the lords have heard,
Thirsting after our blood;
They came very hastily,
And seemed almost mad.
As they did to Christ,
They still persecute His members,
Who forsake evil and do good.

With sticks, swords, and cords
They came well provided,
Where we, as the unsuspecting,
Were easy to spy upon,
Working — hear my declaration —
With the little women who were with us;
That might very lately have happened.

They came as if mad,
All with a great uproar.
Sijnken, heavy with child,
Ran hastily out of the house;
She was heavy and fearful;
They captured her also;
There was a great confusion to hear.

Kaerl ran outside the doors;
Master Claes, very shameless,
Whom they saw pursuing him
With a bare sword — which is not seemly;
Therewith he has hewn.
O friends, behold
Which are called Christians.

Being wounded by him,
He yet escaped them.
Mayken, our praised woman,
Has also yet visited her child.
The Inquisitor, as a rough man,
Seized her with might,
With a bare sword, of bloody intent.
His nature he there bared,
Bloodthirsty and blind.
Mayken, who feared,
Being anxious for her child —
"Wait, my child," they heard her speak.
He has (as has appeared)
Wounded himself, as a madman.

Those who came to assail me
I addressed with good discretion.
The thief-catchers who captured me
Brought me, led, into the house.
I said: "Friends all,
This is for the pure truth;
With God's word I spread it to them there."

Thuenis, born at Waesten,
Whom everyone showed love,
Came to see us (his chosen friends),
How it stood with us.
To depart he said adieu,
But out of love he yet stayed;
That was a find for Master Claes.

It was the Lord's will;
It torments Thuenis not at all.
Henrick, without turning back,
Escaped it swiftly.

It might well vex those people,
But they would yet shed more
Innocent blood, like fierce wolves.

Calleken, gracious,
They also brought captive,
Always fervent in love,
Not to depart from Christ.
We comforted, as behooved,
One another with God's words;
That was, to hear, all our admonition.

Help and comfort at that time
Were very needful to us.
They bound us there
At the Inquisitor's command.
On the streets they brought us;
With very joyful thoughts
We spoke to the neighbors.

"Can anyone pity us?"
We asked there,
"That they persecute us?"
No one complained there.
"It is then for Christ's name;
We need not be ashamed,"
Spoke Mayken, freely, undismayed.

Toward the city they led us;
Calleken, very undismayed,
Prepared herself hastily
To sing, it is declared to you.
Master Claes, as one dismayed:
"The apostles," he said,
"Did not sing, as you pretend."
"I will not dance either,"
Said he. "Why do you sing,
And fear not these fellows?"
Said Tonis: "But, sister, sing freely."
Calleken sang there,
And I found myself also compelled
To sing with joyful heart.

Within Ypres's walls
They brought us also thereafter;
They saw us in no way sorrowing;
That appeared well in the open.
We sang and spoke,
To make God's word known
To the people, freely, without fear.

The people came with great crowds;
Each listened to us;
They saw them run after us.
The rackers led us forth;
I spoke at that season:
"It is not for doing evil,
But for confessing God's word."

"Narrow and strait is the gate,"
Said Calleken — mark me well —
"Conform yourselves duly;
Do good and leave evil;
Go buy Testaments now,
And fear not these rulers,
But do what God's word counsels you."

All that I relate to you,
So it has happened.
To the court, from the hall,
They led us, but undismayed;
As divine slaughter-sheep,
We feared neither torment nor pain,
But thought on what endures eternally.

I cannot tell it all,
Our speaking on our way;
So take my simple setting
From me, in favor, with thanks.
Into the little cage that we entered,
There we worshiped the Lord
With speaking and with psalm-singing.

It has not wearied me
That I have here composed this,
Shut in a square cell,

Not having so much light
For reading or for writing;
In the heart it had to remain,
Until the Lord brought me into sight.

Brothers and sisters, be pleased to think
On us who are in bonds;
Be pleased to grant us for help
Your prayers at this time,
That we in very good manner
May give our body for an offering,
Pure, to God the Lord.

Herewith we greet you
With the Lord's common peace,
Which can sweeten distress.
Pray, great and small,
That we may, fittingly,
Receive the crown of life,
Together in heaven's plain.

A song of Jacques, how he was betrayed

O, see what sorrowful things
I shall here tell you,
That have happened to me singularly;
Be pleased to hear my tale.
There came a counselor,
Whom I well knew
For a good friend of honor,
But he became my tyrant.

He sought me very cleverly,
Saying he had a letter;
He would come to visit me;
He knew me and loved me.
When he had perceived me
With such a sweet voice,
He bade me welcome
And invited me as guest to his house.

And when he heard from me
That I might not stay,

He gave me such loving words
As he had devised.
He sent a messenger very quietly
To Leeuwarden, into the council,
All for commission's sake,
And a bailiff, envious and evil.

When they were ready,
He spoke with false heart
That I should also bring of my ware and work —
He friendly desired it.
When I had come there,
Very lovingly he greeted me;
His heart I did not perceive,
For he spoke to me so sweetly.

Meanwhile he had fetched
The bailiff, who came on.
Spitefully he spoke there before all:
"Seize him; see, here is the man."
There he had me seized,
And said: "Hold fast."
They sought with haste
And felt me round about.

Then I said: "O my lord,
What have you now done?
You do yourself great dishonor,
That you have thus betrayed me.
I have trusted you with my life
And all my goods;
How are you thus found untrue,
That you thus seek my blood?"

He spoke: "I had to find you;
My oath I have sworn.
Now be content; let yourself be bound;
To the house you must go with me."
Then he went to read to me there
His cruel, tyrannical commission,
And after the contents thereof
He asked for four more men.

"I will not accuse them;
But have you anywhere
Heard anyone complain of me?"
He spoke: "That I have not heard."
"You are not captured
For any grievous misdeed,
But you have joined heretics."
"My lords, it is not true."

"Are you also not a rebaptizer?"
"No, I, my lords — hear me.
One baptism alone, pure,
Have I received, freely, after the Lord's word."

And concerning the Roman Church
They asked me;
"That is not God's work,"
I answered thereupon.

There he gave many sighs,
All with a sorrowful countenance,
When he well bethought himself:
"O Jacques, must you fall into my hand!
I had founded my trust
So well, alas, on you;
It shall repent you many a time;
I have so long kept company with you."

But gladly I forgive you this,
All from my heart's ground;
May the Lord be gracious to you,
I desire at all times.

"Jacques, I thank you well.
Have I done wrong therein?
Methinks before God I do not waver,
For after my oath I had to go on."

"Do you think this dealing pious,
Before God and the company of men?
The time shall yet come
When you shall perceive it."

He sent me into the heated room.
"Wait," he spoke, "they shall further
At Leeuwarden examine you concerning our faith
And your doctrine."

As I sat there captive,
My housewife came in;
Then I became so fearful
When I saw her sorrow and grief.
The bailiff with harshness
Stood against and thrust her from me;
Many were there who wept with them
And prayed: "O, let her come near."

It might not long endure;
She was with child.
When I saw her thus sorrowing,
I spoke: "O, go home, my beloved."

"Comfort yourself now in the Lord;
For God's word I am captured;
It shall not be to your dishonor,
For I have wronged no one."

She answered me: "The Lord
Strengthen you in the truth;
Fight piously to His honor;
The crown is prepared for you."

"O, might I die with you,
That were to me a great joy,
And inherit life with you;
My heart would be gladdened."

"O sister chosen,
Have yet no sorrow;
Though I must now step somewhat before,
The Lord's will be done."

