



Henry Eyster  
Jacobs, Editor

# The Book of Concord

# THE BOOK OF CONCORD: THE SYMBOLICAL BOOKS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*“People’s Edition”, By Authority of the General Council of the Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in North America*

*EDITED BY HENRY EYSTER JACOBS, D.D. LL.D, D.S.T.*

*Norton Professor of Systematic Theology in the Lutheran Theological Seminary  
at Philadelphia.*

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*PRIMARY AUTHORS*

Preface: Jacob Andraea and Martin Chemnitz

Unaltered Augsburg Confession: Philip Melanchthon

Apology of the Augsburg Confession: Philip Melanchthon

Small and Large Catechisms: Martin Luther

Smallcald Articles: Martin Luther

Formula of Concord: Jacob Andrea [Primary Author], Martin Chemnitz  
[Primary Author], Nikolaus Selnecker, David Chytraeus, Andreas Musculus,  
Christoph Körner, Caspar Heyderich, Paul Crell, Maximillian Mörlin, Wolfgang  
Harder, Daniel Gräser, Nicholas Jagenteufel, Johannes Cornicaelius, John  
Schütz, Martin Mirus, Georg Listenius, and Paul Glaser



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May God bless you and keep you, help you, defend you, and lead you to know the depth of His love. *Amen.*



*Ch. E. Jacob.*



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# Preface by Henry Eyster Jacobs.

THE CHURCH'S CONFESSIONS OF FAITH are its authorized declarations on subjects concerning which its teaching has been misunderstood or misrepresented, or is liable to such misunderstanding and misrepresentation. They are not comprehensive systems of doctrine covering the entire sphere of divine revelation, but have arisen entirely from historical circumstances, where the teaching of the Church has become a matter of controversy. An exception to this statement may probably be found in Luther's Catechisms; and yet, while they were written for other than polemical purposes, they were offered as standards for the more popular presentation of the truths of the Christian religion at a crisis when both pastors and people needed especial guidance. In each Confession the topics treated, as well as the order, the extent, and the mode of treatment of each topic, are not ideal or determined by any effort to present an exhaustive and logical summary of the faith, as a whole, from the Holy Scriptures, but only to meet an historical need and to respond to a call for a particular emergency. Each Confession is in reality only a part of the one Confession of the faith, which the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is continually drawing from the Holy Scriptures and from communion with the Church's Lord.

The Holy Scriptures are the sole source and authority of the Church's teaching, and amply sufficient for all ordinary purposes of instruction; but when that which the Holy Scriptures teach is called into question, it is the Church's duty, in all ages, as a witness to the truth and set for its defense, to give clear and unmistakable testimony as to what is the meaning of God's Word on the subjects under discussion. All the authority of such testimonies depends upon their conformity with Holy Scripture. Confessions are authoritative, not because the Church has adopted them, but because of the Word of God which they are found to contain. "We accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been derived from God's Word." (Formula of Concord.)

What the Church has once confessed, with respect to questions of more than merely temporary or local significance, becomes a part of her very life. If it be



what the Confession declares that it is, the very truth of God's Word, expressed in terms so clear and unambiguous as to guard against all misunderstanding, the Church of the future cannot be indifferent to it, but cherishes it as a sacred trust ("the deposit," 1 Tim. 6:20), which is to be transmitted to posterity that later generations may be profited by the experience of their predecessors.

Nevertheless, in so doing, the Church cannot restrict its testimony, as new circumstances arise, simply to that which, under entirely different circumstances, has been given at some particular crisis in the past. She is not so bound to the past as to be unable to define her faith in terms adapted to new conditions, but is "ready always to give answer to every one that asketh a reason" of her faith (1 Pet. 1:15). Accordingly, the Augsburg Confession very appropriately asserts the principle of Confessional development in its closing words:

"If anything further be desired, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures".

The simplest and briefest of all the Confessions, the Apostles' Creed, historical investigations show was the product of a gradual growth of four hundred years, as successive controversies furnished the occasion for additional articles. It was not primarily a liturgical formula, as it is with us today, but a clear and distinct utterance on various controverted points, without mentioning those who taught otherwise. A similar growth can be traced without difficulty in the Nicene Creed, where the Council of Nice marks only a particular stage in its formulation, but neither its beginning nor its completion. The Athanasian Creed is the ultimate fruit of centuries of controversy concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, as the arena for theological discussion is passing from the East to the West.

Neither the structure nor the contents of the Augsburg Confession can be adequately interpreted without the study of the historical occasion for each article. Even where it is least polemical, an historical motive for each statement is present. The Apology is the author's own protest against perversions of the meaning and the attempts to answer the positions of the Augsburg Confession; in other words, it is the official interpretation of those who prepared and presented the Augustana.

When, some years later, after the conciliatory spirit that animates the Augsburg Confession had failed to make an impression on its opponents, Luther, in the Smalcald Articles, provided for the General Council that the Emperor had promised to call a statement of the issues involved in the controversies with Rome that was entirely up to date, while Melancthon supplemented it with an appendix on Church Power, that is the foundation of all Lutheran Church Polity.

The last of the Confessions, the Formula of Concord, after more than a

generation had passed since the controversy with Rome was most acute, attempts to afford a common basis upon which Lutherans could stand, and thus end a period of confusion, division, and estrangement that had broken the Lutheran Church of Germany into fragments. Never was there a more careful and discriminating Church document written, guarding in each article against exaggerations on each side, and then, in most precise and definite words, setting forth the teaching from the Holy Scriptures on the subjects concerning which there had been misunderstanding and alienation of feeling. In it the Lutheran Church shows her fidelity in judging errors within, just as in the other great Confessions she had judged errors from without, her borders. To judge others without also judging our own selves (1 Cor. 11; 31) is to be fair and just neither to ourselves nor to others.

Upon the basis of all these Confessions the foundations of the Lutheran Church in America were laid. They were included not only in the Constitutions of many of the earlier congregations, but also in the first Constitution of the Mother Synod. With the entrance of a period when the importance of this confessional position was not recognized, there came into our history retarding and disorganizing forces that threatened the very existence of our Church as it became anglicized, and that to the present day have greatly divided and confused it.

With a widespread and all but general return towards the confessional position of the Fathers, a period of new life and promise for our Church in America has begun. Upon the hearty acceptance of these Confessions in their historical sense, and their consistent application in the spirit of the Gospel to practice, the General Council, in common with others, offers a basis for the union of the entire Lutheran Church in America. The work in which she has so successfully cooperated in the preparation of a Common Service will not be complete until the agreement possible in such joint work is traced to a more thorough harmony in the faith than had been supposed, and its ultimate expression in agreement as to the terms of confessional statement.

But for the attainment of such end the Confessions must be readily accessible in the common language of the country, and should be found in the studies of all our pastors and in the homes and libraries of all our intelligent people. Even although our Church has never asked its laymen to subscribe to more than the Catechism, yet the importance of their acquaintance with all that, as members of Lutheran synods, they require their pastors to know and teach cannot be questioned.

Heretofore translations into English have been accessible only in expensive editions. The edition of which this is a revision was undertaken in 1882 by a

retired clergyman, the Rev. G. W. Frederick, at great pecuniary risk. He spared no expense in providing for the work a most attractive form, and in enabling the editor to introduce any amount of matter, which he deemed of value for illustrating the history and teaching of the Confessions. That edition is not supplanted by this. It will continue to be published by the General Council's Publication Board for the use of scholars. In it will be found the history of each confession, and the various documents upon which they were based. But the popular edition, here offered, fulfills the hope of the editor from the very beginning, to have the Confessions published at such price that they may be scattered broadcast throughout all English-speaking lands, where there are confessors of the Lutheran faith – for Canada and Australia, for South Africa and India, for the West Indies and South America, as well as for the United States of America. Such edition will serve an important office in deepening and strengthening the faith of our people in drawing them together in the bonds of a common fellowship, and in enabling them to appreciate all the more highly their heritage. But beyond this, as the preceding edition was warmly welcomed by eminent representatives of other denominations because of much that they found in it encouraging them in their conflicts, so this edition will continue to a much wider circle than the Lutheran Church the testimony which our Fathers gave, and, while in many other religious bodies confessional lines have vanished and confessional obligations weakened, a standard is here raised around which millions in this western world will rally. The attentive reader, whatever may be his antecedents, will see that the matters here treated are not antiquated or obsolescent, but enter most deeply into the issues of the hour.

The translations included in this volume are those of the two volume edition, except that, for the translation of the Augsburg Confession, credited in that edition to Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, but which is in reality a reprint of a sixteenth century English translation, published in "The Harmony of the Confessions" in 1586, we have substituted the translation officially approved by the General Council after its preparation by a joint committee of the various synodical bodies, mentioned in the note introducing it at the proper place (p. 32). With this exception, the plates are those of the larger edition. A number of minor changes, however, have been made, suggested by twenty-nine years' use of the translation in the study and the class-room, and by criticisms of which we have been informed.

We send forth this volume with gratitude for the privilege of having been called to edit it and its predecessor, and in the full confidence that it will be a blessing to our Church in America, and, through it, in advancing the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name these confessions were written.

Lutheran Theological Seminary,  
Philadelphia, Pa., February 27, 1911.

Henry Eyster Jacobs.

# Preface To The First Edition.

THE TRANSLATION of the Augsburg Confession adopted in this volume is the well-known one of Dr. Charles P. Krauth, which he has kindly revised as the proof-sheets passed through his hands. In the Small Catechism, the translation prepared by Dr. Charles F. Schaeffer with the co-operation of a committee of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and in universal use in the English churches of the General Council, is reprinted, with the addition of the formula for confession contained in the Book of Concord. The Large Catechism was translated for this work by Rev. A. Martin, Professor of the German Language and Literature in Pennsylvania College, to whom the Editor is greatly indebted for assistance and advice also in other directions. Some changes have, however, been made to conform it as nearly as possible to the plan of translation adopted in the rest of the volume.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord were translated by the Editor. The rendering of the Apology is from the Latin, the German translation of Justus Jonas of the *Concordienbuch* being more of a paraphrase than a translation, differing sometimes from the original by the omission, introduction and transposition of entire paragraphs, and therefore inducing the editors of some of the best German editions of the Symbolical Books to prepare fresh translations. We have, accordingly, carefully revised our translation from the Latin, by comparing it with the German translations of Schöpf, Köthe, Spieker and Bodemann.

The Smalcald Articles were translated from the German, and Melanchthon's Appendix, "Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope," from the Latin, in which it was composed. In the Formula of Concord the German, according to the same principle, has been used as the standard text.

The chief variations of the alternate language, officially received in our churches, from the original language of each Confession, is indicated in brackets, with the exception of the Apology, where they were found so numerous and extensive as to render it necessary to insert them frequently among the footnotes.

The Latin edition of Dr. Fredericus Franke, published by Tauchnitz, Leipsic,

1848, has not only been largely followed in indicating variations, but has also furnished most of the notes.

The paging of Muller's *Symbolischen Bücher* has been printed in the margin, so as to enable this translation to furnish all references to this most widely-received and highly-esteemed edition of the Confessions. As the St. Louis German edition, published in 1880 as a jubilee offering, adopts the same plan, this edition can be readily used also with it by observing the marginal numbers in each. The references in the footnotes conform to the marginal paging. [THESE NUMBERS ARE NOT PRESENT IN THIS EDITION.]

The second edition of the New Market translation (1854), for which our English churches owe so much to the energy and devotion of the brothers Revs. Ambrose and Socrates Henkel, as well as the Swedish edition, published under supervision of the Swedish-Augustana Synod, Chicago, 1878, have been frequently consulted, and have furnished material aid.

Additional matter, prepared as Introduction and Appendix to this work, but which has swollen to such an extent as to exceed the limits of this volume, will be published in the near future. The second volume will comprise a brief outline of the history of the Confessions; the documents from which Melancthon elaborated the Augsburg Confession; the non-Lutheran Confessions of Augsburg – the Tetrapolitan of the Reformed cities, Zwingli's *Ratio Fidei* and the Confutation of the Augsburg Confession by the Papists (so indispensable for an intelligent study of the Apology, which is its answer); the Variata in its two chief forms; the Official Appendix to the Book of Concord – viz. the Catalog of Testimonies; together with a minute index on the basis of the exhaustive index in Muller.

With all the care that has been taken, the Editor fully expects that errors that have escaped his notice will be occasionally detected. Had he waited until satisfied that his work would be all he could wish, it would never have appeared. All that he claims is that, with all the means at his command, he has made a sincere effort to supply a deeply felt want.

In the hope that it may stimulate a fresh interest in the priceless treasures that are the heritage of the Lutheran Church, and promote their more thorough study, and that it may bear also its part, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, in bringing to a clear understanding of the faith and uniting upon a firmly-grounded scriptural platform our perplexed and divided people, this new edition of the Confessions is, in God's name and for His glory, presented to the American public.

Henry E. Jacobs



Pennsylvania College,  
Gettysburg, Pa., February 27, 1882.

# Preface To The Christian Book Of Concord.

To the readers, one and all, of these writings of ours, we, the Electors, Princes and Deputies of the Holy Roman Empire in Germany, adherents of the Augsburg Confession, who have subscribed our names to the same, announce and declare, according to the dignity and rank of each one, our devotion, friendship and greeting, combined with willing service.

It is a remarkable favor of Almighty God, that, in these last times, and, in this old age of the world, he has willed, according to his unspeakable love, forbearance and mercy, that the light of his Gospel and Word, through which alone we receive true salvation, should arise and shine clearly and purely in Germany, our most beloved fatherland, after the darkness of papistical superstitions. And on this account, indeed, a brief and succinct confession was prepared from the Word of God, and the most holy writings of the Apostles and Prophets, which at the Diet of Augsburg, in the year 1530, was offered, by our most godly ancestors, in the German and Latin languages to the Emperor Charles V., of excellent memory, and was presented to [all] the deputies of the Empire, and finally being circulated publicly among all men professing Christian doctrine, and thus in th entire world,<sup>1</sup> was diffused everywhere, and began to be current in the mouths and speech of all.

Afterwards many churches and schools embraced and defended this confession, as a symbol of the present time in regard to the chief articles of faith, especially those involved in controversy with the Romanists and various corruptions of the heavenly doctrine [sects], and with perpetual agreement have appealed to it without any controversy and doubt. The doctrine comprised in it, which they knew both to be supported by firm testimonies of Scripture, and to be approved by the ancient and received symbols, they have also constantly judged to be the only and perpetual consensus of the truly believing Church, which was formerly defended against manifold heresies and errors, and is now repeated.

But it can be unknown to no one that, immediately after Dr. Martin Luther,<sup>2</sup> that most distinguished hero, endowed with most eminent piety, was removed from human affairs, Germany, our dear fatherland, experienced most perilous

times and most severe agitations. In these difficulties, and in the sad distraction of a government before flourishing and well regulated, the enemy of mortals artfully labored to disseminate in the churches and schools the seeds of false doctrine, and dissensions, to occasion divisions combined with offense, and, by these arts of his, to corrupt the purity of the heavenly doctrine, to separate the bond of Christian love and godly agreement, and to hinder and retard to a greater degree the course of the most holy Gospel. It has also been known to all in what manner, the enemies of the heavenly doctrine seized this opportunity to disparage our churches and schools, to find covering for their errors, to withdraw alarmed erring consciences from the purity of the Gospel doctrine, in order to render them more compliant in bearing and tolerating the yoke of slavery to the Pope, and in embracing also other corruptions conflicting with God's Word.

To us, indeed, nothing could happen, either more agreeable, or which we would judge should be sought for more earnestly and prayerfully from Almighty God, than that both our churches and our schools should persevere in the pure doctrine of God's Word, and in that longed for and godly unanimity of mind, and, as was the case while Luther was still alive, that they should be regulated and be handed down to posterity in a godly and excellent way according to the rule of the divine Word. We notice, however, that, just as in the times of the Apostles, into those churches, in which they themselves had planted the Gospel of Christ, corruptions were introduced by false brethren, so, on account of our sins and the looseness of these times, this has been allowed by an angry God against our churches also.

Wherefore mindful of our duty, which we know has been divinely enjoined upon us, we think that we ought diligently to apply ourselves to the labor of attacking in our provinces and realms<sup>3</sup> the false dogmas which have been disseminated there, and are gradually insinuating themselves as it were into the intimate acquaintance and familiarity of men, and that we should see to it that the subjects in our government may persevere in the straight way of godliness, and in the truth of the heavenly doctrine, acknowledged and thus far retained and defended, and not be suffered to withdraw from it. Accordingly, when in the year of Christ 1558, an opportunity was offered by a diet which was then being held by the Electors at Frankfort on the Main, and the resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote, an effort was made partly by our most worthy predecessors, and also partly by ourselves to hold a special, general assembly, where in a thorough, but nevertheless an amicable manner, there might be a conference among us, concerning such matters as are maliciously presented, by our adversaries, against [us and] our churches and schools.

And indeed after these deliberations, our predecessors, of godly and excellent

memory, together with some of us assembled at Naumburg in Thuringia. The Augsburg Confession of which we have several times made mention, which was offered to the Emperor Charles V., in the great assembly of the Empire at Augsburg in the year 1530, we then took in hands, and to that godly confession, which was built upon solid testimonies of truth unmoved and expressed in the Word of God, we all subscribed with one mind, in order, in this way, to provide for the interests of posterity, and, so far as in us was, to be counselors and advisers for the avoidance of false doctrines conflicting with God's Word. This we did also with the design that, both with his Imperial Majesty, our most clement Lord, and also universally among all there might be a perpetual testimony that it has never been our intention to wish to defend or spread any new and strange dogma, but that we desired, God aiding us, to constantly support and retain the truth which we professed at Augsburg in the year 1530. We were also led to entertain a not uncertain hope, that, in this way, not only those, who oppose the purer evangelical doctrine, would abstain from fabricated charges and accusations, but also other good and wise men would be attracted by this renewed and repeated confession of ours, and, with greater zeal and care, would seek and investigate the truth of the heavenly doctrine, which alone is our guide to salvation; and, for the salvation of the soul, and eternal happiness, would assent to it, all farther controversies and disputations being rejected.

But, not without agitation of mind, we were informed, that this declaration of ours, and that repetition of a godly confession had still little weight with our adversaries, and that neither we nor our churches were delivered from the most grievous slanders arising from prejudice, which they had circulated against us among the people; also, that, by the adversaries of the true religion, those things which we have done, with the best intention and purpose, have been received in such a way, as though we were so uncertain concerning our religion [confession of faith and religion], and so often have transfused it from one formula to another, that it is no longer clear to us, or our theologians what is the confession once offered to the Emperor at Augsburg. These fictions of the adversaries have deterred and alienated many good men, from our churches, schools, doctrine, faith and confession. To these injuries, there is also added that, under the pretext of the Augsburg Confession, the dogma conflicting with the institution of the Holy Supper of the body and blood of Christ and other corruptions, were also introduced here and there into the churches and schools.

When some godly men, lovers of peace and harmony, besides also learned theologians, had noticed all these things, they judged that these slanders and the dissensions in religion which were constantly increasing more and more, could not be better met than If from the Word of God, the controverted articles would

be thoroughly and accurately explained, the false dogmas would be rejected and condemned, and, on the other hand, the truth divinely delivered would be clearly and lucidly presented; so that they persuaded themselves that, by this method, both silence could be imposed upon the adversaries, and a sure way and plan be shown the more simple and godly, as to how in these dissensions they could act, and also, in the future, aided by divine grace, could avoid corruptions of doctrine.

In the beginning, therefore, the theologians communicated to one another certain writings concerning this subject, sufficiently comprehensive, and derived from the Word of God, in which they showed clearly and skilfully how these controversies were connected with offense to the churches, and could be settled and removed from sight without any loss to the truth of the Gospel; for the result would be that the opportunities and pretexts sought for slander would be cut off and removed from the adversaries. Finally they accurately and in God's fear pondered and explained the controverted articles taken in hand, and accordingly in a special writing described in what way and by what methods the dissensions which had arisen could be settled in a right and godly manner.

Having been informed of this godly purpose of the theologians, we have not only approved it, but have also judged that it ought to be promoted by us with great earnestness and zeal, according to the nature of the office and duty divinely committed to us.

And accordingly, we, by the grace of God, Duke of Saxony, Elector, etc. after a council held with some other electors and princes agreeing with us in religion, for the purpose of promoting the godly design of harmony among the teachers of the Church, summoned to Torgau in the year 1576 certain eminent and least suspected theologians who were also experienced and endowed with preeminent learning. When they had assembled, they conferred devoutly with one another concerning the controverted articles and the writing of pacification, which we mentioned shortly before. And indeed prayers first having been offered to Almighty God, and his praise and glory, they then with extraordinary care and diligence, (the Spirit of the Lord aiding them by his grace), embraced in a document in the best and most convenient order, all those things which seemed to pertain and to be required for this deliberation. Afterwards this book was transmitted to some chief adherents of the Augsburg Confession, Elector's, Princes and Deputies, and they were requested, with the aid of the most eminent and most learned theologians, to read it with anxious care and godly zeal, to diligently examine it, and to commit their opinion and criticism upon it to writing, and finally, to express their judgment and the reasons therefor concerning it collectively and taken part by part.

Therefore when we had received these criticisms we found in them many godly and useful suggestions, as to how the transmitted declaration of the pure Christian doctrine could be fortified and strengthened against corruptions and perversions, by the testimonies of Holy Scripture, in order that in the progress of time, under pretext of this, godless doctrines may not be concealed, but an uncorrupt declaration of the pure truth may be transmitted to posterity. Therefore out of those things which have come to us after having been considered in the best manner, that book of godly concord, of which we spoke, was composed, and the form in which it will be submitted, was completed.

Afterwards some of our rank (for at that time, on account of certain causes which prevented, not all of us, nor also some others, were able to do this), have caused this book to be recited article by article and distinctly to the theologians, and the ministers of the church and of the schools collectively and individually, and have caused them to be excited to a diligent and accurate consideration of those parts of the doctrine, which is contained in it.

When, therefore, they noticed that the declaration of the controverted articles agreed especially with the Word of God, and then with the Augsburg Confession, with the most ready mind and the testimony of their gratitude towards God, they received this Book of Concord, voluntarily and accurately pondered and considered, as expressing the godly and genuine meaning of the Augsburg Confession, approved it and subscribed to it, and publicly bore witness concerning it with heart, mouth and hand Wherefore that godly agreement is called and perpetually will be not only the harmonious and concordant confession of some few of our theologians, but, in general, of the ministers of our churches and rectors of schools, one and all. in our provinces and realms.

Because, indeed, the conferences of our predecessors and ourselves, first at Frankfort on the Main, and afterward at Naumburg, undertaken with a godly and sincere intention, and recorded in writing not only did not accomplish that end and pacification which was desired, but from them even a defense for errors and false doctrines was sought by some, while it had never entered our mind, by this writing of ours, either to introduce, extenuate and establish any false doctrine, or in the least even to recede from the Confession presented in the year 1530 at Augsburg, but rather as many of us as participated in the transactions at Naumburg reserved it to ourselves, and promised besides, that if, in the course of time, anything would be desired with respect to the Augsburg Confession, or as often as necessity would seem to demand it, we would farther declare all things thoroughly and at length, yet for this reason, with great and godly agreement we have elaborated in this Book of Concord, a declaration of our constant and perpetual wish, and a repetition of our Christian faith and confession.



Accordingly, in order that no persons may permit themselves to be disturbed by the charges of our adversaries fabricated, according to their nature, by which they boast that there is agreement not even among us as to what is the true and genuine Augsburg Confession, but that both those who are now among the living, and posterity also may be clearly and thoroughly taught and informed what that godly confession is, which both we and the churches and schools of our realms at all times professed and embraced; after the pure and immutable truth of God's Word, we emphatically testify, that we wish to embrace the first Augsburg Confession alone which was presented to the Emperor Charles V. in the year 1530, at the famous Diet of Augsburg, (alone we say), and no other, copies of which deposited in the archives of our predecessors, of excellent memory, who presented it in the Diet to Charles V. himself, we caused to be compared by men worthy of confidence (lest in us something with respect to most accurate regard for diligence, would be wanting) with the copy which was presented to the Emperor himself, and is preserved in the archives of the Holy Roman Empire, and we are sure that our copies, both the Latin and the German, in all things correspond to it, with like meaning. For this reason also, we determined to add the confession then presented to our declaration, which will be subjoined to these, as to the Book of Concord, in order that all may understand that, in our realms, churches and schools, we have resolved to tolerate no other doctrine, than that which, in the year 1530, was approved at Augsburg in a fixed confession, by the above mentioned electors, princes and estates of the Empire. This Confession also, by the help of God, we will retain to our last breath, when we shall go forth from this life to the heavenly country, to appear with joyful and undaunted mind, and with a pure conscience, before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope, therefore, that our adversaries will hereafter spare both us and the ministers of our churches, and not employ these customary and most grievous accusations, that among ourselves we cannot decide upon anything, concerning our faith, as certain, and that, on this account, we are fabricating new confessions almost every year, yea indeed every month.

Moreover, as to the second edition of the Augsburg Confession of which mention was made also in the transactions at Naumburg, we notice, what is also known to all, that, under the pretext of the words of this latter edition, some have wished to cover and conceal corruptions, with respect to the Lord's Supper, and other errors, and, by, means of published writings, have attempted to obtrude them upon an ignorant populace, nor have been moved by the distinct words of the Augsburg Confession, (which was first presented), by which these errors are openly rejected, and from which a far different judgment than they wish can be drawn. Therefore we have desired in this writing to testify publicly and to inform

all that we wished not even then or now in any way to defend, or excuse, or to approve as though agreeing with the Gospel doctrine, false and godless doctrines and opinions, which may lie concealed under certain coverings of words. We indeed never received the latter edition in the sense that it differed, in any part, from the former which was presented. Neither do we judge that other useful writings of Dr. Philip Melanchthon, or of Brentz, Urban Rhegius, Pomeranus, etc., should be rejected and condemned, so far as, in all things, they agree with the norm which has been set forth in the Book of Concord.

Although, however, some theologians, and among them, Luther himself, when they treated of the Lord's Supper, were drawn, against their will, by their adversaries to disputations concerning the personal union of the two natures in Christ; nevertheless our theologians in the Book of Concord, and in the norm of sound doctrine which is in it, testify that both our opinion and that of this book is constant and perpetual, that godly men should be led, with regard to the Lord's Supper, to no other foundations than to those of the words of institution of the testament of our Lord Jesus Christ. For since he is both almighty and true, it is easy for him to do those things which he has both instituted and promised in his Word. And indeed when this foundation will not be assailed by the adversaries, they will not contend in this kind of argument concerning other methods of proof, but, in true simplicity of faith, will firmly insist upon the very plain words of Christ, which method is the safest and is best suited to the instruction of uneducated men; for those things which are discussed with greater exactness, they do not understand. But indeed since both this our assertion and the simple meaning of the words of Christ's testament are assailed by the adversaries, and rejected as godless and conflicting with the nature of true faith, and finally are affirmed to be contrary to the Apostles' Creed (especially concerning the incarnation of the Son of God, his ascension into Heaven, and his sitting at the right hand of the almighty power and majesty of God) and therefore to be false, it is incumbent upon us to show, by a true and thorough interpretation of these articles, that this opinion of ours differs neither from the words of Christ, nor from these articles.

As to the phrases and forms of expression, employed in this Book of Concord, when we treat of the Majesty of the Human Nature in the person of Christ elevated and placed at the right hand of God, in order to remove all suspicions and causes of offense, which might be occasioned from the different significations of the word *abstract* (as both the schools and the fathers have hitherto employed this term), our theologians in distinct and express words wish to testify that this majesty is in no way to be ascribed to the human nature of Christ, outside of the personal union, neither are we to grant that the human

nature possesses this majesty, as its own, or by itself, (even in the personal union) essentially, formally, habitually, subjectively. (These terms please the schools, although they are not good Latin). For if we would hold to this method both of speaking and teaching, the divine and human natures with their properties would be confounded, and the human, with respect to its essence and properties would be made equal to the divine, yea indeed would be altogether denied. Therefore the theologians judge that we ought to believe that this occurs according to the method and economy of the hypostatic union, as learned antiquity has taught cautiously concerning this subject, that it is a mystery so great as to exceed all the powers of our natural ability and understanding.

As' to the condemnations,<sup>4</sup> censures and rejections of godless doctrines, and especially of that which has arisen concerning the Lord's Supper, in this our declaration, and thorough explanation and decision of controverted articles, these indeed should have been expressly set forth, not only that all should guard against these condemned doctrines, but also for certain other reasons, could in no way have been passed by. Thus as it is in no way our design and purpose to condemn those men who err from a certain simplicity of mind, and nevertheless are not blasphemers against the truth of the heavenly doctrine, much less indeed entire churches, which are either under the Roman Empire of the German nation, or elsewhere; nay, rather it has been our intention and disposition, in this manner, to openly censure and condemn only the fanatical opinions and their obstinate and blasphemous teachers (which we judge should in no way be tolerated in our dominions, churches and schools), because these errors conflict with the express Word of God, and that too in such a way that they cannot be reconciled with it. We have also undertaken this for this reason, viz. that all godly persons might be warned concerning diligently avoiding them. For we have no doubt whatever that, even in those churches which have hitherto not agreed with us in all things, many godly and by no means wicked men are found, who follow their own simplicity, and do not understand aright the matter itself, but in no way approve the blasphemies which are cast forth against the Holy Supper, as it is administered in our churches, according to Christ's institution, and with the unanimous approval of all good men, is taught in accordance with the words of the testament itself. We are also in great hope, that if they would be taught aright concerning all these things, the Spirit of the Lord aiding them, they would agree with us, and with our churches and schools, to the infallible truth of God's Word. And assuredly the duty is especially incumbent upon all the theologians and ministers of the Church, that with such moderation, as is becoming, they teach also from the Word of God those who either from a certain simplicity or ignorance have erred from the truth, concerning the peril of their salvation, and

that they fortify them against corruptions, lest perhaps, while the blind are leaders of the blind, all may perish. Wherefore, by this writing of ours, we testify in the sight of Almighty God, and before the entire Church, that it has never been our purpose, by means of this godly formula for union to occasion trouble or danger to the godly who today are suffering persecution. For as moved by Christian love, we have already entered into the fellowship of grief with them, so we are shocked at the persecution and most grievous tyranny which with such severity is exercised against these poor men, and sincerely detest it. For in no way do we consent to the shedding of that innocent blood, for which undoubtedly a reckoning will be demanded with great severity from the persecutors at the awful judgment of the Lord, and before the tribunal of Christ, and they will then certainly render a most strict account, and suffer fearful punishment.

In regard to these matters (as we have mentioned above) it has always been our intention that in our lands, dominions, schools and churches no other doctrine be proclaimed and accurately set forth, than that which founded upon the Word of God, is contained in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology (and that too when understood properly in its genuine sense), and that opinion conflicting with these be not admitted; and indeed, with this design, this formula of agreement was begun and completed. Therefore before God and all mortals, we once more declare and testify that in the declaration of the controverted articles, of which mention has already been made several times, we are not introducing a new confession, or one different from that which was presented in the year 1530, to Charles V., of happy memory, but that we wished to conduct our churches and schools first of all indeed to the fountains of Holy Scripture, and to the Creeds, and then to the Augsburg Confession, of which we have before made mention. We most earnestly exhort that especially the youth, who are being educated for the holy ministry of the churches and schools, be instructed in this faithfully and diligently, in order that the pure doctrine and profession of our faith may be preserved and propagated also, by the help of the Holy Ghost, to our posterity, until the glorious advent of Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer and Saviour.

Since therefore such is the case, and being instructed from the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, we are sure concerning our doctrine and confession, and, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, our minds and consciences have been confirmed to a greater degree, we have thought that this Book of Concord ought to be published. For it seemed exceedingly necessary, that, amidst so many errors that had arisen in our times, as well as causes of offense, variances and these long-continued dissensions, a godly explanation and agreement concerning all these

controversies, derived from God's Word, should exist, according to which the pure doctrine might be discriminated and separated from the false. Besides this matter is of importance also in this respect, viz. that troublesome and contentious men, who do not suffer themselves to be bound to any formula of the purer doctrine, may not have the liberty, according to their good pleasure, to excite controversies which furnish ground for offense, and to publish and contend for extravagant opinions. For the result of these things, at length, is that the purer doctrine is obscured and lost, and nothing is transmitted to posterity except academical opinions and suspensions of judgment. To these considerations this was also added that with respect to the office committed to us by God, we understand that we owe our subjects this, viz. that we should diligently care for the things which pertain to this life and the life to come, and that we should take pains, with the greatest earnestness and to our utmost ability to attend to those matters which promote the extension of God's name and glory, the propagation of his word (from which alone we hope for salvation), the peace and tranquility of churches and schools, and the instruction and consolation of disturbed consciences. Especially since it is so clearly manifest to us, that this salutary work of Christian concord has already been longed for and expected with anxious prayers and the greatest desire by many good and sincere men of both the highest and the lowest rank. For from the beginning of this work of pacification, we have not indeed been of the opinion, neither are we even now, that this work of concord which is so salutary and exceedingly necessary should be removed from the eyes of men, and altogether concealed, and that the light of heavenly truth should be placed under a bushel or table; wherefore we ought in no wise to defer its publication. Nor do we doubt that all the godly, who are lovers of the heavenly truth, and of concord pleasing to God, will approve, together with us, of this salutary, useful, godly and very necessary undertaking, and that they will act so that nothing may be wanting in them, even to the greatest effort, whereby the glory of God, and the common welfare in both temporal and eternal things, may be promoted.

We indeed (to repeat in conclusion what we have mentioned several times above) have wished, in this work of concord, in no way to devise what is new, or to depart from the truth of the heavenly doctrine, which our ancestors, renowned for their piety, as well as we ourselves, have acknowledged and professed. We mean that doctrine, which having been derived from the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, is contained in the three ancient creeds, in the Augsburg Confession presented in the year 1530 to the emperor Charles V., of excellent memory, then in the Apology which was added to this, in the Smalcald Articles, and lastly in both the catechisms of that excellent man. Dr. Luther. Therefore we also have

determined not to depart even a finger's breadth either from the things themselves, or from the phrases which are employed concerning them, but, the Spirit of the Lord aiding us, to persevere constantly, with the greatest harmony, in this godly agreement, and we intend to examine all controversies according to this true norm and declaration of the purer doctrine. Then, also with the rest of the electors, princes and estates of the Holy Roman Empire, and other kings, princes and magnates of the Christian state, in accordance with the constitution of the Holy Empire, and the agreements which we have with them, we determined and desired to cultivate peace and harmony, and to render to each one, according to his rank, all duties belonging to us, together with the offices of friendship.

Besides in our deliberations we will also earnestly apply ourselves to the defense, with great strictness and the most ardent zeal, of this work of concord, by diligent visitations of the churches and schools, oversight of printing-offices, and other salutary means, according to occasions and circumstances which may be offered to ourselves and others. We will also take pains, if either controversies already composed should be renewed, or new controversies concerning religion should arise, to remove and settle them, for the purpose of avoiding offense, without longer and dangerous digressions.

As a manifest testimony of this, we have with great consent subscribed our names, and attached also our seals:

Lewis, Count Palatine on the Rhine, Elector.

Augustus, Duke of Saxony, Elector.

John George, Margrave of Brandenburg, Elector.

Joachim Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg, Administrator of the  
Archbishopric of Magdeburg.

John, Bishop of Meissen.

Eberhard, Bishop of Lübeck, Administrator of the Episcopate of Werden.

Philip Louis, Count Palatine on the Rhine.

The guardians of Frederick William and John, Dukes of Saxony.

The guardians of John Casimir and John Ernest, Dukes of Saxony.



George Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg.

Julius, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg.

Otho, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg.

Henry the Younger, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg.

William the Younger, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg.

Wolfgang, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg.

Ulrich, Duke of Mecklenburg.

The guardians of John and Sigismund Augustus, Dukes of Mecklenburg.

Lewis, Duke of Würtemberg.

The guardians of Ernest and Jacob, Margraves of Baden.

George Ernest, Count and Lord of Henneburg.

Frederick, Count of Würtemberg and Mümpelgart.

John Gunther, Count of Schwartzburg.

William, Count of Schwartzburg.

Albert, Count of Schwartzburg.

Emich, Count of Leiningen.

Philip, Count of Hanau.

Gottfried, Count of Oettingen.

George, Count and Lord in Castel.

Henry, Count and Lord in Castel.

Otho, Count of Hoya and Burgkhausen.

John, Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst.

John Hoier, Count of Mansfeld.

Bruno, Count of Mansfeld.

Hoier Christopher, Count of Mansfeld.

Pfter Ernest, Jr., Count of Mansfeld.

Christopher, Count of Mansfeld.

Albert George, Count of Stolberg.

Wolfgang Ernest, Count of Stolberg.

Lewis, Count of Gleichen.

Charles, Count of Gleichen.

Ernest, Count of Reinstein.

Boto, Count of Reinstein.

Lewis, Count of Lewenstein.

Henry, Baron of Limburg, *semperfrei*.

George, Baron of Schönburg.

Wolfgang, Baron of Schönburg.

Anarc Frederick, Baron of Wildenfels.

Mayor and Council of the City of Lübeck.

Mayor and Council of the City of Lüneburg.

Council of the City of Brunswick.

Mayor and Council of the City of Landau.

Mayor and Council of the City of Munster in the Gregorian Valley.

Council of the City of Goslar.

Mayor and Council of the City of Ulm.

Mayor and Council of the City of Esslingen.

Council of the City of Reutlingen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Nördlingen.

Mayor and Council of Rothenburg on the Tauber.

Mayor and Council of the City of Hall in Swabia.

Mayor and Council of the City of Heilbronn.

Mayor and Council of the City of Memmingen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Lindau.

Mayor and Council of the City of Schweinfurt.

Council of the City of Donauwörth.

Chamberlain and Council of the City of Regensburg

Mayor and Council of the City of Wimpfen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Giengen.

Mayor and Council of Bopfingen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Alen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Kaufbeuren.

Mayor and Council of the City of Isna.

Mayor and Council of the City of Kempten.

Council of the City of Gottingen.

Mayor and Council of the City of Leutkirch.

The entire Government of the City of Hildesheim.

Mayor and Council of the City of Hameln.

Mayor and Councilmen of the City of Hanover.

Council of Mühlhausen.

Council of Erfurt.

Council of the City of Eimbeck.

Council of the City of Nordheim.

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1. Commented on in Carpzov's *Introduction* p. 14.↩
  2. Cf. Title-page. See Carpzov, p. 16.↩
  3. See Carpzov, p. 16.↩
  4. See Carpzov, p. 25.↩

# **Part I. The General Creeds: The Apostles' Creed. The Nicene Creed. The Athanasian Creed.**

## **1. The Apostles' Creed.**

- [1] I Believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
- [2] And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
- [3] Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
- [4] Born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried:
- [5] He descended into Hell, the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven. And sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
- [6] From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead
- [7] I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic [CHRISTIAN] Church, the Communion of Saints; The forgiveness of sins;
- [8] The Resurrection of the body, And the life everlasting. Amen.

