THE EVENTS OF 1535

The document just mentioned was sent by the highborn Wirich of Oberstein, the commander-in-chief of the entire force by command of the princes and the three provinces, although he himself did not arrive at the camps until January 18. He sent it through a messenger, for whom he had first secured by letter safe conduct in going to the Gate of St. Maurice and returning. On January 13, the townspeople replied as follows. “We, the regents appointed by the grace of God according to His word, and the burghers and inhabitants of the saintly city of Münster, have received the letter sent by you, Wirich, Count of Falkenstein and Limburg and Lord of Oberstein and Brock, appointed commander and so on. In this letter, we are asked to be willing to grant safe conduct to your messenger to come to the Gate of St. Maurice at 9 o’clock on January 14 | and deliver to the city a letter in the name of the princes of the Empire and the three provinces. To this we reply that we have never repelled anyone from us, but have always readily let anyone at all into our presence to discuss with us whatever cases he may have, and that this is the same goodwill which it would be right for us to expect from our opponents. We therefore permit this messenger to come to the Gate of St. Maurice in reliance upon our safe conduct, to hand over the letter that he has, and to withdraw without hindrance. We make a similar request for a messenger from us, whom we will dispatch to certain princes, to receive from you the same freedom to depart and return. Which of these things you will do we desire to be informed. Issued under the seal of our city on the Wednesday after the feast of the Three Kings,2 1535.”

When this messenger was sent to them, they received him with hospitality, awarded him a gift, read the letter that he had brought, and gave a few clumsy oral responses, which were completely irrelevant. They did, however, promise that they would respond to the letter more fully and carefully in writing by messenger. On the same day that the letter was delivered (January 14), they responded as they had promised after a short deliberation. Through the messenger for whom they had

1 Dated January 12.
2 January 8.
requested and been granted safe conduct they sent this response to the
landgrave for him to pass it on to the representatives of the princes
and provinces. In it, they strove to show that they were innocent and
free of any blame, never having been rebels against their true ruler or
expelled him from the city. Therefore, it was unjust and a violation of
both divine and human law for them to be harried with arms by the
prince in a tyrannical way without any declaration of war and to be
miserably oppressed. To the charge made against them in the princes’
letter, that the king had been created by private authority, they made
no response, cleverly passing it over in silence.

The king also wrote a personal letter to the landgrave, who he was
convinced either was or certainly would be an adherent of his faction.
The only address he put at the beginning of this letter was “Unsern
leiben besonderen Lipsen, Landgraven etc.” and from this it can be seen
how high was the opinion he had of himself compared to other
princes. Neither letter contained anything but clumsy, vain blather by
which the king attempted to conceal his impiety just as Adam did his
shameful parts with fig leaves. In the private letter to the landgrave,
the case about making a king and queen was set down as follows. “Leve
Lips”—(“Dear Phil,” this being the landgrave’s name)—“you no doubt
know that Christ and the prophets said that not even a dot in Holy
Scripture was set down without a purpose. In the Acts of the Apostles,
Peter says that in the time of the restoration, which began after the
Babylonian captivity was made manifest through the clear light of the
Gospel, everything that God said through the mouth of His prophets
would be fulfilled and so on. Examine the writings of the Prophets,
then, and consider carefully what they write about the Babylonian
captivity and the culmination of this world, and likewise what Christ’s
parables, the writings of the Apostles and the Book of Apocalypse bear
witness to. What recompense will the Babylonians receive for their

\[^3\] This letter, dated January 10, is in fact written by the “Godly order and assembly
of the regents and community of the city of Münster” (Euth gotlicher ornunge und vereinigung
der regenten und gemeinen der stat Munster).

\[^4\] “To our particularly dear Phil, Landgrave.” The German actually reads: Besonders
teven Philips, Landgrave tho Hessen. This letter concludes by stating that it was written
“to our gracious lord of Hesse” (an unsern gnedigen hern von Hessen). Hence, it is hard to
believe that the use of the colloquial form of the landgrave’s given name conveys an
unwarranted familiarity, as K. seems to think.


\[^6\] Acts 3:21. The reference is only to the fulfillment at the time of the restoration,
the relative clause about the Babylonian captivity being a gloss on the king’s part.