The bailiff could not suffer it;
"Go hence quickly," he admonished.
I said: "O, let God grant
Us yet a little while."

There we were parted
From one another with great sorrow;
May the Lord prepare for us
Gladness in eternity.

Jacques sang this
Where he lay sorely captive;
Mightily he has pressed through,
And rests now under the altar.

A song of Jan Schut, imprisoned at Vreen

O Lord God, I may well complain
With sighs so manifold
That now in these days
Has happened such great violence:
Because I cleave to Your word,
I suffer such great need,
And lie here captive;
They threaten me all with death.

They have bound me,
Led before the authorities.
To proclaim Your name
Through Your grace I was ready.
Then they caused me to be asked
What our faith was;
Thereupon was my declaration:
"It is after Christ's teaching."

"Upon this faith I am baptized,"
I confessed before them,
"As Christ Himself unfolds,
Our faithful Savior.
In Mark it stands written,
In his sixteenth chapter:
The believer shall receive it,
As Christ's word teaches us in common."

"Concerning the baptism of little children,
They asked me further;
I spoke with good intent:
'That I find not in God's word.

Run freely through the Scripture;
Christ has not taught
To baptize the unbelieving,
For they are not first converted from sins.'"

"Thereupon they asked
Whether I would not forsake such;
Thereupon I declared
That it does not behoove me to do that:
To set God's word aside
And die the eternal death.
I will much rather suffer,
Though the pain were yet twice as great."

"Our Lord's supper
I confessed before them present,
As Christ Himself came to teach
In the New Testament:
That we thereby shall remember
His suffering and bitter death,
Which He was willing to grant us
When He shed His blood on the cross."

"Then they had me declare,
With many good words,
Whether Christ were not
Of Mary's flesh and blood.
'Such I have not read,'
I confessed before them.
'How should He be of the earth,
Whom God the Father has sent?'"

"Of the Holy Ghost He is conceived,
Born of the pure maid,
With no sin laden,
As it has pleased God the Father;
Born of David's stem,
As was promised to Him.
Thus in Christ the Lamb
God's promises are fulfilled."

"The Word — mark the matter —
Soon became flesh,

Of the Spirit, after the angel's speech;
God's power overshadowed her.
Therefore the Holy One born of her
Is God's Son renowned;
Therefore we who were lost
Are delivered, as Peter declares."

"'Thereafter they had me asked
What Paul taught:
Whether I did not hold their authorities
As ordained of God.
'Yes — to protect the righteous,'
I confessed before them,
'And to punish those who swarm in evil,
To keep peace in their land.'"

"'What hold you of marriage?'
They asked me;
'As Christ Himself said,
In Matthew nineteen, openly:
A man and a woman both
Shall enter into marriage,
And also not part again,
Unless they have committed adultery.'"

"Of uproar and mutinies
They sought much from me;
Thereupon was my confession:
'We have not devised that.
To love our enemies
Christ teaches in His word;
By the truth it shall not be found
That otherwise is heard of us.'"

"Then they asked again
Who our captain was;
Thereupon was my speech:
'That is Christ with His teaching,
Who has called us in peace,
As a faithful Savior good;
Thereby I hope to abide also,
And seal it with my blood.'"

He who composed this little song —
Jan Schut was his name (known) —
To edify his neighbor,
Has sent it from prison:
That one shall trust in God's word
In every time of need,
Build on no men.
He gives his life up to death.

finis.

A song of Jan Schut, imprisoned at Vreen

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Conclusion

Good-willing reader, here you have many beautiful examples, of men and women, who sought Christ Jesus and the eternal imperishable life with faithful and pure hearts, and feared God from the innermost of their souls, whose hearts bloomed in the Lord's word and love, whose mouths flowed with power, spirit, and wisdom, whose thinking and speaking, whose doing and leaving, whose living and dying was Christ Jesus, whose kingdom and rest they sought not on this earth, for their mind was heavenly and spiritual, as well appears in their writings left behind.

Dear reader, mark yet the difference, namely, which is the way of the Lord and which the way of the devil, and which is the upright service of God and which the service of the devil and of idols, and which are the children of the Lord and which the children of the devil, and which persecute and which are persecuted, that you may understand what manner of people it is, of what Father they are born, and what spirit has driven them, who have so unmercifully thrust out, plundered, belied, captured, tormented, racked, drowned, suffocated, and murdered the lovely, peaceable, innocent, obedient children of God.

Some they have strangled at the stakes, and hanged on gallows; some they have executed with the sword, and given to the birds of heaven for food; some they have cast to the fishes.

And this tyranny (as it seems, according to Scripture's report) shall not cease, until the thrust-out, strangled, and crucified Christ Jesus shall come with all His saints, as an almighty potentate, conqueror, and glorious King, on the last day in the clouds of heaven, with the angels of His power, with flames of fire, to do vengeance upon all those who have not known God, and who have not been obedient to the gospel, and to be declared in His saints, and to appear wonderfully in all believers, in the resurrection and revelation of the heavenly brightness, with which they shall be clothed through the power of Christ, that they may with Him take in and possess the eternal imperishable glory in the perfect being, in eternity. Amen.

A register of the foregoing little songbook

Of the bitter suffering of Christ, humble: Of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fol. 1.
Rejoice, God's children, all the time: Of Frans van Boelsweert. Fol. 3.
Sorrow I will now set aside: Of two young women of Beckum. Fol. 5.
When one wrote fifteen hundred: Of five friends, offered at Ghent. Fol. 8.
I shall sing a song with joy: Of three friends, killed at Antwerp. Fol. 11.
I may well sing sorrowfully: Of five friends, killed at Leiden. Fol. 13.
You Christians all together: Of David and Leuina, offered at Ghent. Fol. 15.
When one wrote fifteen hundred years: Of Gielis and Lijsbeth. Fol. 17.
O God, I must complain to You: Of Joos Verbeeck, burnt alive at Antwerp. Fol. 18.
A new song, take this meaning: Of Willem the tailor. Fol. 21.
In bitterness of soul: Of a friend at Vuren, grievously beheaded. Fol. 23.
Hear, friends, I present you a song: Of Jan Jansz Brant. Fol. 24.
Rejoice, be glad, great and small: Of a young maiden, named Janneken. Fol. 25.
I must begin a song: Of twelve friends, killed at Ghent. Fol. 26.
O Lord God, eternal Father exalted: Of Goris and Joachim. Fol. 28.
Hearken, God, heavenly Father: Of seventy-two friends. Fol. 30.
When one wrote a thousand five hundred: Of four friends, burnt at Lier. Fol. 32.
Alas, I may well sigh: Of four friends, offered at Leiden. Fol. 37.
Babel's Council's mandates: Of six women, killed at Antwerp. Fol. 38.
Hear, friends all, here in this earthly vale: Of Jorian and Clement. Fol. 40.
When one wrote one thousand five hundred sixty-one years: Of Calleken Strincx. Fol. 42.
An eternal joy that does not pass away: Of question and answer. Fol. 44.
Moved am I within: Of some prisoners at Ypres. Fol. 48.
O, see what sorrowful things: Of Jacques, how he was betrayed. Fol. 50.
O Lord God, I may well complain: Of Jan Schut, being imprisoned at Vreen. Fol. 52.

Printed in the year of our Lord 1570.