## **2. The Nicene Creed.**

- [1] I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And of all things visible and invisible.
- [2] And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God.
- [3] Begotten of his Father, before all Worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made. Being of one Substance with the Father; By whom all things were made,
- [4] Who for us men, and for our salvation came down from heaven. And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man,
- [5] And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, And

ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father.

[6] And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end.

[7] And I believe in the Holy Ghost, The Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.

[8] And I believe in one holy, Catholic [CHRISTIAN] and Apostolic Church.

[9] I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

[10] And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **3. The Athanasian Creed. [WRITTEN AGAINST THE ARIANS.]**

[1] Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic [TRUE CHRISTIAN] faith,

[2] Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

[3] And the Catholic [TRUE CHRISTIAN] faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;

[4] Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Substance.

[6] For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost.

[6] But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the Glory Equal, the Majesty Coeternal.

[7] Such as the Father is, such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.

[8] The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

[9] The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible.

[10] The Father eternal, the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal.

[11] And yet they are not three Eternals: but one Eternal.

[12] As there are not three uncreated, nor three incomprehensibles: but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

[13] So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty: and the Holy Ghost Almighty.

[14] And yet they are not three Almighties: but one Almighty.

[15] So the Father is God, the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God.

- [16] And yet they are not three Gods: but one God.
- [17] So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord.
- [18] And yet not three Lords: but one Lord.
- [19] For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the Catholic [CHRISTIAN] Religion: to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords.
- [20] The Father is made of none: neither created nor begotten.
- [21] The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.
- [22] The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
- [23] So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts.
- [24] And in this Trinity none is before, or after other: none is greater, or less than another;
- [25] But the whole three Persons are coeternal together, and coequal: So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.
- [26] He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.
- [27] Furthermore, it is necessary to Everlasting Salvation: that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- [28] For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;
- [29] God, of the Substance of the Father begotten before the worlds: and Man of the Substance of his mother, born in the world;
- [30] Perfect God, and perfect Man: of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
- [31] Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead: and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood.
- [32] Who although he be God and Man: yet he is not two, but one Christ;
- [33] One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh: but by taking the Manhood into God;
- [34] One altogether; not by confusion of Substance: but by Unity of Person.
- [35] For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man: so God and Man is one Christ;
- [36] Who suffered for our salvation: descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.
- [37] He ascended into heaven; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
- [38] At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies: and shall give

account for their own works.

[39] And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting: and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.

[40] This is the Catholic [TRUE CHRISTIAN] faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.



# Part II. The Augsburg Confession

*Delivered To The Emperor Charles V., At The Diet Of Augsburg, A. D. 1530.*

*This Translation is made from the Latin Editio Princeps of 1530-31, the authority of which, equally with that of the German EDITIO PRINCEPS, surpasses all other known Editions. It has been carefully prepared by a Joint Committee of The General Council, The General Synod, The United Synod of the South, and the Joint Synod of Ohio, as a Common Standard of The Augsburg Confession in English. The words in brackets are inserted from the German EDITIO PRINCEPS.]*

## Preface.

[35] Most Invincible Emperor, Caesar Augustus, most Clement Lord:

Inasmuch as Your Imperial Majesty has summoned a Diet of the Empire here at Augsburg to deliberate concerning measures against the Turk, that most atrocious, hereditary and ancient enemy of the Christian name and religion, in what way effectually to withstand his furor and assaults by strong and lasting military provision; and then also concerning dissensions in the matter of our holy religion and Christian Faith, that in this matter of religion the opinions and judgments of parties might be heard in each other's presence, and considered and weighed among ourselves in charity, leniency and mutual kindness, to the end that the things in the Scriptures which on either side have been differently interpreted or misunderstood, being corrected and laid aside, these matters may be settled and brought back to one perfect truth and Christian concord, that for the future one pure and true religion may be embraced and maintained by us, that as we all serve and do battle under one Christ, so we may be able also to live in unity and concord in the one Christian Church. And inasmuch as we, the undersigned Electors and Princes, with others joined with us, have been called to the aforesaid Diet, the same as the other Electors, Princes and Estates, in obedient compliance with the Imperial mandate we have come to Augsburg, and, what we do not mean to say as boasting, we were among the first to be here.

Since then Your Imperial Majesty caused to be proposed to the Electors, Princes and other Estates of the Empire, also here at Augsburg at the very

beginning of this Diet, among other things, that, by virtue of the Imperial Edict, the several Estates of the Empire should present their opinions and judgments in the German and Latin languages, after due deliberation, answer was given to Your Imperial Majesty, on the ensuing Wednesday, that on the next Friday the Articles of our Confession for our part would be presented.

[36] Wherefore, in obedience to Your Imperial Majesty's wishes, we offer, in this matter of religion, the Confession of our preachers and of ourselves, showing what manner of doctrine from the Holy Scriptures and the pure Word of God has been up to this time set forth in our lands, dukedoms, dominions and cities, and taught in our churches. And if the other Electors, Princes and Estates of the Empire will present similar writings, to wit, in Latin and German, according to the said Imperial proposition, giving their opinions in this matter of religion, here before Your Imperial Majesty, our most clement Lord, we, with the Princes and friends aforesaid, are prepared to confer amicably concerning all possible ways and means, as far as may be honorably done, that we may come together, and, the matter between us on both sides being peacefully discussed without offensive strife, the dissension, by God's help, may be done away and brought back to one true accordant religion; for as we all serve and do battle under one Christ, we ought to confess the one Christ, and so, after the tenor of Your Imperial Majesty's Edict, everything be conducted according to the truth of God, which, with most fervent prayers, we entreat of God.

But, with regard to the other Electors, Princes and Estates, if they hold that this treatment of the matter of religion after the manner which Your Imperial Majesty has so wisely brought forward, namely, with such mutual presentation of writings and calm conferring together among ourselves, should not proceed, or be unfruitful in results; we, at least, leave behind the clear testimony that we decline or refuse nothing whatever, allowed of God and a good conscience, which may tend to bring about Christian concord; as also Your Imperial Majesty and the other Electors and Estates of the Empire, and all who are moved by sincere love and zeal for religion, and who will give an impartial hearing to this matter, will graciously perceive and more and more understand from this our Confession.

[37] Your Imperial Majesty also, not only once but often, graciously signified to the Electors, Princes and Estates of the Empire, and at the Diet of Spires held A. D. 1526, according to the form of Your Imperial instruction and commission given and prescribed, caused it to be stated and publicly proclaimed, that Your Majesty, in dealing with this matter of religion, for certain reasons which were alleged in Your Majesty's name, was not willing to decide and could not determine anything, but that Your Majesty would diligently use Your Majesty's

office with the Roman Pontiff for the convening of a General Council, as the same was publicly set forth at greater length over a year ago at the last Diet which met at Spire. There Your Imperial Majesty, through his Highness Ferdinand, King of Bohemia and Hungary, our friend and clement Lord, as well as through the Orator and Imperial Commissioners, caused this, among other things, to be proclaimed: that Your Imperial Majesty had known of and pondered the resolution of Your Majesty's Representative in the Empire, and of the President and Imperial Counsellors, and the Legates from other Estates convened at Ratisbon, concerning the calling of a Council, and that this also was adjudged by Your Imperial Majesty to be of advantage; and because the matters to be adjusted between Your Imperial Majesty and the Roman Pontiff were nearing agreement and Christian reconciliation, Your Imperial Majesty did not doubt that the Roman Pontiff could be induced to hold a General Council; therefore Your Imperial Majesty himself signified that he would endeavor to secure the Chief Pontiff's consent together with Your Imperial Majesty to convene such General Council, and that letters to that effect would be publicly issued with all possible expedition.

In the event, therefore, that the differences between us and the other parties in the matter of religion cannot be amicably and in charity settled here before Your Imperial Majesty, we offer this in all obedience, abundantly prepared to join issue and to defend the cause in such a general, free, Christian Council, for the convening of which there has always been accordant action and agreement of votes in all the Imperial Diets held during Your Majesty's reign, on the part of the Electors, Princes and other Estates of the Empire. To this General Council, and at the same time to Your Imperial Majesty, we have made appeal in this greatest and gravest of matters even before this in due manner and form of law. To this appeal, both to Your Imperial Majesty and to a Council, we still adhere, neither do we intend, nor would it be possible for us, to relinquish it by this or any other document, unless the matter between us and the other side, according to the tenor of the latest Imperial citation, can be amicably and charitably settled and brought to Christian concord, of which this also is our solemn and public testimony.

## **I. Chief Articles of Faith.**

### **Article I. Of God.**

[38] Our Churches, with common consent, do teach, that the decree of the

Council of Nicaea concerning the Unity of the Divine Essence and concerning the Three Persons, is true and to be believed without any doubting; that is to say, there is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet that there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the term “person” they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies which have sprung up against this article, as the Manichaeans who assumed two principles [gods], one Good, and the other Evil; also the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such. They condemn also the Samosatenes, old and new, who contending that there is but one Person, sophistically and impiously argue that the Word and the Holy Ghost are not distinct Persons, but that “Word” signifies a spoken word, and “Spirit” [Ghost] signifies motion created in things.

## **Article II. Of Original Sin.**

[39] Also they teach, that since the Fall of Adam, all men begotten according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost.

They condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that the vice of origin is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.

## **Article III. Of the Son of God.**

Also they teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did take man’s nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are Two Natures, the divine and the human, inseparably conjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, that he might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but for all actual sins of men. He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward he ascended into Heaven, that he might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign, and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy

Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

#### **Article IV. Of Justification.**

Also they teach, that men cannot be Justified before God by their own strength, merits or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, hath made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in his sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

#### **Article V. Of the Ministry of the Church.**

That we may obtain this faith, the Office of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justified those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake.

[40] They condemn the Anabaptists and others, who think that the Holy Ghost cometh to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.

#### **Article VI. Of New Obedience.**

Also they teach, that this Faith is bound to bring forth Good Fruits, and that it is necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will, but not that we should rely on those works to merit justification before God. For remission of sins and justification are apprehended by faith, as also the voice of Christ attests: "When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants" [Luke 17:10]. The same is also taught by the Fathers. For Ambrose says: "It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ, is saved; freely receiving remission of sins, without works, by faith alone."

#### **Article VII. Of the Church.**

Also they teach, that One holy Church is to continue for ever, The Church is the

congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments, nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: “One faith one baptism, one God and Father of all,” etc. [Eph. 4:5, 6].

## **Article VIII. What the Church Is.**

Although the Church properly is the Congregation of Saints and true believers, nevertheless, since, in this life, many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled therewith, it is lawful to use the Sacraments, which are administered by evil men; according to the saying of Christ: “The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat,” etc. [Matt. 23:2]. Both the Sacraments and Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men.

They condemn the Donatists, and such like, who denied it to be lawful to use the ministry of evil men in the Church, and who thought the ministry of evil men to be unprofitable and of none effect.

## **Article IX. Of Baptism.**

[41] Of Baptism, they teach, that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God; and that children are to be baptized, who, being offered to God through Baptism, are received into His grace.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who allow not the Baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.

## **Article X. Of the Lord’s Supper.**

Of the Supper of the Lord, they teach, that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord; and they disapprove of those that teach otherwise.

## **Article XI. Of Confession.**

Of Confession, they teach, that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For

it is impossible, according to the Psalm: “Who can understand his errors?” [Ps. 19:12].

## **Article XII. Of Repentance.**

Of Repentance, they teach, that for those that have fallen after Baptism, there is remission of sins whenever they are converted; and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance.

Now repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which, born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that, for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost. Also those who contend that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin. The Novatians also are condemned, who would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance. They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins cometh through faith, but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own.

## **Article XIII. Of the Use of Sacraments.**

Of the Use of the Sacraments, they teach, that the Sacraments were ordained, not only to be marks of profession among men, but rather to be signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them. Wherefore we must so use the Sacraments that faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the Sacraments justify by the outward act, and do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

## **Article XIV. Of Ecclesiastical Order.**

Of Ecclesiastical Order, they teach, that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments, unless he be regularly called.

## **Article XV. Of Ecclesiastical Rites.**

Of Rites and Usages in the Church, they teach, that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquility and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like.

Nevertheless, concerning such things, let men be admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation. They are admonished also that human traditions instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

## **Article XVI. Of Civil Matters.**

Of Civil Affairs, they teach, that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to determine matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry, to be given in marriage.

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians. They condemn also those who do not place the perfection of the Gospel in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices; for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but especially requires their preservation as ordinances of God, and in such ordinances the exercise of charity. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws, save only when commanded to sin, for then they ought to obey God rather than men [Acts 6:29].

## **Article XVII. Of the Return of Christ to Judgment.**

[43] Also they teach, that, at the Consummation of the World, Christ shall appear for judgment, and shall raise up all the dead; he shall give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joys, but ungodly men and the devils he shall condemn to be tormented without end.

They condemn the Anabaptists who think that there will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils. They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being



everywhere suppressed [exterminated].

## **Article XVIII. Of Free Will.**

Of the Freedom of the Will, they teach, that man's will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness, and for the choice of things subject to reason. Nevertheless, it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God [1 Cor. 2:14]; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his *Hypognosticon*, book iii.: "We grant that all men have a certain freedom of will in judging according to [natural] reason; not such freedom, however, whereby it is capable, without God, either to begin, or much less to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. 'Good,' I call those works which spring from the good in Nature, that is, to have a will to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry, to keep cattle, to learn divers useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life, none of which things are without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their beginning. 'Evil,' I call such works as to have a will to worship an idol, to commit murder," etc.

They condemn the Pelagians and others who teach that, without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching "the substance of the act."

[44] For, although nature is able in some sort to do the outward work (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder), yet it cannot work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

## **Article XIX. Of the Cause of Sin.**

Of the Cause of Sin, they teach, that although God doth create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says [John 8:44]: "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own."

## **Article XX. Of Faith and Good Works.**

Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding Good Works. For their published

writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what estates of life and what works in every calling be pleasing to God. Concerning these things preachers heretofore taught but little, and urged only childish and needless works, as particular holy days, particular fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, services in honor of saints, the use of rosaries, monasticism, and such like. Since our adversaries have been admonished of these things they are now unlearning them, and do not preach these unprofitable works as heretofore. Besides they begin to mention faith, of which there was heretofore marvelous silence. They teach that we are justified not by works only, but they conjoin faith and works, and say that we are justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than the former one, and can afford more consolation than their old doctrine.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the doctrine concerning faith, which ought to be the chief one in the church, has lain so long unknown, as all must needs grant that there was the deepest silence in their sermons concerning the righteousness of faith, while only the doctrine of works was treated in the churches, our teachers have instructed the churches concerning faith as follows:

[45] First, that our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins, grace and justification, but that we obtain this only by faith, when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone has been set forth the Mediator and Propitiation [1 Tim. 2:5], in order that the Father may be reconciled through Him. Whoever, therefore, trusts that by works he merits grace, despises the merit and grace of Christ, and seeks a way to God without Christ, by human strength, although Christ has said of himself; "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" [John 14:6].

This doctrine concerning faith is everywhere treated by Paul [Eph. 2:8]: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works," etc.

And lest anyone should craftily say that a new interpretation of Paul has been devised by us, this entire matter is supported by the testimonies of the Fathers. For Augustine, in many volumes, defends grace and the righteousness of faith, over against the merits of works. And Ambrose, in his *De Vocatione Gentium*, and elsewhere, teaches to like effect. For in his *De Vocatione Gentium* he says as follows: "Redemption by the Blood of Christ would become of little value, neither would the preeminence of man's works be superseded by the mercy of God, if justification, which is wrought through grace, were due to the merits going before, so as to be, not the free gift of a donor, but the reward due to the laborer."

But, although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, nevertheless God-fearing and anxious consciences find by experience that it brings the greatest consolation, because consciences cannot be pacified through any works, but only by faith, when they are sure that, for Christ's sake, they have a gracious God. As Paul teaches [Rom. 5:1]: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This whole doctrine is to be referred to that conflict of the terrified conscience; neither can it be understood apart from that conflict. Therefore inexperienced and profane men judge ill concerning this matter, who dream that Christian righteousness is nothing but the civil righteousness of natural reason.

Heretofore consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works, nor did they hear any consolation from the Gospel. Some persons were driven by conscience into the desert, into monasteries, hoping there to merit grace by a monastic life. Some also devised other works whereby to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. There was very great need to treat of and renew this doctrine of faith in Christ, to the end that anxious consciences should not be without consolation, but that they might know that grace and forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith in Christ.

[46] Men are also admonished that here the term "faith" doth not signify merely the knowledge of the history, such as is in the ungodly and in the devil, but signifieth a faith which believes, not merely the history, but also the effect of the history — namely, this article of the forgiveness of sins, to wit, that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins, through Christ.

Now he that knoweth that he has a Father reconciled to him through Christ, since he truly knows God, knows also that God careth for him, and calls upon God; in a word, he is not without God, as the heathen. For devils and the ungodly are not able to believe this article of the forgiveness of sins. Hence, they hate God as an enemy; call not upon Him; and expect no good from Him. Augustine also admonishes his readers concerning the word "faith," and teaches that the term "faith" is accepted in the Scriptures, not for knowledge such as is in the ungodly, but for confidence which consoles and encourages the terrified mind.

Furthermore, it is taught on our part, that it is necessary to do good works, not that we should trust to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins and grace are apprehended. And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. For Ambrose says: "Faith is the mother of a good will and right doing. For man's powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God's sight. Besides, they are in the power of the devil, who

impels men to divers sins, to ungodly opinions, to open crimes. This we may see in the philosophers, who, although they endeavored to live an honest life, could not succeed, but were defiled with many open crimes. Such is the feebleness of man, when he is without faith and without the Holy Ghost, and governs himself only by human strength.

Hence it may be readily seen that this doctrine is not to be charged with prohibiting good works, but rather the more to be commended, because it shows how we are enabled to do good works. For without faith, human nature can in no wise do the works of the First or of the Second Commandment. Without faith, it does not call upon God, nor expect anything from Him, nor bear the cross; but seeks and trusts in man's help. And thus, when there is no faith and trust in God, all manner of lusts and human devices rule in the heart.) Wherefore Christ said [John 15:5]: "Without me ye can do nothing," and the Church sings:

"Without Thy power divine  
In man there nothing is,  
Naught but what is harmful."

## **Article XXI. Of the Worship of Saints.**

[47] Of the. Worship of Saints, they teach, that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings, but the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints, or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us Christ, as the only Mediator, Propitiation, High-Priest and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and hath promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon [1 John 2:1]: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," etc.

## **Conclusion.**

This is about the Sum of our Doctrine, in which, as can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures, or from the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers. This being the case, they judge harshly who insist that our teachers be regarded as heretics. The disagreement, however, is on certain Abuses, which have crept into the Church without rightful authority. And even in these, if there were some difference, there should be proper leniency on the part of bishops to bear with us by reason of the Confession which we have

now drawn up; because even the Canons are not so severe as to demand the same rites everywhere, neither, at any time, have the rites of all churches been the same; although, among us, in large part, the ancient rites are diligently observed. For it is a false and malicious charge that all the ceremonies, all the things instituted of old, are abolished in our churches. But it has been a common complaint that some Abuses were connected with the ordinary rites. These, inasmuch as they could not be approved with a good conscience, have been to some extent corrected.

## **II. Articles, In Which Are Reviewed The Abuses Which Have Been Corrected.**

[48] Inasmuch then as our churches dissent in no article of the Faith from the Church Catholic but omit some Abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by fault of the times, contrary to the intent of the Canons, we pray that Your Imperial Majesty would graciously hear both what has been changed, and also what were the reasons, in order that the people be not compelled to observe those abuses against their conscience. Nor should Your Imperial Majesty believe those, who, in order to excite the hatred of men against our part, disseminate strange slanders among our people. Having thus excited the minds of good men, they have first given occasion to this controversy, and now endeavor, by the same arts, to increase the discord. For Your Imperial Majesty will undoubtedly find that the form of doctrine and of ceremonies with us, is not so intolerable as these ungodly and malicious men represent. Furthermore, the truth cannot be gathered from common rumors, or the revilings of our enemies. But it can readily be judged that nothing would serve better to maintain the dignity of worship, and to nourish reverence and pious devotion among the people than that the ceremonies be rightly observed in the churches.

### **Article XXII. Of Both Kinds**

[49] To the laity are given Both Kinds in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, because this usage has the commandment of the Lord [in Matt. 26:27]: "Drink ye all of it"; where Christ has manifestly commanded concerning the cup that all should drink; and lest any man should craftily say that this refers only to priests, Paul [in Cor. 11:27] recites an example from which it appears that the whole congregation did use both kinds. And this usage has long remained in the

Church, nor is it known when, or by whose authority, it was changed; although Cardinal Cusanus mentions the time when it was approved. Cyprian in some places testifies that the Blood was given to the people. The same is testified by Jerome, who says: “The priests administer the Eucharist, and distribute the Blood of Christ to the people.” Indeed, Pope Gelasius commands that the sacrament be not divided (*Dist. ii., De Consecratione, Cap. Comperimus*). Only custom, not so ancient, has it otherwise. But it is evident that any custom introduced against the commandments of God is not to be allowed, as the Canons witness (*Dist. iii., Cap. Veritate*, and the following chapters). But this custom has been received, not only against the Scripture but also against the old Canons and examples of the Church. Therefore if any preferred to use both kinds of the sacrament, they ought not to have been compelled with offense to their consciences to do otherwise.

And because the division of the sacrament does not agree with the ordinance of Christ, we are accustomed to omit the procession, which hitherto has been in use.

## **Article XXIII. Of the Marriage of Priests.**

[50] There has been common complaint concerning the Examples of Priests, who were not chaste. For that reason also, Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were certain reasons why marriage was taken away from priests, but that there were far weightier ones why it ought to be given back; for so Platina writes. Since, therefore, our priests were desirous to avoid these open scandals they married wives, and taught that it was lawful for them to contract matrimony. First, because Paul says [1 Cor. 7:2]: “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.” Also [9]: “It is better to marry than to burn.” Secondly, Christ says [Matt. 19:11]: “All men cannot receive this saying,” where he teaches that not all men are fit to lead a single life; for God created man for procreation [Gen. 1:28]. Nor is it in man’s power, without a singular gift and work of God, to alter this creation. Therefore those that are not fit to lead a single life ought to; contract matrimony. For no man’s law, no vow, can annul the commandment and ordinance of God. For these reasons the priests teach that it is lawful for them to marry wives. It is also evident that in the ancient Church priests were married men. For Paul says [1 Tim. 3:2] that a bishop should be the husband of one wife. And in Germany, four hundred years ago for the first time, the priests were violently compelled to lead a single life, who indeed offered such resistance that the Archbishop of Mayence, when about to publish the Pope’s decree concerning this matter, was almost killed in the tumult raised by the enraged priests. And so

harsh was the dealing in the matter that not only were marriages forbidden for the time to come, but also existing marriages were torn asunder, contrary to all laws, divine and human, contrary even to the Canons themselves, made not only by the Popes but by most celebrated Councils.

Seeing also that, as the world is aging, man's nature is gradually growing weaker, it is well to guard that no more vices steal into Germany. Furthermore, God ordained marriage to be a help against human infirmity. The Canons themselves say that the old rigor ought now and then, in the latter times, to be relaxed because of the weakness of men; which it is to be devoutly wished were done also in this matter. And it is to be expected that the churches shall at length lack pastors, if marriage should be any longer forbidden.

But while the commandment of God is in force, while the custom of the Church is well known, while impure celibacy causes many scandals, adulteries, and other crimes deserving the punishments of just magistrates, yet it is a marvelous thing that in nothing is more cruelty exercised than against the marriage of priests. God has given commandment to honor marriage. By the laws of all well-ordered commonwealths, even among the heathen, marriage is most highly honored. But now men, and also priests, are cruelly put to death, contrary to the intent of the Canons, for no other cause than marriage. Paul [in Tim. 4:3] calls that a doctrine of devils, which forbids marriage. This may now be readily understood when the law against marriage is maintained by such penalties.

[51] But as no law of man can annul the commandment of God, so neither can it be done by any vow. Accordingly Cyprian also advises that women who do not keep the chastity they have promised should marry. His words are these [Book I., Epistle xi.]: "But if they be unwilling or unable to persevere, it is better for them to marry than to fall into the fire by their lusts; at least, they should give no offense to their brethren and sisters." And even the Canons show some leniency toward those who have taken vows before the proper age, as heretofore has generally been the case.

## **Article XXIV. Of the Mass.**

Falsely are our churches accused of Abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone, that the unlearned be taught. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the Church a language understood by the

people [1 Cor. 14:2, 9], but it has also been so ordained by man's law.

The people are accustomed to partake of the Sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases the reverence and devotion of public worship. For none are admitted except they be first proved. The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God, and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. This worship pleases God; such use of the Sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not, therefore, appear that the Mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries, than among us.

[52] But it is evident that for a long time, it has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men, that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. For it is unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches, by what manner of men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist, when he says [1 Cor. 11:27]: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." When, therefore, our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake.

Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, by their own negligence, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain of the troubles of the Church, seeing that this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses, which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer. Great dissensions have arisen concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass, as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries, by the very men who were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For, in the Ten Commandments, it is written (Exodus 20), "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain," But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely, that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass taketh away the sins of the living and the dead, by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for



individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning, that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ's passion was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all sins, as it is written to the Hebrews (10:10), "We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ, once for all." Also, 10:14: "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Scripture also teaches that we are justified before God through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Now if the Mass take away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act, justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow.

[53] But Christ commands us [Luke 22:19], "This do in remembrance of me;" therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefits it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For, to remember Christ, is to remember his benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. Nor is it enough only to remember the history, for this the Jew and the ungodly also can remember. Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament [Communion] may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: "Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine."

Now forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holy day, and also other days, when any desire the Sacrament it is given to such as ask for it. And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass [the Communion] they speak very much. Chrysostom says that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others. And it appears from the ancient Canons, that some one celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the Body of the Lord; for thus the words of the Nicene Canon say: "Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter." And Paul [1 Cor. 11:33] commands concerning the Communion: "Tarry one for another," so that there may be a common participation.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since the public ceremonies are retained for the most part, like those hitherto in use; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses, doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches, most frequented, the Mass was

not celebrated every day, as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chapt. 33) testifies: “Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday, the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except only the celebration of the Eucharist.”

## **Article XXV. Of Confession.**

[54] Confession in our churches is not abolished; for it is not usual to give the Body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved. And the people are most carefully taught concerning the faith and assurance of absolution, about which, before this time, there was profound silence. Our people are taught that they should highly prize the absolution, as being the voice of God, and pronounced by His command. The power of the Keys is commended, and we show what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences; that God requires faith to believe such absolution as a voice sounding from Heaven, and that such faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins.

Aforetime, satisfactions were immoderately extolled; of faith and the merit of Christ, and the righteousness of faith, no mention was made; wherefore, on this point, our churches are by no means to be blamed. For this even our adversaries must needs concede to us, that the doctrine concerning repentance has been most diligently treated and laid open by our teachers.

But of Confession, they teach, that an enumeration of sins is not necessary, and that consciences be not burdened with anxiety to enumerate all sins, for it is impossible to recount all sins, as the Psalm testifies [19:13]: “Who can understand his errors?” Also Jeremiah [17:9]: “The heart is deceitful, who can know it?” But if no sins were forgiven, except those that are recounted, consciences could never find peace; for very many sins they neither see, nor can remember.

The ancient writers also testify that an enumeration is not necessary. For, in the Decrees, Chrysostom is quoted, who thus says: “I say not to thee, that thou shouldst disclose thyself in public, nor that thou accuse thyself before others, but I would have thee obey the prophet who says: ‘Disclose thy way before God.’ Therefore confess thy sins before God, the true Judge, with prayer. Tell thine errors, not with the tongue, but with the memory of thy conscience.” And the Gloss (“Of Repentance,” *Distinct. v. Cap. Consideret*) admits that Confession of human right only. Nevertheless, on account of the great benefit of absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience, Confession is retained among us.

## **Article XXVI. Of the Distinction of Meats, and of Traditions.**

[55] It has been the general persuasion, not of the people alone, but also of such as teach in the churches, that making Distinctions of Meats, and like traditions of men, are works profitable to merit grace, and able to make satisfactions for sins. And that the world so thought, appears from this, that new ceremonies, new orders, new holy days, and new fastings were daily instituted, and the teachers in the churches did exact these works as a service necessary to merit grace, and did greatly terrify men's consciences, if they should omit any of these things. From this persuasion concerning traditions, much detriment has resulted in the Church.

First, the doctrine of grace and of the righteousness of faith has been obscured by it, which is the chief part of the Gospel, and ought to stand out, as the most prominent in the Church, that the merit of Christ may be well known, and that faith, which believes that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake may be exalted far above works. Wherefore Paul also lays the greatest stress on this article, putting aside the law and human traditions, in order to show that the righteousness of the Christian is another than such works, to wit, the faith which believes that sins are freely forgiven for Christ's sake. But this doctrine of Paul has been almost wholly smothered by traditions, which have produced an opinion that, by making distinctions in meats and like services, we must merit grace and righteousness. In treating of repentance, there was no mention made of faith; all that was done was to set forth those works of satisfaction, and in these all repentance seemed to consist.

Secondly, these traditions have obscured the commandments of God; because traditions were placed far above the commandments of God. Christianity was thought to consist wholly in the observance of certain holy days, fasts and vestures. These observances had won for themselves the exalted title of being the spiritual life and the perfect life. Meanwhile the commandments of God, according to each one's calling, were without honor, namely, that the father brought up his family, that the mother bore children, that the Prince governed the Commonwealth, — these were accounted works that were worldly and imperfect, and far below those glittering observances. And this error greatly tormented devout consciences, which grieved that they were bound by an imperfect state of life, as in marriage, in the office of magistrate, or in other civil ministrations; on the other hand, they admired the monks and such like, and falsely imagined that the observances of such men were more acceptable to God.

[56] Thirdly, traditions brought great danger to consciences; for it was impossible to keep all traditions, and yet men judged these observances to be

necessary acts of worship. Gerson writes that many fell into despair, and that some even took their own lives, because they felt that they were not able to satisfy the traditions; and meanwhile, they heard not the consolation of the righteousness of faith and grace.

We see that the summists and theologians gather the traditions together, and seek mitigations whereby to ease consciences, and yet they do not succeed in releasing them, but sometimes entangle consciences even more. And with the gathering of these traditions, the schools and sermons have been so much occupied that they have had no leisure to touch upon Scripture, and to seek the more profitable doctrine of faith, of the cross, of hope, of the dignity of civil affairs, of consolation of sorely tried consciences. Hence Gerson, and some other theologians, have grievously complained, that by these strivings concerning traditions, they were prevented from giving attention to a better kind of doctrine. Augustine also forbids that men's consciences should be burdened with such observances, and prudently advises Januarius, that he must know that they are to be observed as things indifferent; for these are his words.

Wherefore our teachers must not be looked upon as having taken up this matter rashly, or from hatred of the bishops, as some falsely suspect. There was great need to warn the churches of these errors, which had arisen from misunderstanding the traditions. For the Gospel compels us to insist in the churches upon the doctrine of grace, and of the righteousness of faith; which, however, cannot be understood, if men think that they merit grace by observances of their own choice.

Thus, therefore, they have taught, that by the observance of human traditions we cannot merit grace, or be justified; and hence we must not think such observances necessary acts of worship.

They add hereunto testimonies of Scripture. Christ [Matt. 15:3] defends the Apostles who had not observed the usual tradition, which however, seemed to pertain to a matter not unlawful, but indifferent, and to have a certain affinity with the purifications of the law, and says [9]: "In vain do they worship me with the commandments of men." He, therefore, does not exact an unprofitable service. Shortly after, he adds [11]: "Not that which goeth into the mouth, defileth a man." So also Paul [Rom. 14:17]: "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink." [Col. 2:16]: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the Sabbath day;" also [v. 20, sq.]: "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, touch not, taste not, handle not?" And Peter says [Acts 15:10]: "Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear; but we believe that through

the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved, even as they.” Here Peter forbids to burden the consciences with many rites, either of Moses, or of others.

[57] And in Tim. [4:1, 3], Paul calls the prohibition of meats a doctrine of devils; for it is against the Gospel to institute or to do such works that by them we may merit grace, or as though Christianity could not exist without such service of God.

Here our adversaries cast up that our teachers are opposed to discipline and mortification of the flesh, as Jovinian. But the contrary may be learned from the writings of our teachers. For they have always taught concerning the cross, that it behooves Christians to bear afflictions. This is the true, earnest and unfeigned mortification, to wit, to be exercised with divers afflictions, and to be crucified with Christ.

Moreover, they teach, that every Christian ought to exercise and subdue himself with bodily restraints and labors, that neither plenty nor slothfulness tempt him to sin, but not that we may merit grace or make satisfaction for sins by such exercises. And such external discipline ought to be urged at all times, not only on a few and set days. So Christ commands [Luke 21:34]: “Take heed, lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting;” also [Matt. 17:21]: “This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.” Paul also says [1 Cor. 9:27]: “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.” Here he clearly shows that he was keeping under his body, not to merit forgiveness of sins by that discipline, but to have his body in subjection and fitted for spiritual things, and for the discharge of duty according to his calling. Therefore, we do not condemn fasting, but the traditions which prescribe certain days and certain meats, with peril of conscience, as though works of such kinds were a necessary service.

Nevertheless, very many traditions are kept on our part, which conduce to good order in the Church, as the Order of Lessons in the Mass, and the chief holy days. But, at the same time, men are warned that such observances do not justify before God, and that, in such things, it should not be made sin, if they be omitted without scandal. Such liberty in human rites was not unknown to the Fathers. For in the East they kept Easter at another time than at Rome, and when, on account of this diversity, the Romans accused the Eastern Church of schism, they were admonished by others that such usages need not be alike everywhere. And Irenaeus says: “Diversity concerning fasting does not destroy the harmony of faith.” As also Pope Gregory intimates in *Dist. xii.*, that such diversity does not violate the unity of the Church. And in the *Tripartite History*, Book 9, many examples of dissimilar rites are gathered, and the following statement is made: “It was not the mind of the Apostles to enact rules concerning holy days, but to preach godliness and a holy life.”

## Article XXVII. Of Monastic Vows.

[58] What is taught, on our part, concerning Monastic Vows, will be better understood, if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine's time, they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison. Gradually, many other observances were added besides vows. And these fetters were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to the Canons. Many also entered into this kind of life through ignorance, being unable to judge their own strength, though they were of sufficient age. Being thus ensnared, they were compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the provision of the Canons. And this was more the case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex. This rigor displeased many good men before this time, who saw that young men and maidens were thrown into convents for a living, and what unfortunate results came of this procedure, and what scandals were created, what snares were cast upon consciences! They were grieved that the authority of the Canons in so momentous a matter was utterly despised and set aside.

To these evils, was added an opinion concerning vows, which, it is well known, in former times, displeased even those monks who were more thoughtful. They taught that vows were equal to Baptism; they taught that, by this kind of life, they merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. Yea, they added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God, but even greater things, because it kept not only the precepts, but also the so-called evangelical counsels."

Thus they made men believe that the profession of monasticism was far better than Baptism, and that the monastic life was more meritorious than that of magistrates, than the life of pastors and such like, who serve their calling in accordance with God's commands, without any man-made services. None of these things can be denied; for they appear in their own books.

[59] What then came to pass in the monasteries? Aforetime, they were schools of Theology and other branches, profitable to the Church; and thence pastors and bishops were obtained. Now it is another thing. It is needless to rehearse what is known to all. Aforetime they came together to learn; now they feign that it is a kind of life instituted to merit grace and righteousness; yea, they preach that it is a state of perfection, and they put it far above all other kinds of

life ordained of God.

These things we have rehearsed without odious exaggeration, to the end that the doctrine of our teachers, on this point, might be better understood. First, concerning such as contract matrimony, they teach, on our part, that it is lawful for all men who are not fitted for single life to contract matrimony, because vows cannot annul the ordinance and commandment of God. But the commandment of God is [1 Cor. 7:2]: “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.” Nor is it the commandment only, but also the creation and ordinance of God, which forces those to marry who are not excepted by a singular work of God, according to the text [Gen. 2:18]: “It is not good that the man should be alone.” Therefore they do not sin who obey this commandment and ordinance of God. What objection can be raised to this? Let men extol the obligation of a vow as much as they list, yet shall they not bring to pass that the vow annuls the commandment of God. The Canons teach that the right of the superior is excepted in every vow; much less, therefore, are these vows of force which are against the commandments of God.

Now if the obligation of vows could not be changed for any cause whatever, the Roman Pontiffs could never have given dispensation; for it is not lawful for man to annul an obligation which is altogether divine. But the Roman Pontiffs have prudently judged that leniency is to be observed in this obligation, and therefore we read that many times they have dispensed from vows. The case of the King of Aragon who was called back from the monastery is well known, and there are also examples in our own times.

In the second place, Why do our adversaries exaggerate the obligation or effect of a vow, when, at the same time, they have not a word to say of the nature of the vow itself, that it ought to be in a thing possible, free, and chosen spontaneously and deliberately. But it is not known to what extent perpetual chastity is in the power of man. And how few are there who have taken the vow spontaneously and deliberately! Young men and maidens, before they are able to judge, are persuaded, and sometimes even compelled, to take the vow. Wherefore it is not fair to insist so rigorously on the obligation, since it is granted by all that it is against the nature of a vow to take it without spontaneous and deliberate action.

Many canonical laws rescind vows made before the age of fifteen; for before that age, there does not seem sufficient judgment in a person to decide concerning a perpetual life. Another Canon, granting even more liberty to the weakness of man, adds a few years, and forbids a vow to be made before the age of eighteen. But whether we followed the one or the other, the most part have an excuse for leaving the monasteries, because most of them have taken the vows

before they reached these ages.

But, finally, even though the violation of a vow might be rebuked, yet it seems not forthwith to follow that the marriages of such persons ought to be dissolved. For Augustine denies that they ought to be dissolved (xxvii. Quaest. I., Cap. *Nuptiarum*); and his authority is not lightly to be esteemed, although other men afterwards thought otherwise.

But although it appears that God's command concerning marriage delivers many from their vows, yet our teachers introduce also another argument concerning vows, to show that they are void. For every service of God, ordained and chosen of men without the commandment of God to merit justification and grace, is wicked; as Christ says [Matt. 15:9]: "In vain do they worship me with the commandments of men." And Paul teaches everywhere that righteousness is not to be sought by our own observances and acts of worship, devised by men, but that it comes by faith to those who believe that they are received by God into grace for Christ's sake.

[61] But it is evident that monks have taught that services of man's making satisfy for sins and merit grace and justification. What else is this but to detract from the glory of Christ and to obscure and deny the righteousness of faith? It follows, therefore, that the vows thus commonly taken, have been wicked services, and, consequently, are void. For a wicked vow, taken against the commandment of God, is not valid; for (as the Canon says) no vow ought to bind men to wickedness.

Paul says [Gal. 5:4]: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." They, therefore, who want to be justified by their vows, are made void of Christ and fall from grace. For such as ascribe justification to vows, ascribe to their own works that which properly belongs to the glory of Christ. But it is undeniable that the monks have taught that, by their vows and observances, they were justified, and merited forgiveness of sins, yea, they invented still greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works. If any one should be inclined to enlarge on these things with evil intent, how many things could he bring together, whereof even the monks are now ashamed! Over and above this, they persuaded men that services of man's making were a state of Christian perfection. And is not this assigning justification to works? It is no light offense in the Church to set forth to the people a service devised by men, without the commandment of God, and to teach that such service justifies men. For the righteousness of faith in Christ, which chiefly ought to be in the Church, is obscured, when this wonderful worshiping of angels, with its show of poverty, humility and chastity, is cast before the eyes of men.



[62] Furthermore, the precepts of God and the true service of God are obscured when men hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. For Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, again to conceive great faith, and to trust that, for Christ's sake, we have a gracious God, to ask of God, and assuredly to expect his aid in all things that, according to our calling, are to be borne; and meanwhile, to be diligent in outward good works, and to serve our calling. In these things consist the true perfection and the true service of God. It does not consist in the unmarried life, or in begging, or in vile apparel. But the people conceive many pernicious opinions from the false commendations of monastic life. They hear unmarried life praised above measure; therefore they lead their married life with offense to their consciences. They hear that only beggars are perfect; therefore they keep their possessions and do business with offense to their consciences. They hear that it is an evangelical counsel not to avenge; therefore some in private life are not afraid to take revenge, for they hear that it is but a counsel, and not a commandment; while others judge that the Christian cannot properly hold a civil office, or be a magistrate.

There are on record examples of men who, forsaking marriage and the administration of the Commonwealth, have hid themselves in monasteries. This they called fleeing from the world, and seeking a kind of life which should be more pleasing to God. Neither did they see that God ought to be served in those commandments which he himself has given, and not in commandments devised by men. A good and perfect kind of life is that which has for it the commandment of God. It is necessary to admonish men of these things. And before these times, Gerson rebuked this error concerning perfection, and testified that, in his day, it was a new saying that the monastic life is a state of perfection.

So many wicked opinions are inherent in the vows, such as that they justify, that they constitute Christian perfection, that they keep the counsels and commandments, that they have works of supererogation. All these things, since they are false and empty, make vows null and void.

## **Article XXVIII. Of Ecclesiastical Power.**

[63] There has been great controversy concerning the Power of Bishops, in which some have awkwardly confounded the power of the Church and the power of the sword. And from this confusion very great wars and tumults have resulted, while the Pontiffs, emboldened by the power of the Keys, not only have instituted new services and burdened consciences with reservation of cases, but have also undertaken to transfer the kingdoms of this world, and to take the Empire from the Emperor. These wrongs have long since been rebuked in the

Church by learned and godly men. Therefore, our teachers, for the comforting of men's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the power of the Church and the power of the sword, and taught that both of them, because of God's commandment, are to be held in reverence and honor, as among the chief blessings of God on earth.

But this is their opinion, that the power of the Keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is a power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer sacraments. For with that commandment, Christ sends forth his Apostles [John 20:21 sqq.]: "As my Father has sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." [Mark 16:15]: "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature."

This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments, according to the calling, either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, as eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. As Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Therefore, since the power of the Church grants eternal things, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government; no more than the art of singing interferes with civil government. For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel; the civil rulers defend not souls, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.

[64] Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission, to teach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the Commonwealth. As Christ says [John 18:36]: "My kingdom is not of this world"; also [Luke 12:14]: "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Paul also says [Phil. 3:20]: "Our citizenship is in Heaven"; [2 Cor. 10:4]: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God to the casting down of imaginations." After this manner, our teachers discriminate between the duties of both these powers, and command that both be honored and acknowledged as gifts and blessings of God.

If bishops have any power of the sword, that power they have, not as bishops, by the commission of the Gospel, but by human law, having received it of Kings and Emperors, for the civil administration of what is theirs. This, however, is another office than the ministry of the Gospel.

When, therefore, a question arises concerning the jurisdiction of bishops, civil authority must be distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again, according to the Gospel, or, as they say, according to Divine Law, to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the sacraments, no jurisdiction belongs, except to forgive sins, to discern doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, simply by the Word. Herein the congregations are bound by Divine Law to obey them, according to Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you, heareth me."

But when they teach or ordain anything against the Gospel, then the congregations have a commandment of God prohibiting obedience [Matt. 7:15]: "Beware of false prophets"; [Gal. 1:8]: "Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel let him be accursed"; [2 Cor. 13:8]: "We can do nothing against the truth; but for the truth." Also [v. 10]: "The power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction." So, also, the Canonical Laws command (II. Q. vii. Cap., *Sacerdotes* and Cap. *Oves*). And Augustine (*Contra Petilianum Epistolam*): "Not even to Catholic bishops must we submit, if they chance to err, or hold anything contrary to the Canonical Scriptures of God."

If they have any other power or jurisdiction, in hearing and judging certain cases, as of matrimony or of tithes, they have it by human law. But where the ordinaries fail, princes are bound, even against their will, to dispense justice to their subjects for the maintenance of peace.

[65] Moreover, it is disputed whether bishops or pastors have the right to introduce ceremonies in the Church, and to make laws concerning meats, holy days and degrees, that is, orders of ministers, etc. They that claim this right for the bishops, refer to this testimony [John 16:12, 13]: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." They also refer to the example of the Apostles, who commanded to abstain from blood and from things strangled [Acts 15:29]. They refer to the Sabbath Day, as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath Day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!

But, concerning this question, it is taught on our part (as has been shown above), that bishops have no power to decree anything against the Gospel. The Canonical laws teach the same thing (*Dist. ix.*). Now it is against Scripture to establish or require the observance of any traditions, to the end that, by such observance, we may make satisfaction for sins, or merit grace and righteousness. For the glory of Christ's merit is dishonored when, by such observances, we undertake to merit justification. But it is manifest that, by such belief, traditions have almost infinitely multiplied in the Church, the doctrine concerning faith and the righteousness of faith being meanwhile suppressed. For gradually more holy days were made, fasts appointed, new ceremonies and services in honor of saints instituted; because the authors of such things thought that, by these works, they were meriting grace. Thus, in times past, the Penitential Canons increased, whereof we still see some traces in the satisfactions.

[66] Again, the authors of traditions do contrary to the command of God when they find matters of sin in foods, in days, and like things, and burden the Church with bondage of the law, as if there ought to be among Christians, in order to merit justification, a service like the Levitical, the arrangement of which God has committed to the Apostles and bishops. For thus some of them write; and the Pontiffs in some measure seem to be misled by the example of the law of Moses. Hence are such burdens, as that they make it mortal sin, even without offense to others, to do manual labor on holy days, to omit the Canonical Hours, that certain foods defile the conscience, that fastings are works which appease God, that sin in a reserved case cannot be forgiven but by the authority of him who reserved it; whereas the Canons themselves speak only of the reserving of the ecclesiastical penalty, and not of the reserving of the guilt.

Whence have the bishops the right to lay these traditions upon the Church for the ensnaring of consciences, when Peter [Acts 15:10] forbids to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, and Paul says [2 Cor. 13:10] that the power given him was to edification, not to destruction? Why, therefore, do they increase sins by these traditions?

But there are clear testimonies which prohibit the making of such traditions, as though they merited grace or were necessary to salvation. Paul says [Col. 2:16]: "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days"; [v. 20, 23]: "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not, which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men? which things have indeed a show of wisdom." Also in Tit. [1:14] he openly forbids traditions: "Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the

truth.” And Christ [Matt. 15:14] says of those who require traditions: “Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind”; and he rebukes such services [v. 13]: “Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up.”

If bishops have the right to burden churches with infinite traditions, and to ensnare consciences, why does Scripture so often prohibit to make and to listen to traditions? Why does it call them "doctrines of devils"? [1 Tim. 4:1]. Did the Holy Ghost in vain forewarn of these things?

[67] Since, therefore, ordinances instituted as things necessary, or with an opinion of meriting grace, are contrary to the Gospel, it follows that it is not lawful for any bishop to institute or exact such services. For it is necessary that the doctrine of Christian liberty be preserved in the churches, namely, that the bondage of the Law is not necessary to justification, as it is written in the Epistle to the Galatians [5:1]: “Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” It is necessary that the chief article of the Gospel be preserved, to wit, that we obtain grace freely by faith in Christ, and not for certain observances or acts of worship devised by men.

What, then, are we to think of the Sunday and like rites in the house of God? To this we answer, that it is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church, not that thereby we should merit grace or make satisfaction for sins, or that consciences be bound to judge them necessary services, and to think that it is a sin to break them without offense to others. So Paul ordains [1 Cor. 11:5], that women should cover their heads in the congregation [1 Cor. 14:30], that interpreters of Scripture be heard in order in the church, etc.

It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of charity and tranquility, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion; but so that consciences be not burdened to think that they be necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered, provided only that no offense be given.

Of this kind, is the observance of the Lord’s Day, Easter, Pentecost, and like holy days and rites. For those who judge that, by the authority of the Church, the observance of the Lord’s Day instead of the Sabbath Day was ordained as a thing necessary, do greatly err. Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath Day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church [the Apostles] designated the Lord’s Day for this purpose; and this day seems to

have been chosen all the more for this additional reason, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping neither of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is necessary.

[68] There are monstrous disputations concerning the changing of the law, the ceremonies of the new law, the changing of the Sabbath Day, which all have sprung from the false belief that there must needs be in the Church a service like to the Levitical, and that Christ had given commission to the Apostles and bishops to devise new ceremonies as necessary to salvation. These errors crept into the Church when the righteousness of faith was not clearly enough taught. Some dispute that the keeping of the Lord's Day is not indeed of divine right; but in a manner so. They prescribe concerning holy days, how far it is lawful to work. What else are such disputations but snares of consciences? For although they endeavor to modify the traditions, yet the equity can never be perceived as long as the opinion remains that they are necessary, which must needs remain where the righteousness of faith and Christian liberty are disregarded.

The Apostles commanded to abstain from blood. Who doth now observe it? And yet they that do it not, sin not; for not even the Apostles themselves wanted to burden consciences with such bondage; but they forbade it for a time, to avoid offense. For, in any decree, we must perpetually consider what is the aim of the Gospel. Scarcely any Canons are kept with exactness, and, from day to day, many go out of use even with those who are the most zealous advocates of traditions. Neither can due regard be paid to consciences unless this equity be observed, that we know that the Canons are kept without holding them to be necessary, and that no harm is done consciences, even though traditions go out of use.

[69] But the bishops might easily retain the lawful obedience of the people, if they would not insist upon the observance of such traditions as cannot be kept with a good conscience. Now they command celibacy; they admit none, unless they swear that they will not teach the pure doctrine of the Gospel. The churches do not ask that the bishops should restore concord at the expense of their honor; which, nevertheless, it would be proper for good pastors to do. They ask only that they would release unjust burdens which are new and have been received contrary to the custom of the Church Catholic. It may be that there were plausible reasons for some of these ordinances; and yet they are not adapted to later times. It is also evident that some were adopted through erroneous conceptions. Therefore, it would be befitting the clemency of the Pontiffs to mitigate them now; because such a modification does not shake the unity of the Church. For many human traditions have been changed in process of time, as the Canons themselves show. But if it be impossible to obtain a mitigation of such

observances as cannot be kept without sin, we are bound to follow the Apostolic rule [Acts 5:29], which commands us to obey God rather than men. Peter [1 Pet. 5:31] forbids bishops to be lords, and to rule over the churches. Now it is not our design to wrest the government from the bishops, but this one thing is asked, namely, that they allow the Gospel to be purely taught, and that they relax some few observances which cannot be kept without sin. But if they make no concession, it is for them to see how they shall give account to God for having, by their obstinacy, caused a schism.

## **Conclusion.**

These are the Chief Articles which seem to be in controversy. For although we might have spoken of more Abuses, yet to avoid undue length, we have set forth the chief points, from which the rest may be readily judged. There have been great complaints concerning indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuses of excommunications." The parishes have been vexed in many ways by the dealers in indulgences. There were endless contentions between the pastors and the monks concerning the parochial rites, confessions, burials, sermons on extraordinary occasions, and innumerable other things. Things of this sort we have passed over, so that the chief points in this matter, having been briefly set forth, might be the most readily understood. Nor has anything been here said or adduced to the reproach of any one. Only those things have been recounted, whereof we thought that it was necessary to speak, so that it might be understood that, in doctrine and ceremonies, nothing has been received on our part, against Scripture or the Church Catholic, since it is manifest that we have taken most diligent care that no new and ungodly doctrine should creep into our churches.

The above articles we desire to present in accordance with the edict of Your Imperial Majesty, so that our Confession should therein be exhibited, and a summary of the doctrine of our teachers might be discerned. If anything further be desired, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures.

John, Duke of Saxony, Elector.

George, Margrave of Brandenburg.

Ernest, Duke of Lüneburg.

Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.

John Frederick, Duke of Saxony.

Francis, Duke of Lüneburg.

Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt.

Senate and Magistracy of Nuremburg.

Senate of Reutlingen.



# Part III. Apology Of The Augsburg Confession.

## Melanchthon's Preface.

*Philip Melanchthon presents his Greeting to the Reader.*

[73] After the Confession of our princes was publicly read, certain theologians and monks prepared a confutation of our writing; and when His Imperial Majesty had caused this also to be read in the assembly of the princes, he demanded of our princes that they should assent to this confutation, but as our princes had heard that many articles were disapproved, which they could not abandon without offense to conscience, they asked that a copy of the confutation be furnished them, that they might be able both to see what the adversaries condemned and to refute their arguments. And indeed in a cause of such importance, pertaining to religion and the instruction of consciences, they thought that the adversaries would produce their writing without any hesitation. But this our princes could not obtain, unless on the most perilous conditions, which it was impossible for them to accept.

[74] Then, too, negotiations for peace were begun, in which it was apparent that our princes declined no burden, however grievous, that could be assumed without offense to conscience. But the adversaries obstinately demanded this, viz. that we should approve certain manifest abuses and errors; and as we could not do this, His Imperial Majesty again demanded that our princes should assent to the confutation. This our princes declined to do. For in a matter pertaining to religion, how could they assent to a writing into which they had not looked? Especially, as they had heard that some articles were condemned, in which it was impossible for them, without grievous sin, to approve the opinions of the adversaries.

They had, however, commanded me and some others to prepare an *Apology of the Confession*, in which the reasons why we could not receive the confutation

should be set forth to His Imperial Majesty, and the objections made by the adversaries should be refuted. For during the reading, some of us had taken down the chief points of the topics and arguments. This Apology they finally [at last when they took their departure from Augsburg] offered to His Imperial Majesty, that he might know that we were hindered, by the greatest and most important reasons, from approving the confutation. But His Imperial Majesty did not receive the offered writing. Afterwards a decree was published, in which the adversaries boast that they have refuted our Confession from the Scriptures.

You have now, therefore, reader, our apology; from which you will understand not only what the adversaries have judged (for we have reported this in good faith), but also that they have condemned several articles contrary to the manifest Scripture of the Holy Ghost; so far are they from overthrowing our propositions by means of the Scriptures.

[75] Although originally we began the Apology by taking counsel with others, nevertheless, as it passed through the press, I have made some additions. Wherefore I give my name, so that no one may complain that the book has been published anonymously.

It has always been my custom in these controversies, to retain, so far as I was at all able, the form of the ordinarily received doctrine, in order that at some time concord could be reached the more readily. Nor indeed am I now departing far from this custom; although I could justly lead away the men of this age still farther from the opinions of the adversaries. But the adversaries are treating the case in such a way, as to show that they are seeking neither truth nor concord, but to drain our blood.

And now I have written with the greatest moderation possible; and if any expression appear too severe, I must say here beforehand that I am contending with the theologians and monks who wrote the confutation, and not with the Emperor or the princes, whom I hold in due esteem. But I have recently seen the confutation, and have noticed how cunningly and artfully it was written, so that on some points it could deceive even the cautious.

[76] Yet I have not discussed all their sophistries; for it would be an endless task; but I have comprised the chief arguments, that there might be among all nations a testimony concerning us, that we hold the Gospel of Christ correctly and in a pious way. Discord does not delight us; neither are we indifferent to our danger, the extent of which, in such a bitterness of hatred wherewith the adversaries have been inflamed, we readily understand. But we cannot abandon truth that is manifest and necessary to the Church. Wherefore we believe that troubles and dangers for the glory of Christ and the good of the Church, should be endured; we are confident that this our fidelity to duty is approved of God,

and we hope that the judgment of posterity concerning us, will be more just. For it is undeniable that many topics of Christian doctrine, whose existence in the Church is of the greatest moment, have been brought to view by our theologians, and explained; in reference to which, we are not disposed here to recount, under what sort of opinions and how dangerous, they formerly lay covered in the writings of the monks, canonists and sophistical theologians.

We have the public testimonials of many good men, who give God thanks for this greatest blessing, viz. that concerning many necessary topics, he has taught better things than are. read everywhere in the books of our adversaries.

We will commend our cause, therefore, to Christ, who hereafter will judge these controversies, and we beseech him to look upon the afflicted and scattered Churches, and to bring them back to godly and perpetual concord. [Therefore, if the known and clear truth is trodden under foot, we will resign this cause to God and Christ in heaven, who is the Father of orphans, and the Judge of widows and of all the forsaken, who (as we certainly know) will judge and pass sentence upon this cause aright. Lord Jesus Christ, it is thy holy Gospel, it is thy cause, look thou upon the many troubled hearts and consciences, and maintain and strengthen in thy truth thy Churches and little flocks, who suffer from the devil, anxiety and distress. Confound all hypocrisy and lies, and grant peace and unity, so that thy glory may advance, and thy kingdom, strong against all the gates of hell, may continually grow and increase.]

## **I. Of the First Article. Of God.**

[77] The first article of our Confession, our adversaries approve, in which we declare that we believe and teach that there is one divine essence, indivisible, etc., and yet that there are three distinct persons, of the same divine essence, and coeternal, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. This article we have always taught and defended, and we believe that it has, in Holy Scripture, sure and firm testimonies that cannot be overthrown. And we constantly affirm that those thinking otherwise are outside of the Church of Christ, and are idolaters, and insult God [idolatrous and blasphemous].

# Chapter I. Of Original Sin.

## Article II. Of The Second Article.

The second article, Of Original Sin, the adversaries approve, but in such a way, that they, nevertheless, censure the definition of Original Sin, which we incidentally gave. Here at the very threshold, His Imperial Majesty will discover that the writers of the confutation were deficient not only in judgment, but also in candor. For whereas we, with a simple mind, desired, in passing, to recount those things which Original Sin embraces, these men, by framing an invidious interpretation, artfully distort a proposition that has in it nothing which of itself is wrong. Thus they say: “To be without the fear of God, to be without faith, is actual guilt;” and therefore they deny that it is original guilt.

[A. Of the Notion of Original Sin.]

[78] It is very evident that such subtleties have originated in the schools, not in the council of the Emperor. But although this false interpretation can be very easily refuted; yet, in order that all good men may understand that we teach in this matter nothing that is absurd, we ask first of all that the German Confession be examined. This will free us from the suspicion of novelty. For there it is written: *Weiter wird gelehret, das nach dem Fall Ada alle Menschen, so natürlich geboren werden, in Sunden empfangen, und geboren werden; das ist, dass sie alle von Mutter Leibe an voll böser Lust und Neigung sind, keine wahre Gottesfurcht, kein wahren Glauben an Gott von Natur haben können.* [It is further taught that since the Fall of Adam, all men who are naturally born, are conceived and born in sin, i. e. that they all, from their mother’s womb, are full of evil desire and inclination, and can have by nature, no true fear of God, no true faith in God.] This passage testifies that we deny to those propagated according to carnal nature, not only the acts, but also the power or gifts of producing fear and trust in God. For we say that those thus born have concupiscence, and cannot produce true fear and trust in God. What is there here, with which fault can be found? To good men, we think, indeed, that we have exculpated ourselves sufficiently. For in this sense the Latin statement denies to nature the power, i. e. it denies the gifts and energy, by which to produce fear and trust in God, and, in adults, the acts. So that when we mention

concupiscence, we understand not only the acts or fruits, but the constant inclination of the nature [the evil inclination within, which does not cease, as long as we are not born anew through the Spirit and faith].

But hereafter we will show more fully, that our statement agrees with the usual and ancient definition. For we must first show our design in preferring to employ these words in this place. In their schools, the adversaries confess that “the material,” as they call it, “of Original Sin, is concupiscence.” Wherefore, in framing the definition, this should not have been passed by, especially at this time, when some are philosophizing concerning it in a manner unbecoming our religion [are speaking concerning this innate, wicked desire, more after the manner of heathen from philosophy, than according to God’s word of Holy Scripture].

For some contend that Original Sin is not a fault or corruption in the nature of man, but only servitude, or a condition of mortality [an innate evil nature, but only a fault or imposed load or burden], which those propagated from Adam bear, because of the guilt of another [namely, Adam’s sin], and without any fault of their own. Besides, they add that in eternal death, no one is condemned on account of Original Sin, just as those who are born of a bond-woman are slaves, and bear this condition without any vice of nature, but because of the calamity of their mother. To show that this impious opinion is displeasing to us, we made mention of “*concupiscence*,” and, with the best intention, have termed and explained, as “*diseases*,” “*that the nature of men is born corrupt and full of faults*.”

[80] Nor indeed have we only made use of the term concupiscence, but we have also said that “*the fear of God and faith are wanting*.” This we have added with the following design: The scholastic teachers also, not sufficiently understanding the definition of Original Sin, which they have received from the Fathers, extenuate the sin of origin. They contend concerning the *fomes* [or evil inclination] that it is a quality of [fault in the] body, and, with their usual folly, ask whether this quality be derived from the contagion of the apple or from the breath of the serpent, and whether it be increased by remedies? With such questions they have suppressed the main point. Therefore, when they speak of the sin of origin, they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, to wit, ignorance of God, contempt for God, the being destitute of fear and confidence in God, hatred of God’s judgment, the flight from God [as from a tyrant] when he judges, anger toward God, despair of grace, the having confidence in present things [money, property, friends], etc. These diseases, which are in the highest degree contrary to the law of God, the scholastics do not notice; yea, to human nature they meanwhile ascribe unimpaired strength for

loving God above all things, and for fulfilling God's commandments according to the substance of the acts;<sup>1</sup> nor do they see that they are saying things that are contradictory to one another. For what else is the being able in one's own strength to love God above all things, and to fulfill his commandments, but to have original righteousness [to be a new creature in Paradise, entirely pure and holy]? But if human nature have such strength as to be able of itself to love God above all things, as the scholastics confidently affirm, what will Original Sin be? For what will there be need of the grace of Christ, if we can be justified by our own righteousness [powers]? For what will there be need of the Holy Ghost, if human strength can, by itself, love God above all things, and fulfill God's commandments? Who does not see how preposterously our adversaries speak? The lighter diseases in the nature of man they acknowledge, the more severe they do not acknowledge; and yet of these, Scripture everywhere admonishes us, and the prophets constantly complain [as the 13th Psalm, and some other psalms say, Ps. 14:1-3, 5:9; 140:3; 36:1], viz. of carnal security, of the contempt of God, of hatred toward God, and of similar faults born with us. But after the scholastics mingled with Christian doctrine, philosophy concerning the perfection of nature [light of reason], and ascribed to the Free Will and to elicit acts more than was sufficient, and taught that men are justified before God by philosophic or civil righteousness (which we also confess to be subject to reason, and in a measure within our power); they could not see the inner uncleanness of the nature of men. For this cannot be judged except from the Word of God, of which the scholastics, in their discussions, do not frequently treat.

These were the reasons, why, *in the description of Original Sin*, we made mention of concupiscence also, and denied, to man's natural strength, fear and confidence in God. For we wished to indicate that Original Sin contains also these diseases, viz. ignorance of God, contempt for God, the being destitute of fear and confidence in God, inability to love God. These are the chief faults of human nature, conflicting especially with the first table of the Decalogue.

[81] Neither have we said anything new. The ancient definition understood aright expresses precisely the same thing when it says: "Original Sin is the absence of original righteousness" [a lack of the first purity and righteousness in Paradise]. But what is righteousness? Here the scholastics wrangle about dialectic questions; they do not explain what original righteousness is. Now, in the Scriptures, righteousness comprises not only the second table of the Decalogue, but the first also, which teaches concerning the fear of God, concerning faith, concerning the love of God. Therefore original righteousness should have not only an equable temperament of the bodily qualities [perfect health and, in all respects, pure blood, unimpaired powers of the body], but also

these gifts, viz. a more certain knowledge of God, fear of God, confidence in God, or certainly rectitude and the power to yield these affections. And Scripture testifies to this, when it says [Gen. 1:27] that man was fashioned in *the image and likeness of God*. What else is this than that, in man, there were embodied such wisdom and righteousness, as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i. e. to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like? For thus Irenaeus and Ambrose interpret the likeness to God, the latter of whom says: “*That soul is not, therefore, in the image of God, in which God is not at all times.*” And Paul shows the Ephesians (5:9) and Colossians (3:10), that the image of God is “the knowledge of God, righteousness and truth.” Nor does Longobard fear to say that original righteousness “is the very likeness to God, which God imparted to man in the beginning.” We recount the opinions of the ancients, which in no way interfere with Augustine’s interpretation of the image.

Therefore the ancient definition, when it says that sin is the lack of righteousness, not only denies obedience with respect to man’s lower powers, but also denies the knowledge of God, confidence in God, the fear and love of God, or certainly the power to produce these affections. For even the theologians themselves teach in their schools that these are not produced without certain gifts and the aid of grace. In order that the matter may be understood, we term these very gifts, the knowledge of God, and fear and confidence in God. From these facts, it appears that the ancient definition says precisely the same thing that we say, denying fear and confidence toward God, to wit, not only the acts, but also the gifts and power to produce these acts.

[82] Of the same import is the definition of Augustine, who is accustomed to define Original Sin, as concupiscence [a wicked desire]. For he means that when righteousness had been lost, concupiscence succeeded. For inasmuch as diseased nature cannot fear and love God, and believe God, it seeks and loves carnal things. God’s judgment it either in security contemns, or, thoroughly terrified, hates. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and the vicious habit which has succeeded it. Nor indeed is concupiscence only a corruption of the qualities of the body, but also, in the higher powers, a vicious turning to go carnal things. Nor do those persons see what they say, who ascribe to man at the same time concupiscence that is not entirely destroyed by the Holy Ghost, and love to God above all things.

We, therefore, have been right in expressing, in our description of Original Sin, both, viz. these defects, the not being able to believe God, the not being able to fear and love God; and, likewise, the having concupiscence which seeks carnal things contrary to God’s Word, i. e. seeks not only the pleasure of the

body, but also carnal wisdom and righteousness, and, contemning God, trusts in these as good things. Nor only the ancients, but also the more recent [teachers and scholastics], at least the wiser ones among them, teach that Original Sin is at the same time truly these, viz. the defects which I have recounted, and concupiscence. For Thomas says thus: "Original Sin comprehends the loss of original righteousness, and with this an inordinate disposition of the parts of the soul; whence it is not pure loss, but a corrupt habit." And Bona Ventura: "When the question is asked, 'What is Original Sin?' the correct answer is, that it is immoderate concupiscence. The correct answer is also, that it is want of the righteousness that is due. And in one of these replies, the other is included." The same is the opinion of Hugo, when he says that Original Sin is ignorance in the mind, and concupiscence in the flesh." For he thereby indicates that when we are born, we bring with us ignorance of God, unbelief, distrust, contempt and hatred of God. For when he mentions ignorance, he includes these. These opinions also agree with Scripture. For Paul sometimes expressly calls it a defect, as (1 Cor. 2:14): "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." In another place (Rom. 7:5), he calls it concupiscence, "working in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." In reference to both parts, we could cite more passages; but in regard to a manifest fact, there is no need of testimonies. And the intelligent reader will readily be able to decide, that to be without the fear of God and without faith, are more than actual guilt. They are abiding defects in nature that has not been renewed,

[83] In reference to Original Sin, we therefore hold nothing differing either from Scripture or from the Catholic Church, but cleanse from corruptions and restore to light most important declarations of Scripture and of the Fathers, that had been covered over by the sophistical controversies of modern theologians. For it is manifest from the subject itself that modern theologians have not noticed what the Fathers meant when they spake of *defect*. But the recognition of Original Sin is necessary. For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood, unless our diseases be recognized. The entire righteousness of man is mere hypocrisy before God, unless we acknowledge that our heart is naturally destitute of love, fear and confidence in God. For this reason, the prophet (Jer. 31:19) says: "After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh." Likewise (Ps. 116:11) "I said in my haste, All men are liars," i. e. not thinking aright concerning God.

*[B. Against the adversaries of Luther]*



Here our adversaries inveigh against Luther also, because he wrote that “Original Sin remains after baptism.” They add that this article was justly condemned by Leo X. But His Imperial Majesty will find on this point a manifest slander. For our adversaries know in what sense Luther intended this remark, that Original Sin remains after baptism. He always thus wrote, viz. that baptism removes the imputation (*reatus*) of Original Sin, although the material, as they call it, of the sin, i. e. concupiscence, remains. He also added in reference to the material, that the Holy Ghost, given through baptism, begins to put to death the concupiscence, and creates new movements [a new light, a new sense and spirit] in man. In the same manner, Augustine also speaks, who says: “Sin is remitted in baptism, not in such a manner that it no longer exists, but so that it is not imputed.” Here he confesses openly that sin exists, i. e. that it remains, although it is not imputed. And this judgment was so agreeable to those who succeeded him that it was recited also in the decrees. Also against Julian, Augustine says: “The law, which is in the members, has been annulled by spiritual regeneration, and remains in the mortal flesh. It has been annulled because the guilt has been remitted in the sacrament, by which believers are born again; but it remains, because it occasions desires, against which believers contend.” Our adversaries know that Luther believes and teaches thus, and while they cannot disprove the fact, they nevertheless pervert his words, in order by this artifice to crush an innocent man.

[84] But they contend that concupiscence is a penalty, and not a sin [a burden and imposed penalty, and is not such a sin as is subject to death and condemnation]. Luther maintains that it is a sin. It has been said above that Augustine defines Original Sin as concupiscence. If there be anything disadvantageous in this opinion, let them quarrel with Augustine. Besides Paul says (Rom. 7:7, 23): “I had not known lust” (concupiscence), “except the law had said. Thou shalt not covet.” Likewise: “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” These testimonies can be overthrown by no sophistry. For they clearly call concupiscence sin, which, nevertheless, is not imputed to those who are in Christ, although by nature it is a matter worthy of death, where it is not forgiven. Thus, beyond all controversy, the Fathers believe. For Augustine, in a long discussion, refutes the opinion of those, who thought that concupiscence in man, is not a fault, but an adiaphoron, as color<sup>2</sup> or ill-health is said to be an adiaphoron of the body [as to have a black or a white body is neither good nor evil].

[85] But if the adversaries will contend that the *fomes* [or evil inclination] is an adiaphoron, not only many passages of Scripture, but the entire Church also

[and all the Fathers] will contradict them. For even though perfect consent were not attained [even if not entire consent, but only the inclination and desire be there], who ever dared to say that these were adiaphora, viz. to doubt concerning God's wrath, concerning God's grace, concerning God's Word, to be angry at the judgments of God, to be provoked because God does not at once remove one from afflictions, to murmur because the wicked experience a better fortune than the good, to be urged on by wrath, lust, the desire for glory, wealth, etc.? And yet godly men acknowledge these in themselves, as appears in the Psalms and the prophets. But, in the schools, they transferred hither from philosophy, notions entirely different, that, because of emotions, we are neither good nor evil, we are neither praised nor blamed. Likewise, that nothing is sin, unless it be voluntary [inner desires and thoughts are not sins, if I do not altogether consent thereto]. These notions were expressed among philosophers, with respect to civil righteousness, and not with respect to God's judgment. [For there it is true, as the jurists say, *L, cogitationis*, thoughts are exempt from custom and punishment. But God searches the hearts; in God's court and judgment it is different.] With no greater prudence, they add also other notions, such as, that [God's creature and] nature is not evil. In its proper place, we do not censure this; but it is not right to pervert it, so as to extenuate Original Sin. And, nevertheless, these notions are read in the works of scholastics, who inappropriately mingle philosophy or civil doctrine concerning ethics, with the Gospel. Nor are these matters only disputed in the schools, but, as is usually the case, are carried from the schools to the people. And these persuasions prevailed, and nourished confidence in human strength, and suppressed the knowledge of Christ's grace. Therefore, Luther wishing to declare the magnitude of Original Sin and of human infirmity, taught that these remnants of Original Sin [after baptism] are not, by their own nature, adiaphora in man, but that, for their non-imputation, they need the grace of Christ, and, likewise for their mortification, the Holy Ghost.

[86] Although the scholastics extenuate both sin and punishment, when they teach that man, by his own strength, can fulfill the commandments of God; in Genesis [3:15] the punishment, imposed on account of Original Sin, is described otherwise. For there, human nature is subjected not only to death and other bodily evils, but also to the kingdom of the devil. For there (Gen. 3:15), this fearful sentence is proclaimed: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." The defects and the concupiscence are punishments and sins. Death and other bodily evils, and the dominion of the devil, are peculiarly punishments. For human nature has been delivered into slavery, and is held captive by the devil, who infatuates it with wicked opinions

and errors, and impels it to sins of every kind. But just as the devil cannot be conquered except by the aid of Christ, so, by our own strength, we cannot free ourselves from this slavery. Even the history of the world shows how great is the power of the devil's kingdom. The world is full of blasphemies against God, and of wicked opinions; and the devil keeps entangled in these bands those who are wise and righteous [many hypocrites who appear holy] in the sight of the world. In other persons, grosser vices manifest themselves. But since Christ was given to us to remove both these sins and these punishments, and to destroy the kingdom of the devil, sin and death; it will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ, unless we understand our evils. For this reason, our preachers have diligently taught concerning these subjects, and have delivered nothing that is new, but have set forth Holy Scripture and the judgments of the holy Fathers.

We think that this will satisfy His Imperial Majesty concerning the puerile and trivial sophistry, with which the adversaries have perverted our article. For we know that we believe aright and in harmony with the Catholic Church of Christ. But if the adversaries will renew this controversy, there will be no want among us of those who will reply and defend the truth. For in this case our adversaries, to a great extent, do not understand what they say. They often speak what is contradictory; and explain correctly and logically neither that which is formal in [i. e. that which is or is not properly in the essence of] Original Sin, nor the defects of which they speak. But we have been unwilling, at this place, to examine their contests with any very great subtlety. We have thought it worth while only to recite, in customary and well-known words, the belief of the holy Fathers, which we also follow.

### **Article III. Of the Third Article (Concerning Christ).**

*Parallel Passages. — Apostles' Creed, 2; Nicene Creed, 2, 3; Athanasian Creed, 28-39; Smalcald Articles, 299; Formula of Concord, Epitome and Sol. Decl., Art. iv. 544, 674.*

The third article the adversaries approve, in which we confess that there are in Christ two natures, viz. a human nature assumed by the Word into the unity of his person; and that the same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that he has risen again, to reign, and to justify and sanctify believers, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

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1. Augsburg Confession, Art. xviii. 8.↩

2. Another reading substitutes *dolor* (pain) for *color*.↩

## Chapter II. Of Justification.

### Article IV. Of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Twentieth Articles.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Arts, iv., xviii.; *Smalcald Articles*, 300; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome and Sol. Decl.*, Art iii., 527, 610.

[87] In the fourth, fifth, sixth and below in the twentieth article, they condemn us, for teaching that “men obtain remission of sins, not because of their own merits, but freely for Christ’s sake, through faith in Christ.” For they condemn us both for denying, that men obtain remission of sins, because of their own merits, and for affirming that, through faith, men obtain remission of sins, and through faith in Christ are justified. But, since, in this controversy, the chief topic of Christian doctrine, is treated, which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ [which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible], and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with forbearance, in regard to matters of such importance. For, since the adversaries understand neither what the remission of sins, nor what faith, nor what grace, nor what righteousness is, they sadly corrupt this topic, and obscure the glory and benefits of Christ, and rob devout consciences of the consolations offered in Christ. But, not only that we may strengthen the position of our Confession, but also remove the charges which the adversaries advance against us, certain things are to be premised in the beginning, in order that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, i. e. both that of our adversaries and our own, may be known.

#### **[A. Of the origin of the disagreement, and the errors of the adversaries.]**

All Scripture ought to be distributed into these two topics, the Law and the promises. For, in some places, it delivers the Law, and, in others, the promise concerning Christ, viz. either when it promises that Christ will come, and offers, for his sake, the remission of sins, justification and life eternal, or when in the Gospel Christ himself, since he has appeared, promises the remission of sins, justification and life eternal. Moreover, in this discussion, by Law we designate

the Ten Commandments, wherever they are read in the Scriptures. Of the ceremonies and judicial laws of Moses, we say nothing at present.

[88] Of these two parts, the adversaries select the Law, because human reason naturally understands, in some way, the Law (for it has the same judgment divinely written in the mind); and, by the Law, they seek the remission of sins and justification. Now, the Decalogue requires not only outward civil works, which reason can in some way produce, but it also requires other things placed far above reason, viz. to truly fear God, to truly love God, to truly call upon God, to be truly convinced that God hears, and to expect the aid of God in death, and in all afflictions; finally, it requires obedience to God, in death and all afflictions, so that we may not flee from these, or refuse them, when God imposes them.

Here the scholastics, having followed the philosophers, teach only a righteousness of reason, viz. civil works, and fabricate besides that, without the Holy Ghost, reason can love God above all things. For, as long as the human mind is at ease, and does not feel the wrath or judgment of God, it can imagine that it wishes to love God, that it wishes to do good for God's sake. In this manner, they teach that men merit the remission of sins, by doing according to that which is in them, i. e. if reason, grieving over sin, elicit an act of love to God, or, for God's sake be active in that which is good. And because this opinion naturally flatters men, it has brought forth and multiplied in the Church many services, monastic vows, abuses of the mass; and, with this opinion, others have, from time to time, devised other acts of worship and inventions. And, in order that they may nourish and increase confidence in such works, they affirm that God necessarily gives grace to one thus working, by the necessity not of constraint, but of immutability [not that he is constrained, but that this is the order, which God will not transgress or alter].

[89] In this opinion, there are many great and pernicious errors, which it would be tedious to enumerate. Let the discreet reader think only of this: If this be Christian righteousness, what difference is there between philosophy and the doctrine of Christ? If we merit the remission of sins by these elicit acts, what does Christ furnish? If we can be justified by reason and the works of reason, wherefore is there need of Christ or regeneration? And from these opinions, the matter has now come to such a pass, that many ridicule us, because we teach that another righteousness than philosophic, must be sought after. We have heard that some, the Gospel being banished, have, instead of a sermon, repeated the ethics of Aristotle. [I myself have heard a great preacher, who did not mention Christ and the Gospel, and preached the ethics of Aristotle.] Nor did such men err, if those things are true, which the adversaries defend [if the doctrine of the adversaries be true, the Ethics is a precious book of sermons, and a fine, new

Bible]. For Aristotle wrote concerning civil life so learnedly, that nothing farther concerning this, is to be sought after. We see books extant, in which certain sayings of Christ are compared with the sayings of Socrates, Zeno and others, as though Christ had come for the purpose of delivering certain laws, through which we might merit the remission of sins, as though we did not receive this gratuitously, because of his merits. Therefore, if we here receive the doctrine of the adversaries, that by the works of reason, we merit the remission of sins and justification, there will be no difference between philosophic, or certainly pharisaic, and Christian righteousness.