Letters and songs from other editions of the Offering of the Lord

A little letter of the children to their mother, thanking her for her instruction
Our humble, favorable greeting be written to you, dear mother; we humbly submit ourselves to you, and greatly thank you for your good instruction which you have sent us, and we hope to conform and accommodate ourselves to it, also to live peacefully with one another, according to your command, and we are daily praying for you, that God grant in you the very best that might make your soul blessed. Herewith we commend you to the Lord, who grant you His eternal rest, there above in His kingdom, where we hope to come to you; God be with you until another time.

To the singer. Printed from songbook no. 1, 1563, fol. 2.
Since, Christian singer, the holy Scripture, as well in the old as in the new Testament, exhorts us not only to reading, but also to singing, it has seemed good to me to gather together those little songs which are left to us in writing, of offered children of God, especially those which treat of betrayal, capture, examination, torment, torture, and killing. And since they are now, of all the aforesaid, through the power of God, delivered and come into rest, let us rejoice and be glad thereover, singing little songs, as the children of Israel did when they were delivered out of Pharaoh's hand; they praised the Lord, magnifying His name, and said:

I will sing to the Lord, for He has done gloriously; horse and wagon He has overthrown in the sea; the Lord is my strength and song of praise, and is become my salvation, etc. And Syrach also says: Praise together that little song, and bless the Lord in His works; give greatness-making to His name, and confess Him in the voice of your lips. Paul writes further: Speak with one another of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing and play to the Lord in your hearts. James also says: He who is in distress, let him pray; he who is of good cheer, let him sing psalms. Thus we have now, out of various copies, as well printed as written, gathered such little songs as aforesaid, to be added to that Offering-book, for the little songs are in part made of those whose confession stands in the Offering-book (of which we hope to give distinction and to set it in the margin where the song shall begin), and since they treat of one and the same matter, they well fit together, so that everyone who is desirous of singing or reading may carry both kinds with him in one small book, to read or to sing as he is disposed. But when you sing, take good care that it be done to the praise of the Lord.

A letter of Hendrick Verstralen, written in the prison at Rijpe
The abundant great grace of God, which comes to us from the Father, through Christ His only Son, and the unmeasured riches of the holy Ghost, through which we are now kept unto the eternal life under this evil and perverse generation — this only eternal God of all grace, may He keep you, my most beloved wife, and sister in the Lord, my flesh, my bone,

the dearest of all creatures on earth; for this I have more than once confessed before the lords, even if the whole world were mine, I would give it therefore, that I might keep my wife and little children with a good conscience, but for the Lord's sake I must now leave all, against nature; the spirit must overcome the flesh. O my Janneken, my sheep, how hard this parting falls to me, from you and the children; O how deep you lie engraved in my heart, which is now a great conflict to me; the Lord help me yet to come to the overcoming, so that the crown of life may be prepared for me, with all God's elect holy ones, who have left all behind for the Lord's sake. O my dear wife, my sheep, my dear, I thank you out of the deepest of my soul, for your comforting letter which you have sent me, and all who have given counsel or help thereto, to them may the Lord give His eternal life; the letter has taken more heaviness from my heart than all the goods are worth that are on the earth. O how good it is to remember the prisoners; how well that Habakkuk came to my need, who has fed me, poor prisoner, here in the lions' den as to my soul; for a little morsel that comes from without strengthens me ten times more than what I have with me. O my dear wife and sister in the Lord, this I ask of you for the Lord's sake, I who am now bound for the Lord's sake: keep yet to the truth, as the congregation stands at Antwerp and Ghent, and if one sees that any schism comes, keep to the right God-fearing; then the God of all comfort shall be with you; yea, God and His holy congregation shall feed you and my young little sheep, of that I do not doubt. If you remain in the fear of the Lord, and cast all your care upon Him, even though you are now well poor, my sister and beloved wife, you shall have much good if you fear God and shun sin, as I trust you will. Yet I ask of you, my most beloved wife, take care, as long as you live, for my young little sheep, my little Susanna, my little Abraham, and my little Isaac, that they may be brought up in the fear of God; O with how hot tears I pray to God my God, that He will let them grow up in the fear of God, or in their youth take them to Himself. O my most beloved dear on earth, Janneken Verstralen, kiss my little children now and then for me, and tell my little Susanna that her father wishes that she be obedient to her mother in the fear of God, and learn to be diligent to help her mother to earn the food for her little brothers, and you, my Janneken, my dear, remember me, your imprisoned husband, and bound for the sake of the eternal truth and the testimony of Jesus, in your prayer; for this I ask you and all God-fearing brothers and sisters, that you help us pray to God, that we may keep the victory of a chaste camp, that God will now teach my fingers to fight and my arm to bend the steel bow, that through faith I may smite the army in two, and so with my God leap over the walls, so that with Paul we may say: the fight is fought, the course completed, the crown of life is kept for us. Mayken and I are of good courage to do such violence for God's kingdom, that flesh and blood shall remain hanging on the posts. We may not sit together, yet we have been together three times, though with subtlety the first time, when the disputer of Ghent came; then all the lords came too; then I began to address the lords about the misfortune with which they would be punished, who now lay their hands on the blood of the innocent; then they looked poorly for themselves; but a flatterer began to speak, saying: I had highly accused all the lords; in sum, I felt that he was the one who would dispute against me; so I at last kept aloof, even though I could not

have defended myself, and I spoke kindly to the lords, and desired that they would let Mayken be heard, for I see that you are diligent to help me, I said, and so it will go through with one trouble: if you help one, you help them both; so they consented to it; then we began to set the shield against the spear. It was not long after noon; after the meal we came together again, but Mayken might not come to me; but they began to contend with us with very sharp words, so they turned the leaf, and began to speak kindly, saying: whether I would not dare to do, as Paul against my understanding, have Timothy circumcised, have my head shaved, yea, all secretly, he said; whether I would not dare, like Judith, to smite off Holofernes's head; whether, even if the truth were not so, I would do all that I would promise; whether it was not the same God; whether one might not as well lie now as then, for the better's sake, for there stands, he said: keep peace with all men if possible. To that I desired to consider, if I could do it with truth and a good conscience; then we parted, and they desired nothing else, they said.

At another time they came again, and asked how I had considered; and I always sought to be with Mayken, but it would not well be; then I said: let us come together; I always hope to do what is possible; then Mayken came to me; then I laid before Mayken, as they had laid before me; then Mayken said: how should that go on; should the dog eat again what he has spat out? Then I said: they should let me speak with Mayken alone; they allowed it. Then I said to Mayken: all the living could not make me believe that the priests' things are right; they know it well, I said, but they seek to be rid of us; but we will live and die with one another. Thus we said: we would take counsel; they were content. So at another time they took Mayken alone, but they also let me come; when I came, and I was there, I noticed that they showed us great friendship and promised much, to set us as free on the street as we had ever been; for that they would pledge their souls; so I at last was frightened, fearing to be seduced by fine speaking; they also had more courage to win me than Mayken; so I fell on my knees and begged them that they would take no more trouble for us, for I had prayed to my God with many tears, day and night, that He would keep me in His truth; thus I would live or die with the Lord. Then Mayken sprang up for joy, for she thought that I had let it go, for I had come in with a sorrowful countenance; now I am glad, she said, for I thought: should I have to die alone, she said; but when I noticed that Mayken had thought ill of me, I fell on my knees and said: that truly grieves me; so we gave each other the hand and mouth, and were very merry with one another, and our party became very sad; I would have liked to have written the whole dealing neatly, but I cannot well manage with this equipment.
Furthermore, my most beloved wife, my sheep, my dear, I let your love know that I have little burden in my conscience; the Lord be eternally praised for it; but all my sorrow is our bitter parting; but my dear sheep, that I would well ask of you, because you are of so good a nature that you can well keep yourself without a husband, that you now henceforth remain alone with my children, for through remarrying often great sorrow comes, and wherein I ever grieved you through my weakness, for that I ask you forgiveness for the sake of the Lord's deep wounds and innocent death. Greet all the God-fearing very much, with the peace of the Lord, and the sucklings who lie at Sion's breasts — Serres, you broken-bone's

head, and J. van G., help yet to care for my poor widow and orphans, knowing that therein you serve not men, but God. H., C., M., and A., and L., and C., I all greet very much. O how well I would write the like, if I had good equipment. Adieu my flesh and blood, kiss my little Susanna for me. O for me adieu, adieu, adieu my dear wife. Pray our dear Lord for me for a blessed end.