[90] Although the adversaries, not to pass by Christ altogether, require a knowledge of the history concerning Christ, and ascribe to him that he has merited for us that a habit be given, or as they say *prima gratia*, “first grace,” which they understand as a habit, inclining us the more readily to love God; yet, what they ascribe to this habit, is of little importance, because they imagine that the acts of the will are of the same kind, before, and after this habit. They imagine that the will can love God; but nevertheless this habit stimulates it to do the same the more cheerfully. And they bid us first merit this habit, by preceding merits, then they bid us merit by the works of the Law, an increase of this habit, and life eternal. Thus they bury Christ, so that men may not avail themselves of him, as a Mediator, and believe that, for his sake, they freely receive remission of sins and reconciliation, but may dream that, by their own fulfillment of the Law, they merit the remission of sins, and that by their own fulfillment of the Law, they are accounted righteous before God; while, nevertheless, the Law is never satisfied, and reason does nothing except certain civil works, and, in the meantime, neither [in the heart] fears God, nor truly believes that God cares for it. And although they speak of this habit, yet, without the righteousness of faith, neither the love of God in man can exist, nor can what the love of God is, be understood.

Their feigning a distinction between *meritum congrui* and *meritum condigni* [due and true complete merit] is only an artifice whereby they may not appear openly to Pelagianize. For if God necessarily gives grace for the *meritum congrui* [due merit], it is no longer *meritum congrui*, but *meritum condigni* [a true duty and complete merit]. After this habit of love [is there], they imagine that man can acquire merit *de condigno*. And yet they bid us doubt whether there be a habit present. How therefore do they know whether they acquire merit *de congruo* or *de condigno*? But this whole matter was fabricated by unconcerned men, who did not know how the remission of sins occurs, and how, in the judgment of God, and terrors of conscience, trust in works is driven away from us. Secure hypocrites always judge that they acquire merit *de condigno*, whether

the habit be present, or be not present, because men naturally trust in their own righteousness; but terrified consciences waver, and hesitate, and then seek and accumulate other works, in order to find rest. Such consciences never think that they acquire merit *de condigno*, and they rush into despair unless they hear, in addition to the doctrine of the Law, the Gospel concerning the gratuitous remission of sins, and the righteousness of faith. [Thus some stories are told, that when the Barefooted monks had in vain praised their order and good works to some good consciences in the hour of death, they at last had to be silent concerning their order and St. Franciscus, and to say: “Dear man, Christ has died for thee.” This revived and refreshed in trouble, and alone gave peace and comfort.]

[91] Thus the adversaries teach nothing but the righteousness of reason, or certainly of the Law, upon which they look just as the Jews upon the veiled face of Moses;<sup>1</sup> and, in secure hypocrites, who think that they satisfy the Law, they excite presumption and empty confidence in works, and contempt of the grace of Christ. On the contrary, they drive timid consciences to despair, which, laboring with doubt, never can find from experience what faith is, and how it is efficacious; thus, at last they utterly despair.

Moreover we think concerning the righteousness of reason thus, viz. that God requires it, and that, because of God’s commandment, the honorable works which the Decalogue commands must necessarily be performed, according to the passage (Gal. 3:24): “The Law was our schoolmaster;” likewise (1 Tim. 1:9): “The Law is made for the ungodly.” For God wishes those who are carnal [gross sinners] to be restrained by civil discipline, and, to maintain this, he has given laws. Scripture doctrine, magistrates, penalties. And this righteousness reason, by its own strength, can, to a certain extent, work, although it is often overcome by natural weakness, and by the devil impelling it to manifest crimes. Moreover, although we cheerfully assign this righteousness of reason the praises that are due it (for this corrupt nature has no greater good [in this life and in a worldly nature, nothing is ever better than eloquence and virtue], and Aristotle says aright: “Neither the evening star, nor the morning star is more beautiful than righteousness,” and God also honors it with bodily rewards); yet it ought not to be praised, so as to detract from Christ.

For it is false, that we merit the remission of sins by our works.

False also is this, that men are accounted righteous before God because of the righteousness of reason [works and external piety].

False also is this, that reason, by its own strength, is able to love God above all things, and to fulfill God’s Law, viz. to truly fear God, to be truly confident that God hears prayer, to be willing to obey God in death and other dispensations



of God, not to covet what belongs to others, etc.; although reason can work civil works.

False also and dishonoring Christ is this, that there are men who do not sin, but without grace, fulfill the commandments of God.

[92] We have testimonies for this our belief, not only from the Scriptures, but also from the Fathers. For, in opposition to the Pelagians, Augustine contends at great length, that grace is not given because of our merits. And, in *De Natura et Gratia*, he says: "If natural ability, through the Free Will, suffice both for learning to know how one ought to live, and for living aright, then Christ has died in vain, then the offense of the cross is made void. Why may I not also here exclaim? Yea I will exclaim, and, with Christian grief, will chide them: 'Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace' (Gal. 5:4, cf. 2:21). 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth' (Rom. 10:3, 4). And John 8:36: 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'"

Therefore, by reason, we cannot be freed from sins and merit the remission of sins. And in John 3:5, it is written: "Except man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But if it is necessary to be born again of the Holy Ghost, the righteousness of reason does not justify us before God, and does not fulfill the Law, Rom. 3:23: "All have come short of the glory of God," i. e. are destitute of the wisdom and righteousness of God, which acknowledges and glorifies God. Likewise Rom. 8:7, 8: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh, cannot please God." These testimonies are so manifest, that, to use the words of Augustine which he employed in this case they do not need an acute understanding, but only an attentive hearer. If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh certainly does not love God; if it cannot be subject to the Law of God, it cannot love God. If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh sins, even when we do external civil works. If it cannot be subject to the Law of God, it certainly sins even when, according to human judgment, it possesses deeds that are excellent and worthy of praise. The adversaries consider only the precepts of the Second Table, which contain civil righteousness that reason understands. Content with this, they think that they satisfy the Law of God. In the meantime they do not see the First Table, which commands that we love God, that we be truly confident that God is angry with sin, that we truly fear God, that we be truly confident that God hears prayer. But the human heart without the Holy Ghost, either in security despises God's

judgment, or in punishment flees from, and hates God, when he judges. Therefore, it does not obey the First Table.

[93] Since, therefore, contempt of God, and doubt concerning the Word of God, and concerning the threats and promises, inhere in human nature, men truly sin, even when, without the Holy Ghost, they do virtuous works; because they do them with a wicked heart, according to Rom. 14:23: "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin."<sup>2</sup> For such persons perform their works with contempt of God, just as Epicurus does not believe that God cares for him, or that he is regarded or heard by God. This contempt vitiates works apparently virtuous, because God judges the heart.

Lastly, it was very foolish for the adversaries to write, that men who are under eternal wrath, merit the remission of sins by an elicited act of love, since it is impossible to love God, unless the remission of sins be apprehended first by faith. For the heart, truly feeling that God is angry, cannot love God, unless he be presented as reconciled. As long as he terrifies us, and seems to cast us into eternal death, human nature is not able to elevate itself, so as to love a wrathful, judging and punishing God; [poor, weak nature must lose heart and courage, and must tremble before such great wrath, which so fearfully terrifies and punishes, and cannot ever feel a spark of love, before God himself comforts]. It is easy for the unconcerned to devise such dreams concerning love, as that a mortal guilty of sin can love God above all things, because they do not feel what the wrath or judgment of God is. But in agony of conscience, and in conflicts [with Satan] conscience experiences the vanity of these philosophical speculations. Paul says (Rom. 4:15): "The Law worketh wrath." He does not say that by the Law men merit the remission of sins. For the Law always accuses and terrifies consciences. Therefore, it does not justify; because conscience terrified by the Law, flees from the judgment of God. Therefore, they err who trust that by the Law, by their own works, they merit the remission of sins. It is sufficient for us to have said these things concerning the righteousness of reason or of the Law, which the adversaries teach. For later, when we will declare our belief concerning the righteousness of faith, the subject itself will compel us to adduce more testimonies, which also will be of service in overthrowing the errors of the adversaries which we have thus far reviewed.

[94] Because, therefore, men by their own strength, cannot fulfill the Law of God, and all are under sin, and subject to eternal wrath and death; on this account, we cannot be freed, by the Law, from sin, and be justified, but the promise of the remission of sins and of justification, has been given us for Christ's sake, who was given for us, in order that he might make satisfaction for the sins of the world, and has been appointed as a Mediator and Propitiator. And

this promise has not the condition of our merits, but freely offers the remission of sins and justification, as Paul says (Rom. 11:6): “If it be of works, then is it no more grace.” And in another place (Rom. 3:21): “The righteousness of God without the Law is manifested,” i. e. the remission of sins is freely offered. Nor does reconciliation depend upon our merits. Because, if the remission of sins were to depend upon our merits, and reconciliation were from the Law, it would be useless. For, as we do not fulfill the Law, it would also follow that the promise of reconciliation would never pertain to us. Thus Paul reasons (Rom. 4:14): “For if they which are of the Law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.” For if the promise would require the condition of our merits and the Law, it would follow, since we would never fulfill the Law, that the promise would be useless.

[95] But since justification occurs through the free promise, it follows that we cannot justify ourselves. Otherwise, wherefore would there be need to promise? For since the promise cannot be received except by faith, the Gospel, which is properly the promise of the remission of sins and of justification for Christ’s sake, proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ, which the Law does not teach. Nor is this the righteousness of the Law. For the Law requires of us our works, and our perfection. But the Gospel freely offers, for Christ’s sake, to us who have been vanquished by sin and death, reconciliation, which is received, not by works, but by faith alone. This faith brings to God, not confidence in one’s own merits, but only confidence in the promise, or the mercy promised in Christ. This special faith, therefore, by which an individual believes that, for Christ’s sake, his sins are remitted him, and, that, for Christ’s sake, God is reconciled and propitious, obtains remission of sins and justifies us. And, because in repentance, i. e. in terrors, it comforts and encourages hearts, it regenerates us, and brings the Holy Ghost,<sup>3</sup> that then we may be able to fulfill God’s law, viz. to love God, to truly fear God, to truly be confident that God hears prayer, and to obey God in all afflictions; it mortifies concupiscence, etc. Thus, because faith, which freely receives the remission of sins, presents, against God’s wrath, Christ as Mediator and Propitiator, it does not present our merits or our love. This faith is the true knowledge of Christ, and avails itself of the benefits of Christ, and regenerates hearts, and precedes the fulfilling of the Law. And of this faith, not a syllable exists in the doctrine of our adversaries. Hence we find fault with the adversaries, equally because they teach only the righteousness of the Law, and because they do not teach the righteousness of the Gospel, which proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ.

## **[B. What is Justifying Faith?]**

[96] The adversaries feign, that faith is only a knowledge of history, and, therefore, teach that it can coexist with mortal sin. Hence, they say nothing concerning faith, by which Paul so frequently says that men are justified, because those who are accounted righteous before God, do not live in mortal sin. But that faith which justifies, is not merely a knowledge of history, but it is to assent to the promise of God, in which, for Christ's sake, the remission of sins and justification are freely offered.

[It is the certainty or the certain trust in the heart, when, with my whole heart, I regard the promises of God as certain and true, through which there are offered me, without my merit, the forgiveness of sins, grace and all salvation, through Christ the Mediator.]

And, that no one may suppose that it is mere knowledge, we will add further: it is to wish and to receive the offered promise of the remission of sins and of justification.

[Faith is that my whole heart takes to itself this treasure. It is not my doing, not my presenting or giving, not my work or preparation, but that a heart comforts itself, and is perfectly confident with respect to this, viz. that God makes a present and gift to us, and not we to him, that he sheds upon us every treasure of grace in Christ.]

And the distinction between this faith and the righteousness of the Law, can be easily discerned. Faith is the λατρεία [divine service], which receives the benefits, offered by God; the righteousness of the Law is the λατρεία [divine service] which offers to God our merits. By faith, God wishes himself so to be honored, that we may receive from him those things which he promises and offers.

But, that faith signifies, not only a knowledge of history, but the faith which assents to the promise, Paul openly testifies, when he says (Rom. 4:16): "Therefore it is of faith, to the end the promise might be sure." For he judges, that the promise cannot be received, unless by faith. Wherefore, he compares them correlatively, and connects promise and faith. Although it will be easy to decide what faith is, if we consider the Creed, where this article certainly stands: "The forgiveness of sins." Therefore, it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, was raised again, unless we add also this article, which is the final cause of the history: "The forgiveness of sins." To this article, the rest must be referred, viz. that, for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our merits, forgiveness of sins is given us. For what need would there be, that Christ be given for our sins, if for our sins our merits can give satisfaction?

As often, therefore, as we speak of Justifying Faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects concur: the *promise*, and that too *gratuitous*, and the

*merits of Christ, as the price and propitiation.* The promise is received by faith; the “gratuitous” excludes our merits, and signifies that the benefit is offered only through mercy; the merits of Christ, are the price, because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins. Scripture frequently implores mercy; and the holy fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. As often, therefore, as mention is made of mercy, we must keep in mind, that faith is there required, which receives the promise of mercy. And, again, as often as we speak of faith, we wish an object to be understood, viz. the promised mercy. For faith justifies and saves, not on the ground that it is a work in itself worthy, but only because it receives the promised mercy.

[97] And in the prophets and the psalms, this worship, this λατρεία, is frequently highly praised, although the Law does not teach the gratuitous remission of sins. But the fathers knew the promise concerning Christ, that God, for Christ’s sake, wished to remit sins. Therefore, since they understood that Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works are not a price for so great a matter [could not pay so great a debt]. Therefore, they received gratuitous mercy and remission of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament. Here belong those frequent repetitions concerning mercy and faith, in the psalms and the prophets, as this (Ps. 130:3 sq.): “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand.” Here David confesses his sins, and does not recount his merits. He adds: “But there is forgiveness with thee.” He comforts himself by his trust in God’s mercy, and he cites the promise: “My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope,” i. e. because thou hast promised the remission of sins, I am sustained by this thy promise.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the fathers also were justified, not by the Law, but by the promise and faith. And it is wonderful that the adversaries extenuate faith to such a degree, although they see that it is everywhere praised as an eminent service, as in Ps. 50:15: “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.” Thus God wishes himself to be made known, thus he wishes himself to be worshiped, that from him we may receive benefits, and may receive them too because of his mercy, and not because of our merits. This is the richest consolation in all afflictions. And such consolations the adversaries remove, when they extenuate and disparage faith, and teach only that, by means of works and merits, men treat with God.

### **[C. That Faith in Christ Justifies.]**

[98] In the first place, lest any one may think that we speak concerning an inoperative knowledge of history, we must declare how faith is attained. Afterward we will show both that it justifies, and how this ought to be

understood, and we will explain those things to which the adversaries object. Christ, in the last chapter of Luke (24:47), commands “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name.” For the Gospel convicts all men, that they are under sin, that they all are subject to eternal wrath and death, and offers, for Christ’s sake, remission of sins and justification, which is received by faith.<sup>5</sup> The preaching of repentance which accuses us, terrifies consciences with true and earnest terrors. In these, hearts ought again to receive consolation. This happens, if they believe the promise of Christ, that, for his sake, we have remission of sins. *This faith, encouraging and consoling in these fears, receives remission of sins, justifies and quickens.* For this consolation is a new and spiritual life. These things are plain and clear, and can be understood by the pious, and have testimonies of the Church [as is to be seen in the conversion of Paul and Augustine.] The adversaries nowhere can say how the Holy Ghost is given. They imagine that the sacraments confer the Holy Ghost *ex opere operato*, without a good emotion in the recipient, as though, indeed, the gift of the Holy Ghost were a matter of indifference.

[99] But since we speak of such faith as is not idle thought, but of that which liberates from death and produces a new life in hearts, and is the work of the Holy Ghost; this does not coexist with mortal sin, but, as long as it is present, produces good fruits, as we will say later. For what more simple and more clear can be said concerning the conversion of the wicked, or concerning the mode of regeneration? Let them, from so great an array of writers, adduce a single commentary upon the *Sententiae*,<sup>6</sup> that speaks of regeneration. When they speak of the habit of love, they imagine that men merit it through works, and they do not teach that it is received through the Word, precisely as also the Anabaptists teach at this time. But God cannot be treated with, God cannot be apprehended, except through the Word. Accordingly justification occurs through the Word, just as Paul says (Rom. 1:16): “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Likewise (10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing.” And even from this, proof can be derived, that faith justifies; because, if justification occurs only through the Word, and the Word is apprehended only by faith, it follows that faith justifies. But there are other and more important reasons. We have said these things thus far, in order that we might show the mode of regeneration, and that the nature of faith, concerning which we speak, might be understood.

Now we will show *that faith justifies*. Here, in the first place, readers must be admonished of this, that just as it is necessary to maintain this sentence: Christ is Mediator, so is it necessary to defend *that faith justifies*. For how will Christ be Mediator, if, in justification, we do not use him as Mediator; if we are not

convinced that, for his sake, we are accounted righteous? But this is to believe, to trust in the merits of Christ, that for his sake God certainly wishes to be reconciled with us. Likewise just as we ought to maintain that, in addition to the Law, the promise of Christ is necessary; so also is it needful to maintain that faith justifies. For the Law cannot be performed, unless the Holy Ghost be first received. It is, therefore, needful to maintain, that the promise of Christ is necessary. But this cannot be received except by faith. Therefore, those who deny that faith justifies, teach nothing but the Law, both Christ and the Gospel being set aside.

[100] But when it is said that faith justifies, some perhaps understand it of faith as an originating principle, viz. that faith is the beginning of justification or preparation for justification, so that that through which we are accepted by God is not faith itself, but the works which follow; and they dream, accordingly, that faith is praised, because it is an originating principle. For great is the power of an originating principle, as they commonly say, ἀρχὴ ἡμῶν παντός, the beginning is half of everything; just as if one would say that grammar makes the teachers of all arts, because it prepares for other arts, although in fact it is his own art that renders every one an artist. We do not believe thus concerning faith, but we maintain this, that properly and truly, by faith itself, we are for Christ's sake accounted righteous, or are acceptable to God. And, because "to be justified" means that, out of unjust men, just men be made, or be born again, it means also that they should be pronounced or accounted just.<sup>7</sup> For Scripture speaks in both ways. Accordingly we wish first to show this, that faith alone makes of an unjust, a just man, i. e. receives remission of sins.

The particle ALONE offends some, although even Paul says (Rom. 3:28): "We conclude that a man is justified by faith *without the deeds of the Law.*" Again (Eph. 2:8): "*It is the gift of God; not of works,* lest any man should boast." Again (Rom. 3:24): "Being justified *freely.*" If the exclusive ALONE displeases, let them remove from Paul also the exclusives "*freely,*" "*not of works,*" "*it is the gift,*" etc. For these also are exclusives. It is, however, the opinion of merit that we exclude. We do not exclude the Word or sacraments, as the adversaries falsely charge us. For we have said above that faith is conceived from the Word, and we honor the ministry of the Word in the highest degree. Love also and works ought to follow faith. Wherefore, they are not excluded so as not to follow, but *confidence in the merit of love or of works is excluded in justification.* And this we will clearly show.

#### **[D. That We Obtain Remission of Sins by Faith alone in Christ.]**



We think that even the adversaries acknowledge that, in justification, the remission of sins is first necessary. For we all are under sin. Wherefore, we thus reason:

To attain the remission of sins is to be justified, according to Ps. 32:1: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven.” *By faith alone in Christ*, not through love, not because of love or works, do we attain the remission of sins, although love follows faith. *Therefore by faith alone we are justified*, understanding justification as the making a righteous man out of an unrighteous, or that he be regenerated.

[101] It will thus become easy to declare the minor premise if we know how the remission of sins occurs. The adversaries with great indifference dispute whether the remission of sins and the infusion of grace are the same changes. Idle men did not have anything to say [cannot speak at all on this subject]. In the remission of sins, the terrors of sin and of eternal death, in the heart, ought to be overcome, as Paul testifies, 1 Cor. 15:56 sq.: “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is, sin terrifies consciences; this occurs through the Law, which shows the wrath of God against sin; but we gain the victory through Christ. How? By faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. Thus, therefore, we prove the minor proposition. The wrath of God cannot be appeased, if we present against it our own works, because Christ has been set forth as a Propitiator, so that, for his sake, the Father may become reconciled to us. But Christ is not apprehended as a Mediator, except by faith. *Therefore, by faith alone we obtain remission of sins*, when we comfort our hearts with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. Likewise Paul, Rom. 6:2, says: “By whom also we have access,” and adds, “by faith.” Thus, therefore, we are reconciled to the Father, and receive remission of sins, when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ’s sake. The adversaries regard Christ as Mediator and Propitiator for this reason, viz. that he has merited the habit of love; they do not urge us to use him now as Mediator, but, precisely as though Christ were buried, they imagine that we have access, through our own works, and, through these, merit this habit, and afterwards, by this love, come to God.<sup>8</sup> Is not this to altogether bury Christ, and to take away the, entire doctrine of faith? Paul, on the contrary, teaches that we have access, i. e, reconciliation, through Christ. And to show how this occurs, he adds, that we have access “by faith.” *By faith, therefore, for Christ’s sake, we receive remission of sins*. We cannot oppose our own love, and our own works, over against God’s wrath.

*Secondly*. It is certain that sins are remitted for the sake of Christ, as



Propitiator, Rom. 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation." Moreover Paul adds: "Through faith." Therefore this Propitiator thus profits us, when, by faith, we apprehend the mercy promised in him, and present it, against the wrath and judgment of God. And to the same effect, it is written, Heb. 4:14, 16: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest," etc., "let us therefore come with confidence." For the Apostle bids us to come to God, not with confidence in our own merits, but with confidence in Christ, as a High Priest; therefore he requires faith.

*Thirdly.* Peter in Acts 10:43 says: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." How could this be said more clearly? We receive remission of sins, he says, through his name, i. e. for his sake: therefore, not for the sake of our merits, not for the sake of our contrition, attrition, love, worship, works. And he adds: "When we believe in him." Therefore, he requires faith. For we cannot apprehend the name of Christ, except by faith. Besides he cites the agreement of all the Fathers. This is truly to cite the authority of the Church. But of this topic we will speak after a while when treating of "Repentance."

*Fourthly.* Remission of sins is something promised for Christ's sake. Therefore, it cannot be received except by faith alone. For the promise cannot be received, except by faith alone. Rom. 4:16: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure as though he were to say: "If the matter were to depend upon our merits, the promise would be uncertain and useless, because we never could determine when we would have sufficient merit." And this, experienced consciences can easily understand [and would not, for a thousand worlds, have our salvation depend upon ourselves]. Accordingly Paul says. Gal. 3:22: "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." He withdraws merit from us, because he says that all are guilty and concluded under sin; then he adds that the promise, viz. of the remission of sins and of justification, is given, and adds how the promise can be received, viz. by faith. And this reasoning, derived from the nature of the promise, is the chief reasoning in Paul, and is often repeated. Nor can anything be devised or imagined whereby this argument of Paul can be overthrown.

[103] Wherefore let not good minds suffer themselves to be forced from the opinion, that we receive remission of sins for Christ's sake only through faith. In this, they have sure and firm consolation against the terrors of sin, and against eternal death, and against all the gates of hell.

But since we receive remission of sins and the Holy Ghost by faith alone, faith alone justifies, because those reconciled are accounted righteous and

children of God, not on account of their own purity, but through mercy for Christ's sake: if they by faith apprehend this mercy. Accordingly Scripture testifies, that by faith we are accounted righteous (Rom. 3:26). We, therefore, will add testimonies that clearly declare that faith is that very righteousness, by which we are accounted righteous before God, viz. not because it is a work, that is, in itself, worthy, but because it receives the promise, by which God has promised, that for Christ's sake, he wishes to be propitious to those believing in him, or, because he knows that "Christ of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

Var.: And reconciliation for Christ's sake.

[104] In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul expressly discusses this topic, and declares that, when we believe that God, for Christ's sake, is reconciled to us, we are justified freely by faith. And this proposition, which contains the statement of the entire discussion, he maintains in the third chapter: "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law" (Rom. 3:28). Here the adversaries interpret that this refers to Levitical ceremonies. But Paul speaks not only of the ceremonies, but of the whole Law. For he quotes afterward from the Decalogue (7:7): "Thou shalt not covet." And if moral works would merit the remission of sins, and justification, there would also be no need of Christ and the promise, and all that Paul speaks of the promise would be overthrown. For he would have been wrong in writing to the Ephesians (2:8): "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works."

Paul likewise refers to Abraham and David (Rom. 4:1, 6). But they had the command of God concerning circumcision. Therefore if any works justified, these works must also have justified at the time that they had a command. Moreover, Augustine teaches correctly that Paul speaks of the entire Law, as he discusses at length, "of the spirit and letter," where he says finally, "These matters, therefore, having been considered and treated, according to the ability that the Lord has thought worthy to give us, we infer that man is not justified by the precepts of a good life, but by faith in Jesus Christ."

And lest we may think that the sentence, that faith justifies, fell from Paul inconsiderately, he fortifies and confirms this by a long discussion in the fourth chapter to the Romans, and afterwards repeats it in all his Epistles. Thus he says, Rom. 4:4, 5: "To him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Here he clearly says that faith itself is imputed for righteousness. Faith, therefore, is that thing, which God declares to be righteousness, and he adds that it is imputed freely, and says that it could not be imputed freely, if it were due on account of works. Wherefore he

excludes also the merit of moral works. For if justification before God were due to these, faith would not be imputed for righteousness without works. And afterwards, Rom. 4:9: "For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." Chapter 5:1 says: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," i. e. we have consciences that are tranquil and joyful before God. Rom. 10:10: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Here he declares that faith is the righteousness of the heart. Gal. 2:16: "We have believed in Christ Jesus that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the Law." Eph. 2:8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of worlds, lest any man should boast."

[105] John 1:12: "To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 3:14, 15; "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish." Likewise, v. 17: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned."

Acts 13:38, 39: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses." How could the office of Christ and justification be declared more clearly? The Law, he says, did not justify. Christ was given, to the end that we may believe that for his sake we are justified. He plainly denies justification to the Law. Therefore, for Christ's sake, we are accounted righteous, when we believe that God, for His sake, has been reconciled to us. Acts 4:11, 12: "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." But the name of Christ is apprehended only by faith. Therefore, by confidence in the name of Christ, and not by confidence in our works, we are saved. For "the name" here signifies the cause which is mentioned, because of which salvation is attained. And to call upon the name of Christ is to trust in the name of Christ, as the cause or price, because of which we are saved. Acts 15:9: "Purifying their hearts by faith." Wherefore that faith of which the Apostles speak, is not inoperative knowledge, but a reality receiving the Holy Ghost and justifying us [not a mere knowledge of history, but a strong powerful work of the Holy Ghost, which changes hearts].

Hab. 2:4: "The just shall live by his faith." Here, he first says that men are just by faith, by which they believe that God is propitious, and he adds that the

same faith quickens, because this faith produces in the heart peace and joy and eternal life.

Isa. 53:11: “By his knowledge shall he justify many.” But what is the knowledge of Christ, unless to know the benefits of Christ, the promises which by the Gospel he has diffused into the world? And to know these benefits is properly and truly to believe in Christ, to believe that that which God has promised for Christ’s sake, he will certainly fulfill,

[106] But Scripture is full of such testimonies, since, in some places, it presents the Law, and in others the promises concerning Christ, and the remission of sins, and the free acceptance of the sinner for Christ’s sake.

Here and there among the Fathers similar testimonies are extant. For Ambrose says in his letter to a certain Irenaeus: “Moreover, the world was subject to the Law for the reason that, according to the command of the Law, all are addressed, and yet, by the works of the Law, no one is justified, i. e. because, by the Law, sin is perceived, but guilt is not discharged. The Law, which made all sinners, seemed to have done injury, but when the Lord Jesus Christ came, he forgave to all sin which no one could avoid, and, by the shedding of his own blood, blotted out the handwriting which was against us. This is what he says in Rom. 5:20: ‘The Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’ Because after the whole world became subject, he took away the sin of the whole world, as he testified, saying (John 1:29): ‘Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.’ And, on this account, let no one boast of works, because no one is justified by his deeds. But he who is righteous, has it given him because he was justified after the laver [of Baptism]. Faith, therefore, is that which frees through the blood of Christ, because he is blessed, ‘whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered’ (Ps. 32:1).” These are the words of Ambrose, which clearly favor our doctrine; he denies justification to works, and ascribes it to faith which frees through the blood of Christ. Let all the Sententiarists,<sup>9</sup> who are embellished with magnificent titles be collected into one heap. For some are called angelic; others, subtle; and others, irrefragable.<sup>10</sup> When all these have been read and re-read, they will not be of as much aid for understanding Paul as is this one passage of Ambrose.

[107] To the same effect, Augustine writes many things against the Pelagians. In “Of the Spirit and Letter,” he says: “The righteousness of the Law is set forth for this reason, viz. that he who should fulfill it might live in it, in order that when any one has recognized his infirmity, he may attain and work this righteousness, and live in it, not by his own strength, neither by the letter of the Law itself, which cannot be done, but, by procuring by faith, a justifier. Except

in a justified man, there is no good work, wherein he who does it may live. But justification is obtained by faith.” Here he clearly says that the justifier is procured by faith, and that justification is obtained by faith. And a little after: “By the Law, we fear God; by faith, we hope in God. But to those fearing punishment, grace is hidden; and the soul laboring under this fear, betakes itself by faith to God’s mercy, in order that he may give what he has commanded.” Here he teaches that, by the Law, hearts are terrified, but, by faith, they receive consolation. He also teaches us to apprehend, by faith, mercy, before we attempt to fulfill the Law. We will shortly cite certain other passages.

Indeed, it is wonderful that the adversaries are in no way moved by so many passages of Scripture, which clearly ascribe justification to faith, and, likewise, deny it to works. Do they think that the same is repeated so often for no purpose? Do they think that these words fell inconsiderately from the Holy Ghost? But they have also devised sophistry, whereby they elude them. They say that these passages of Scripture, which speak of faith, ought to be received as referring to a *fides formata*, i. e. they do not ascribe justification to faith, except on account of love. Yea they do not, in any way, ascribe justification to faith, but only to love, because they dream that faith can coexist with mortal sin. Whither does this tend, unless that they again abolish the promise and return to the Law? If faith receive the remission of sins on account of love, the remission of sins will always be uncertain, because we never love as much as we ought; yea we do not love unless our hearts are firmly convinced that the remission of sins has been granted us. Thus the adversaries, while they require in the remission of sins and justification confidence in one’s own love, altogether abolish the Gospel concerning the free remission of sins; although, at the same time, they neither render this love nor understand it, unless they believe that the remission of sins is freely received.

[108] We also say that love ought to follow faith, as Paul also says (Gal. 5:6): “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” And yet, for this reason, we ought not to think that, by confidence in this love or on account of this love, we receive the remission of sins and reconciliation, just as we do not receive the remission of sins because of other works that follow. But the remission of sins is received by faith alone, and indeed by faith properly so called, because the promise cannot be received except by faith. But faith properly so called, is that which assents to the promise of Scripture [is when my heart and the Holy Ghost, in the heart, says: The promise of God is true and certain]. Of this faith, Scripture speaks. And because it receives the remission of sins, and reconciles us to God, by this faith we are accounted for Christ’s sake righteous before we love and do the

works of the Law, although love necessarily follows. *Nor indeed is this faith an idle knowledge, neither can it coexist with mortal sin, but it is a work of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are freed from death, and terrified minds are encouraged and quickened.* And because this faith alone receives the remission of sins, and renders us acceptable to God and brings the Holy Ghost;<sup>11</sup> it could be more correctly called *gratia gratum faciens*, grace rendering one pleasing to God, than an effect following, viz. love.

Thus far, in order that the subject might be made clear, we have shown, with sufficient fulness, both from testimonies of Scripture, and arguments derived from Scripture, that by faith alone, we obtain the remission of sins for Christ's sake, and that by faith alone we are justified, i. e. from unrighteous men made righteous, or regenerated. But how necessary the knowledge of this faith is, can be easily judged, because, in this alone, the office of Christ is recognized, by this alone we receive the benefits of Christ; this alone brings sure and firm consolation to pious minds. And in the Church it is necessary that there should be doctrine, from which the pious may receive the sure hope of salvation. For the adversaries give men bad advice [therefore the adversaries are truly unfaithful bishops, unfaithful preachers, and doctors; they have hitherto given evil counsel to consciences, and still do so by introducing such doctrine], when they bid them doubt whether they obtain remission of sins. For how will such persons sustain themselves in death, who have heard nothing of this faith, and think that they ought to doubt whether they obtain the remission of sins? Besides it is necessary that in the Church, the Gospel be retained, i. e. the promise that for Christ's sake sins are freely remitted. Those who teach nothing of this faith, concerning which we speak, altogether abolish the Gospel. But the scholastics mention not even a word concerning this faith. Our adversaries follow them, and reject this faith. Nor do they see that by rejecting this faith, they abolish the entire promise, concerning the free remission of sins, and the righteousness of Christ.

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1. 2 Cor 3:18 sqq.↩

2. Cf. Apology XV. (viii. 17), p. 208.↩

3. Cf. Augsburg Confession, Art. V.↩

4. In the Variata, Melancthon adds the example of Abraham, and continues: "Paul also cites concerning Abraham (Rom. 4:3): 'He believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness;' i. e. Abraham knew that God was propitious to him only on account of his promise; he assented to God's promise and did not suffer himself to be withdrawn from it, although he

saw that he was impure and unworthy; he knew that God offers his promise on account of his own truth, and not on account of our works or merits. Neither can terrified consciences find rest, if they ought to know that they please [God] on account of their own works or their own love or fulfilling of the Law, because in the flesh sin inheres, which always accuses us. But hearts find rest when in these terrors they are convinced that we please God, because he has promised, and that God proffers the promise on account of his own truth, not on account of our worth. Thus Abraham heard this voice: ‘Fear not; I am thy shield,’ etc. (Gen. 15:1). This encouraged him, and he perceived that God was propitious to him, not because he deserved it, but because it was necessary that the promise of God be judged true. This faith, therefore, is imputed to him for righteousness, i. e. because he assents to the promise and receives the offered reconciliation; he is now truly righteous and accepted by God, not on account of his own worth, but because he accepts the gratuitous promise of God. Not without a cause did this testimony of Genesis (15:1) please Paul. We see how he amplifies it, how earnestly he dwells upon it, because he saw that in this passage the nature of faith can be easily observed; he saw that a testimony concerning the imputation of righteousness is expressly added; he saw that the praise of meriting justification and of pacifying conscience is denied to works. When Abraham therefore is pronounced righteous, because he assents to the promise and accepts the offered reconciliation, he does not oppose merits or works to God’s wrath. Wherefore this passage carefully considered will be sufficient to teach pious minds fully concerning the entire subject, since indeed it can be thus understood, if terrified minds propose it to themselves and are convinced that in this manner they ought to assent to the gratuitous promise. For they are not able to find rest otherwise, unless they are confident that they have a reconciled God, for the reason that he has promised, and not for the reason that our nature, life and works are worthy.”↵

5. Cf. Formula of Concord Ep. and Sol. Dec, V., 533 sqq , 636 sqq.; Apol., III. 65; XII. 53.↵
6. Of Peter Lombard.↵
7. Cf. Formula of Concord, 528, 613.↵
8. Variata: By love have peace of conscience.↵
9. The commentators on the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard.↵
10. *Doctor Angelicus*, Thomas Aquinas; *Doctor Subtilissimus*, John Duns Scotus; *Doctor Irrefragibilis*, Alexander Halesius; *Doctor Seraphious*, Bonaventura.↵

11. Var.: And renders consciences pacified and tranquil.↩



## Chapter III. Of Love And The Fulfilling Of The Law.

### [A. Of the Necessity of the New Obedience, and its relation to Faith.]

Parallel Passages.— Chap. III.: Augsburg Confession, Arts. VI. and XX. Smalcald Articles, 319, 324; Formula of Concord, 529. 615 sq.

Here the adversaries urge against us: “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matt. 19:17); likewise: “The doers of the Law shall be justified” (Rom. 2:13), and many other like things concerning the Law and works. Before we reply to this, we must first declare *what we believe concerning love and the fulfilling of the Law*.

It is written in the prophet (Jer. 31:33): “I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” And in Rom. 3:31, Paul says: “Do we then make void the Law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the Law.” and Christ says (Matt. 19:17): “If thou wilt enter into life, Keep the commandments.” Likewise (1 Cor. 13:3): “If I have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” These and similar sentences testify that the Law ought to be begun in us, and be kept by us more and more. Moreover, we speak not of ceremonies, but of that Law which gives commandment concerning the movements of the heart, viz. of the Decalogue. Because indeed faith brings the Holy Ghost, and produces in hearts a new life, it is necessary that it should produce spiritual movements in hearts. And what these movements are, the prophet (Jer. 31:33) shows, when he says: “I will put my Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” Therefore, when we have been justified by faith, and regenerated, we begin to fear and love God, to pray to him, to expect from him aid, to give thanks and praise him, and to obey him in afflictions. We begin also to love our neighbors, because our hearts have spiritual and holy movements [there is now, through the Spirit of Christ, a new heart, mind and spirit within].

[110] These things cannot occur until we have been justified by faith, and, regenerated, we receive the Holy Ghost: first, because the Law cannot be kept without [the knowledge of] Christ; and likewise the Law cannot be kept without the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost is received by faith, according to the declaration of Paul, Gal. 3:14: “That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” Then, too, how can the human heart love God, while it knows

that He is terribly angry, and is oppressing us with temporal and perpetual calamities? But the Law always accuses us, always shows that God is angry. [Therefore what the scholastics say of the love of God is a dream.] God is not therefore loved, until we apprehend mercy by faith. Thus He at length becomes an object that can be loved.

Although, therefore, civil works, i. e. the outward works of the Law, can be done in a measure, without Christ and without the Holy Ghost, nevertheless it appears from those things which we have said, that those things which belong peculiarly to the divine Law, i. e. the affections of the heart towards God which are commanded in the first table, cannot be rendered without the Holy Ghost. But our adversaries are fine theologians; they regard the second table, and political works; for the first table they care nothing, as though it were of no matter; or certainly they require only outward observances. They in no way consider the Law that is eternal, and placed far above the sense and intellect of all creatures (Deut. 6:5): “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart.”