Another letter to his wife

O my most beloved wife, my flesh, my bone, my dear friend, my dear, my sheep, not at my heart, but in my heart, and now henceforth my poor widow, whom I must leave, according to God's pleasure, goodness, will, and counsel, who has so ordained that I henceforth lie bound for His good pleasure, for the sake of His eternal truth which I hope (my dear wife and sister in the Lord) to testify with my death through God's grace, now to pay the obedience which we owe God, that is the denial of ourselves, that we may love neither father nor mother, nor wife, nor child, nor our own life above Him, or God threatens us with His eternal judgment: whoever loves anything more than Me, he cannot be My disciple, much less His Son; and those who are not sons, they are bastards, who shall have no part nor inheritance with God. And this is the cause, my dear wife, howbeit that you with my little children lie so deep in my heart, that you against my nature must be thrust out from it, for you may not be to me, nor I to you, any idol, as dear to us as our dear-bought souls are. So shall you by this know, my most beloved wife, that I will commend you with my little children to that great almighty eternal God, who is rich in mercy toward all who fear and love Him, that He through His goodness and great power will bring you to the eternal glorious undefiled inheritance among all who are sanctified. The God of all comfort and the Father of all grace, who is named the right Father, whether called in heaven or on earth, may He grant you, my dear wife, Janneken Verstralen, that through His fathomless mercy and unmeasured goodness and riches of His grace, through His holy Spirit you may be strengthened in the inward man, and that Christ, His praised Son, may dwell through faith in your heart; that you, my dear, may be clothed with the mantle of righteousness, and girded with the girdle of truth and the band of love, about the loins of your mind; yea, that the little cluster of grapes and the little bundle of myrrh may hang between both your breasts, in your heart, namely Christ Jesus, through whom you may be kept from the pestilence that creeps in the darkness, and so shine with an eternal crown, as a daughter born of the royal seed, the living word of God, and keep the victory of a chaste camp, to the praise and honor of the almighty God; may such happen, and to your soul's salvation. Amen. This sends Hendrick Verstralen, your husband bound in the Lord for the sake of the eternal truth and the testimony of Christ, to my beloved wife and sister in the Lord, as a great and good wish of my heart, as for my last adieu: adieu my dearest on earth, adieu sister in the Lord. O strong is the truth; it conquers all things.

O my own rib, you who are from the middle of my body, how should I not love you, you my wife, who loves my soul more than my body, as I understand from your letter, which is a great joy to me, an eternal comfort; I have read it with many tears. I thank you greatly, my

sheep, for your great diligent care for me; further I ask you, my dear wife, whom I have so honorably married before God and His congregation, and since our parting is now near, help us yet with all the God-fearing to pray to God, and to beseech yet a little while, until Mayken, our dear sister, and I your husband, who now yet stand in our greatest conflict, under that bloody banner which Christ the Captain of the faith, and chief field-marshal Himself has borne, in the midst of His saints, that we with Him through our death may overcome our enemies, with our God set the little flag on the mast-tree, and with peace and rest come into our chambers, and await the coming of the Lord, who shall raise us again out of the earth through His grace to the eternal life, and my dear sheep, my flesh, my blood, be patient in your affliction; remain yet now, with Judith and Anna the prophetess, steadfast in prayer, serving day and night your God, in the house of the Lord, which is His congregation. See, my dear wife, I hope that you will do according to Paul's counsel, now that you are withheld, you shall serve the Lord unhindered, and seek to please the Lord, and to be holy in soul and in body; hear yet, my dear wife, my dearest dear on earth, do yet my counsel for the Lord's sake: go and sell all that you can spare, that is little, and make yourself as small as you can, for a widow can manage with a little.

And seek yet an honest quiet daughter for a companion, who is not hung about with young company, and flee the lusts of youth, and do the best with my little children; the Lord shall well provide for you, who gives the wild ass his food when he cries with thirst in the wilderness, and feeds the young ravens who call to God, as David says; He shall also feed you, my dear sheep, when you with my young orphans, you my widow, my chosen sheep, shall cry to God; though your tears fall here on the earth, they shall not cease until they pierce through the clouds and appear before God; then comfort shall happen to you, as David says: when the miserable calls, he says, then the Lord hears, and He helps them out of all their needs; yea, the angel of the Lord encamps round about them who fear Him from the heart. O my dear wife, think on Paul's word: the time is short; I would fain spare you, he says; those who are married must be as though they were not married; thus, my dear sister in the Lord, Janneken Verstralen, the end of all things is now near at hand, says Peter; the heaven shall be rolled together, and shall vanish as smoke; the elements shall melt with heat; O how then must you be prepared with a holy chaste walk. O my dear wife, that little word has sometimes frightened me, for the sake of my evil ill-willed flesh with which I am hung about; but I comfort myself therewith, that God would purify me through chastisement in the fire of tribulations, and so be gracious to me, for I have so loved His truth, though weakness has clung to me; thus I will now say with the prophet Micah: I will gladly bear the Lord's anger, for I have sinned against you; and with Syrach: I would rather fall into the hands of the Lord than into the hands of men, for His mercy is as great as He Himself is; He forgives sins, and He helps in need; for this, my dear wife, be yet patient in both our affliction; will yet with Judith confess that our punishment is yet less than our sins, and He helps in need; for he who humbles himself before the Lord, confesses his sins and leaves them, shall obtain mercy; but he who hides them, to him it shall not prosper. But if we confess our sins to the Lord, it is God who forgives them to us, for we have a free open