[111] But Christ was given for this purpose, viz. that, for his sake, there might be bestowed on us the remission of sins, and the Holy Ghost to bring forth in us new and eternal life, and eternal righteousness [to manifest Christ in our hearts, as it is written, John 16:15: “He shall take of the things of mine, and show them unto you.” Likewise, he works also other gifts, love, thanksgiving, charity, patience, etc.]. Wherefore the Law cannot be truly kept, unless the Holy Ghost be received through faith. Accordingly Paul says, that the Law is established by faith, and not made void; because the Law can at length be thus kept, when the Holy Ghost is given. And Paul teaches, Cor. 3:15 sq., the veil that covered the face of Moses cannot be removed, except by faith in Christ, by which the Holy Ghost is received. For he speaks thus: “But even unto this day when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Paul understands, by the veil, human opinion concerning the entire Law, the Decalogue and the ceremonies, viz. because hypocrites think that external and civil works satisfy the Law of God, and that sacrifices and observances justify before God *ex opere operato*. But then this veil is removed from us, i. e. we are freed from this error, when God shows to our hearts our uncleanness, and the heinousness of sin. Then, for the first time, we see that we are far from fulfilling the Law. Then, we learn to know how flesh, in security and indifference, does not fear God, and is not fully certain that we are regarded by God, but imagines that men are born and die by chance. Then, we experience that we do not believe that God forgives and hears us. But when, on hearing the Gospel and the remission of sins, we are consoled by faith, we

receive the Holy Ghost, so that now we are able to think aright concerning God, and to fear and believe God, etc. From these facts, it is apparent that the Law cannot be kept without Christ and the Holy Ghost.

[112] We, therefore, profess that it is necessary that the Law be begun in us, and that it be observed continually more and more. And at the same time we comprehend both spiritual movements, and external good works [the good heart within and works without]. Therefore the adversaries falsely charge against us, that our theologians do not teach good works, while they not only require these, but also show how they can be done. The result convicts hypocrites, who, by their own powers, endeavor to fulfill the Law, that they cannot afford what they attempt. For human nature is far too weak to be able by its own powers to resist the devil, who holds as captives all who have not been freed through faith. There is need of the power of Christ against the devil, viz. that, inasmuch as we know that for Christ's sake we are heard, and have the promise, we may pray for the governance and defense of the Holy Ghost, that we may neither be deceived and err, nor be impelled to undertake anything contrary to God's will. Just as Ps. 68:18 teaches: "Thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for man." For Christ has overcome the devil; and has given to us the promise and the Holy Ghost, in order that, by divine aid, we ourselves also may overcome. And John 3:8: "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Again, we teach not only how the Law can be observed, but also how God is pleased if anything be done, viz. not as though we render satisfaction to the Law, but because we are in Christ, just as we will say after a little. It is, therefore, manifest that we require good works. Yea, we add also this, that it is impossible for love to God, even though it be small, to be sundered from faith; because through Christ we come to the Father, and, the remission of sins having been received, we now are truly certain that we have a God, i. e. that God cares for us; we call upon him, we give him thanks, we fear him, we love him, as John teaches in his first Epistle (4:19), "We love him," he says, "because he first loved us," viz. because he gave his Son for us, and forgave us our sins. Thus he indicates that faith precedes, and love follows. Likewise the faith of which we speak exists in repentance, i. e. it is conceived in the terrors of conscience which feels the wrath of God against our sins, and seeks the remission of sins, and to be freed from sin. And in such terrors and other afflictions, this faith ought to grow, and be strengthened. Wherefore, it cannot exist in those who live according to the flesh, who are delighted by their own lusts, and obey them. Accordingly Paul says (Rom. 8:1): "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." So too (vs. 12, 13): "We are debtors not to

the flesh to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Wherefore, the faith which receives remission of sins in a heart terrified and fleeing from sin, does not remain in those who obey their desires, neither does it coexist with mortal sin.

[113] From these effects of faith the adversaries select one, viz. love, and teach that love justifies. Thus it is clearly apparent that they teach only the Law. They do not teach that remission of sins through faith is first received. They do not teach of Christ as Mediator, that, for Christ’s sake, we have a gracious God; but because of our love. And yet what the nature of this love is, they do not say, neither can they say. They proclaim that they fulfill the Law, although this glory belongs properly to Christ; and they set over against the judgment of God confidence in their own works; for they say that they merit *de condigno* (according to righteousness) grace and eternal life. This confidence is absolutely impious and vain. For, in this life, we cannot satisfy the Law, because carnal nature does not cease to bring forth wicked dispositions [evil inclination and desire], even though the Spirit in us resists them.

[114-115] But some one may ask: Since we also confess that love is a work of the Holy Ghost, and since it is righteousness, because it is the fulfilling of the Law, why do we not teach that it justifies? To this we must reply: In the first place it is certain, that we receive remission of sins, neither through our love, nor for the sake of our love, but for Christ’s sake by faith alone. Faith alone which looks upon the promise, and knows that it must be regarded certain that God forgives, because Christ has not died in vain, etc., overcomes the terrors of sin and death. If any one doubt whether sins be remitted him, he dishonors Christ, since he judges that his sin is greater or more efficacious than the death and promise of Christ; although Paul says (Rom. 5:20): “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,” i. e. that mercy is more comprehensive [more powerful, richer, and stronger] than sin. If any one think that he obtains the remission of sins because he loves, he dishonors Christ, and will discover in God’s judgment that this confidence in his own righteousness is empty and vain. Therefore, it is necessary that faith should reconcile and justify. And as we do not receive remission of sins through other virtues of the Law, or on account of these, viz. on account of patience, chastity, obedience towards magistrates, etc., and nevertheless these virtues ought to follow; so, too, we do not receive remission of sins, because of love to God, although it is necessary that this should follow. But the custom of speech is well known, that, by the same word, we sometimes comprehend by synecdoche the cause and effects. Thus in Luke 7:47, Christ says: “Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much.” For Christ

interprets this very passage when he adds: “Thy faith hath saved thee.” Christ, therefore, did not mean that the woman, by that work of love, had merited the remission of sins. For he says clearly on this account: “Thy faith hath saved thee.” But faith is that which freely apprehends God’s mercy on account of God’s Word, [which relies upon God’s mercy and Word, and not upon one’s own work]. If any one denies that this is faith, [if any one imagines that he can rely at the same time upon God and his own work], he does not understand at all what faith is. [Germ, adds: For the terrified conscience is not satisfied with its own works, but must cry after mercy, and is comforted and encouraged alone by God’s Word.] And the narrative itself shows in this passage what that is which he calls faith. The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ, that with him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to Christ. To seek from him the remission of sins, was truly to acknowledge the Messiah. Now thus to think of Christ, thus to worship him, thus to embrace him, is to truly believe. Christ, moreover, employed the word “love,” not with respect to the woman, but against the Pharisee; because he contrasted the entire worship of the Pharisee, with the entire worship of the woman. He reproved the Pharisee, because he did not acknowledge that he was the Messiah, although he afforded him the outward offices due to a guest and a great and holy man. He points to the woman and praises her worship, ointment, tears, etc., all of which were signs of faith and a confession, viz. that with Christ she sought the remission of sins. It is indeed a great example which, not without reason, moved Christ to reprove the Pharisee, who was a wise and honorable man, but not a believer. He charges him with impiety, and admonishes him by the example of the woman, showing thereby that it is disgraceful to him, that while an unlearned woman believes God, he, a doctor of the law, does not believe, does not acknowledge the Messiah, and does not seek from him remission of sins and salvation. Thus therefore he praises the entire worship as it often occurs in the Scriptures, that, by one word, we embrace many things; as below we will speak at greater length in regard to similar passages, such as Luke 11:41: “Give alms of such things as ye have; and behold all things are clean unto you.” He requires not only alms, but also the righteousness of faith. Thus he here says: “Her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much,” i. e. because she has truly worshiped me with faith and the exercises and signs of faith. He comprehends the entire worship, yet, meanwhile, this teaches that the remission of sins is properly received by faith, although love, confession and other good fruits ought to follow. Wherefore, by this, he does not mean that these fruits are the prices, or are the propitiation, because of which the remission of sins, which reconciles us to God,

is given. We are disputing concerning a great subject, concerning the honor of Christ, and whence good minds may seek for sure and firm consolation, whether it is to be placed in confidence in Christ, or in our works. But if it is to be placed in our works, the honor of Mediator and Propitiator will be withdrawn from Christ. And yet we will find, in God's judgment, that this confidence is vain, and that consciences rush thence into despair. But if the remission of sins, and reconciliation, do not occur freely for Christ's sake, but for the sake of our love, no one will have remission of sins, unless when he has fulfilled the entire Law; because the Law does not justify as long as it can accuse us. Therefore, it is manifest that, since justification is reconciliation for Christ's sake, we are justified by faith, because it is very certain that by faith alone the remission of sins is received.

Now, therefore, let us reply to the objection which we have above stated.<sup>1</sup> The adversaries are right in thinking that love is the fulfilling of the Law, and obedience to the Law is certainly righteousness. [Ger. adds: But who in truth can say or boast that he keeps the Law, and loves God, as the Law has commanded? We have shown above that God has made the promise of grace, because we cannot observe the Law. Therefore Paul says everywhere that we cannot be justified before God by the Law.] But they make a mistake in this, that they think that we are justified by the Law. Since, however, we are not justified by the Law, but receive remission of sins and reconciliation by faith for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of love, or the fulfilling of the Law; it follows necessarily that we are justified by faith in Christ.

[116] In the second place, this fulfilling of the Law or obedience towards the Law, is indeed righteousness, when it is complete; but in us it is small and impure. Accordingly, it is not pleasing for its own sake, and is not accepted for its own sake. But although from those things which have been said above, it is evident that justification signifies not only the beginning of the renewal, but also the reconciliation by which also we afterwards are accepted; nevertheless it can now be seen much more clearly that the inchoate fulfilling of the Law does not justify, because it is accepted only on account of faith.<sup>2</sup>

Nor must we trust that we are accounted righteous before God, by our own perfection and fulfilling of the Law; but rather for Christ's sake.

[117] First [in the third place], because Christ does not cease to be Mediator after we have been renewed. They err who imagine that he has merited only a *first grace*, and that afterwards we please God and merit eternal life by our fulfilling of the Law. Christ remains Mediator, and we ought always to be confident that for his sake we have a reconciled God, even although we are unworthy. As Paul clearly teaches, when he says<sup>3</sup> (1 Cor. 4:4): "I know nothing

by myself, yet am I not hereby justified?” but he knows that by faith he is accounted righteous for Christ’s sake, according to the passage: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven” (Ps. 32:1; Rom. 4:7). But this remission is always received by faith. Likewise, the imputation of the righteousness of the Gospel, is from the promise; therefore, it is always received by faith, and it always must be regarded certain that, by faith, we are, for Christ’s sake, accounted righteous. If the regenerate ought afterwards to think that they will be accepted an account of the fulfilling of the Law, when would conscience be certain that it pleased God, since we never satisfy the Law? Accordingly we must always recur to the promise; by this our infirmity must be sustained, and we must regard it certain that we are accounted righteous for the sake of Christ, “who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34). If any one think, that he is righteous and accepted, on account of his own fulfillment of the Law, and not on account of Christ’s promise, he dishonors this High Priest. Neither can it be understood how man can be made righteous before God, when Christ is excluded as Propitiator and Mediator.

[118] Again [in the fourth place], what need is there of a long discussion?<sup>4</sup> All Scripture, all the Church cries out that the Law cannot be satisfied. Therefore, this inchoate fulfillment of the Law does not please on its own account, but on account of faith in Christ. Otherwise the Law always accuses us. For who loves or fears God sufficiently? Who with sufficient patience bears the afflictions imposed by God? Who does not frequently doubt whether human affairs are ruled by God’s counsel or by chance? Who does not frequently doubt whether he be heard by God? Who is not frequently enraged because the wicked enjoy a better lot than the pious, because the pious are oppressed by the wicked?<sup>5</sup> Who does satisfaction to his own calling? Who loves his neighbor as himself? Who is not tempted by lust? Accordingly Paul says (Rom. 7:19): “The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.” Likewise (v. 25): “With the mind, I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.” Here he openly declares that he serves the law of sin. And David says (Ps. 143:2): “Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” Even this servant of God prays for the averting of judgment. Likewise (Ps. 32:2): “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” Therefore, in this our infirmity, sin is always present, as it could be imputed, of which he says a little while after (v. 6): “For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.” Here he shows that even saints ought to seek remission of sins. More than blind are those who do not perceive that wicked desires in the flesh are sins, of which Paul (Gal. 5:17) says: “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” The flesh distrusts God, trusts in present

things, seeks human aid in calamities, even contrary to God's will, flees from afflictions, which it ought to bear because of God's commands, doubts concerning God's mercy, etc. The Holy Ghost in our hearts contends with such dispositions in order to suppress and mortify them, and to produce new spiritual movements. But concerning this topic, we will collect more testimonies below, although they are everywhere obvious not only in the Scriptures, but also in the holy Fathers.

Well does Augustine say: "All the commandments of God are fulfilled, when whatever is not done, is forgiven." Therefore he requires faith even in good works, in order that we may believe that, for Christ's sake, we please God, and that even the works are not of themselves worthy to please. And Jerome, against the Pelagians, says: "Then, therefore, we are righteous, when we confess that we are sinners, and that our righteousness consists not in our own merit, but in God's mercy." Therefore, in this inchoate fulfillment of the Law, faith ought to be present, which is certain that, for Christ's sake, we have a reconciled God. For mercy cannot be apprehended unless by faith, as it is repeatedly said above.<sup>6</sup> Wherefore, when Paul says (Rom. 3:21): "We establish the Law through faith," by this we ought to understand, not only that those regenerated by faith receive the Holy Ghost, and have movements agreeing with God's Law, but it is by far of the greatest importance that we add also this, that we ought to perceive that we are far distant from the perfection of the Law. Wherefore, we cannot conclude that we are accounted righteous before God because of our fulfilling of the Law, but, in order that the conscience may become tranquil, justification must be sought elsewhere. For we are not righteous before God, as long as we flee from God's judgment, and are angry with God. Therefore, we must conclude that being reconciled by faith we are accounted righteous for Christ's sake, not for the sake of the Law, or our works: but that this inchoate fulfilling of the Law pleases on account of faith, and that, on account of faith, there is no imputation of the imperfection of the fulfilling of the Law, even though the sight of our impurity terrifies us. Now if justification is to be sought elsewhere, our love and works do not therefore justify. Far above our purity, yea far above the Law itself, ought to be placed the death and satisfaction of Christ, presented to us that we might be sure that because of this satisfaction, and not because of our fulfilling of the Law, we have a gracious God.

Paul teaches this in Gal. 3:13, when he says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us," i. e. the Law condemns all men but Christ, because without sin he has borne the punishment of sin, and been made a victim for us, has removed that right of the Law to accuse and condemn those who believe in him, because he himself is the propitiation for them, for



whose sake we are now accounted righteous. But since they are accounted righteous, the Law cannot accuse or condemn them, even though they have not actually satisfied the Law. To the same purport, he writes to the Colossians (2:10): “Ye are complete in him,” as though he were to say: Although ye are still far from the perfection of the Law, yet the remnants of sin do not condemn you, because, for Christ’s sake, we have a sure and firm reconciliation, if you believe, even though sin inhere in your flesh.

[119] The promise ought always to be in sight, that God because of his promise, wishes for Christ’s sake, and not because of the Law or our works, to be gracious and to justify. In this promise, timid consciences ought to seek reconciliation and justification; by this promise, they ought to sustain themselves, and be confident, that, for Christ’s sake, because of his promise, they have a gracious God. Thus works can never render a conscience pacified; but only the promise can. If, therefore, justification and peace of conscience, must be sought elsewhere, than in love and works, love and works do not justify, although they are virtues and pertain to the righteousness of the Law, in so far as they are a fulfilling of the Law. So far also this obedience of the Law justifies by the righteousness of the Law. But this imperfect righteousness of the Law, is not accepted by God, unless on account of faith. Accordingly, it does not justify, i. e. it neither reconciles, nor regenerates, nor by itself renders us accepted before God.<sup>7</sup>

From this, it is evident<sup>8</sup> that “we are justified before God by faith alone,” because by faith alone we receive remission of sins and reconciliation or justification is a matter promised for Christ’s sake, and not for the sake of the Law. Therefore, it is received by faith alone, although when the Holy Ghost is given, the fulfilling of the Law follows.

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1. Var. adds: Why love does not justify.↩
  2. In the Variata, Melanchthon has inserted the following: Only that justifies before God, which renders consciences pacified. For as long as conscience flees from God’s judgment and is enraged with God we are not righteous and quickened. Moreover faith alone renders consciences pacified, according to Rom. 5:1: “Being justified by faith, we have peace.” Likewise: “The just shall live by faith.” (Heb. 2:4; Rom. 1:17), i. e. by faith he overcomes the terrors of death, by faith he is encouraged and receives joy and life. And faith effects this not because it is a work worthy of itself, but only because it accepts the offered promise, regarding as nothing its own

worth. Therefore faith alone justifies, and good works please on account of faith. What can the adversaries produce against this reasoning? What can they devise contrary to manifest truth? For the minor premise is most certain, viz. that our works cannot render conscience pacified, when God judges and convicts us, and manifests to us our impurity. Scripture, too, often inculcates this. In Ps. 143:2: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." This simply denies to all, even to saints and servants of God, the glory of righteousness, if God do not pardon, but judge and convict their hearts. For when he elsewhere boasts of his own righteousness, he is speaking of his own cause against the persecutors of God's Word, and not of personal purity, and asks that the cause and glory of God be defended, as Ps. 7:8: "Judge O Lord my cause." Again Ps. 129 (130:3) teaches that no one can bear God's judgment, if he observe our sins: "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" And Job (9 :15 [28p: "I was afraid of all my works" [Eng. Vers. "sorrows"]. Likewise c. 9:30: "If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch." And Prov. 20:9: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean?" And John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." And in the Lord's Prayer the saints ask for the forgiveness of sins. Therefore even the saints have sins. In Num. (6:10) [14:18]: "The innocent will not be innocent." And Zechariah (2:13) says: "Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord." And Isaiah (40: sqq.): "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it," i. e. flesh and righteousness of the flesh cannot endure the judgment of God. And Jonah says (2:9): "They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy," i. e. every confidence is vain except a confidence in mercy. Mercy preserves us; our own merits, our own endeavors do not preserve us. These declarations, and similar in the Scriptures testify that our works are unclean and need mercy. Wherefore works do not render consciences pacified, but mercy apprehended by faith does." Cf. §§ 205-208.↵

3. The Variata continues: Just as Paul says: "By whom also we have access by faith" (Rom. 5:2). For our fulfilling of the Law is, as we have said, impure, because our nature is horribly corrupt.↵
4. The Variata thus begins this section: *Fifthly*, if we were to think, that after renewal we ought to be made acceptable, not by faith for Christ's sake, but for the sake of our fulfilling of the Law, conscience would never find rest, but would be driven to despair. For the Law always accuses, since we never

satisfy the Law. This is what the entire Church confesses.↵

5. Var. adds: Who is not enraged with God's judgment when he seems to cast us off?↵
6. Var. adds: Therefore it is nothing else than a doctrine of despair to teach that we are not accepted by faith for Christ's sake, but for the sake of our own fulfilling of the Law.↵
7. German omits §§ 54-60.↵
8. Var: From all these things it is sufficiently apparent that faith alone justifies, i. e. first, it obtains the remission of sins and reconciliation for Christ's sake, and that faith alone regenerates (for by faith alone the Holy Ghost is conceived); secondly, that this inchoate fulfilling of the Law does not by itself please before God.↵

[B. Reply to the arguments of the adversaries.']

Moreover when the grounds of this case have been understood, viz. the distinction between the Law and the promises or the Gospel, it will be easy to resolve the difficulties to which the adversaries object. For they cite passages concerning the Law and works, and omit passages concerning the promises. But a reply can at once be made to all opinions concerning the Law, viz. that the Law cannot be observed without Christ, and that if civil works are wrought without Christ, they do not please God. Wherefore when works are commended, it is necessary to add that faith is required, that they are commended on account of faith, that they are the fruits and testimonies of faith.<sup>1</sup>

[120] Ambiguous and dangerous cases produce many and various solutions. For the judgment of the ancient poet is true:

“An unjust cause, being in itself sick, requires skilfully applied remedies.”

But in just and sure cases, one or two explanations derived from the sources, correct all things that seem to offend. This occurs also in this case of ours. For the rule which we have just recited, explains all the passages that are cited concerning the Law and works. For we acknowledge that Scripture teaches in some places the Law, and in other places the Gospel or the gratuitous promise of the remission of sins for Christ's sake. But our adversaries absolutely abolish the free promise, when they deny that faith justifies, and teach that, for the sake of love and of our works, we receive remission of sins and reconciliation. If the remission of sins would depend upon condition of our works, it would be altogether uncertain.<sup>2</sup> Therefore the promise will be abolished. Hence we refer godly minds to the consideration of the promises, both concerning the free remission of sins, and concerning reconciliation, which we teach occurs through faith in Christ. Afterwards, we add also the doctrine of the Law.<sup>3</sup> And it is necessary to divide these things aright, as Paul says, Tim. 2:15. We must see what Scripture ascribes to the Law, and what to the promises. For it praises works in such a way, as not to remove the free promise.<sup>4</sup>

For good works are to be done on account of God's command,<sup>5</sup> likewise for the exercise of faith, and on account of confession and giving of thanks. For these reasons, good works ought necessarily to be done, which, although they are done in flesh not as yet entirely renewed, that retards the movements of the Holy Ghost, and imparts some of its uncleanness; yet, on account of Christ, they are holy, divine works, sacrifices, and acts pertaining to the government of Christ, who thus displays his kingdom before this world. For in these he

sanctifies hearts, and represses the devil, and in order to retain the Gospel among men, openly opposes to the kingdom of the devil the confession of saints, and, in our weakness, declares his power. The dangers, labors and sermons of the Apostle Paul, of Athanasius, Augustine and the like, who taught the churches, are holy works, are true sacrifices acceptable to God, are contests of Christ through which he repressed the devil, and drove him from those who believed. David's labors, in waging wars, and in the administration of the state, are holy works, are true sacrifices, are contests of God, defending the people who have the word of God against the devil, in order that the knowledge of God may not be entirely extinguished on earth. We think thus also concerning every good work in the humblest callings, and in private persons. Through these works, Christ celebrates his victory over the devil, just as the distribution of alms by the Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:1) was a holy work, and a sacrifice and contest of Christ against the devil, who labors that nothing may be done for the praise of God. To disparage such works, the confession of doctrine, affliction, works of love, mortifications of the flesh, would be indeed to disparage the outward government of Christ's kingdom among men.

[121] Here also we add, concerning rewards and merits. We teach that rewards have been offered and promised to the works of believers. We teach that good works are meritorious, not for the remission of sins, for grace or justification (for these we obtain only by faith), but for other rewards, bodily and spiritual, in this life, and after this life, because Paul says (1 Cor. 3:8): "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." There will, therefore, be different rewards according to different labors. But the remission of sins is alike and equal to all, just as Christ is one, and is offered freely to all who believe that, for Christ's sake, their sins are remitted. Therefore, the remission of sins and justification are received only by faith, and not on account of any works, as is evident in the terrors of conscience, because none of our works can be opposed to God's wrath, as Paul clearly says (Rom. 5:1): "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith," etc.

But because faith makes sons of God, it also makes co-heirs with Christ. Therefore, because by our works we do not merit justification, through which we are made sons of God, and co-heirs with Christ, we do not, by our works, merit eternal life; for faith obtains this, because faith justifies us and renders God propitious. But the justified are destined for eternal life, according to the passage (Rom. 8:30): "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Paul (Eph. 6:2) commends to us the commandment concerning honoring parents, by mention of the reward which is added to that commandment, where he does not mean that

obedience to parents justifies us before God; but that, when it occurs in those who have been justified, it merits other great rewards. Yet God exercises his saints variously, and often defers the rewards of the righteousness of works, in order that they may learn not to trust in their own righteousness, and may learn to seek the will of God rather than the rewards; as appears in Job, in Christ and other saints. And of this, many psalms teach us, which console us against the happiness of the wicked, as Ps. 37:1: “Neither be thou envious.” And Christ says (Matt. 5:10): “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” By these praises of good works, believers are undoubtedly moved to do good works. Meanwhile, the doctrine of repentance is also proclaimed against the godless, whose works are wicked; and the wrath of God is displayed, how it threatens all who do not repent. We therefore praise and require good works, and show many reasons why they ought to be done.

Thus of works Paul also teaches when he says (Rom. 4:9 sq.) that Abraham received circumcision, not in order that by this work he might be justified; for, by faith, he had already attained it, that he was accounted righteous. But circumcision was added, in order that he might have in his body a written sign, admonished by which he might exercise faith, and by which also he might confess his faith before others, and, by his testimony, might invite others to believe.

“By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice.” Because, therefore, he was just by faith, the sacrifice which he made was pleasing to God; not, that, by this work, he merited the remission of sins and grace, but that he exercised his faith and showed it to others, in order to invite them to believe.

[122] Although, in this way, good works ought to follow faith, men who cannot believe and be sure that for Christ’s sake they are freely forgiven, and that freely for Christ’s sake they have a reconciled God, employ works far otherwise, when they see the works of saints, they judge in a human manner that saints have merited the remission of sins and grace through these works. Accordingly they imitate them, and think that through similar works they merit the remission of sins and grace; they think that through these works they appease the wrath of God, and, attain that, for the sake of these works, they are accounted righteous. This godless opinion concerning works we condemn. In the first place, because it obscures the glory of Christ, when men offer to God these works, as a price and propitiation. This honor, due to Christ alone, is ascribed to our works. Secondly, they nevertheless do not find, in these works, peace of conscience, but, in true terrors, heaping up works upon works, they at length despair, because they find no work sufficiently pure. [Germ, adds: Sufficiently important and precious to propitiate God, to obtain with certainty eternal life, in a word, to

tranquillize and pacify the conscience.] The Law always accuses, and produces wrath. Thirdly, Such persons never attain the knowledge of God; for, as in anger they flee from God, who judges and afflicts them, they never believe that they are heard. But faith manifests the presence of God, since it is certain that God freely forgives and hears.

[123] Moreover this godless opinion concerning works always has existed in the world. The heathen had sacrifices, derived from the fathers. They imitated their works. Their faith they did not retain; but thought that the works were a propitiation and price, on account of which God would be reconciled to them. The people, in the Law, imitated sacrifices with the opinion, that by means of these works, they would appease God, so to say, *ex opere operato*. We see here how earnestly the prophets rebuke the people. Ps. 50:8: "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices." And Jer. 7:22: "I spake not unto your fathers, concerning burnt-offerings." Such passages condemn not works, which God certainly had commanded as outward exercises in this government; but they condemn the godless opinion according to which they thought that by these works they appeased the wrath of God, and thus cast away faith. And because no works pacify the conscience, new works, in addition to God's commands, were from time to time devised [with wicked conscience, as we have seen in the Papacy]. The people of Israel had seen the prophets sacrificing on high places [and in groves]. Besides the examples of the saints especially move the minds of those hoping by similar works to obtain grace just as these saints obtained it. [But the saints believed.] Wherefore, the people began, with wonderful zeal, to imitate this work, in order that by such a work<sup>6</sup> they might merit remission of sins, grace and righteousness. But the prophets sacrificed on high places, not, that by these works they might merit the remission of sins and grace, but because on these places they taught and accordingly presented there a testimony of their faith. The people had heard that Abraham had sacrificed his son. Wherefore they also, in order to appease God by a most cruel and difficult work, put to death their sons. But Abraham did not sacrifice his son, with the opinion, that this work was a price and propitiatory work, for the sake of which he was accounted righteous. Thus in the Church, the Lord's Supper was instituted, that by remembrance of the promises of Christ, of which we are admonished in this sign, faith might be strengthened in us, and we might publicly confess our faith, and proclaim the benefits of Christ, as Paul says (1 Cor. 11:26): "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death," etc. But our adversaries contend that the mass is a work that justifies us *ex opere operato*, and removes the guilt and liability to punishment in those for whom it is celebrated; for thus writes Gabriel.

Anthony, Bernard, Dominions, Franciscus and other holy Fathers selected a certain kind of life either for the sake of study [of more readily reading the Holy Scriptures] or othei useful exercises. In the mean time they believed that by faith, they were accounted righteous for Christ's sake, and that God was gracious to them, not on account of those exercises of their own. But the multitude since then has imitated not the faith of the Fathers, but their example without faith, in order that, by such works,<sup>7</sup> they might merit the remission of sins, grace and righteousness; they did not believe that they received these freely on account of Christ as Propitiator. Thus the world judges of all works, that they are a propitiation, by which God is appeased; that they are a price, because of which we are accounted righteous. It does not know that Christ is Propitiator; it does not know that by faith we freely attain, that we are accounted righteous for Christ's sake. And, nevertheless, since works cannot pacify the conscience, others are continually chosen, new rites are performed, new vows made, and new orders of monks formed, beyond the command of God, in order that some great work may be sought for, which may be set over against the wrath and judgment of God.

Contrary to Scripture, the adversaries hold these godless opinions concerning works. But to ascribe to our works these things, viz. that they are a propitiation, that they merit the remission of sins and grace, that for the sake of these and not by faith for the sake of Christ as Propitiator, we are accounted righteous before God, what else is this but to deny Christ the honor of Mediator and Propitiator? Although, therefore, we believe and teach that good works must necessarily be done (*for the inchoate fulfilling of the Law ought to follow faith*), nevertheless we ascribe to Christ his own honor. We believe and teach that, by faith for Christ's sake, we are accounted righteous before God, that we are not accounted righteous because of works without Christ as Mediator, that by works we do not merit the remission of sins, grace and righteousness, that we cannot set our works over against the wrath and justice of God, that works cannot overcome the terrors of sin, but that the terrors of sin are overcome by faith alone, that only Christ the Mediator is to be presented by faith against the wrath and judgment of God. If any one think differently, he does not give Christ due honor, who has been set forth that he might be a Propitiator, that through him we might have access to the Father. We are speaking now of the righteousness, through which we treat with God, not with men, but by which we apprehend grace and peace of conscience. Conscience, however, cannot be pacified before God, unless by faith alone, which is certain that God for Christ's sake is reconciled to us, according to Rom. 5:1: "Being justified by faith, we have peace;" because justification is only a matter freely promised for Christ's sake, and therefore is always received



before God by faith alone.<sup>8</sup>

[124] Now, then, we will reply to those passages, which the adversaries cite, in order to prove that we are justified by love and works. From Corinthians (1 Cor. 13:2), they cite: “Though I have all faith, etc., and have not charity, I am nothing.” And here they triumph greatly. Paul testifies to the entire Church, they say, that faith alone does not justify. But a reply is easy, since we have shown above what we hold concerning love and works. This passage of Paul requires love. We also require this. For we have said above,<sup>9</sup> that renewal and the inchoate fulfilling of the Law, ought to exist in us, according to Jer. 31:33: “I will put my Law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts.” If any one should cast away love, even though he should have great faith, yet this faith he will not retain, for he does not retain the Holy Ghost [he becomes cold and is now again fleshly, without Spirit and faith; for the Holy Ghost is not where Christian love and other fruits of the Spirit are not]. Nor indeed does Paul in this passage treat of the mode of justification, but he writes to those who, although they have been justified, should be urged to bring forth good fruits, lest they may lose the Holy Ghost. The adversaries, furthermore, treat the matter in reverse order. They cite this one passage, in which Paul teaches concerning fruits; they omit very many other passages, in which in a regular order he discusses the mode of justification. They always add a correction to the other passages, which treat of faith, viz. that they ought to be understood as applying to *fides formata*.<sup>10</sup> Here they add no correction, that there is also need of the faith that holds that we are accounted righteous for the sake of Christ as Propitiator. Thus the adversaries exclude Christ from justification, and teach only a righteousness of the Law.

[125] But let us return to Paul. No one can infer anything more from this text than that love is necessary. This we confess. So also not to commit theft is necessary. But the reasoning will not be correct, if some one would desire to frame thence an argument such as this: “Not to commit theft, is necessary. Therefore, not to commit theft, justifies.” Because justification is not the approval of a certain work, but of the entire person. Hence this passage from Paul does not contradict us; only the adversaries must not in imagination add to it whatever they please. For he does not say that love justifies, but: [“and if I have not love”] “I am nothing,” viz. that faith, however great it may have been, is extinguished. He does not say, that love overcomes the terrors of sin and of death, that we can set our love over against the wrath and judgment of God, that our love satisfies God’s Law, that, without Christ as Propitiator, we have access, by our love, to God, that, by our love, we receive the promised remission of sins. Paul says nothing of this. He does not, therefore, think that love justifies; because we are justified only when we apprehend Christ as Propitiator, and

believe that, for Christ's sake, God is reconciled to us. Neither, with the omission of Christ as Propitiator, is justification even to be dreamed of.<sup>11</sup> If there be no need of Christ, if, by our love, we can overcome death, if by our love, without Christ, as Propitiator, we have access to God, our adversaries may remove the promise concerning Christ, and abolish the Gospel.<sup>12</sup> The adversaries corrupt very many passages, because they bring to them their own opinions, and do not derive the meaning from the passages themselves. For what difficulty is there in this passage, if we remove the interpretation which the adversaries, who do not understand what justification is or how it occurs [what faith is, what Christ is, or how a man is justified before God], of their own accord, attach to it? The Corinthians, being justified before, had received many excellent gifts. In the beginning they glowed with zeal, just as is generally the case. Then dissensions [factions and sects] began to arise among them, as Paul indicates; they began to dislike good teachers. Accordingly Paul reproves them, recalling them to offices of love. Although these are necessary, yet it would be foolish to imagine that works of the Second Table, through which we have to do with man and not properly with God, justify us. But, in justification, we have to treat with God; his wrath must be appeased, and conscience must be pacified with respect to God. None of these occur through the works of the Second Table.

But they object, that love is preferred to faith and hope. For Paul says (1 Cor. 13:13): "The greatest of these is charity." Now, it is in accordance with this, that to justify is the greatest and the chief virtue. Although Paul, in this passage, properly speaks of love towards one's neighbor, and indicates that love is the greatest, because it has most fruits. Faith and hope have to do only with God; but love has infinite offices externally towards men. [Love goes forth upon earth among the people, and does much good, by consoling, teaching, instructing, helping, counseling privately and publicly.] Nevertheless we grant to the adversaries that love towards God and our neighbor is the greatest virtue, because the chief commandment is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Matt. 22:37). But how will they infer thence that love justifies? The greatest virtue, they say, justifies. By no means. For just as even the greatest or first Law does not justify, so also the greatest virtue of the Law does not justify.<sup>13</sup> But that virtue justifies which apprehends Christ, which communicates to us Christ's merits, by which we receive grace and peace from God.<sup>14</sup> But this virtue is faith. For as it has been often said, [^beg] faith is not only knowledge, but much rather to wish to receive or apprehend those things, which are offered in the promise concerning Christ. Moreover this obedience towards God, viz. to wish to receive the offered promise, is no less a divine service, λατρεία<sup>15</sup> than is love. God wishes us to believe him, and to receive from him blessings, and this he declares

to be true divine service.

[^beg] See § 48.

[126] But the adversaries ascribe justification to love, because they everywhere teach and require the righteousness of the Law. For we cannot deny that love is the highest work the Law. And human wisdom looks into the Law, and seeks in it justification. Accordingly the scholastic doctors, great and talented men, proclaim this as the highest work of the Law, and ascribe to this work justification. But deceived by human wisdom, they did not look upon the uncovered, but upon the veiled face of Moses, just as the Pharisees, philosophers, Muslims.<sup>16</sup> But we preach the foolishness of the Gospel, in which another righteousness is revealed, viz, that for the sake of Christ, as Propitiator, we are accounted righteous, when we believe that, for Christ's sake, God has been reconciled to us. Neither are we ignorant how far distant this doctrine is from the judgment of reason and of the Law. Nor are we ignorant that the doctrine of the Law concerning love, is much more specious; for it is wisdom. But we are not ashamed of the foolishness of the Gospel. For the sake of Christ's glory, we defend this, and beseech Christ, by his Holy Ghost, to aid us, that we may be able to make this clear and manifest.

The adversaries, in the Confutation, have also cited against us Col. 3:14: "Charity which is the bond of perfectness." From this, they infer, that love justifies, because it renders men perfect. Although a reply concerning perfection could here be made in many ways, yet we will simply recite the meaning of Paul. It is certain that Paul spoke of love towards one's neighbor. Neither must we indeed think that Paul would ascribe either justification or perfection to the works of the Second Table, rather than to those of the First. And if love render men perfect, there will then be no need of Christ as Propitiator,<sup>17</sup> for faith apprehends Christ only as Propitiator. This, however, is far distant from the meaning of Paul, who never suffers Christ to be excluded as Propitiator. Therefore he speaks not of personal perfection, but of them integrity common to the Church [concerning the unity of the Church, and the word which they interpret as perfection, means nothing else than to be not rent]. For, on this account, he says that love is a bond or connection, to signify that he speaks of the binding and joining together with each other, of the many members of the Church. For, just as in all families and in all states, concord should be nourished by mutual offices, and tranquility cannot be retained, unless men keep secret and forgive certain mistakes among them selves; so Paul commands that love exist in order that it may in the Church preserve concord, bear with the harsher manners of brethren as there is need, keep secret certain less serious mistakes, prevent the Church from flying apart into various schisms; and enmities and factions and

heresies, from arising from the schisms.

[127] For concord must necessarily be rent asunder whenever either the bishops impose [without cause] upon the people heavier burdens, or have no respect to weakness in the people. And dissensions arise when the people judge too severely [quickly censure and criticize] concerning the conduct [life and walk] of teachers [bishops or preachers], or despise the teachers because of certain less serious faults; for then both another kind of doctrine and other teachers are sought after. On the other hand, perfection, i. e. the integrity of the Church, is preserved, when the strong bear with the weak, when the people take in good part some faults in the conduct of their teachers [have patience also with their preachers], when the bishops make some allowances for the weakness of the people [know how to exercise forbearance to the people, according to circumstances, with respect to all kinds of weaknesses and faults]. Of these precepts of equity, the books of all the wise are full, so that, in every day life, we make many allowances, for the sake of common tranquility. And of this, Paul frequently teaches both here and elsewhere. Wherefore the adversaries argue indiscreetly from the term “perfection,” that love justifies; while Paul, on the other hand, speaks of common integrity and tranquility. And thus Ambrose interprets this passage: “Just as a building is said to be perfect or entire, when all its parts are fitly joined together with one another.” Moreover, it is disgraceful for the adversaries to proclaim so much concerning love while they nowhere exhibit it. What are they now doing? They are rending asunder churches, they are writing laws in blood, and are proposing to the most clement prince the Emperor, that these should be promulgated, they are slaughtering priests and other good men, if any one have [even] slightly intimated that he does not entirely approve any manifest abuse. [They wish all dead who say a single word against their godless doctrine.] These things are not consistent with those encomiums of love, which if the adversaries would follow, the churches would be tranquil and the state have peace. For these tumults would be quieted, if the adversaries would not insist with too much earnestness upon certain traditions, useless for godliness, most of which not even those very persons who most earnestly defend them observe.<sup>18</sup> But they easily forgive themselves, and yet do not likewise forgive others, according to the passage in the poet: “I forgive myself, Maevius said.” But this is farthest distant from those encomiums of love, which they here recite from Paul, nor do they, any more than the walls of the houses, understand the word upon which they insist.