fountain, as Zechariah says, against sin and uncleanness, that is Christ Jesus, who has bought us with His dear precious blood, for that blood of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, that makes us clean from all our sins. See, my most beloved wife, though much of Christ's suffering now comes over us, yet through Christ much more comfort comes to us, that through His innocent death we shall have the eternal life, if we remain steadfast in the fear of God to the end, as I hope to do through God's grace, and I ask you also, my J. V., my sheep, my dear, that you also do so: remain an honorable widow in prayer, and in beseeching to God, and sanctification, without which no one shall see the Lord, until you also are taken away by the Lord. O my dearest dear on earth, my fatherly heart toward you and my little children, I wish so much good to the soul; there are three of my little sheep with the Lord, I hope through God's grace soon to be the fourth. O my dear wife, if I for you four, who must yet remain behind, through God's grace and power might twice living be burned therefor in a pitch-barrel, and you might now go with me to the Lord into rest. What joy would be done to my fatherly heart, if I were sure of the salvation of you all; written with many hot tears, I ask you, my most beloved wife, that you would be willing to remain an honorable quiet widow; do not take this ill of me, it is indeed my counsel, but therefore no command; but I seek it for the greatest assurance of your salvation. O how often has this happened, widows whose husbands had gone before them so godly, had left their lives so godly for the truth, that the women, remarrying, have accustomed themselves to it, under much smarting — a part has come to ruin, a part has gone along with great sorrow, sighing over those they now have; therefore, my dear sheep, I say once more, think on the apostle's word: the time is short; I would fain spare you, he says, for he had well wished that all men had been as he, seeing that through marriage much vexation comes in the flesh; but each one has his special grace, the one thus, the other so; but do you that which you will, only that it be done in the Lord; but I hope and trust in my God, that He shall hold you fast with my four sheep together, and keep you, that you be not taken, and shall not let my most beloved wife be tempted above your ability, for God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, but to keep the evil and godless unto the day of judgment, to be tormented; thus I will commend you, my dear sheep, to the Lord, our God and helper in need, and further to His holy congregation, who shall together unlock their fatherly heart over you, my poor widow and young orphans. Furthermore, I desire, my dear wife, that you very much greet from me, with the peace of the Lord, the God-fearing brothers and sisters whom you meet, and tell them that I greatly desire of them all, that they yet remember us, we poor prisoners, as their fellow brothers, and will help pray and beseech to God, that we may yet wage the Lord's warfare, and help us also to keep the field, that we may carry it out to His praise and our salvation, and tell them all adieu from us, in case I cannot write more, and to you, my dear wife, my flesh and my blood, I will also say adieu: adieu my assisting helper in need, adieu faithful friend on earth; the Lord be praised who has given you to me, you my sheep, who have always shown me comfort in my affliction; adieu my little Susanna, my little Abraham, my little Isaac; adieu Janneken my dearest dear on earth, who have borne me six little children; with the three I hope soon to be in rest. The almighty God, to whom nothing is impossible, in whose power

it all stands, may He keep you, my chosen wife, with the other three innocent little sheep unto His eternal life. O my sheep, my J. V., that the almighty God will grant us, my dear, that we with our little children may come to the Lord, to be merry together, before the throne of the Lamb and the majesty of our God. Amen.

The simplicity of the doves, the innocence of the children, the prudence of the serpent — therein may God keep you, my dear H. And bring you to His eternal inheritance; be commended to the Lord and to that rich word of His grace. By me, your husband H. V., bound for the eternal truth at Rupelmonde, with fetters on my legs. Mayken greets you and all the God-fearing very much with the peace of the Lord.

O greet that household very much for us; to D. I would earnestly and kindly have entreated the old mother with her daughters, that they immediately gird up their loins with the girdle of truth, and the shoes of the Gospel on, to step into the army of God, to the congregation, where the Lord's warfare is now waged; come yet immediately, my dear old mother, with your young daughters, to bear the baggage of the Captain of our faith, namely that little bundle of love; therein lies a helmet of salvation, with a fine plume called faith and firm trust; hang yet the mantle of righteousness over it, that the fine helmet of salvation may not rust, and the plume not become wet — that is, that your faith and trust in God may not pass away, and that you do not remain behind with the fainthearted and fearful, though you see that all tempests and storms and downpours fall on the righteous; remember, my dear sheep, that all the God-fearing must have themselves enrolled, become soldiers, under that bloody banner which Christ Jesus, our chief field-marshal, has borne, in the midst of His saints, and under whose banner I now stand through God's grace, and hope with Him to fight knightly and to wage lawful warfare, as long as I can stand on my legs and breath is in me. Herewith I will say adieu to you, my dear friends D. and P. with the daughters, and commend to God and to that word of His grace, in hope that you will follow. Adieu my dear friends, at whose table I ate the last bread with joy, and sang a little song to the honor of God. Adieu my dear friends, in hope that we shall eat bread together in the kingdom of God, oil of gladness, and drink new wine.

By me H. V. in bonds, for the testimony of the truth's sake, on Palm Sunday, in the year 1571.

A letter of H. Verstralen, written to his brothers and sisters

Our very dear heartily-beloved brothers and sisters, who stand with us in the Lord in like faith, and are separated out of Babylon, to touch no more that which is unclean, nor will draw any yoke more with the unbelievers, but are come into Jerusalem, into the congregation of the living God, to serve there the Lord your God, round about that slaughterhouse, whereto some of you are yet spared, as the prophet Jeremiah says, to be killed, we, prisoners and bound in the Lord for the sake of the eternal truth, H. V. and M. D., your all-weak brothers and sisters in the Lord, wish much comfort, gladness, and joy in all your hearts, from God our heavenly Father, and that through Jesus Christ, His only eternal-born Son,

full of grace and truth, through this our chief priest and mercy-seat, who has offered Himself to God His Father for us on the wood of the cross, that He through His death might prepare for us the entrance to the eternal life, through this innocent and undefiled little Lamb, who has taken away our sins; so we bow the knees of our hearts, day and night, before God our heavenly Father, that He will spread His peace among you as a water-stream, and strengthen you, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, with His holy Spirit, so that you may be strengthened in the inward man, and may keep the unity in the Spirit through the band of peace and of love, that we, my dear brothers and sisters, who are bought and delivered through that noble precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, may together serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness which is pleasing before Him, so long as we are in this hut. Amen.

O you army of the Lord, you city of the living God, may the Lord yet provide you watchmen everywhere on your walls, who neither day nor night are silent, but that your teachers may (as David says) be adorned with many blessings, and obtain the one victory after the other, so that the vineyard of the Lord may be planted, and you Jerusalem might be built, you temple of the Lord, albeit in troublesome time; let each one bind his sword upon his side; with the one hand he builds, and with the other hand he holds the spear, so that the enemies may be turned away, who want to take our labor away, so that Sion alone may be shown prepared. O my dear brothers and sisters, this we wish you from God, that you might be built into one another, to a spiritual house and dwelling-place of God; that God's law may be written in all your hearts, and His commandment may be in your mind, and so remaining God's sons and daughters, in whom God may dwell and walk, may He keep you, that you nevermore touch that which is unclean, but may show yourselves in all things as servants of God, so that the name of the Lord may be praised, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. O brothers and sisters, that your light may rise as a morning star, remaining that royal priesthood, that holy people of the property, so that you, dear brothers and sisters, in all places may lift up holy hands to God, may offer Him the fruit of the lips, the spiritual offering, so that the bowl of the Lord may become full of incense, of the prayers of the saints. O you bride of the Lamb, who out of love of your bridegroom Christ must be zealous unto death, and bear the fruit of righteousness, with much pain and travail, and must lie sick of His love, may the Lord our God yet lay His left hand under your head, and with His right hand must He embrace you, you reborn Eve of Christ your husband, through that imperishable seed of the living word of God, proceeding out of that fatherly heart. O you fair daughter of the almighty Father, who are now shown His Son Jesus the Lord Himself from heaven, and through faith shall have from Him the eternal life, may the eternal almighty Father pour out His blessing with power of the holy Ghost richly in you, and make you fruitful, and fit for all good works, so that you may win many sons and daughters for His Son Jesus, that His winepress through the number of His saints may soon become full, and so the sooner you may see the downfall of our enemies, who are innumerably many, and have bent our back, and run over us as over a street, and pour out evil for good to us, because they may not build with us at the spiritual house of the Lord, while they are

uncircumcised in heart, and fleshly-minded; against these our enemies may God arm us and you, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, with the weapons of righteousness, to be shod with the Gospel of peace, our loins girded with the truth, having always that two-edged sword of the Spirit at your side, thereby keeping our helmet of salvation, through the shield of faith, keeping that little bundle of love, and so tread after our Captain of the faith as Christian knights, thus waging boldly the Lord's warfare under that bloody banner of Christ, so that we, our dear brothers and sisters, may together through God's grace keep the victory of the chaste camp, and of the godly conflict, may obtain the crown of eternal life. Amen.

We, prisoners in the Lord, and bound for the sake of the eternal truth and that testimony of Jesus, Mayken Deynoots and Hendrick Verstralen, herewith greet all our brothers and sisters in the Lord, and send your love this little writing, out of the deep ground of our hearts, as for our last adieu, herewith taking friendly leave, of all dear brothers and sisters, especially those who are known to us and have shown much good in our affliction, where we lie imprisoned, for the sake of the eternal truth, through your comforting admonition. Thus we yet once more ask of your love, all of you, who shall see or hear our letter read, before we are out of the flesh, that you will yet heartily help us pray to the Lord, that we may yet overcome even unto death, to the praise and honor of the almighty God, and to our salvation, and to your boasting in the day of Christ. Adieu all my dear brothers and sisters. Adieu all who love the Lord and His coming. Adieu H. P., H. de R., and D. P., and Adam with his wife, and B. P., and S., and Jan van H., our faithful helpers in need. Adieu K. and L., B. and M., S. and G. with her sister, Jan. Dear friends, let it go to your hearts to pray for us to God, for it is prayed of you by us with tears. H. de R., I ask you, greet very much from me, with the peace of the Lord, L. de C., and as an adieu, and your kinswoman, and your mate C., all my dear brothers. O if God gave that the two Abrahams might each of his rib make a Sarah, that were the wish of my heart; tell them adieu from me too: Grietken and Judith; adieu T. de S. and L. your wife, our dear sister; G., to you I may boldly name my dear brother; adieu my dear mate; yet I hope to remember you if possible. Keep yourself yet godly.

Written on St. Joris's day, 1571.

A song of Hendrick Verstralen
To the tune of Swinters Somers euen groen.

O Lord God of great power,
none is yet like unto You;
You stretch out the heaven with might
over the whole world wide.
O Creator God of all,
before You must bow all knees;
have mercy on Hendrick Verstralen,
through Your Spirit let comfort come to him.

Though I lie here now trodden down,
before You, O Lord, it is naked and bare;
Your name have I confessed,
every morning I await death.
Strengthen me, O God, in this distress,
that I pray You out of pure love;
I must leave my wife
for Your truth and nothing else.

Therefore will You yet show
Your goodness, Lord; You well know
to feed my wife and little children,
as You did the widow of Zarephath.
Keep my wife and little children small,
O Lord, through Your good counsel,
so that of my blood none
in Your coming be lost.

Though we must now part,
my dear wife, with great sorrow,
let us with patience await —
see, the coming of the Lord.
Help me to laud and praise the Lord,
for we suffer not as a thief;
we shall rise again;
comfort yourself herewith, my sheep, my dear.

Though I am now taken from you
by the tyrants cruel and bold,
we hope to come together again
when the Lord holds His judgment.
Then shall we with might
fourfold avenge our harm, see;
all who now despise us for the truth,
they were better never born.

Though we must now mourn,
it shall not long endure, truly;
the heaven shall rend,
the day of recompense is near.
The Lord comes to avenge Sion;
His sword is drunken in heaven now;

His enemies He shall stick thereon,
and tread as ashes under His feet.

The promises full of faithfulness
has Mayken Deynoots well considered;
she would keep me company
when she saw that the bailiff seized me.
I count myself happy to be —
spoke our sister to me —
that I, praised, for the kingdom of God,
may now freely die with you.

Mayken our able sister
holds to the truth bold and steadfast;
she will for the Lord's name
leave now her young body.
Her clothes she will wash clean
in the blood of the delicate little Lamb;
the Lord shall well reward her —
all who stand godly for the truth.

Mayken loved her mother dearly;
the old stem grieved her greatly.
Were it that she understood God's Spirit,
she would now not be angry,
but come as the mother did,
as we understand in Maccabees,
and comfort her daughter also,
as she did her seven sons.

Mayken and Hendrick Verstralen,
who both feel from God's word,
who will go to fetch the crown of life,
they must through the strait gate.
The way is narrow, and fine in the choosing;
we must press so hard
that on the posts of the doors
must remain both our bodies.

Herewith we will commend to God
my sheep, my most beloved wife;
we shall sing and play with the Lord
if we remain steadfast by the truth.

Though we lie bitten on the earth,
we shall with the wise virgins
yet eat of the wood of life
in the midst of Paradise.

Adieu Janneken Verstralen pure,
adieu my flesh and also my blood;
serve yet the Lord your God alone
as did wise Judith;
remain in prayer and beseeching also
as Paul admonishes,
day and night with chaste manners,
as becomes an honorable widow.

For this, O God of the heavenly kingdom,
I pray You day and night:
keep my four little sheep alike,
for it stands alone in Your power.
For Your name I must leave my life;
thus I pray You, You highest Ruler:
may You give Christ Your Son
to my wife as a testament.

A letter which Mayken Deynoots wrote to her brothers and sisters, lying imprisoned
The abundant grace and mercy of God our heavenly Father, through His only eternal-born Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who has offered Himself to God His heavenly Father for us as a reconciliation-offering for our sins, that He might deliver us from the coming wrath, which shall come over all who have not been obedient to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer pain, that eternal ruin. But the wisdom, power, and consolation of the holy Ghost, who proceeds from both the Father and the Son, this only, eternal, almighty God, from whom all good and perfect gifts are given, must always remain with us and with you, my dear brothers and sisters, so that He through grace will make us all fit, through Himself, that we may be found worthy in the day of His coming. Amen. My heartily-beloved dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, I wish you out of the ground of my heart for an adieu, that it may always go well with you in soul and in body; I, Mayken, your weak sister in the Lord, thank your love out of the deep ground of my heart, for the great love which you are showing us; I wish before God that the same may also happen to you in need; my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, take it in good part from me that I do not write more with my hand, for I am very unfit therein; yet I count it needless to be, for Hendric our dear brother, my fellow prisoner in the Lord, has done so well for us both. I wish you the same before God, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. Let it seem to you that I have written: the wish of my heart is that we may seal it with our blood, to the praise and honor of the

Lord's holy name, and to our soul's salvation. Amen. With my hand I say adieu to all my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord: adieu; remain yet always godly by the eternal truth. Adieu, pray to the Lord for us; I do it day and night for you according to my weakness. Adieu G., C., N., T., and your wives. Adieu B., J., B. P., my dear sister; adieu Andries M. Adieu, adieu, adieu; take me in good part.