[128] From Peter they cite also this sentence (1 Pet. 4:8): “Charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” It is evident that Peter speaks also of love towards one’s neighbor, because he joins this passage to the commandments, by which he

commands that they should love one another. Neither could it have come into the mind of any apostle, that our love overcomes sin and death, that love is the propitiation, on account of which, to the exclusion of Christ as Mediator, God is reconciled; that love is righteousness without Christ as Mediator. For this love, if there would be any, would be a righteousness of the Law, and not of the Gospel, because the latter promises to us reconciliation and righteousness, if we believe that, for the sake of Christ as Propitiator, the Father has been reconciled, and that the merits of Christ are bestowed upon us. Peter accordingly urges us a little before, to come to Christ, that we may be built upon Christ. And he adds (1 Pet. 2:4-6): "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." When God judges and convicts us, our love does not exempt us from confusion [from our works and lives, we truly suffer shame]. But faith in Christ liberates us in these fears, because we know that for Christ's sake we are forgiven.

[129] Besides, this sentence concerning love is derived from Prov. 119:10-12, where the antithesis clearly shows how it ought to be understood: "Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins." It teaches precisely the same thing as that passage of `Paul taken from Colossians, that if any dissensions would occur, they should be moderated and settled by considerations and forbearance. Dissensions, it says, increase by means of hatred, as we often see that from the most trifling offenses tragedies proceed [from the smallest sparks, a great conflagration arises]. Certain trifling offenses occurred between Caius Caesar and Pompey, in which if the one had yielded a very little to the other, civil war would not have arisen. But while each acted from his own hatred, from a matter of no account the greatest commotions arose. And many heresies in the Church have arisen entirely from the hatred of the teachers. Therefore it speaks not concerning a person's own faults, but concerning the faults of others, when it says: "Charity covereth sins," viz. those of others, and that too among men, i. e. even though these offenses occur, yet love keeps them out of view, forgives, yields and does not carry all tilings to tie extremity of justice. Peter, therefore, does not mean, that love merits in God's sight the remission of sins, that it is a propitiation to the exclusion of Christ as Mediator, that it regenerates and justifies, but that it is not morose, harsh, intractable towards men, that it keeps out of view some mistakes of its friends, that it takes in good part even the harsher manners of others, just as the well-known maxim enjoins: \*Be acquainted with, but do not hate the manners of a friend," Nor was it without design that the apostle taught so frequently concerning this office, what the philosophers call *ἐπιειχία*, equity. For this virtue is necessary for retaining public harmony, which cannot last unless pastors and Churches keep out of view and pardon many things.

From James they cite (2:24): “Ye see then how by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone.” Nor is any other passage supposed to be more contrary to our belief. But the reply is easy and plain. If the adversaries do not attach their own opinions, concerning the merits of works, the words of James have in them nothing that is of disadvantage. But wherever there is mention of works, the adversaries add falsely their own godless opinions, that by means of good works we merit the remission of sins; that good works are a propitiation and price, on account of which God is reconciled to us; that good works overcome the terrors of sin and of death; that good works are accepted in God’s sight on account of their goodness, and that they do not need mercy and Christ as Propitiator. None of all these things came into the mind of James, which the adversaries, nevertheless, defend under the pretext of this passage of James.

In the first place, this must be considered, viz. that this passage is more against the adversaries than against us. For the adversaries teach that man is justified by love and works. Of faith, by which we apprehend Christ as Propitiator, they say nothing. Yea they condemn this faith; nor do they condemn it only in sentences and writings, but also by the sword and capital punishments, they endeavor to exterminate it in the Church. How much better does James teach who does not omit faith, or present love in preference to faith, but retains faith, so that, in justification, Christ may not be excluded as Propitiator! Just as Paul also, when he treats of the sum of the Christian life, includes faith and love, Tim. 1:5: “The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”

[130] Secondly, the subject itself declares that here such works are spoken of, as follow faith, and show that faith is not dead, but living and efficacious in the heart. James, therefore, did not believe that by good works we merit the remission of sins, and grace. For he speaks of the works of those who have been justified, who have already been reconciled and accepted, and have obtained remission of sins. Wherefore the adversaries err, when they argue hence that James teaches that we merit remission of sins and grace by good works, and that by our works we have access to God, without Christ as Propitiator.

Thirdly, James has spoken shortly before concerning regeneration, viz. that it occurs through the Gospel. For thus he says (1:18): “Of his own will, begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” When he says that we have been born again by the Gospel he teaches that we have been born again and justified by faith. For the promise concerning Christ is apprehended only by faith when we set it over against the terrors of sin and of death. James does not, therefore, think that we are born again by our works.

From these things, it is clear that James does not contradict us, who when he

censured idle and secure minds that imagine that they have faith, although they do not have it, made a distinction between dead and living faith. He says that that is dead which does not bring forth good works [and fruits of the Spirit, obedience, patience, chastity, love]; he says that that is living, which brings forth good works. Furthermore, we have frequently already shown what we term faith. For we do not speak of inoperative knowledge [that merely the history concerning Christ should be known], such as devils have, but of faith which resists the terrors of conscience and cheers and consoles terrified hearts [the new light and power, which the Holy Ghost works in the heart, through which we overcome the terrors of death, of sin, etc.]. Such faith is neither an easy matter as the adversaries dream, nor a human power [thought which I can form for myself], but a divine power, by which we are quickened and by which we overcome the devil and death. Just as Paul says to the Colossians (2:12), that faith is efficacious through the power of God, and overcomes death: “Wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.” Since this faith is a new life, it necessarily produces new movements and works. [Because it is a new light and life in the heart, whereby we obtain another mind and spirit, it is living, productive and rich in good works.] Accordingly James is right in denying that we are justified by such a faith as is without works. When he says that we are justified by faith and works, he certainly does not say that we are born again by works.

[131] Neither does he say this, that Christ is partly our Propitiator, and our works are partly our propitiation. Neither does he describe the mode of justification, but only of what nature the just are, after they have been already justified and regenerated. [For he is speaking of works which should follow faith. There it is well said: He who has faith and good works is righteous; not indeed on account of the works, but for Christ’s sake through faith. And as a good tree should bring forth good fruit, and yet the fruit does not make the tree good; so good works must follow the new birth, although they do not make man accepted before God; but as the tree must first be good, so also must man be first accepted before God by faith for Christ’s sake. The works are too insignificant to render God gracious to us for their sake, if he were not gracious to us for Christ’s sake. Therefore James does not contradict St. Paul, and does not say that by our works we merit, etc.] And to be justified signifies here not that from a wicked man 131 a righteous man be made, but to be pronounced righteous in a forensic sense;<sup>19</sup> as also in the passage (Rom. 2:13): “The doers of the Law shall be justified.” As, therefore, these words: “The doers of the Law shall be justified,” contain nothing contrary to our doctrine, so too we believe concerning the words of James: “By works a man is justified, and not by faith alone,” because men



having faith and good works, are certainly pronounced righteous. For, as we have said, the good works of saints are righteousness, and please on account of faith. For James commends only such works as faith produces, as he testifies when he says of Abraham (2:21): “Faith wrought with his works.” In this sense, it is said: “The doers of the Law are justified,” i. e. they are pronounced righteous who from the heart believe God, and afterwards have good fruits, which please him on account of faith, and accordingly are the fulfillment of the Law. These things so 13a simply spoken contain nothing erroneous, but they are distorted by the adversaries, who arbitrarily attach to them godless opinions. For it does not follow hence that works merit the remission of sins; that works regenerate hearts; that works are a propitiation; that works please without Christ as Propitiator; that works do not need Christ as Propitiator. James says nothing of these things, which, nevertheless, the adversaries shamelessly infer from the words of James.

[132] Certain<sup>20</sup> other passages concerning works are also cited against us. Luke 6:37: “Forgive and ye shall be forgiven.” Isa. 58:7 [9]: “Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry? .... then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer.” Dan. 4:24 [27]: “Break off thy sins, by showing mercy to the poor.” Matt. 5:3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;” and v. 7: “Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.” Even these passages would contain nothing contrary to us, if 134 the adversaries would not falsely attach something to them. For they contain two things: The one is a preaching either of the Law or of repentance, which not only convicts those doing wrong, but also enjoins them to do what is right; the other is a promise which is added. Nor indeed is it said that sins are remitted without faith, or that works themselves are a propitiation. Moreover in the preaching of the Law, these two things ought always to be understood, viz.: First that the Law cannot be observed, unless we have been regenerated by faith in Christ, just as Christ says (John 15:5): “Without me ye can do nothing.” Secondly, and though at most some external works can be done, this general judgment: “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” which interprets the whole Law, must be retained; and the Gospel must also be retained, that “through Christ we have access to the Father” (Heb. 10:19; Rom. 5:2).

For it is evident that we are not justified by the Law. Otherwise why would there be need of Christ or the Gospel, if the preaching of the Law alone would be sufficient? Thus in the preaching of repentance, the preaching of the Law, or the Word convicting of sin, is not sufficient, because the Law works wrath, and only accuses, only terrifies consciences, because consciences never are at rest, unless they hear the voice of God, in which the remission of sins is clearly promised. It



is accordingly necessary that the Gospel be added that, for Christ's sake, sins are remitted, and that we obtain remission of sins by faith in Christ. If the adversaries exclude the Gospel of Christ from the preaching of repentance, they are judged aright to be blasphemers against Christ.

Therefore, when Isaiah (1:16-18) preaches repentance: "Cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow," the prophet thus both exhorts to repentance, and adds the promise. But it would be foolish to consider in such a sentence only the words: "Relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless." For he says in the beginning: "Cease to do evil," where he censures impiety of heart, and requires faith. Neither does the prophet say that through the works: "Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless," they can merit the remission of sins *ex opere operato*, but he commands such works as are necessary in the new life. Yet in the mean time, he means that the remission of sins is received by faith, and accordingly the promise is added. Thus we must regard all similar passages. Christ preaches repentance when he says: "Forgive," and he adds the promise: "And ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). Nor indeed does he say this, viz. that, when we forgive, by this work of ours we merit the remission of sins *ex opere operato*, as they term it, but he requires a new life, which certainly is necessary. Yet in the mean time he means that the remission of sins is received by faith. Thus when Isaiah says (58:7): "Deal thy bread to the hungry," he requires a new life. Nor does the prophet speak of this work alone, but, as the text indicates, of all repentance; yet, in the mean time, he intends that remission of sins is received by faith. For the position is sure,<sup>21</sup> and none of the gates of hell can overthrow it, that in the preaching of repentance, the preaching of the Law is not sufficient; because the Law works wrath and always accuses. But the preaching of the Gospel should be added, because thus the remission of sins is granted us, if we believe that sins are remitted us for Christ's sake. Otherwise why would there be need of the Gospel, why would there be need of Christ? This belief ought always to be in view, in order that it may be opposed to those, who, Christ being cast aside and the Gospel being blotted out, wickedly distort the Scriptures to the human opinions, that by our works we purchase remission of sins.

[133] Thus also in the sermon of Daniel (4:24), faith is required, [The words of the prophet, which were full of faith and spirit, we must not regard as heathenish as those of Aristotle, or any other heathen. Aristotle also admonished Alexander that he should not use his power for his own wantonness, but for the improvement of countries and men. This was written correctly and well; concerning the office of king, nothing better can be preached or written. But

Daniel is speaking to his king, not only concerning his office as king, but concerning repentance, the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and concerning sublime, great, spiritual subjects which far transcend human thoughts and works.] For Daniel did not mean that the king should only bestow alms, but embraces all repentance when he says: “Break off [*Redime*, Vulg.] thy iniquities by showing mercy to the poor,” i. e. break off thy sins by a change of heart and works. But here also faith is required. And Daniel proclaims to him many things concerning the worship of the God of Israel alone, and converts the king not only to bestow alms, but much more to faith. For we have the excellent confession of the king concerning the God of Israel: “There is no other God that can deliver after this sort” (Dan. 3:29). Therefore, in the sermon of Daniel there are two parts. The one part is that which gives commandment concerning the new life, and the works of the new life. The other part is that in which Daniel promises to the king the remission of sins. And this promise of the remission of sins, is not a preaching of the Law, but a word that is truly prophetic and evangelical, which Daniel certainly means to be received in faith. For Daniel knew that the remission of sins in Christ was promised not only to the Israelites, but also to all nations. Otherwise he could not have promised to the king the remission of sins. For it is not in the power of man, especially amid the terrors of sin, to determine, without a sure word of God, concerning God’s will, that he ceases to be angry. And the words of Daniel speak in his own language still more clearly of repentance, and still more clearly present the promise: “Redeem thy sins by righteousness, and thy iniquities by favors toward the poor.” These words teach concerning the whole of repentance. For they direct him to become righteous, then to do good works, to defend, as was the duty of a king, those who are miserable against injustice. But righteousness is faith in the heart. Moreover sins are redeemed by repentance, i. e. the obligation or guilt is removed, because God forgives those who repent, as it is written in Ez. 18:21, 22. Nor are we to infer hence that he forgives on account of works that follow, on account of alms; but on account of his promise he forgives those who apprehend his promise. Neither do any apprehend his promise, except those who truly believe, and by faith overcome sin and death. The regenerate ought to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, just as John says (Matt. 3:8). The promise, therefore, was added: “So, there will be healing for thy offenses” (Dan. 4:24). Jerome here adds to the matter a particle of doubt,<sup>22</sup> and in his commentaries contends much more unwisely that the remission of sins is uncertain. But let us remember that the Gospel certainly promises the remission of sins. And to deny that the remission of sins ought certainly to be promised, would be to remove the Gospel entirely. Let us therefore dismiss Jerome concerning this passage. Although the promise

is displayed even in the word “redeem.” For it signifies that the remission of sins is possible, that sins can be redeemed, i. e. that their obligation or guilt can be removed, or the wrath of God appeased. But our adversaries, overlooking the promises, everywhere consider only the precepts, and attach falsely the human opinion, that remission occurs on account of works, although the text does not say this, but much rather requires faith.<sup>23</sup> For wherever a promise is, there faith is required. For a promise cannot be received unless by faith.

[134] But works meet the sight of men. Human reason naturally admires these, and because it discerns only works, and does not understand or consider faith, it dreams accordingly that these works merit remission of sins, and justify. This opinion of the Law inheres by nature in men’s minds, neither can it be expelled, unless when we are divinely taught. But the mind must be recalled from such carnal 145 opinions to the Word of God, We see that the Gospel and the promise concerning Christ, have been presented to us. When therefore, the Law is preached, when works are enjoined, we should not be ashamed of the promise concerning Christ. But the latter must first be apprehended, in order that we may be able to produce good works, and our works may please God, as Christ says (John 15:5): “Without me, ye can do nothing.” Therefore, if Daniel would have used such words as these: “Redeem your sins by repentance,” the adversaries would take no notice of this passage. But since he has actually proclaimed this in other words, the adversaries distort his words and apply them against the doctrine of grace and faith, although Daniel meant most especially to include faith. Thus, therefore, we reply to the words of Daniel, that, inasmuch as he is preaching repentance, he is teaching not only of works, but also of faith, as the narrative itself in the context testifies. Secondly, because Daniel clearly presents the promise, he necessarily requires faith which believes that sins are freely remitted by God. Although therefore in repentance he mentions works, yet Daniel does not say that by these works we merit remission of sins. For Daniel speaks not only of the remission of the punishment; because remission of the punishment is sought for in vain, unless the heart first receive the remission of guilt. Besides if the adversaries understand Daniel as speaking only of the remission of sins, this passage will prove nothing against us; because it will thus be necessary for even them to confess, that the remission of sin and free justification precede. Afterwards even we concede that the punishments by which we are chastised, are mitigated by our prayers and good works, and finally by our entire repentance, according to I Cor. 11:31: “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” And Jer. 15:19: “If thou return, then will I bring thee again.” And Zech. 1:3: “Turn thee unto me, and I will turn unto you.” And Ps. (49, Vulg.) 50:15: “Call upon me in the day of trouble.”

[135] Let us, therefore, in all our encomiums upon works, and in the preaching of the Law, retain this rule: that the Law is not observed without Christ. As he himself has said: "Without me, ye can do nothing." Likewise that: "Without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). For it is very certain that the doctrine of the Law is not intended to remove the Gospel, and to remove Christ as Propitiator. And let the Pharisees our adversaries be cursed, who so interpret the Law as to ascribe the glory of Christ to works, viz. that they are a propitiation, that they merit the remission of sins. It follows, therefore, always that works are thus praised, because they are pleasing on account of faith, as works, do not please without Christ as Propitiator. "By him we have access to God" (Rom. 5:2), not by works without Christ as Mediator. Therefore, when it is said (Matt. 19:17): "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," we must believe that without Christ the commandments are not kept, and without him cannot please. Thus in the Decalogue itself, in the First Commandment (Ex. 20:6): "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments," the most glorious promise of the Law is added. But this Law is not observed without Christ. For it always accuses the conscience, which does not satisfy the Law, and, therefore, in terror, it flies from the judgment and punishment of the Law. "Because the Law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4:15). Man observes the Law, however, when he hears that for Christ's sake God is reconciled, even though we cannot satisfy the Law. When by this faith, Christ is apprehended as Mediator, the heart finds rest, and begins to love God and observe the Law, and knows that now, because of Christ, as Mediator, it is pleasing to God, even though the inchoate fulfilling of the Law be far from perfection, and be very impure. Thus we must judge also concerning the preaching of repentance. For although in the doctrine of repentance, the scholastics have said nothing at all concerning faith, yet we think that none of our adversaries is mad as to deny that absolution is a voice of the Gospel.<sup>24</sup> Absolution besides ought to be received by faith, in order that it may cheer the terrified conscience.

Therefore the doctrine of repentance, because it not only commands new works, but also promises the remission of sins, necessarily requires faith. For the remission of sins is not received unless by faith. Therefore, in those passages that refer to repentance, we should always understand that not only works, but also faith is required, as in Matt. 6:14: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."<sup>25</sup> Here a work is required, and the promise of the remission of sins is added,<sup>26</sup> which does not occur on account of the work, but through faith on account of Christ. Just as Scripture testifies in many passages. Acts 10:43:15: "To him give all the prophets witness that

through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins;" and John 2:12: "Your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake;" Eph. 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Although what need is there to recite testimonies? This utterance itself is peculiar to the Gospel, viz. that for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our works, we obtain by faith remission of sins. Our adversaries endeavor to suppress this word of the Gospel, by means of distorted passages which contain the doctrine of the Law, or of works. For it is true that in the doctrine of repentance, works are required; because certainly a new life is required. But here the adversaries wrongly add that, by such works, we merit the remission of sins or justification. And yet Christ often connects the promise of the remission of sins to good works, not because he means that good works are a propitiation, for they follow reconciliation; but for two reasons: One is because good fruits ought necessarily to follow. Therefore he admonishes, that, if good fruits do not follow, the repentance is hypocritical and feigned. The other reason is, because we have need of external<sup>27</sup> signs of so great a promise, because a conscience full of fear has need of manifold consolation. As, therefore, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs that continually admonish, cheer and encourage desponding minds, to believe the more firmly that their sins are forgiven; so the same promise is written and portrayed in good works, in order that these works may admonish us to believe the more firmly. And those who produce no good works, do not excite themselves to believe, but despise these promises. The godly, on the other hand, embrace them, and rejoice that they have the signs and testimonies of so great a promise. Accordingly they exercise themselves in these signs and testimonies. Just as, therefore, the Lord's Supper does not justify us *ex opere operato* without faith, so alms do not justify us without faith *ex opere operato*.

[136] So also the address of Tobias (4:11) ought to be received: "Alms free from every sin, and from death." We will not say that this is hyperbole, although it ought thus to be received, so as not to detract from the praise of Christ, whose prerogative it is to free from sin and death. But we must recur to the rule that without Christ the doctrine of the Law is of no profit. Therefore those alms please God which follow reconciliation or justification, and not those which precede. Therefore they free from sin and death, not *ex opere operato*, but, as we have said above concerning repentance, because we ought to embrace faith and its fruits, so<sup>28</sup> here we must say concerning alms, that this entire newness of life saves [that they please God, because they occur in believers]. Alms also are the exercises of faith, which receives the remission of sins, and overcomes death, while it exercises itself more and more, and in these exercises receives strength. We grant also this, that alms merit many favors from God [but they cannot

overcome death, hell, the devil, sins, and give the conscience peace (for this must occur alone through faith in Christ)], mitigate punishments, and that they merit our defense in the dangers of sins and of death, as we have said a little before concerning repentance in general.

And the address of Tobias, regarded as a whole, shows that faith is required before alms (4:5): “Be mindful of the Lord thy God all thy days.” And afterwards (v. 19): “Bless the Lord thy God always, and desire of him that thy ways be directed.” This, however, belongs properly to that faith of which we speak, which believes that God is reconciled to it because of his mercy, and which wishes to be justified, sanctified and governed by God. But our adversaries, charming men, pick out mutilated sentences, so as to impose upon those who are unskilled. Afterwards they attach something from their own opinions. Therefore, entire passages are to be required, because, according to the common precept, it is inequitable, when any single clause is presented, to judge or reply, unless the entire Law be thoroughly examined. And when entire passages have been produced, they very frequently bring with themselves an interpretation.<sup>29</sup>

[137] Luke 11:41 is also cited in a mutilated form, viz.: “Give alms of such things as ye have; and behold all things are clean unto you.” The adversaries are very stupid. For as often as we say that to the preaching of the Law, there should be added the Gospel concerning Christ, because of whom good works are pleasing, they yet everywhere teach that, Christ being excluded, justification is merited by the works of the Law. When this entire passage is produced, it will show that faith is required. Christ rebukes the Pharisees who think that they are cleansed before God, i. e. that they are justified by frequent ablutions. Just as some Pope or other<sup>30</sup> says of the sprinkling of the water mingled with salt, that “it sanctifies and cleanses the people;” and the gloss says that it cleanses *from venial sins*. Such also were the opinions of the Pharisees which Christ reproved, and to this feigned cleansing he opposes a double cleanness, the one inner, the other outward. He bids them to be cleansed inwardly [(which occurs only through faith)], and adds concerning the outward cleanness: “Give alms of such things as you have; and behold all things are clean unto you.” The adversaries do not apply aright the universal particle, “*all things*”; for Christ adds this conclusion to both members: “All things will be clean unto you, if you will be clean within, and will outwardly give alms.” For he indicates that outward cleanness is to be referred to works commanded by God, and not to human traditions, such as the ablutions were at that time, and the daily sprinkling of water, the vesture of monks,<sup>31</sup> the distinctions of food, and similar acts of ostentation are now. But the adversaries distort the meaning, by transposing, by



sophistry, the universal particle to only one part: “All things will be clean to those having given alms.” Yet Peter says (Acts 15:9) that hearts are purified by faith. And when this entire passage is regarded, it presents a meaning harmonizing with the rest of Scripture, that, if the hearts are cleansed, and then outwardly alms are added, i. e. all the works of love, they are thus entirely clean, i. e., not only within, but also without. In the second place, why is not the entire discourse added to it? There are many parts of the reproof, some of which give commandment concerning faith, and others concerning works. Nor is it the part of a candid reader to pick out the commands concerning works, while the passages concerning faith are omitted.<sup>32</sup>

Lastly,<sup>33</sup> readers are to be admonished of this, viz. that the adversaries give the worst advice to godly consciences, when they teach that by works the remission of sins is merited, because conscience in acquiring remission through works cannot be confident that a work will satisfy God. Accordingly it is always tormented, and continually devises other works, and other acts of worship, until it altogether despairs. This course is described by Paul, Rom. 4:5, where he proves that the promise of righteousness is not made because of our works, because we could never determine that we had a reconciled God. For the Law always accuses. Thus the promise would be in vain and uncertain. He accordingly concludes that this promise of the remission of sins and of righteousness is received by faith, not on account of works. This is the true, simple and genuine meaning of Paul, in which the greatest consolation is offered godly consciences, and the glory of Christ is shown forth, who certainly was given to us for this purpose, viz. that through him we might have grace, righteousness and peace.

Thus far we have reviewed the principal passages which the adversaries cite against us, in order to show that faith does not justify, and that we merit, by our works, remission of sins and grace. But we hope that we have shown clearly enough to godly consciences, that these passages are not opposed to our doctrine; that the adversaries wickedly distort the Scriptures to their opinions; that the most of the passages which they cite have been garbled; that, while omitting the clearest passages concerning faith, they only select from the Scriptures passages concerning works, and even these they distort; that everywhere they add certain human opinions to that which the words of Scripture say; that they teach the Law in such a manner as to suppress the Gospel concerning Christ. For the entire doctrine of the adversaries, is, in part, derived from human reason, and, in part, a doctrine of the Law, not of the Gospel. For they teach two modes of justification, of which the one has been derived from reason, and the other from the Law, not from the Gospel, or the

promise concerning Christ.

[138] The former mode of justification<sup>34</sup> with them, is that they teach that, by good works, men merit grace both *de congruo* and *de condigno*. This mode is a doctrine of reason, because reason, not seeing the uncleanness of the heart, thinks that it pleases God thus, if it perform good works, and in addition, other works and other acts of worship are constantly devised, by men in great peril, against the terrors of conscience. The heathen and the Israelites slew human victims, and undertook many other most painful works, in order to appease God's wrath. Afterwards, orders of monks were devised, and these vied with each other in the severity of their observances against the terrors of conscience and God's wrath. And this mode of justification, because it is rational, and is altogether occupied with outward works, can be understood, and to a certain extent be afforded. And to this the canonists have distorted the misunderstood Church ordinances, which were enacted by the fathers for a far different purpose, namely, not, that, by these works, we should seek after righteousness, but that, for the sake of mutual tranquility among men, there might be a certain order in the Church. In this manner, they also distorted the sacraments, and most especially the mass, through which they seek *ex opere operato* righteousness, grace and salvation.

Another mode of justification<sup>35</sup> is handed down by the scholastic theologians, when they teach that we are righteous through a habit infused by God, which is love, and that, aided by this habit, we observe the Law of God outwardly and inwardly, and that this fulfilling of the Law is worthy of grace and of eternal life. This doctrine is plainly the doctrine of the Law. For that is true which the Law says: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc. (Deut. 6:5.) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor" (Lev. 19:18). Love is, therefore, the fulfilling of the Law.

But it is easy for a Christian to judge concerning both modes; because both modes exclude Christ, and are, therefore, to be rejected. In the former, which teaches that our works are propitiation for sin, the impiety is manifest. The latter mode contains much that is injurious. It does not teach that, when we are born again, we avail ourselves of Christ. It does not teach that justification is the remission of sins. It does not teach that we attain the remission of sins before we love; but falsely represents that we elicit the act of love,<sup>36</sup> through which we merit remission of sins. Nor does it teach that by faith in Christ we overcome the terrors of sin and death. It falsely represents that, by their own fulfilling of the Law, without Christ as Propitiator, men come to God. Afterwards, it represents that this very fulfilling of the Law, without Christ as Propitiator, is righteousness worthy of grace and eternal life, while nevertheless scarcely a weak and feeble fulfilling of the Law occurs even in saints.



But if any one will only reflect upon it, that the Gospel has not been given in vain to the world, and that Christ has not been promised, set forth, has not been born, has not suffered, has not risen again in vain, he will most readily understand that we are justified not from reason or from the Law. In regard to justification, we, therefore, are compelled to dissent from the adversaries. For the Gospel shows another mode; the Gospel compels us to avail ourselves of Christ in justification; it teaches that through him, we have access to God by faith; it teaches that we ought to set him as Mediator and Propitiator over against God's wrath; it teaches that, by faith in Christ, the remission of sins and reconciliation are received, and the terrors of sin and of death overcome. Thus Paul also says that righteousness is not of the Law, but of the promise, in which the Father has promised that he wishes to forgive, that for Christ's sake he wishes to be reconciled. This promise, however, is received by faith alone, as Paul testifies, Rom. 4:13. This faith alone receives remission of sins, justifies and regenerates. Then love and other good fruits follow. Thus therefore we teach, that man is justified, as we have above said, when conscience, terrified by the preaching of repentance, is cheered and believes that for Christ's sake it has a reconciled God. "This faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. 4:3, 5. And when in this manner the heart is cheered and quickened by faith, it receives the Holy Ghost, who renews us, so that we are able to observe the Law; so that we are able to love God and the Word of God, and to be submissive to God in afflictions; so that we are able to be chaste, to love our neighbor, etc. Even though these works are far distant from the perfection of the Law, yet they please on account of faith, by which we are accounted righteous, because we believe that for Christ's sake we have a reconciled God. These things are plain, and in harmony with the Gospel, and can be understood by persons of sound mind. And from this foundation, it can easily be decided wherefore we ascribe justification to faith, and not to love; although love follows faith, because love is the fulfilling of the Law. But Paul teaches that we are justified not from the Law, but from the promise, which is received only by faith. For we neither come to God without Christ as Mediator, nor receive remission of sins for the sake of our love, but for the sake of Christ. Likewise we are not able to love God while he is angry, and the Law always accuses us, always manifests to us an angry God. Therefore, by faith we must first apprehend the promise, that for Christ's sake the Father is reconciled and forgives. Afterwards we begin to observe the Law. Our eyes are to be cast away from human reason, away from Moses upon Christ, and we are to believe that Christ has been given for us, in order that, for his sake, we may be accounted righteous. In the flesh we never satisfy the Law. Thus therefore we are accounted righteous, not on account of the Law, but on account of Christ,

because his merits are granted us, if we believe on him.

[139] If any one therefore has considered these foundations, that we are not justified from the Law, because human nature cannot observe the Law of God, and cannot love God; but, that we are justified from the promise, in which, for Christ's sake, reconciliation, righteousness and eternal life have been promised; he will easily understand that justification must necessarily be ascribed to faith, if he only will reflect upon the fact, that it is not in vain that Christ has been promised and set forth, that he has been born and has suffered and been raised again; if he will reflect upon the fact, that the promise of grace in Christ is not in vain, that it was made immediately from the beginning of the world, apart from and beyond the Law; if he will reflect upon the fact that the promise should be received by faith, as John says (1 Ep. 5:10, sq.): "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." And Christ says (John 8:36): "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And Paul (Rom. 5:2): "By whom also we have access to God;" and he adds: "By faith." By faith in Christ, therefore, the promise of remission of sins and of righteousness is received. Neither are we justified before God, from reason or from the Law,

These things are so plain, and so manifest that we wonder that the madness of the adversaries is so great as to call them into doubt. The proof is manifest that, since we are justified before God not from the Law, but from the promise, it is necessary to ascribe justification to faith. What can be opposed to this proof, unless some one wish to abolish the entire Gospel, and the entire Christ? The glory of Christ becomes more brilliant, when we teach that we avail ourselves of him as Mediator and Propitiator. Godly consciences see that in this doctrine the most abundant consolation is offered to them, viz. that they ought to believe and most certainly rely upon the fact that they have a reconciled Father, for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our righteousness; and that, nevertheless, Christ aids us, so that we are able to observe also the Law. Of such blessings as these, the adversaries deprive the Church, when they condemn, and endeavor to efface the doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith. Therefore let all well-disposed minds beware of consenting to the godless counsels of the adversaries.

In the doctrine of the adversaries concerning justification, no mention is made of Christ, and how we ought to set him over against the wrath of God; as though indeed we were able to overcome the wrath of God by means of love, or to love an angry God. In regard to these things, consciences are left in uncertainty.<sup>37</sup> For if they ought to know that they have a reconciled God for the reason that they

love, and that they observe the Law, they must needs always doubt whether they have a reconciled God; because they either do not notice this love, as the adversaries acknowledge, or they certainly feel that it is very small; and much more frequently do they feel that they are angry at the judgment of God, who suppresses human nature with many terrible evils, with troubles of this life, the terrors of eternal wrath, etc. When, therefore, will conscience be at rest, when will it be pacified? When in this doubt, and in these terrors, will it love God? What else is the doctrine of the Law, but a doctrine of despair? And let any one of our adversaries come forward who can teach us concerning this love, how he himself loves God. They do not at all understand what they say; they only echo, just like the walls of a house, the little word “love,” without understanding it. So confused and obscure is their doctrine, it not only transfers the glory of Christ to human works, but also leads consciences either to presumption or to despair. But ours, we hope, is readily understood by pious minds, and brings godly and salutary consolation to terrified consciences. For as the adversaries fallaciously object that also many wicked men and devils believe, we have frequently already said that we speak of faith in Christ, i. e. of faith in the remission of sins, of faith which truly and heartily assents to the promise of grace. This is not brought about without a great struggle in human hearts. And men of sound mind can easily judge, that the faith which believes that we are cared for by God, and that we are forgiven and hearkened to by him, is a matter above nature. For, of its own accord, the human mind makes no such decision concerning God.

Therefore, this faith, of which we speak, is neither in the wicked, nor in devils.

[140] Furthermore if any sophist cavils that righteousness is in the will, and therefore it cannot be ascribed to faith, which is in the intellect, the reply is easy, because in the schools even such persons acknowledge that the will commands the intellect to assent to the Word of God. We say also more clearly: Just as the terrors of sin and death are not only thoughts of the intellect, but also horrible movements of the will fleeing God’s judgment; so faith is not only knowledge, in the intellect, but also confidence, in the will, i. e. it is to wish and to receive that which is offered in the promise, viz. reconciliation and remission of sins. Scripture thus uses the term “faith,” as the following sentence of Paul testifies (Rom. 5:1): “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Moreover in this passage, to *justify*<sup>38</sup> signifies, according to forensic usage, to acquit a guilty one, and declare him righteous; but on account of the righteousness of another one, viz. of Christ, which, righteousness of another is communicated to us by faith. Therefore since in this passage our righteousness is the imputation of the righteousness of another, we must here speak concerning righteousness, otherwise than when in philosophy or in a civil court we seek after the

righteousness of one's own work, which certainly is in the will. Paul accordingly says, 1 Cor. 1:30: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." And Cor. 5:28: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

But because the righteousness of Christ is given us by faith, faith is for this reason righteousness in us imputatively, i. e. it is that by which we are made accepted by God, on account of the imputation and ordinance of God, as Paul says (Rom. 4:3, 5): "Faith is reckoned for righteousness." Although on account of certain captious persons, we must say technically: Faith is truly righteousness, because it is obedience to the Gospel. For it is evident that obedience to the command of a superior, is truly a species of distributive justice. And this obedience to the Gospel, is reckoned for righteousness, so that, only on account of this, because by this we apprehend Christ as Propitiator, good works, or obedience to the Law, are pleasing. For we do not satisfy the Law, but, for Christ's sake, this is forgiven us, as Paul says (Rom. 8:1): "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This faith gives God the honor, gives God that which is his own, in this, that in receiving the promises it obeys him. Just as Paul also says (Rom. 4:20): "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Thus the worship and divine service of the Gospel, is to receive from God gifts; on the contrary, the worship of the Law, is to offer and present our gifts to God.<sup>39</sup> We can, however, offer nothing to God, unless first we have been reconciled and born again. This passage, too, brings the greatest consolation; as the chief worship of the Gospel is to wish to receive remission of sins, grace and righteousness. Of this worship, Christ says, John 6:40: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." And the Father says (Matt. 17:5): "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." The adversaries speak of obedience to the Law; they do not speak of obedience to the Gospel: and yet we cannot obey the Law, unless, through the Gospel, we have been born again, since we cannot love God, unless the remission of sins have been received. For as long as we feel that he is angry with us, human nature flees from his wrath and judgment. If any one should make a cavil such as this: If there be faith, which wishes those things which are offered in the promise, the habits of faith and hope seem to be confounded, because hope is that which expects promised things; to this we reply, that these dispositions cannot in reality be severed, in the manner that they are divided by idle speculations in the schools. For in the Epistle to the Hebrews, faith is defined as "the substance" [*expectatio*] "of things hoped for"

(Heb. 11:1). If any one wish a distinction to be made, we say that the object of hope is properly a future event, but that faith exists concerning future and present things, and receives in the present the remission of sins offered in the promise. [What is the difference between faith and hope? Answer: Hope expects future blessings and deliverance from trouble; faith receives the present reconciliation, and concludes in the heart, that God has forgiven my sins, and that he is now gracious to me. And this is a noble service of God, which serves God by giving him the honor, and by esteeming his mercy and promise so sure, that, without merit, we can receive and expect from him all manner of blessings. And in this service of God, the heart should be exercised and increase; of which the foolish sophists know nothing.]

From these statements, we hope that it can be sufficiently understood, both what faith is, and that we are compelled to hold that by faith we are justified, reconciled and regenerated; inasmuch as we wish to teach the righteousness of the Gospel, and not the righteousness of the Law. For those who teach that we are justified by love, teach the righteousness of the Law, and do not teach us in justification to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator. These things also are manifest, viz. that not by love, but by faith, we overcome the terrors of sin and death, that we cannot oppose our love and fulfilling of the Law to the wrath of God, because Paul says, (Rom. 5:2): “By Christ we have access to God by faith.” We urge this sentence so frequently, because of its perspicuity. For it shows most clearly the state of the whole case, and when carefully considered can teach abundantly concerning the whole matter and can console well-disposed minds. Accordingly it is of advantage to have it at hand and in sight, not only that we may be able to oppose it to the doctrine of our adversaries, who teach that we come to God not by faith, but by love and merits without Christ as Mediator; and, at the same time that, when in fear, we may cheer ourselves and exercise faith. This is also manifest, that without the aid of Christ we cannot observe the Law, as he himself says (John 15:5): “Without me ye can do nothing.” Accordingly, before we observe the Law, our hearts must be born again by faith.

[141] Hence it can also be understood why we find fault with the doctrine of the adversaries concerning merit *condigni*.<sup>40</sup> The decision is very easy; because they do not make mention of faith, that we please God by faith for Christ’s sake, but they falsely state that good works, wrought by the aid of the habit of love, constitute a righteousness worthy by itself to please God, and worthy of eternal life; and that they have no need of Christ as Mediator. What else is this than to transfer the glory of Christ to our works, viz. that we please God because of our works, and not because of Christ. But this is also to rob Christ of the glory of Mediator, who is Mediator perpetually, and not merely in the beginning of

justification. Paul also says (Gal. 2:17) that if one justified in Christ have need afterwards to seek righteousness elsewhere, he affirms of Christ that he is a minister of sin, i. e., that he does not fully justify. And most absurd is that which the adversaries teach, viz. that good works merit grace *de condigno*, as though indeed after the beginning of justification, if conscience terrify, as is ordinarily the case, grace must be sought through a good work, and not by faith in Christ.

Secondly,<sup>41</sup> the doctrine of the adversaries leaves consciences in doubt, so that they never can be pacified; because the Law always accuses us, even in good works. For always “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit” (Gal. 5:17). How, therefore, will conscience here have peace, without faith, if it believe that, not for Christ’s sake, but for the sake of one’s own work, it ought now to please God? What work will it find, upon what will it firmly rely as worthy of eternal life, inasmuch as hope ought to originate from merits? Against these doubts, Paul says (Rom. 5:1): “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;” we ought to be firmly convinced that for Christ’s sake righteousness and eternal life are granted us. And of Abraham, he says (Rom. 4:18): “Against hope, he believed in hope.”