Another letter of Mayken Deynoots, to her brothers and sisters

I, a prisoner in the Lord, greet you out of the innermost of my heart, my dear heartily-beloved and very loved brothers and sisters, J. and Andries, who are now in great affliction and sorrow, for that sorrowful parting; O be patient in all your affliction, steadfast in prayer, and joyful in the hope, which shall not let us be ashamed, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. O it is a precious thing to be patient, and to wait for the Lord's help; for he who fears God is comforted after the temptation, and after the chastisement he finds grace; the Lord hides His face indeed for a moment, but with eternal mercy He shall have mercy on us. Therefore, my dear sister Janneken, comfort yourself with the Lord's holy word; though you are now as a forsaken and heart-sorrowful wife, it is yet for a little time to do, that your sorrow shall be changed into eternal gladness; for He who made you is your husband, Lord Sabaoth is His name, the Holy One in Israel, who is called the God of all the world. O you female warrior of God, fight godly against your flesh and blood, and remain steadfast unto death; then the crown of eternal life shall be given you, with a perfect gladness which no one shall take from you. Andries, my dear brother, that you are separated from us with great sorrow, and that you wish yourself with us — that you must commend to the Lord, for all things must yet have their time; for it is not broken off at their power; when they said to me: little woman, you must go with us, I said: in the name of the Lord; they wished greatly for you, I said: were it the Lord's will, you would well get him; I would very gladly go back again; then I greeted our dear brothers with a kiss of peace, for love compelled me thereto; I think that my fellow-prisoner brother has let you know how it has gone further, and of our dealings, so much as is known to him; I cannot write of it for lack of paper; my dear brothers and sisters, I heartily thank your love for your good admonition, faithful warning, and lovely comfort, and wish before God that the same may happen to you in your need; I have read them with many tears, and meanwhile thanked the Lord so often, who remembers and does not forget, through His great grace, His poor weak imprisoned and bound children; comfort and admonish one another with the same words, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, and kiss one another once for me; I hope to do as you have said. Herewith I intend to commend you to the Lord, and to that comforting word of His grace, and say herewith adieu to all dear brothers and sisters in the Lord; I know no one who is known to me, be he far or near, of whom I do not think; adieu with an inward holy kiss of love and of peace. Adieu, and pray to the Lord for us; I do it day and night for you. Adieu my dear brothers and sisters, adieu, adieu, adieu with tears; adieu, hold fast, until you are taken away; this adieu I write to you all. Take yet this simple plain writing in good part. By me, your weak sister in the Lord, Mayken Deynoots, written in the castle of Rupelmonde, where I lie imprisoned

and bound with iron chains or fetters, for the sake of the eternal truth; I long for the day to make my offering, but I hope to await it with patience.

In the year after Christ's birth, 1571.

A song
When one wrote fifteen hundred years
And sixty-two besides,
One saw at Ghent this openly

Pious Christians die

For the sweet testimony of Christ,
Which they confessed with humility,
Unto death without fainting.
Their foundation alone
was
Christ the rejected
stone;
On Him alone stood their trust.
I must lament to You, Lord, my distress:
How long shall one still hear this:

That around Jerusalem
they kill
And shed the blood of the elect.
The bodies of Your servants —
excellent —
Are now presented to the birds and beasts,
All given as food.
Whoever
leaves off evil
And does after Christ's counsel,
He must be everyone's
plunder.
How piteously they are murdered,
Who rightly confess God's Word;
A laughingstock, by the world
scorned,

They are here below;
Everyone's refuse too,
As one now sees in every place,

As one may well declare.
Their life, body, and goods
Was for the sweet Name of Christ,
As these are now found to be.
Bold, shrewd, and
excellent,
has
Peter van Maldegem beforehand
confessed his faith before the blind Lords,
with
Peter van Male without faltering,
and thereto also
Jacques Bostijn,
with
Lowijs Alaerts, shrewd and fine:
They fought for the Lord's Name.
Now rest
they under the altar,
As John testifies openly,
With white garments fitting.
Vijnken and
Goudeken the young lady (de Joncheer),
with
Janneken young of days:
These three sisters remained by God's teaching
Unto death without fainting.

Betken van Maldegem held to the end,
with
Cijnken van Geldere undefiled.
Thus shall they at the same time,
When Christ their sweet Bridegroom
Shall come to meet them,
Be found as pure
maidens.
Guillame van Dale with shrewd courage
Has for the truth his life
Left, and also shed his blood;
Thus he is exalted by God.
He feared neither sword nor glow;
Thus he praised the good Lord,
And shall among His pious ones

The fine Kingdom of Heaven
In eternity possess:
An eternal joy, not for sums.
In the year sixty-three,
mark this well,

Dierick Lambrechts young of days
Fought for the faith well minded
Unto death without fainting.

Christiaen van Wettere also wanted
with
Anthonijn de Wale to the city;
Thus shall they have for reward
Garments white and pure,
All together with God's elect,
thereto
the crown of life.
In the year sixty-four,
mark well,

Steuen de Graet very fervent,
with
Cijnken his mother well strengthened,
In old age very gentle.
Thus shall they this openly,
Here above with the heavenly host,
Praise the Lord beautifully
And sing
the new song,
As John declares to us,
All in Heaven's throne.
Perijnken Ketels well known
Has for the truth — hear it —
In St. Peter's, in the monastery, ended her life,
with
Leenken her mother without faltering.

Thus
shall they be rewarded,
As was shown to Esdras
On Mount Zion praised,
All with a pleasant crown

And palm branches in the hand,
Of the young man
highly exalted.
Perijnken and
Martijnken van Male bold,
Two sisters — mark
it:
With flesh nor blood they did not confer,

For God could well strengthen them.

Peter van der Muelen shortly thereafter
Fought for the faith openly
In the year sixty-five
also.

Willem de Duyck likewise

Also left the world's plain;
Thus they are now in good peace.
In the year sixty-eight,
mark this,

Jan Parijs all fittingly,

Pierken van Cleve well minded,
and
Lauwerens Peters fitting;

Hendrick Maesschap,
very valiant,
Was burned alive with them.
Thus shall they all together
Hear a lovely word:
"Come,"
"you blessed, forth"
"To my heavenly Father."
Jan de Smit, as I recall,
Fought shrewdly, all without falling.

Shortly thereafter
Daniel de Pou
Confessed Christ's word exalted.

Daniel van Voren well known,
with
Passchier Weyns very excellent,
Would not be ashamed of God's word;
Thus shall fine Christ
Pour them the new wine
Here above, all fittingly.
In the year sixty-nine,
hear this:

Roelant Stayaert at this time;

Joos Goethals, and struck not in vain;

Peter Stayaert also besides;

Janneken Roolants, his lawful wife,
and
Janneken the young lady left her body.
Thus they remained pious,
As gold
proved in the fire;
Thus shall the gracious Lord
His
heavenly Kingdom give them.
Christoffel Buyse was also ready,

Lauwereys van Rentergem also,
To bear the cross with good discretion
On the narrow way to Heaven's place.

Joos Messenier, to his behoof,
and
Grietken Baets, very well minded:
Thus shall they — hear it —
In the fine new Jerusalem,
For Christ shall be their light;
Eternal life shall befall them.
Jacxken Terlinck remained firmly built
On Christ the praised Lord;
Her five little children she entrusted to the Lord,
Who cares for them; besides.

Tanneken vander Muelen pure,
with
Jacxken van Hussele together.

How joyful shall they be
When the trumpets' sound:

"Come here, my dearest company,"
To my highly exalted Father.
All these have ended their lives,
Suffered for the pure Truth,
In Flanders, within the city of Ghent,
Together all in common.

I beseech You, mighty good Father,
Give Your elect courage,
Who now as yet at times
With oppression, in bonds, torment —

Keep them, O Lord, undefiled,
All who are in suffering for Your Name.
I thank God the Father through sweet Christ,
Who His elect as before

Has delivered through His good grace
From false doctrine — hear it.
Keep us, O Lord, all together,
We who still go on pilgrimage
In great peril with danger.
Give
us, O Lord, Your Spirit,
When we
are tried with tempest,
As gold and silver through the fire.
Brothers and sisters in common,
And fear neither oppression, bonds, nor suffering;
Christ our King and none other
Will deliver us from evil.
Thus remain firmly built on Him;
Do not turn aside from His ways

So shall you be blessed.
Herewith I take my end;

I commend you to God's excellent Spirit;
His Name remains eternally praised.