Thirdly, How will conscience know, when a work has been done, by the inclination of this habit of love, so that it can be convinced that it merits grace *de condigno*? But it is only to elude the Scriptures that this very distinction has been devised, viz. that men merit at one time *de congruo*, and, at another time, *de condigno* because, as we have above said,<sup>42</sup> the intention of the one who works does not distinguish the kinds of merit; but hypocrites, in their security, think simply their works are worthy, and that, for this reason, they are accounted righteous. On the other hand, terrified consciences doubt concerning all works, and for this reason are continually seeking other works. For to merit *de congruo*, is this, viz. to doubt and, without faith, to work, until despair takes place. In a word, all that the adversaries teach, in regard to this matter, is full of errors and dangers.

[142] Fourthly, The entire [the holy Catholic, Christian] Church confesses that eternal life is attained through mercy. For thus Augustine speaks, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, when indeed he is speaking of the works of the saints, wrought after justification: “God leads us to eternal life not by our merits, but according to his mercy.” And *Confessions*, Book ix.: “Woe to the life of man, however much it may be worthy of praise, if it be judged with mercy removed.” And Cyprian in his treatise on the Lord’s Prayer: “Lest any one should flatter himself that he is innocent, and by exalting himself, should perish the more deeply, he is instructed and taught that he sins daily, in that he is bidden to entreat daily for his sins.” But the subject is well known, and has very many and

very clear testimonies in Scripture, and in the Church Fathers, who all with one mouth declare that even though we have good works, yet in these very works we need mercy. Faith surveying this mercy cheers and consoles us. Wherefore the adversaries teach erroneously, when they so extol merits as to add nothing concerning this faith that apprehends mercy. For just as we have above said that the promise and faith stand in a reciprocal relation, and that the promise is not apprehended unless by faith; so we here say that the promised mercy correlatively requires faith, and cannot be apprehended without faith. Therefore we justly find fault with the doctrine concerning merit *condigni*, since it teaches nothing of justifying faith, and obscures the glory and office of Christ as Mediator. For in this matter we should not be regarded as teaching anything new, since the Church Fathers have so clearly handed down the doctrine that, even in good works, we need mercy.

Scripture also often inculcates the same. In Ps. 143:2: “And enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This passage denies absolutely even to all saints and servants of God, the glory of righteousness, if God does not forgive, but judges and accuses their hearts. For when David boasts in other places of his righteousness, he speaks concerning his own cause against the persecutors of God’s Word; he does not speak of his personal purity; and he asks that the cause and glory of God be defended, as in Ps. 7:8: “Judge me, O Lord, according to thy righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.” Likewise in Ps. 130:3, he says that no one [not even the highest saints] could endure God’s judgment, if God were to mark our sins: “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” Job 9:28: “I am afraid of all my sorrows” [Vulg., *opera*, works]; v. 30: “If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch.” Prov. 20:9: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” John 1:8: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” etc. And in the Lord’s Prayer, the saints ask for the remission of sins. Therefore, even the saints have sins. Num. 14:18: “The innocent shall not be innocent” [cf. Ex. 34:7]. Deut. 4:24: “The Lord thy God is a consuming fire.” Zechariah also says (2:13): “Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord.” Isa. 40:6: “All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it,” i. e. flesh and righteousness of the flesh cannot endure the judgment of God. Jonah also says (ch. 2:8): “They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy,” i. e. all confidence is vain, except confidence in mercy; mercy delivers us; our own merits, our own efforts do not. Accordingly Daniel also prays (9:18, sq.): “For we do not present our



supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do it; defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” Thus Daniel teaches us in praying to lay hold upon mercy, i. e, to trust in God’s mercy, and not to trust in our own merits before God. We also wonder what our adversaries do in prayer, if, indeed, the profane men ever ask anything of God. If they declare that they are worthy because they have love and good works, and ask for grace as a debt, they pray precisely like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, who says: “I am not as other men are.” He who thus prays for grace, and does not rely upon God’s mercy, treats Christ with dishonor, who, since he is our high priest, intercedes for us. Thus, therefore, prayer relies upon God’s mercy, when we believe that we are hearkened to, for the sake of Christ, the high priest, as he himself says (John 14:13): “Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.” “In my name,” he says, because without this high priest we cannot come to the Father.

[144] Here belongs also the declaration of Christ, Luke 17:10: “So likewise, ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.”<sup>43</sup> These words clearly declare that God saves by mercy, and on account of his promise, not that it is due on account of the value of our works. But,<sup>44</sup> at this point, the adversaries play wonderfully with the words of Christ. In the first place, they make an antistrophe [retorted argument], and turn it Mt; against us. Much more, they say, can it be said: “If we have believed all things, say, We are unprofitable servants.” Then they add that works are of no profit to God, but are not without profit to us. See how the puerile study of sophistry delights the adversaries, and although these trifles do not deserve a refutation, nevertheless we will reply to them in a few words. The antistrophe is defective. For in the first place the adversaries are deceived in regard to the term faith; because, if it would signify that knowledge of history<sup>45</sup> which is also in the wicked and in devils, the adversaries would be correct in arguing that faith is unprofitable, when they say: “When we have believed all things, say. We are unprofitable servants.” But we are speaking, not of the knowledge of history, but of confidence in the promise and mercy of God. And the confidence in the promise confesses that we are unprofitable servants; yea this confession that our works are unworthy, is the very voice of faith, as appears in this example of Daniel (9:18), which we cited a little above: “We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses,” etc. For faith saves, because it apprehends mercy or the promise of grace, even though our works are unworthy; and, with this meaning, the antistrophe does not oppose us, viz.: “When ye shall have done all things, say, We are unprofitable servants;”



viz. because our works are unworthy: for with the entire Church we teach that we are saved by mercy. But if they mean to infer in a similar way, just as when you have done all things, do not trust in your works, so when you have believed all things, do not trust in the divine promise; these do not agree. The inference is wrong: “Works do not help; therefore, faith also does not help.” We must give the uncultured men a homely illustration: “A half farthing does not help; therefore a florin also does not help.” Just as the florin is of much higher denomination and value than the half farthing, so also should it be understood that faith is much higher and more efficacious than works. Not that faith helps, because of its worth, but because it trusts in God’s promises. For they are very dissimilar; as the causes and objects of confidence in the former proposition are far dissimilar to those of the latter. In the former, confidence is confidence in our own works. In the latter, confidence is confidence in the divine promise. Christ, however, condemns confidence in our works; he does not condemn confidence in his promise. He does not wish us to despair of God’s grace and mercy. He accuses our works as unworthy, but does not accuse the promise which freely offers mercy. And here Ambrose says well: “Grace is to be acknowledged; but nature is not to be ignored.” We must trust in the promise of grace, and not in our own nature. But the adversaries act in accordance with their custom, and distort, against faith, the judgments which have been given on behalf of faith.<sup>46</sup> We leave, however, these difficult points to the schools. “The sophistry is plainly puerile, when they interpret” unprofitable servant,” as meaning that the works are unprofitable to God, but are profitable to us. Yet Christ speaks concerning that profit which makes God a debtor of grace to us, although it is out of place to discuss here concerning that which is profitable or unprofitable. For “unprofitable servants” means “insufficient,” because no one fears God as much, and loves God as much, and believes God as much as he ought.<sup>47</sup> But let us dismiss these frigid cavils of the adversaries, concerning which, if at any time they are brought to the light, prudent men will easily decide what they should judge. They have found a flaw in words which are very plain and clear. But every one sees that in this passage, confidence in our own works is condemned.

[146] Let us, therefore, hold fast to this which the Church confesses, viz. that we are saved by mercy. And lest<sup>48</sup> any one may here think: “If we are to be saved by mercy, hope will be uncertain, if, in those by whom salvation is attained, nothing precedes, by which they may be distinguished from these by whom it is not attained,” we must give him a satisfactory answer. For the scholastics, influenced in this way, seem to have devised *meritum condigni*. For this consideration can greatly exercise the human mind. We will therefore reply briefly. For the very reason that hope may be sure, for the very reason that there

may be an antecedent distinction between those by whom salvation is attained, and those by whom it is not attained, it is necessary to firmly hold that we are saved by mercy. When this is expressed thus unqualifiedly, it seems absurd. For in civil courts and in human judgment, that which is of right or of debt, is certain, and mercy is uncertain. But the matter is different with respect to God's judgment, for here mercy has a clear and certain command from God. For the Gospel is properly that command [word], which enjoins us to believe that God is propitious to us for Christ's sake. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John 3:17, 18). As often, therefore, as mercy is spoken of, faith in the promise must be added; and this faith produces sure hope, because it relies upon the Word and command of God. If hope would rely upon works, then, indeed, it would be uncertain, because works cannot pacify the conscience, as has been said above frequently. And this faith makes a distinction between those by whom salvation is attained, and those by whom it is not attained. Faith makes the distinction between the worthy and the unworthy, because eternal life has been promised to the justified; and faith justifies.

But here again the adversaries will cry out that there is no need of good works, if they do not merit eternal life. These calumnies we have refuted above.<sup>49</sup> Of course, it is necessary to do good works. We say that eternal life has been promised to the justified.<sup>50</sup> But those who walk according to the flesh, retain neither faith nor righteousness. We are for this very end justified, that being righteous we may begin to do good works and to obey God's Law. We are regenerated and receive the Holy Ghost, for the very end that the new life may produce new works, new dispositions, the fear and love of God. hatred to concupiscence, etc. This faith of which we speak arises in repentance [is where repentance is], and, ought to be established and grow, in the midst of good works, temptations and dangers, so that we may continually be the more firmly persuaded that God, for Christ's sake, cares for us, forgives us, hearkens to us. This is not learned without many and great struggles. How often conscience is aroused, how often it excites, even to despair, when it brings to view sins, either old or new, or the impurity of our nature? This handwriting is not blotted out without a great struggle, in which experience testifies what a difficult matter faith is. And while we are cheered in the midst of the terrors, and receive consolation, other spiritual movements at the same time grow, the knowledge of God, fear of God, hope, love of God; and we are "regenerated," as Paul says (Col. 3: and Cor. 3:18): "in the knowledge of God," and "beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image," i. e. we receive the true knowledge of God, so that we truly fear him, truly trust that we are cared for, and that we

are hearkened to by him. This regeneration is as it were the beginning of eternal life, 231 as Paul says (Rom. 8:10): “If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” And (2 Cor. 5:2, 3): “We are clothed upon, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” From these statements, the candid reader can judge that we especially require good works, since we teach that this faith arises in repentance, and in repentance ought continually to increase; and in these matters, we place Christian and spiritual perfection, if, in repentance, repentance and faith grow together. This can be better understood by the godly, than those things which are taught by the adversaries concerning contemplation or perfection. Just as, however, justification pertains to faith, so also life eternal pertains to faith. And Peter says (1 Pet. 1:9): “Receiving the end or fruit of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” For the adversaries confess that the sons of God have been justified, and are co-heirs of Christ. Afterwards works, because on account of faith they please God, merit other bodily and spiritual rewards. For there will be distinctions in the glory of the saints.

But here the adversaries reply that eternal life is called a reward, and that, therefore, it is merited *de condigno* by good works. We reply briefly and plainly: Paul (Rom. 6:23) calls eternal life “a gift,” because by the righteousness presented for Christ’s sake, we are made at the same time sons of God and co-heirs of Christ, as John says (3:36): “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.” And Augustine says, as also do very many others who follow him: “God crowns his gifts in us.” Elsewhere indeed (Luke 6:23) it is written: “Your reward is great in heaven.” If these passages seem to the adversaries to conflict, they themselves may explain them. But they are not fair judges; for they omit the word “gift.” They omit also the sources of the entire matter [the chief part, how we are justified before God], and they select the word “reward,” and most harshly interpret this not only against Scripture, but also against the usage of the language. Hence they infer that inasmuch as it is called “a reward,” our works, therefore, are such that they ought to be a price, for which eternal life is due. They are, therefore, worthy of grace and life eternal, and do not stand in need of mercy, or of Christ as Mediator, or of faith. This logic is altogether new; we hear the term “reward,” and, therefore, are to infer that there is no need of Christ as Mediator, or of faith having access to God for Christ’s sake, and not for the sake of our works! Who does not see that these are anacolouthons? We do not contend concerning the term “reward.” We dispute concerning this matter, viz. whether good works are of themselves worthy of grace and of eternal life, or whether they please only on account of faith, which apprehends Christ as Mediator. Our adversaries not only ascribe this to works, viz. that they are

worthy of grace and of eternal life, but they also state falsely that they have superfluous merits, which they can grant to others, and by which they can justify others, as when monks sell the merits of their orders to others. These monstrosities they heap up in the manner of Chrysippus, where this one word “reward” is heard, viz.: “It is called a reward, and therefore we have works which are a price for which a reward is due; therefore, works please by themselves, and not for the sake of Christ as Mediator. And since one has more merits than another, therefore some have superfluous merits. And those who merit them can bestow these merits upon others.” Stop, reader; you have not the whole of this sorites. For certain sacraments of this donation must be added; the hood is placed upon the dead. [As the Barefooted monks and other orders have shamelessly done, in placing the hoods of their orders upon dead bodies.] By such accumulations, the blessings brought us in Christ, and the righteousness of faith are obscured. [These are acute and strong arguments, all of which they can spin from the single word “reward” whereby they obscure Christ and faith.]

[148] We are not agitating an idle logomachy concerning the term “reward.” If the adversaries will concede that we are accounted righteous by faith because of Christ, and that good works please God because of faith, we will not afterwards contend much concerning the term “reward.” We confess that eternal life is a reward, because it is something due on account of the promise, not on account of our merits. For the justification has been promised, which we have above shown to be properly a gift of God; and to this gift has been added the promise of eternal life, according to Rom. 8:30: “Whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Here belongs what Paul says (2 Tim. 4:8): “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me.” For the crown is due the justified because of the promise.<sup>51</sup> And this promise saints should know, not that they may labor for their own profit, for they ought to labor for the glory of God; but in order that they may not despair in afflictions, they should know God’s will, that he desires to aid, to deliver, to save them. Although the perfect hear the mention of penalties and rewards in one way, and the weak hear it in another way; for the weak labor for the sake of their own advantage. And yet the preaching of rewards and punishments is necessary. In the preaching of punishments, the wrath of God is set forth, and, therefore, this pertains to the preaching of repentance. In the preaching of rewards, grace is set forth. And just as Scripture, in the mention of good works, often embraces faith; for it wishes righteousness of the heart to be included with the fruits; so sometimes it offers grace together with other rewards, as in Isa. 58: sq., and frequently in other places in the prophets. We also confess what we have often testified, that, although justification and eternal life pertain to faith, nevertheless

good works merit other bodily and spiritual rewards,<sup>52</sup> and degrees of rewards, according to 1 Cor. 3:8: “Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” [For the blessed will have reward; one higher than the other. This difference merit makes, according as it pleases God; and is merit, because they who do these good works, God has adopted as children and heirs. For thus they have merit which is their own and peculiar; as one child, with respect to another.]

For the righteousness of the Gospel, which has to do with the promise of grace, freely receives justification and quickening. But the fulfilling of the Law, which follows faith, has to do with the Law, in which a reward is offered and is due, not freely, but according to our works. But those who merit this are justified before they do the Law. Therefore (as Paul says, Col. 1:13; Rom. 8:17), they have before been translated into the kingdom of God’s Son, and been made joint heirs with Christ. But as often as mention is made of merit, the adversaries immediately transfer the matter from other rewards to justification, although the Gospel freely offers justification on account of Christ’s merits, and not of our own; and the merits of Christ are communicated to us by faith. But works and afflictions merit, not justification, but other remunerations, as the reward is offered in these passages: “He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully” (2 Cor. 9:6). Here clearly the measure of the reward is connected with the measure of the work. “Honor thy father, and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land” (Ex. 20:1 2). And here certainly the Law offers a reward to work. Although, therefore, the fulfilling of the Law merits a reward, for a reward properly pertains to the Law; yet we ought to be mindful of the Gospel, which freely offers justification for Christ’s sake. We neither observe the Law, nor can observe it, before we have been reconciled to God, justified and regenerated. Neither would this fulfilling of the Law please God, unless we would be accepted on account of faith. And because men are accepted on account of faith, for this very reason the inchoate fulfilling of the Law pleases, and has a reward in this life, and after this life. Concerning the term “reward,” very many other remarks might here be made, derived from the nature of the Law, which, as they are too extensive, must be explained in another connection.<sup>53</sup>

[149] But, the adversaries urge that it is the prerogative of good works to merit eternal life, because Paul says, Rom. 2:6: “Who will render to every one according to his works.” Likewise v. 10: “Glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good.”<sup>54</sup> John 5:29: “They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life.” Matt. 25:35: “I was an hungered and ye gave me meat,” etc. In these and all similar passages in which works are praised in the Scriptures, it

is necessary to understand not only outward works, but also the faith of the heart, because Scripture does not speak of hypocrisy, but of the righteousness of the heart with its fruits. Moreover, as often as mention is made of the Law and of works, we must know that Christ as Mediator is not to be excluded. For he is the end of the Law, and he himself says (John 15:5): “Without me, ye can do nothing.” According to this rule, we have said above, that all passages concerning works, can be judged. Wherefore when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to those who have been justified, because no men except justified men, who are led by the Spirit of Christ, can do good works; and without faith and Christ as Mediator, good works do not please, according to Heb. 11:6 “Without faith, it is impossible to please God.” When Paul says: “He will render to every one according to his works,” not only the outward work ought to be understood, but all righteousness or unrighteousness. So: “Glory to him that worketh good,” i. e. to the righteous. “Ye gave me meat,” is cited as the fruit and witness of the righteousness of the heart and of faith, and, therefore, eternal life is rendered to righteousness. [There it must certainly be acknowledged that Christ means not only the works, but that he desires to have the heart; which he wishes to esteem God aright, and to believe correctly concerning him, viz. it is through mercy that it is pleasing to God. Therefore Christ teaches that everlasting life will be given the righteous, as Christ says: “The righteous shall go into everlasting life.”] In this way. Scripture, at the same time with the fruits, embraces the righteousness of the heart. And it often names the fruits, in order that it may be better understood by the inexperienced, and to signify that a new life and regeneration, and not hypocrisy, are required. But regeneration occurs, by faith, in repentance.

No sane man can judge otherwise; neither do we here affect any idle subtlety, so as to separate the fruits from the righteousness of the heart; if the adversaries would only have conceded that the fruits please because of faith, and of Christ as Mediator, and that by themselves they are not worthy of grace and of eternal life. For in the doctrine of the adversaries, we condemn this, that, in such passages of Scripture, understood either in a philosophical or a Jewish manner, they abolish the righteousness of faith, and exclude Christ as Mediator. From these passages, they infer that works merit grace, sometimes *de congruo*, and at other times *de condigno*, viz. when love is added; i. e. because they justify, and because they are righteousness, they are worthy of eternal life. This error manifestly abolishes the righteousness of faith, which believes that we have access to God, for Christ’s sake, not for the sake of our works, and that through Christ as Priest and Mediator, we are led to the Father, and have a reconciled Father, as has been sufficiently said above. And this doctrine concerning 256 the righteousness of

faith is not to be neglected in the Church of Christ; because without it the office of Christ cannot be considered, and the doctrine of justification that is left, is only a doctrine of the Law.<sup>55</sup> But we should retain the Gospel, and the doctrine concerning the promise, granted for Christ's sake.

[150] We are not, therefore, on this topic contending with the adversaries concerning a small matter. We are not seeking out idle subtleties, when we find fault with them for teaching that we merit eternal life by works, while that faith is omitted which apprehends Christ as Mediator. For of this faith, which believes that for Christ's sake the Father is propitious to us, there is not a syllable in the scholastics. Everywhere they hold that we are accepted and righteous because of our works, wrought either from reason, or certainly wrought by the inclination of that love, concerning which they speak.

And<sup>56</sup> yet they have certain sayings, maxims as it were of the old writers,<sup>57</sup> which they distort in interpreting. In the schools, the boast is made, that good works please on account of grace, and that confidence must be put in God's grace. Here they interpret grace as a habit, by which we love God, as though indeed the ancients meant to say that we ought to trust in our love, of which we certainly experience how small and how impure it is. Although it is strange how they bid us trust in love, since they teach us that we are not able to know whether it be present.<sup>58</sup> Why do they not here set forth God's love and mercy toward us? And as often as mention is made of this they ought to add faith. For the promise of God's mercy, reconciliation and love towards us, is not apprehended unless by faith. With this view, they would be right in saying that we ought to trust in grace, that good works please because of grace, when faith apprehends grace. In the schools, the boast is also made that our good works avail by virtue of Christ's passion.<sup>59</sup> Well said! But why add nothing concerning faith? For Christ is "a propitiation," as Paul (Rom. 3:25) says, "through faith." When timid consciences are comforted, and are convinced that our sins have been blotted out by the death of Christ, and that God has been reconciled to us on account of Christ's suffering, then indeed the suffering of Christ profits us. If the doctrine concerning faith be omitted, it is said in vain that works avail by virtue of Christ's passion.

[151] And very many other passages they corrupt in the schools, because they do not teach the righteousness of faith, and because they understand by faith merely a knowledge of history or of dogmas, and do not understand by it that virtue which apprehends the promise of grace and of righteousness, and which quickens hearts in the terrors of sin and of death. When Paul says (Rom. 10:10): "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," we think that the adversaries acknowledge



here that confession justifies or saves, not *ex opere operato* but only on account of the faith of the heart. And Paul thus says that confession saves, in order to show what sort of faith obtains eternal life; namely, that which is firm and active. That faith, however, which does not manifest itself in confession, is not firm. Thus other good works please on account of faith; as also the prayers of the Church ask that all things may be accepted for Christ's sake. They likewise ask all things for Christ's sake. For it is manifest that at the close of prayers, this clause is always added: "Through Christ our Lord."<sup>60</sup>

Accordingly we conclude that we are justified before God, are reconciled to God and regenerated by faith, which in repentance apprehends the promise of grace, and truly quickens the terrified mind, and is convinced that for Christ's sake God is reconciled and propitious to us. And through this "faith," says Peter (1 Ep. 1:5), "we are kept unto salvation, ready to be revealed." The knowledge of this faith is necessary to Christians, and brings the most abundant consolation in all afflictions, and displays to us the office of Christ, because those who deny that men are justified by faith, and deny that Christ is Mediator and Propitiator, deny the promise of grace, and the Gospel. They teach only the doctrine either of reason or of the Law concerning justification.

We have shown<sup>61</sup> the origin of this case, so far as can here be done, and have explained those things to which the adversaries object. Good men indeed, will easily judge these things, if they will think, as often as a passage concerning love or works is cited, that the Law cannot be observed without Christ, and that we cannot be justified from the Law, but from the Gospel; that is, from the promise of the grace promised in Christ. And we hope that this discussion, although brief, will be profitable to good men for strengthening faith, and teaching and comforting conscience. For we know that those things which we have said are in harmony with the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, with the holy Fathers, Ambrose, Augustine, and very many others, and with the whole Church of Christ, which certainly confesses that Christ is Propitiator and Justifier.

Nor are we immediately to judge that the Roman Church agrees with everything that the pope or cardinals or bishops or some of the theologians or monks approve.<sup>62</sup> For it is manifest that to most of the pontiffs their own authority causes more care than does the Gospel of Christ. And it has been ascertained that most of them are openly Epicureans. It is evident that theologians have mingled with Christian doctrine more of philosophy than was sufficient. Nor ought their influence to appear so great, that it will never be lawful to dissent from their disputations, while at the same time many manifest errors are found among them, such as that we are able from purely natural powers to love God above all things.<sup>63</sup> This dogma, although it is manifestly



false, has produced many other errors. For the Scriptures, the holy Fathers and the judgments of all the godly everywhere make reply. Therefore, even though bishops or some theologians or monks have taught us to seek remission of sins, grace and righteousness, through our own works, and new forms of worship, which have obscured the office of Christ, and have made out of Christ not a Propitiator and Justifier, but only a Legislator; nevertheless, the knowledge of Christ has always remained with some godly persons. Scripture, moreover, has predicted that the righteousness of faith would be obscured in this way by human traditions and the doctrine of works. Just as Paul often complains (cf. Gal. 4:9; 5:7; Col. 2:8, sq.; Tim. 4: sq., etc.) that there were at that time those who, instead of the righteousness of faith, taught that men were reconciled to God, and justified, by their own works and own acts of worship, and not by faith for Christ's sake; because men judge by nature that God ought to be appeased by works. Nor does reason see a righteousness other than the righteousness of the Law, understood in a juridical sense. Accordingly there have always existed in the world some who have taught this carnal righteousness alone to the exclusion of the righteousness of faith; and such teachers will also always exist. The same happened among the people of Israel. The greater part of the people thought that they merited remission of sins by their works; they accumulated sacrifices and acts of worship. On the contrary, the prophets, in condemnation of this opinion, taught the righteousness of faith. And the occurrences among the people of Israel are illustrations of those things which were to occur in the Church. Therefore, let the multitude of the adversaries, who condemn our doctrine, not disturb godly minds. For their spirit can easily be judged, because in some articles they have condemned truth that is so clear and manifest, that their godlessness appears openly. For the bull of Leo X.<sup>64</sup> condemned a very necessary article, which all Christians should hold and believe, viz. that "We ought to trust that we have been absolved not because of our contrition, but because of Christ's Word (Matt. 16:19): 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind,'" etc. And now in this assembly, the authors of the Confutation have condemned in clear words<sup>65</sup> this, viz. that we have said that faith is a part of repentance, by which we obtain remission of sins, and overcome the terrors of sin, and conscience is rendered pacified. Who, however, does not see that this article, that by faith we obtain the remission of sins, is most true, most certain and especially necessary to all Christians? Who to all posterity, hearing that such a doctrine has been condemned, will judge that the authors of this condemnation had any knowledge of Christ?

[152] And concerning their spirit, a conjecture can be made from the unheard-of cruelty, which it is evident that they have hitherto exercised towards most good men. And in this assembly we have heard that a reverend father, when

opinions concerning our Confession were expressed, said in the senate of the Empire, that no plan seemed to him better than to make a reply written in blood to the Confession which we find presented written in ink. What more cruel would Phalaris say? Therefore some princes also have judged this expression unworthy to be treated of, in such an assembly. Wherefore although the adversaries claim for themselves the name of the Church, nevertheless we know that the Church of Christ is with those who teach the Gospel of Christ, not with those who defend wicked opinions contrary to the Gospel, as the Lord says (John 10:27): “My sheep hear my voice.” And Augustine says, “The question is, Where is the Church? What, therefore, are we to do? Are we to seek it in our own words, or in the words of its Head, our Lord Jesus Christ? I think that we ought to seek it in the words of him, who is truth, and who knows his own body best.” Hence the judgments of our adversaries will not disturb us, since they defend human opinions contrary to the Gospel, contrary to the authority of the holy Fathers, who have written in the Church, and contrary to the testimonies of godly minds.

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1. The Var. adds: What can be expressed more simply than this our doctrine? For it is necessary that the benefits of Christ be recognized in order to distinguish the promises from the Law.↵
2. Var. adds: For we never do sufficient works.↵
3. The Var. continues: Not that by the Law we merit the remission of sins, or that for the sake of the Law we are accounted righteous, and not for Christ’s sake, but because God requires good works; for it is necessary wisely to divide aright the Law and the promises.↵
4. Var. adds: So as not to remove Christ.↵
5. §§ 68-81 are treated much more briefly in the Var. and Ger.↵
6. Var.: They might appease the wrath of God.↵
7. Var. (and Germ.): In order that for the sake of these works, they might be accounted righteous before God. The human mind thus errs concerning works, because it does not understand the righteousness of faith. And this error the Gospel reproves, which teaches that men are accounted righteous not for the sake of the Law, but for the sake of Christ alone. Christ, however, is apprehended by faith alone; wherefore, we are accounted righteous by faith alone for Christ’s sake. But the adversaries present in opposition a passage from Corinthians., etc. (§ 97).↵
8. §§ 92-95 omitted in German.↵

9. § 15 sqq.↵
10. Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec. iii.: § 43, p. 620.↵
11. §§ 99-102, much briefer in Germ.↵
12. Var.; Which teaches that we have access to God through Christ as Propitiator, and that we are accepted not for the sake of our fulfilling of the Law, but for Christ's sake (71).↵
13. Var. adds: For there is no law which accuses us more, and causes our conscience to be more enraged with God's judgment, than this supreme Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart." For who of the saints, except Christ, dared to boast that he had satisfied this Law? Therefore the virtue of the Law does not justify, but that virtue. etc.↵
14. From here to § 109 the treatment in Germ, and Var. is briefer.↵
15. See § 49.↵
16. See Art. xv.:18, p. 208.↵
17. Var. (and Germ.): Moreover Paul teaches that we are accepted on account of Christ, and not on account of the fulfilling of the Law; for the fulfilling of the Law is not perfect. Therefore since he elsewhere manifestly denies us perfection, it is not to be thought that he speaks here of personal perfection.↵
18. Germ, omits from here to § 117.↵
19. See Art. iv.: §§71,72.↵
20. In Germ, and Var. §§ 133-155 are treated at less length, and in different order.↵
21. Cf. Formula of Concord, S. D. v.: §§ 11. 12.↵
22. Jerome translates it: "Perhaps God will remit thy sins."↵
23. The Var. continues: It is philosophical to seek in Daniel's discourse for nothing but an exhortation concerning the proper administration of the government; it is pharisaic to feign that the remission of sins occurs because of this work. But it so happens; works naturally meet the sight, etc.↵
24. Cf. Apology, Art. xi.: § 59, p. 165.↵
25. Luther in a copy of the edition of 1531 made the following marginal note: We cannot remit, unless it first be remitted to us, and the Holy Ghost be sent us. Otherwise it is known as "Forgiving, but not forgetting."↵
26. Var. continues: Nor must we here reason that our act of pardoning merits *ex opere operato* that sins be remitted to us. For Christ does not say this. But just as Christ connects the promise of the remission of sins to other sacraments, so also he connects it to good works, etc.↵
27. Luther wrote on the margin of the copy sent him by Melanchthon in 1531: Internal too; for when our heart does not convict us, we know that we are

- the children of God.↵
28. In the Var. and Germ, the discussion from this point to § 158 is in a different order and partly in other words.↵
  29. Var. omits § 159.↵
  30. Ascribed falsely to Alexander I. in Gratian's Decretals.↵
  31. Var. continues: As if any one would infer: Andrew is present; therefore all the apostles are present. Wherefore in the antecedent, both members ought to be joined: Believe and give alms; thus all things will be pure. For Scripture elsewhere says: "By faith," etc. Wherefore if hearts, etc.↵
  32. Var.: There are some [meaning Erasmus] who interpret: Give alms, and all things are clean, etc. as irony. For Christ seems to censure, by means of irony, the vain persuasion of the Pharisees, who, although they had minds subject to the worst covetousness, meanwhile trusted that by giving alms they would be pure demigods. This interpretation is not absurd, and has nothing in it that conflicts with Scripture.↵
  33. In treating §§ 164-237, the Var. and Germ, are both briefer and follow another order.↵
  34. Apology, Art. iv., § 9, p. 88.↵
  35. Apology, Art. iv., § 17, sqq., p. 89.↵
  36. Apology, Art. ii., § 12. Art. iv., § 9.↵
  37. Cf. §164; §§ 198-200.↵
  38. Var. thus presents § 184-186: *Secondly*, justification signifies here to be accounted righteous. But God does not account man righteous as in a civil court or in philosophy man is accounted righteous, because of the righteousness of his own work which is ascribed correctly to the will; but he accounts man righteous through mercy for Christ's sake, if any one only apprehend this by faith. Wherefore faith can be called righteousness, because it is that which, to speak with Paul, "is imputed for righteousness" to whatever part of man it be referred; for this does not hinder divine imputation. Although we indeed refer this faith to the will; for it is to will and to receive the promise of Christ.↵
  39. Apology, Art. iv. § 49, p. 96.↵
  40. Cf: Apology, iv. § 19, p. 90.↵
  41. Var. (and Germ.): And see what follows from the opinion of the adversaries. If we ought to believe that Christ has merited only the *prima gratia*, as they call it, and that we afterwards are accepted and merit eternal life by our fulfilling of the Law, when will consciences be pacified? [Germ.: Hearts or consciences will be pacified neither at the hour of death, nor at any other time, nor can they build any more upon certain ground.] When will they

know for a certainty that they have a propitious God? For the Law always accuses us [Germ.: For God's Law is not a matter of pleasantries; it accuses consciences outside of Christ], as Paul says (Rom. 4:15): "The Law worketh wrath." Thus it will happen that if consciences feel the judgment of the Law, they will rush into despair. Paul says: "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). But these persons will do nothing from faith, if they will know that God is gracious to them only when they have at length fulfilled the Law. They will always doubt whether the Law have been satisfied, yea, they will understand that it has not been satisfied.

Accordingly they will never be sure that they have a gracious God, and that they are hearkened to. Therefore they will never love, they will never truly worship God. What else are such hearts but hell itself, since they are full of despair and hatred of God, and yet in this hatred they invoke and worship God, just as Saul worshiped him. Here we appeal to all minds that are godly and experienced in spiritual things; they will be able to testify that these evils [Germ.: Such great uncertainty, such disquietude, such torture and anxiety, such horrible fear and doubt] are derived from the godless persuasion of the adversaries, which holds that we are accounted righteous before God by our own fulfilling of the Law, and bids us trust not in the promise of mercy [Germ.: And point us to the labyrinth of trusting not in the rich, blessed promises of Grace] given us for Christ's sake, but in our own fulfilling of the Law. And let us ask the adversaries what advice they give to the dying: whether they bid them believe that they are accounted righteous, and expect eternal life because of their own works, or indeed through mercy for Christ's sake. Certainly neither Paul nor Laurentius will say that he is accounted righteous because of his own purity, or that eternal life is due him because of his own works or fulfilling of the Law but he will believe, etc. Neither can pious minds [Germ.: A saint, great and high though he be] be fortified against despair, unless they believe that through mercy for Christ's sake we certainly have both righteousness and life eternal, not on account of the Law [Germ.: If he would not grasp the divine promises, the Gospel, as a tree or branch in the great flood, in the strong, violent stream, amidst the waves and billows of the anguish of death, etc.]. This belief consoles, encourages and saves godly minds. Wherefore the adversaries, when they speak of the *meritum condigni*, abolish the doctrine concerning faith, and drive consciences to despair. In Ed. Var. and Germ, the substance of §§ 223-233 follows § 168.↵

42. Art. iv., § 20, p. 90.↵

43. Var. (and Germ.) continue: And Bernard says correctly: "It is necessary to

believe, first, that you cannot have remission of sins unless by the indulgence of God; second, that unless also he grant this, you can have no good work whatever; lastly, that you can merit eternal life by no good works, unless this also be given freely.” And a little after: “Let no one deceive himself, because if he will think aright, he will find without doubt that, with ten thousand, he cannot meet one that cometh against him with twenty thousand,” etc. Therefore, in order to hold firm consolation and hope of conscience we recall men to the promise of Christ, and teach that it is necessary to believe that God for Christ sake remits sins, justifies, and grants eternal life, according to John 5:12: “He that hath the Son, hath life.” But it is worth while to hear how the adversaries elude the saying of Christ: “When ye shall have done,” etc. in the Confutation they corrupt it thus: First, they make an antistrophe: much more, etc., as in § 213. See Confutation, Art. VI.↵

44. In §§ 214-222 the Germ. is briefer.↵
45. Var. adds: Or if we would say that faith saves on account of its own worth.↵
46. Var. adds: For this sophistry: “When ye shall have believed all things, say that faith is useless,” abrogates the entire Gospel. Does not the Gospel promise the remission of sins and salvation, even to those who have no good works at all, if only they are converted and do not despair, but by faith in Christ obtain the remission of sins? Do the adversaries bid those persons despair whose consciences find no works that they can oppose to the judgment of God? Will they say to these that faith is useless? May the sophists be undone with such calumnies as these which overthrow the entire Gospel, abrogate the gratuitous remission of sins, tear away from consciences firm consolations, etc.? But this sophistry, etc.↵
47. Var. adds: No one satisfies the Law.↵
48. The discussion from this point to § 234 is given in Ed. Var. and Germ previously, and is there somewhat differently arranged.↵
49. Cf. § 68, sqq.↵
50. Var. appeals to Rom, 8:30.↵
51. Var. continues: For these gifts are arranged with reference to one another, just as Augustine also says: “God crowns his own gifts in us.” But Scripture calls eternal life reward, not because it is due on account of works, but because, although it is bestowed for another reason, yet it makes up for afflictions and works. Just as an inheritance falls to a son of a family not on account of his performance of duty (*sua officia*); and yet it is a reward and compensation for his performance of duty. Germ. illustrates this by an



additional example.↵

52. Var. (and Germ.) adds: Which are rendered both in this life and after this life. For God defers most rewards until he glorifies saints after this life, because he wishes them in this life to be exercised in mortifying the old man.↵
53. Of. Apology, Of Confession and Satisfaction, § 36 sqq., p. 192.↵
54. This passage is omitted in Germ, and Var.↵
55. Var. (and Germ.) more fully: Wherefore we are compelled to rebuke the pharisaic opinions of the adversaries, both in order that we may proclaim the glory of Christ, and that we may present to consciences firm consolations. For how will conscience receive sure hope of salvation, since it knows that in judgment its works are unworthy, unless it know that men are accounted righteous and are saved by mercy for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of their fulfilling of the Law? Did Laurentius when on the gridiron believe that by this work he was satisfying God, that he was without sin, that he did not need Christ as Mediator, and the mercy of God? He did not indeed think differently from the prophet, who says: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143:2). Bernard confesses that his works are not worthy of eternal life, when he says: *Perdite vixi*. But he comforts himself and receives the hope of salvation from this, viz. that he believes that the remission of sins and life eternal are granted him for Christ's sake through mercy; just as the Psalm (32:1) teaches: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." And Paul says (Rom. 4:6): "David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Paul says that he is blessed to whom righteousness is imputed through faith in Christ, even though he have no good works. By such consolations, consciences are to be encouraged and confirmed, because for Christ's sake through faith the remission of sins, the imputation of righteousness and life eternal are attained. But if faith be in this manner understood in passages concerning works, they are not opposed to our doctrine. And indeed it is necessary always to add faith, so as not to exclude Christ as Mediator. But good works ought to follow faith, because faith without good works is hypocrisy.↵
56. §§ 259-279 are omitted in Germ.↵
57. Var. adds: Agreeing with our belief.↵
58. Cf. Conc. Trident., Sess. vi., cap. 9.↵
59. Cf. Confutation, Pt. I., Art. xx.↵
60. Var.: Through our Lord Jesus Christ.↵

61. In Ed. Var. §§ 267-279 are very brief.↵
62. Melanch. distinguished the Roman Church from the Papal See. Cf. Aug. Conf., Introduction.↵
63. This Duns Scotus first taught in Libr. iv. sentent. 1. iii. dist. 27, qu. Cf. Aug. Conf., Art. xviii. § viii., Apology, Art. ii. g sqq.↵
64. The bull *Exsurge Domini* June 15th, 1520.↵
65. See Confutation, Part I , Art. xii.↵



## Chapter IV. Of the Church.

### V. Of the Seventh Article.

### VI. Of the Eighth Article.

*Parallel Passages.* — Chap. IV. Art. VII. *Apostles' Creed*, 3; *Nicene Creed*, 8; *Augsburg Confession*, Arts. vii. and xv.; *Smalcald Articles*, Art. xii.; *Small Catechism*, Art. iii. of *Creed*; *Large Catechism*, do.; *Formula of Concord Sol. Decl.*, x. 19; xii. § 5.