A song
When one had written fifteen hundred
And seventy-one years,
Has
Gerrit Corneliszoon nobly

given up his young life
At Amsterdam openly.
In a flatboat, after the denunciation,3
Ready for work he was;
There the bailiff found him,
Taken and bound,
And led to the City Hall.
On the next day he came forth
Before the Council at that time,
And they very diligently inquired
And asked him without fear
What his faith was.
His faith at that time
He confessed unafraid;
But they wanted him to confess
Some who stood beside him —

But God guarded his mouth.
When they, to their ability,
Had once tortured him,
They stripped off his clothes
And bound his eyes with cloths.
Mark
yet the serpents' venom.
All to force the law,

They bound his hands behind
And hung him up,
And so went away from him.

The Dutch *natvermonden* is obscure; possibly a misprint for *na 't vermonden* — "after the report" or "after the denunciation."

O friends, this was so bitter.
The Lords, high of mood,
Have still fearlessly
Had him beaten with sharp rods;
God went to guard his tongue,
So that he accused no one.
The hangman, very cruel of mind,
They summoned at that time
To themselves within;
To strip him he began —
The hangman had to do his work.
Hands and feet he went to bind,
And pinched him on his privy parts,4
There sat the lions and the grates;
O God, how can they invent it all
That is devised against the innocent.
On the rack he lay;
Mark what sort this is:
Beaten there with rods,
And with a bucket full — this must not be silenced —
Poured into his body with urine.
The dragon had yet to avenge himself
On the Lamb with great spite;
Mark what has appeared here:
Burning candles they lit

Under his arms — be sure of it.
Twice hung without strangling,
Once with a weight on his foot.
O God, though You long forbear,
You shall yet well repay without fail
Those who thus shed the innocent blood.
Thus hanging on the cord,
They went away all at their leisure.

Afterwards they asked, as the enraged:
"Will"
"you not confess in short words?"

The Dutch *themde* is uncertain; read here as a misprint for *klemde* (pinched). *Leeuwen en grinden* ("lions and grates") is likewise obscure — possibly instruments of torture.

"We shall deal thus all day."
He thanked God Almighty,
Who makes us keep the field,
And guarded his mouth very mightily
For his neighbor truly;

Therefore he was sorely tormented.
Sorely pained, beyond telling,

So that he could not walk;
On a chair he was carried.
When one would go to plead before the court,
He was brought into the court.
Mark what honor they showed him
In the court, as a fool:
With a flowered hat they crowned him,
As they rewarded Christ;
Thus they made sport with him.
Sentence with little understanding

They uttered, and took revenge:
That one should strangle and burn
And thus put him out of the way,
Bound to a stake.
He thanked the bailiff humbly

For his cruel sentence;
And very patiently they bore him

Before the manifold people
To the stake that was prepared.
Very fervently, resolved toward God,

He cried so very fittingly:
"O Father, be gracious to me;"
"Make me indeed one of Your least little sheep,"

"Or the least member of Your body."
O Lord, who sits on high
And sees here below,
Who is a knower of all secrets;
The hearts, however high in presumption,

Before Him it is all counted as nothing.
Thrice he called out very fervently:
"O bold Father,"

"Forgive them very graciously;"
"Although they torment me unmannerly,"
"They know not what they do."
O people, eternity is so long;
Father, eternity is long time,
He cried with anxious heart.
O, this battle is very fierce;
Fight now, flesh; this is the last battle.
When the cord was at his throat,
He cried for least and most:

"O Father, I commend to You here —"
"Before men I do not conceal this —"
"Into Your hands my spirit."
Thus he made his offering
All before the blind world.
He feared neither world, death, nor shame,
Nor the lords of the land;
He fought mightily to the end.
Thus will now no more fight,
You judges of Amsterdam,
Against the Lord's servants;
It is very evil to condemn

For innocent is that Lamb.
Cease your persecution,
You judges everywhere;
For your great mandates
And the King's placards
In the judgment shall help no one.

A song
Hear our mournful lamenting

O Lord, in this distress;
Shorten our evil days,
Full of heavy, great peril.
Your word suffers much offense;

It is trodden underfoot in the streets.
Whoever lives thereafter in peace

Is persecuted or killed.
Killed since Abel's time
Are the righteous, simply:

The Lord
Himself had to suffer;
Why then not His servant?
Yes, whoever, as Paul says,
Will live godly and mightily
Must be persecuted harshly;
Scripture is fulfilled aright.
Aright it has so come to pass —
Within Delft, take note —
There were two imprisoned
For Christ's honorable Name.
They confessed the truth clearly;
Many manifold trials
They overcame patiently;
It was well rewarded to them hereafter.
After much strife of the learned,
Which fell upon them very heavily,
With the blind perverted ones

they tormented them sorely, but
They kept the field, battle-ready.
Then these little sheep straightway,
For they were found fat,
Were sent to death there.
There came the people in heaps
To see the offerings.
Many called out to them,
Early in the morning, about ten,

That they should fight piously;
They
cried many
fair words,
To follow after them,
And took leave therewith.
The hour began to approach;

They brought them to the court;
The little sheep spoke boldly:
"Good day, to all."

Jan Hendricksen van Swertewale
and
Marten Jansen also,
Grain-carrier, citizen of the city,
Heard the sentence, all together.
All together they were read out
As
heretics, rebaptized — hear me —
And also to have openly despised
The sacrament of their altar,

That it is neither flesh nor blood.
Also were at many times
Learned men sent to them,
And yet they remained firm thereby.
Thereupon they delivered them into the hands
Of the executioner,
to openly
Strangle and burn at stakes,
So that death follows thereupon.
Then these little sheep spoke clearly:
"My Lords, we appeal
Before the highest court of the Lord,
And we shall well win it there."
There went the city scribe along

To read off on the scaffold — hear:
That no one, on pain of goods and life,
Should speak a word to them.
Then came
Marten Jansen forward.
They scorched his tongue painfully;
Yet he spoke just as bold-hearted:

"This truth I testify henceforth."
Further he spoke: "Were it not well done
For my salvation,
I would well have obtained pardon
And escaped much heavy strife;

But I have stood the good fight through
And kept the faith also.
The crown of righteousness
Is now prepared for me henceforth."
Henceforth he cried constantly:
"O Lord, be in this season
Gracious to me, poor sinner;
For I am, in my judgment,
Not worthy, for Your bold Name,"

"To suffer with the steadfast."
"Receive my spirit into Your hands,"
He cried in his last doing.

Then
they went to avenge this
On
Jan Hendricksen, God's servant:
His mouth stopped from speaking,
Yet he tore it out again.

Then he spoke: "Now it counts aright:"
"This is the complete truth."
Then he cried
much:
"Fight, pious ones!"
Thereupon the people ran away.
Away the Lords took with them
This sheep, before their word was disturbed;
But since no one did them harm,
They brought it forth again,
Bound, gagged, stifled,
So that he nearly sank into unconsciousness.

The executioner did not long tarry,

But helped him hastily through.
Through the narrow gate faithfully
They have pressed piously — see.
No suffering befalls them more sorely,
But they rest from all sorrow.
When one wrote fifteen hundred

And seventy-one years,
The fifth
day
Of February,
Their offering was made.
Done according to Scripture's witness;
God tries them as gold in the fire
And has found them worthy
And delivered from all danger.
O how blessed are they well-nigh
Who may come to this feast
And bow their neck as pious ones
Under Christ's scepter here.
Herewith I conclude these matters.
Dear friends, keep good watch;
Let us still watch a little,
For the Lord comes unawares,
Like a thief in the night.
Whom He shall find faithful,
With them He shall hold His feast;
Well for him who rightly heeds it.