[153] The seventh article of our Confession, in which we said that “the Church is the congregation of saints,” they have condemned; and have added a long disquisition, that the wicked ought not to be separated from the Church, since John has compared the Church to a threshing-floor, on which wheat and chaff are heaped together (Matt. 3:12), and Christ has compared it to a net in which there are both good and bad fishes (13:47). What they say is indeed true, viz. that there is no remedy against the attacks of the slanderer. Nothing can be spoken with such care that it can avoid detraction. For this reason, we have added the eighth article, lest any one may think that we separate the wicked and hypocrites from the outward fellowship of the Church, or that we deny efficacy to the sacraments when they are administered by hypocrites or wicked men. Therefore there is no need here of a long defense against this slander. The eighth article is sufficient to exculpate us. For we grant that in this life hypocrites and wicked men have been mingled with the Church, and that they are members of the Church according to the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church, i. e. of Word, profession and sacraments, especially if they have not been excommunicated. Neither are the sacraments without efficacy for the reason that they are administered by wicked men; yea we can even be right in using the sacraments, which are administered by wicked men. For Paul also predicts (2 Thess. 2:4) that Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, i. e. he will rule and bear office in the Church. But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but it is in principle a *fellowship of faith and the Holy Ghost in hearts*. [The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God]; which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks so that it can be

recognized, viz. the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. [Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are Christians.] And this Church alone is called the body of Christ; because Christ renews, [Christ is its Head and] sanctifies and governs it by his Spirit, as Paul testifies (Eph. 1; sq.), when he says: "And gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Wherefore those in whom Christ does not act [through his Spirit] are not the members of Christ. This too the adversaries acknowledge, viz. that the wicked are dead members of the Church. Therefore we wonder why they find fault with our description [our conclusion concerning the Church] speaks of living members. Neither have we said anything new. Paul has defined the Church precisely in the same way (Eph. 5:25 sq.), that it should be cleansed in order to be holy. And he adds the outward marks, the Word and sacraments. For he thus says: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." In the Confession we have presented this sentence almost in the very words. Thus also the Church is defined by the article in the Creed, which teaches us to believe that there is "a Holy Catholic Church." The wicked indeed are not a holy Church. And that which follows, viz. "the communion of saints," seems to be added, in order to explain what the Church signifies, viz. the congregation of saints, who have with each other the fellowship of the same Gospel or doctrine [who confess one Gospel, have the same knowledge of Christ] and of the same Holy Ghost, who renews, sanctifies and governs their hearts.

And this article has been presented for a necessary reason. [The article of the Catholic or Universal Church, which is gathered together from every nation under the sun, is very comforting and highly necessary.] We see the infinite dangers which threaten the destruction of the Church. In the Church itself, infinite is the multitude of the wicked who oppress it. Therefore, in order that we may not despair, but may know that the Church will nevertheless remain [until the end of the world], likewise that we may know that however great the multitude of the wicked is, yet the Church [which is Christ's bride] exists, and that Christ affords those gifts which he has promised to the Church, to forgive sins, to hear prayer, to give the Holy Ghost; this article in the Creed presents us these consolations. And it says *Catholic Church*, in order that we may not understand the Church to be an outward government of certain nations [that the

Church is like any other external polity, bound to this or that land, kingdom or nation, as the Pope of Rome will say], but rather men scattered throughout the whole world [here and there in the world from the rising to the setting of the sun], who agree concerning the Gospel, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost, and the same sacraments, or have human traditions that are the same or dissimilar. And the gloss upon the Decrees<sup>1</sup> says that “The Church in its wide sense embraces good and evil;” likewise that the wicked are in the Church only in name, not in fact; but that the good are in the Church both in fact and in name. And to this effect, there are many passages in the Fathers. For Jerome says, “The sinner, therefore, who has been stained by any impurity, cannot be called a member of the Church of Christ, neither can he be said to be subject to Christ.”

[154] Although, therefore, hypocrites and wicked men are members of the true Church according to outward rites, yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to define that which is the living body of Christ, and likewise is in name and in fact the Church [which is called the body of Christ, and has fellowship not alone in outward signs, but has gifts in the heart, viz. the Holy Ghost and faith]. And for this there are many reasons. For it is necessary to understand what it is that principally makes us members and living members of the Church. If we will define the Church only as an outward polity of the good and wicked, men will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is righteousness of heart and the gift of the Holy Ghost [that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, as nevertheless it is; that therein Christ inwardly rules, strengthens and comforts hearts, and imparts the Holy Ghost and various spiritual gifts], but they will judge that it is only the outward observance of certain forms of worship, and rites. Likewise what difference will there be between the people of the Law, and the Church, if the Church be an outward polity? But Paul<sup>2</sup> distinguishes the Church from the people of the Law, thus, that the Church is a spiritual people, i. e. that it has been distinguished from the heathen not by civil rites [not only in the polity and civil affairs], but that it is the true people of God, regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Among the people of the Law, the carnal seed [all those who by nature were born Jews, and Abraham’s seed] had, in addition to the promise concerning Christ, promises also of corporeal things, of government, etc. And for these reasons even the wicked among them were said to be the people of God, because God had separated this carnal seed from other nations by certain outward ordinances and promises; and, yet, these wicked persons did not please God. But the Gospel [which is preached in the Church] brings not merely the shadow of eternal things, but the eternal things themselves,<sup>3</sup> the Holy Ghost and righteousness, by which we are righteous before God. [But every true Christian is even here upon earth, partaker of eternal blessings, even of eternal comfort, of

eternal life, and of the Holy Ghost, and of righteousness which is from God, until he will be completely saved in the world to come.]

[155] Therefore, only those are the people, according to the Gospel, who receive this promise of the Spirit. Besides the Church is the kingdom of Christ, distinguished from the kingdom of the devil. It is certain, however, that the wicked are in the power of the devil, and members of the kingdom of the devil, as Paul teaches, Eph. 2:2, when he says that the devil “now worketh in the children of disobedience.” And Christ says to the Pharisees, who certainly had outward fellowship with the Church, i. e. with the saints among the people of the Law; for they held office, sacrificed and taught: “Ye are of your father, the devil” (John 8:44). Therefore, the Church which is truly the kingdom of Christ is properly the congregation of saints. For the wicked are ruled by the devil, and are captives of the devil; they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ.

But what need is there of words in a manifest matter? If the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it is necessary that the wicked, since they are in the kingdom of the devil, are not the Church; although in this life, because the kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed, they are mingled with the Church, and hold offices in the Church. Neither are the wicked the kingdom of Christ, for the reason, that the revelation has not yet been made. That which he quickens by his Spirit is always the kingdom of Christ, whether it be revealed or be covered by the cross. Just as he who has now been glorified, is the same Christ who was before afflicted. And with this the parables of Christ clearly agree, who says (Matt. 3:38) that “the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one.” “The field,” he says, “is the world,” not the Church. Thus John speaks concerning the whole race of the Jews, and says that it will come to pass that the true Church will be separated from that people. Therefore, this passage is more against the adversaries than in favor of them, because it shows that the true and spiritual people is to be separated from the carnal people. Christ also speaks of the outward appearance of the Church, when he says (Matt. 13:47): “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net,” likewise “to ten virgins,” and he teaches that the Church has been covered by a multitude of evils, in order that this stumbling-block may not offend the pious; likewise, in order that we may know that the Word and sacraments are efficacious even when administered by the wicked. And meanwhile he teaches that these godless men, although they have the fellowship of outward signs, are nevertheless not the true kingdom of Christ, and members of Christ. They are members of the kingdom of the devil. Neither indeed are we dreaming of a Platonic state, as some wickedly charge, but we say that *this Church exists, viz. the truly believing and righteous men*

*scattered throughout the whole world*, [We are speaking not of an imaginary Church, which is to be found nowhere; but we say and know certainly that this Church, wherein saints live, is and abides truly upon earth; namely, that some of God's children are here and there in all the world, in various kingdoms, islands, lands and cities, from the rising of the sun to its setting, who have truly learned to know Christ and his Gospel.] And we add the marks: "*the pure doctrine of the Gospel* [the office of the ministry or Gospel], *and the sacraments.*"

[156] And this Church is properly the pillar of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). For it retains the pure Gospel, and, as Paul says (1 Cor. 3:12), "the foundation," i. e. the true knowledge of Christ and faith. Although among these [in the body which is built upon the true foundation, i. e. upon Christ and faith], there are also many weak persons, who upon the foundation build stubble that will perish, i. e. certain unprofitable opinions [some human thoughts and opinions], which nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, are both forgiven them, and also corrected. And the writings of the holy Fathers testify that sometimes even they built stubble upon the foundation, but that this did not overthrow their faith. But most of those errors which our adversaries defend, overthrow faith; as their condemnation of the article concerning the remission of sins, in which we say that the remission of sins is received by faith. Likewise manifest and pernicious is the error, in that the adversaries teach that men merit the remission of sins by love to God, prior to grace. For this also is to remove "the foundation," i. e. Christ. Likewise what need will there be of faith, if the sacraments justify *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using them? But just as the Church has the promise that it will always have the Holy Ghost, so it has also the threatenings that there will be wicked teachers and wolves. The Church properly so called is that which has the Holy Ghost. Although wolves and wicked teachers go about in the Church, yet they are not properly the kingdom of Christ. Just as Lyra also testifies, when he says: "The Church does not consist of men, with respect to power, or ecclesiastical or secular dignity, because many princes, and archbishops, and others of lower rank, have apostatized from the faith. Therefore, the Church consists of those persons in whom there is a true knowledge and confession of faith and truth." What else have we said in our Confession than what Lyra here says?

[157] But the adversaries perhaps require that the Church be thus defined, viz. that it is the supreme outward monarchy of the whole world, in which the Roman pontiff necessarily has the absolute power (which no one is permitted to dispute or censure) to frame articles of faith, to abolish, according to his pleasure, the Scriptures [to pervert and interpret them contrary to all divine law, contrary to his own decretals, contrary to all imperial rights, as often, to as great

an extent, and whenever it pleases him; to sell indulgences and dispensations for money], to appoint rites of worship and sacrifices; likewise to frame such laws as he may wish, and to dispense and exempt from whatever laws, divine, canonical or civil, which he may wish; and that from him the Emperor and all kings receive, according to the command of Christ, the power and right to hold their kingdoms. For as the Father has subdued all things beneath him, this right should be understood as transferred to the Pope; therefore the Pope must necessarily be lord of the whole world, of all the kingdoms of the world, of all things private and public, and must have absolute power in temporal and spiritual things, and both swords, the spiritual and temporal. Besides this definition, not of the Church of Christ, but of the papal kingdom, has as its authors not only the canonists, but also Daniel 11:36 sqq. [Daniel, the prophet, represents Antichrist in this way.]

[158] But if we would define the Church, in this way, we would perhaps have fairer judges. For there are many things extant written extravagantly and wickedly concerning the power of the Pope of Rome, on account of which no one has ever been arraigned. We alone are blamed, because we proclaim the beneficence of Christ, that by faith in Christ we obtain remission of sins, and not by [hypocrisy or] rites of worship devised by the Pope. Moreover, Christ, the prophets and apostles define the Church of Christ far otherwise than as the papal kingdom. Neither must we transfer to the priests what belongs to the true Church, viz. that they are pillars of the truth, that they do not err. For how many of them care for the Gospel, or judge that it is worth being read? Many even publicly ridicule all religions, or, if they approve any, they approve those which are in harmony with human reason, and regard the rest fabulous and like the tragedies of the poets. Wherefore we hold, according to the Scriptures, that the Church properly so called, is the congregation of saints [of those here and there in the world], who truly believe the Gospel of Christ, and have the Holy Ghost. And yet we confess that, in this life, many hypocrites and wicked men, mingled with these, have the fellowship of outward signs, who are members of the Church according to this fellowship of outward signs, and accordingly bear offices in the Church [preach, administer the sacraments, and bear the title and name of Christians]. Neither does the fact that the sacraments are administered by the unworthy, detract from their efficacy, because, on account of the call of the Church, they represent the person of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, as Christ testifies (Luke 10:16): “He that heareth you, heareth me” [Thus even Judas was sent to preach]. When they offer the Word of God, when they offer the sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ. The Word of Christ teaches this, in order that we may not be offended by the

unworthiness of the ministers.

But concerning this matter, we have spoken with sufficient clearness in the Confession<sup>4</sup> that we condemn the Donatists and Wickliffites, who thought that men sinned when they received the sacraments from the unworthy in the Church. These things seem, for the present, to be sufficient for the defense of the description of the Church which we have presented. Neither do we see how, when the Church properly so called is named “the body of Christ,” it should be described otherwise than we have described it. For it is evident that the wicked belong to the kingdom and body of the devil, who impels and holds captive the wicked. These things are clearer than the light of noonday, which, if the adversaries still continue to pervert, we will not hesitate to reply at greater length.

[159] The adversaries condemn also the part of the seventh article in which we said that “to the unity of the Church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments; nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike everywhere.” Here they distinguish between “universal” and “particular” rites, and approve our article, if it be understood concerning particular rites; they do not receive it concerning universal rites. We do not sufficiently understand what the adversaries mean. We are speaking of true, i. e. of spiritual unity [we say that those are one harmonious Church, who believe in one Christ; who have one Gospel, one Spirit, one faith, the same sacraments, and we are speaking, therefore, of spiritual unity], without which faith in the heart, or righteousness of heart before God, cannot exist. For this we say that similarity of human rites, whether universal or particular, is not necessary, because the righteousness of faith is not a righteousness bound to certain traditions [outward ceremonies of human ordinances] as the righteousness of the Law was bound to the Mosaic ceremonies, because this righteousness of the heart is a matter that quickens the heart. To this quickening, human traditions, whether they be universal or particular, contribute nothing; neither are they effects of the Holy Ghost, as are chastity, patience, the fear of God, love to one’s neighbor and the works of love.

Neither were the reasons trifling why we presented this article. For it is evident that many foolish opinions concerning traditions had crept into the Church. Some thought that human traditions were necessary services for meriting justification [that without such human ordinances, Christian holiness and faith are of no avail before God; also that no one can be a Christian unless he observe such traditions, although they are nothing but an outward regulation]. And afterwards they disputed how it came to pass that God was to be worshiped

with such variety, as though indeed these observances were acts of worship, and not rather outward and political ordinances, pertaining in no respect to righteousness of heart or the worship of God, which vary, according to the circumstances, for certain probable reasons, sometimes in one way, and at other times in another [as in worldly governments one state has customs different from another]. Likewise some Churches have excommunicated others because of such traditions, as the observance of Easter, pictures and the like.<sup>5</sup> Hence the ignorant have supposed that faith, or the righteousness of the heart before God, cannot exist [and that no one can be a Christian] without these observances. For many foolish writings of the Summists<sup>6</sup> and of others, concerning this matter are extant.

[160] But just as dissimilar spaces of day and night do not injure the unity of the Church, so we believe that the true unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar rites instituted by men. Although it is pleasing to us that, for the sake of tranquility [unity and good order] universal rites be observed. Just as also in the Churches, we willingly observe the order of the mass,<sup>7</sup> the Lord's Day, and other more eminent festival days. And with a very grateful mind, we embrace the profitable and ancient ordinances, especially since they contain a discipline, by which it is profitable to educate and instruct the people and those who are ignorant. But now we are not discussing the question whether it be of advantage to observe them on account of peace or bodily profit. Another matter is treated of. For the question at issue is, whether the observances of human traditions be acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God. This is the point to be judged in this controversy, and when this is decided, it can afterwards be judged whether to the true unity of the Church it is necessary that human traditions should everywhere be alike. For if human traditions be not acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God, it follows that even they can be righteous and be the sons of God who have not the traditions which have been received elsewhere. As if the style of German clothing is not worship of God, necessary for righteousness before God, it follows that men can be righteous, and sons of God, and the Church of Christ, even though they use a costume that is not German, but French.

Paul clearly teaches this to the Colossians (2:16, 17): "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Likewise (v. sqq.): "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of



wisdom in will-worship and humility.” For the meaning is: Since righteousness of the heart is a spiritual matter, quickening hearts, and it is evident that human traditions do not quicken hearts, and are not effects of the Holy Ghost, as are love to one’s neighbor, chastity, etc., and are not instruments through which God admonishes hearts to believe, as are the divinely-given Word and sacraments, but are usages with regard to matters that pertain in no respect to the heart, which perish with the using, we must not believe that they are necessary for righteousness before God. And to the same effect, he says, Rom. 14:17: “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” But there is no need to cite many testimonies; since they are everywhere obvious in the Scriptures, and, in our Confession, we have brought together very many of them, in the latter articles.<sup>8</sup> And the point to be decided in this controversy must be repeated later, viz. whether human traditions be acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God? There we will discuss this matter more fully.

[161] The adversaries say that universal traditions are to be observed because they are supposed to have been handed down by the apostles. What religious men they are! They wish that the rites derived from the apostles be retained; they do not wish the doctrine of the apostles to be retained. They must judge concerning these rites, just as the apostles themselves judge in their writings. For the apostles did not wish us to believe that through such rites we are justified, that such rites are necessary for righteousness before God. The apostles did not wish to impose such a burden upon consciences; they did not wish to place righteousness and sin in the observance of days, food and the like. Yea Paul calls such opinions doctrines of devils (1 Tim. 4:1). Therefore the will and advice of the apostles ought to be derived from their writings; it is not enough to mention their example. They observed certain days, not because this observance was necessary for justification, but in order that the people might know at what time they should assemble. They observed also certain other rites, and order of lessons, whenever they assembled. The people retained also from the customs of the fathers [from their Jewish festivals and ceremonies], as is commonly the case, certain things which, being somewhat changed, the fathers adapted to the history of the Gospel, as the Passover, Pentecost, so that not only by teaching, but also through these examples, they might hand down to posterity the memory of the most important subjects. But if these things were handed down as necessary for justification, why afterwards did the bishops change many things in these very matters? But if they were matters of divine right it was not lawful to change them by human authority.

[162] Before the Synod of Nice, some observed Easter at one time, and others

at another time. Neither did this want of uniformity injure faith. Afterward the plan was adopted, by which our passover [Easter] did not fall at the same time as that of the Jewish passover. But the apostles had commanded the Churches to observe the passover with the brethren who had been converted from Judaism. Therefore after the Synod of Nice, certain nations tenaciously held to the custom of observing the Jewish time. But the apostles, by this decree, did not wish to impose necessity upon the Churches, as the words of the decree testify. For it bids no one to be troubled, even though his brethren, in observing Easter, do not compute the time aright. The words of the decree are extant in Epiphanius: "Do not calculate, but celebrate it whenever your brethren of the circumcision do; celebrate it at the same time with them, and even though they may have erred, let not this be a care to you." Epiphanius writes that these are the words of the apostles presented in a decree concerning Easter, in which the discreet reader can easily judge that the apostles wished to free the people from the foolish opinion of a fixed time, when they prohibit them from being troubled, even though a mistake should be made in the computation. Some,<sup>9</sup> moreover, in the East, who were called, from the author of the dogma, Audians, contended, on account of this decree of the apostles, that the passover should be observed with the Jews. Epiphanius, in refuting them, praises the decree, and says that it contains nothing which deviates from the faith or rule of the Church, and blames the Audians because they do not understand aright the expression, and interprets it in the sense in which we interpret it, because the apostles did not believe that it referred to the time in which the passover should be observed, but because the chief brethren had been converted from the Jews, who observed their custom, and, for the sake of harmony, wished the rest to follow their example. And the apostles wisely admonished the reader neither to remove the liberty of the Gospel, nor to impose necessity upon consciences, because they add that they should not be troubled even though there should be an error in making the computation.

Many things of this class can be inferred from the histories, in which it appears that a want of uniformity in human observances does not injure the unity of faith [separate no one from the universal Christian Church]. Although what need is there of discussion? The adversaries do not at all understand what the righteousness of faith is, what the kingdom of Christ is, if they judge that uniformity of observances in food, days, clothing and the like, which do not have the command of God, be necessary. But look at the religious men, our adversaries. For the unity of the Church, they require uniform human observances, although they themselves have changed the ordinance of Christ in the use of the Supper, which certainly was before a universal ordinance. But if

universal ordinances are so necessary, why do they themselves change the ordinance of Christ's Supper, which is not human, but divine? But concerning this entire controversy, we will have to speak at different times below.

## VI. Of The Eighth Article.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. viii.; *Large Catechism*, Part v., § 15 sqq.; *Formula of Concord*, Sol. Dec. xii., §§ 14, 34.

The entire eighth article has been approved, in which we confess that hypocrites and wicked persons have been mingled with the Church, and that the sacraments are efficacious even though distributed by wicked ministers, because the ministers act in the place of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, according to Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you, heareth me." Impious teachers<sup>10</sup> are to be deserted, because these do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists. And Christ says (Matt. 7:15): "Beware of false prophets." And Paul (Gal. 1:9): "If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed."

[163] But Christ has warned us in his parables concerning the Church, that, when offended by the private vices, whether of priests or people, we should not excite schisms, as the Donatists have wickedly done. We judge, as altogether seditious,<sup>11</sup> loose indeed who excited schisms for the reason that they maintained that the priests should not be permitted to hold possessions or property. For to hold that which is one's own is a civil ordinance. It is lawful, however, for Christians to use civil ordinances, as the air, the light, food, drink. For as nature and the fixed movements of the heavenly bodies, are truly God's ordinances and we are preserved by God, so lawful governments are truly God's ordinances, and are retained and defended by God against the devil.

## VII. Of the Ninth Article (Baptism).

*Parallel Passages.* — *Nicene Creed*, § 9; *Augsburg Confession*, Art. ix.; *Smalcald Articles*, P. iii., Art. v.; *Small Catechism*, P. iv.; *Large Catechism*, Proleg. § 21, Part iv.; *Formula of Concord*, Sol. Dec, xii.: 10-13; *Visitation Articles*, iii.

The ninth article has been approved, in which we confess that "baptism is necessary to salvation," and that "children are to be baptized," and that "the baptism of children is not in vain, but is necessary and effectual to salvation."

And since the Gospel is taught among us purely and diligently, by God's favor we receive also from it this fruit, that in our Churches no Anabaptists have arisen [have not gained ground in our Churches],<sup>12</sup> because the people have been fortified by God's Word, against the wicked and seditious faction of these robbers. And as we condemn most other errors of the Anabaptists, we condemn this also, that they dispute that the baptism of little children is unprofitable. For it is very certain that the promise of salvation pertains also to little children [that the divine promises of grace and of the Holy Ghost belong not alone to the old, but also to children]. Neither indeed does it pertain to those who are outside of Christ's Church, where there is neither Word nor sacraments, because the kingdom of Christ exists only with the Word and sacraments. Therefore it is necessary to baptize little children, that the promise of salvation may be applied to them, according to Christ's command (Matt. 28:19): "Baptize all nations." Just as there salvation is offered to all, so baptism is offered to all, to men, women, children, infants. It clearly follows, therefore, that infants are to be baptized, because with baptism salvation [the universal grace and treasure of the Gospel] is offered.

Secondly, it is manifest that God approves of the baptism of little children. Therefore the Anabaptists who condemn the baptism of little children, believe wickedly. That God, however, approves of the baptism of little children, is shown by this, viz. that God gives the Holy Ghost to those thus baptized [to many who have been baptized in childhood]. For if this baptism would be in vain, the Holy Ghost would be given to none, none would be saved, and finally there would be no Church.<sup>13</sup> [For there have been many holy men in the Church who have not been baptized otherwise.] This reason, even taken alone, can sufficiently establish good and godly minds against the godless and fanatical opinions of the Anabaptists.

## VIII. Of the Tenth Article (The Holy Supper).

*Parallel Passages.*— *Aug. Conf.*, Art. x.; *Smalcald Articles*, P. iii., Art. vi.; *Small Catechism*, Part v.; *Large Catechism*, Proleg. § 23 sqq.. Part v.; *Formula of Concord*, Epitome, and Sol. Dec. c. vii.

[164] The tenth article has been approved, in which we confess that we believe, that, "in the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly tendered, with those things which are seen, bread and wine, to those who receive the sacrament." This belief we constantly defend, as the subject has been carefully examined and considered. For since

Paul says (1 Cor. 10:16) that the bread is the communion of the Lord's body, it would follow, if the Lord's body were not truly present, that bread is not a communion of the body, but only of the Spirit of Christ. And we have ascertained that not only the Roman Church affirms the bodily presence of Christ, but the Greek Church also both now believes and formerly believed the same. For the canon of the Mass among them testifies to this, in which the priest clearly prays that the bread may be changed and become the very body of Christ. And Vulgarius, who seems to us to be not a silly writer, says distinctly that "bread is not a mere figure, but is truly changed into flesh." And there is a long exposition of Cyril on John 15, in which he teaches that Christ is corporeally offered us in the Supper. For he says thus:

"Nevertheless, we do not deny that we are joined spiritually to Christ by true faith and sincere love. But that we have no mode of connection with him, according to the flesh, this indeed we entirely deny. And this we say is altogether foreign to the divine Scriptures. For who has doubted that Christ is thus a vine, and we indeed are branches, deriving thence life for ourselves? Hear Paul saying (1 Cor. 10:17; Rom. 12:5; Gal. 3:28) that we are all one body in Christ, that, although we are many, we are, nevertheless, one in him; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' Does he perhaps think that the virtue of the mystical benediction is unknown to us? Since this is in us, does it not also by the communication of Christ's flesh, cause Christ to dwell in us bodily?"

And a little after:

"Whence we must consider that Christ is in us not only according to habit, which is understood as love, but also by natural participation," etc.

We have cited these testimonies, not to undertake a discussion here, concerning this subject (for His Imperial Majesty does not disapprove of this article), but in order that all who may read them, may the more clearly perceive that we defend the doctrine received in the entire Church, that, in the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly tendered with those things which are seen, bread and wine. And we speak of the presence of the living Christ [living body]; knowing that "death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. 6:9).

## **IX. Of the Eleventh Article (Confession).**

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, Art. xi.; xxv.; Apology, Art v.: II sqq., 169; Art. vi., 185; Smalcald Articles, Art. viii., 321; Small Catechism, Part VI.*

[165] The eleventh article, “Of Retaining Absolution in the Church,” is approved. But they add a correction, in reference to confession, viz. that the regulation be observed, headed, *Omnis utriusque*<sup>14</sup> and that annual confession be made, and although all sins cannot be enumerated, yet that diligence be employed in order that they be recollected, and those which can be recalled, be recounted. Concerning this entire article, we will speak at greater length later,<sup>15</sup> when we will explain our entire opinion concerning repentance. It is well known that we had so elucidated and honored [that we have preached, written and taught in a manner so Christian, correct and pure] the benefit of absolution and the power of the keys, that many distressed consciences have derived consolation from our doctrine; since they have heard that it is the command of God, nay rather the utterance peculiar to the Gospel, that we should believe the absolution, and regard it certain that the remission of sins is freely granted us for Christ’s sake; and that we should believe that, by this faith, we are truly reconciled to God [as though we heard a voice from heaven]. This belief has encouraged many godly minds, and, in the beginning, brought Luther the best recommendation to all good men; since it shows consciences sure and firm consolation; because previously the entire power [entire necessary doctrine of repentance and] of absolution had been kept suppressed by doctrines concerning works, since the sophists and monks teach nothing of faith and free remission but pointed men to their own works, from which nothing but doubt proceeds in alarmed consciences].

But with respect to the *time*, certainly the most in our churches use the sacraments, absolution and the Lord’s Supper frequently in a year. And those who teach of the worth and fruits of the sacraments, speak in such a manner as to invite the people to use the sacraments frequently. For concerning this subject, there are many things extant written by our theologians in such a manner, that the adversaries, if they are good men, will undoubtedly approve and praise them. Excommunication is also pronounced against the openly wicked and the despisers of the sacraments. These things are thus done, both according to the Gospel and according to the old canons. But a fixed time is not prescribed, because all are not ready in like manner at the same time. Yea if all would hasten together at the same time, the people could not be heard and instructed in order [so diligently]. And the old canons and Fathers did not appoint a fixed time. The canon speaks only thus:<sup>16</sup> “If any enter the Church and be found never to commune, let them be admonished. If they do not commune, let them come to repentance. If they commune [if they wish to be regarded Christians], let them not for ever be excluded. If they have not done this, let them be excluded.” Christ [Paul] says (1 Cor. 11:29), that those who eat unworthily, eat judgment to

themselves. The pastors accordingly do not compel those who are not qualified to use the sacraments,

[166] *Concerning the enumeration of sins in confession*, men are thus taught, in order that snares be not cast upon consciences. Although it is of advantage to accustom inexperienced men to enumerate some things, in order that they may be the more readily taught, yet we are now discussing what is necessary according to divine law. Therefore, the adversaries ought not to cite for us the regulation *Omnis utriusque*, which is not unknown to us, but they ought to show from the divine law that an enumeration of sins is necessary for obtaining their remission. The entire Church, throughout all Europe, knows what sort of snares, this point of the regulation, which commands that all sins be confessed, has cast upon consciences. Neither has the text by itself as much disadvantage as the Summists afterwards imagined, who collect the circumstances<sup>17</sup> of the sins. What labyrinths were there! How great a torture for the best minds! For these incitements of terror moved in no way licentious and profane men.

Afterwards what tragedies did the questions concerning one's own priest,<sup>18</sup> excite among the pastors and brethren [monks of various orders], who then were by no means brethren, when they were warring concerning jurisdiction of confessions! We, therefore, believe that, according to divine law, the enumeration of sins is not necessary. This also is pleasing to Panormitanus and very many other learned jurisconsults.<sup>19</sup> Nor do we wish to impose necessity upon the consciences of our people by the regulation, *Omnis utriusque*, of which we judge, just as of other human traditions, that they are not acts of worship necessary for justification. And this regulation commands an impossible matter, that we should confess all sins. It is evident, however, that we neither remember most sins, nor understand them [nor do we indeed even see the greatest sins], according to Ps. 19:13: "Who can understand his errors?"

[167] If the pastors are good men, they will know how far it is of advantage to examine [the young and otherwise] inexperienced persons; but we do not wish to sanction the torture of the Summists, which notwithstanding would have been less intolerable if they had added one word concerning faith, which comforts and encourages consciences. Now, concerning this faith, which obtains the remission of sins, there is not a syllable in so great a mass of constitutions, glosses, summaries, books of confession. Christ is nowhere read there. Only the lists of sins are read. And the greater part is occupied with sins against human traditions, and this is most vain. This doctrine has forced to despair many godly minds, which were not able to find rest, because they believed that by divine law an enumeration was necessary: and yet they experienced that it was impossible. But other faults of no less moment adhere in the doctrine of the adversaries



concerning repentance, which we will now recount.

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1. Decrees of Gratian, Part II., Cons. 33, ques. 3, dist. 1, c. 70.↵
2. Rom. 2:28, sqq.; Gal. 6:15.↵
3. Col. 2:17: Heb. 8:6.↵
4. Aug. Conf. viii.: 3.↵
5. According to Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, v.: 23-25), Victor, Bishop of Rome (about 196, A. D.) excommunicated the Churches of Asia Minor, on account of differences concerning the celebration of Easter. In the eighth and ninth centuries, anathemas were pronounced in the Greek, Roman and Frank Churches concerning images.↵
6. Those who wrote summaries either of canonical law, or ethics; especially the scholastics of the thirteenth century.↵
7. The order of Lessons in the Mass, Augsburg Confession, xxvi. 40.↵
8. Augsburg Confession, xxvi. 22-29; xxviii. 44-48.↵
9. Germ, omits §§ 43, 44.↵
10. I. e. They who teach what is impious. See Apology, xiv.: 2i, p. 290.↵
11. The followers of Wycliffe. Cf. Wycliffe's Dialogues, L. iv.. Cap. 17.↵
12. Reference is made especially to the Churches of Upper Saxony. F.↵
13. These words are taken from Augustine, *De pecc, merit, et remis*, I:19.↵
14. Canon xxi., Fourth Lateran Council, A. D. 1215.↵
15. Apology, Art v.↵
16. Council of Toledo, A. D. 400, Canon xiii.↵
17. Council of Trent also requires confession of these, g 14, cap. 6.↵
18. The "Omnis utriusque" commands that to him all sins be confessed.↵
19. Augsburg Confession, xxv.: 12.↵



## Chapter V. Of Repentance.

### X. Of the Twelfth Article.

*Parallel Passages.*— *Aug. Confess.*, Art. xii.; *Smal. Art.*, Part iii., Art iii., vii.; *Large Catechism*, Part iv., § 64 sqq.; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome and Sol. Dec.*, c. v. *Cf Apology*, Chap, ii., Art. iv., § 61; *Chap.*, iv.. Art xi, § 59 sqq.

In the twelfth article they approve of the first part, in which we set forth that, to those who have fallen since baptism, the remission of sins can be imparted at whatever time, and as often as they are converted. They condemn the second part, in which we say that the parts of repentance are *contrition and faith* [a penitent, contrite heart, and faith, that I believe that I receive the forgiveness of sins through Christ]. They say that faith is not the second part of repentance. What are we to do here, O Charles, thou most invincible Emperor? The utterance peculiar to the Gospel is this, that by faith we obtain the remission of sins. [This word is not our word, but the voice and word of Jesus Christ our Saviour.] This voice of the Gospel these writers of the confutation condemn. We, therefore, can in no way assent to the confutation. We cannot condemn the utterance of the Gospel so salutary and abounding in consolation. What else is the denial that by faith we obtain remission of sins, but to treat the blood and death of Christ with scorn? We, therefore, beseech thee, O Charles, most invincible Emperor, to patiently and diligently hear and consider us concerning this very important subject, which contains the chief topic of the Gospel, and the true knowledge of Christ, and the true worship of God. For all good men will ascertain that on this subject we have taught especially things that are true, godly, salutary and necessary for the whole Church of Christ. They will ascertain from the writings of our theologians that very much light has been added to the Gospel, and many pernicious errors have been corrected, by which, through the opinions of the scholastics and canonists, the doctrine of repentance was previously covered.

[168] Before we come to the defense of our position we must say this first; All good men of all ranks, and also of the theological rank, undoubtedly confess that before the writings of Luther appeared, the doctrine of repentance was very much confused. The books of the Sententiaries are extant, in which there are innumerable questions, which no theologians were ever able to explain satisfactorily. The people were able neither to comprehend the sum of the matter, nor to see what things especially were required in repentance, where peace of

conscience was to be sought for. Let any one of the adversaries come forth and tell us when remission of sins takes place. O good God, what darkness there is! They doubt whether it be in attrition<sup>1</sup> or in contrition that remission of sins occurs. And if it occur on account of contrition, what need is there of absolution, what does the power of the keys effect, if sin have been already remitted? Here indeed they also labor much more, and wickedly detract from the power of the keys. Some dream that, by the power of the keys, guilt is not remitted, but that eternal are changed into temporal punishments. Thus the most salutary power would be the ministry not of life and the Spirit, but only of wrath and punishments. Others, namely the more cautious, imagine that by the power of the keys, sins are remitted before the Church, and not before God. This also is a pernicious error. For if the power of the keys do not console us before God, what then will pacify the conscience? Still more involved is what follows. They teach that by contrition we merit grace. In reference to which if any one would ask why Saul and Judas and similar persons who were dreadfully contrite did not merit grace, reply must here be made, according to faith and according to the Gospel, that Judas did not believe, that he did not support himself by the Gospel and promise of Christ. For faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and of Peter. But the adversaries reply concerning the Law, that Judas did not love God, but feared the punishments.

[169] When, however, will a terrified conscience, especially in those serious, true and great terrors which are described in the psalms and the prophets, and which those certainly taste who are truly converted, be able to decide whether it fear God for his own sake [out of love it fear God, as its God], or be fleeing from eternal punishments? These great emotions can be distinguished in letters and terms; they are not thus separated in fact, as these sweet sophists dream. Here we appeal to the judgments of all good and wise men [who also desire to know the truth]. They undoubtedly will confess that these discussions in the writings of the adversaries are very confused and intricate. And nevertheless the most important subject is at stake, the chief topic of the Gospel, the remission of sins. This entire doctrine concerning these questions which we have reviewed, is in the writings of the adversaries, full of errors and hypocrisy, and obscures the benefit of Christ, the power of the keys and the righteousness of faith [to inexpressible injury of conscience].

These things occur in the first act. What when they come to *confession*? What a work there is in the endless enumeration of sins, which is nevertheless, in great part, devoted to those against human traditions! And in order that good minds may by this means be the more tortured, they imagine that this enumeration is of divine right. And when they demand this enumeration under the pretext of

divine right, in the mean time they speak coldly concerning absolution, which is truly of divine right. They falsely assert that the sacrament itself confers grace *ex opere operato* without a good disposition on the part of the one using it; no mention is made of faith apprehending the absolution and consoling the conscience. This is truly what is generally called *απιεναι προ των μυστηριων*, departing from the mysteries.

[170] The third act [of this play] remains, concerning satisfactions. But this contains the most confused discussions. They imagine that eternal punishments are commuted to the punishments of purgatory, and teach that a part of these is remitted by the power of the keys, and that a part is to be redeemed by means of satisfactions.<sup>2</sup> They add further that satisfactions ought to be works of supererogation, and they make these consist of most foolish observances, such as pilgrimages, rosaries or similar observances which do not have the command of God. Then, just as they redeem purgatory by means of satisfactions, so an act of redeeming satisfactions which was most abundant in revenue, was devised. For they sell indulgences which they interpret as remissions of satisfactions. And this revenue is not only from the living, but is much more ample from the dead. Nor do they redeem the satisfactions of the dead only by indulgences, but also by the sacrifice of the Mass.<sup>3</sup> In a word, the subject of satisfactions is infinite. Among these scandals, for we cannot enumerate all things, the doctrine of the righteousness of faith in Christ, and the benefit of Christ also lie covered by the doctrine of devils. Wherefore, all good men understand that the doctrine of the sophists and canonists concerning repentance is properly and justly censured. For the folio wipg dogmas are clearly false, and foreign not only to Holy Scripture, but also to the Church Fathers:

I That from the divine covenant, we merit grace by good works wrought without grace.

II That by attrition, we merit grace.

III That for the blotting out of sin, the mere detestation of the crime is sufficient.

IV That, on account of contrition, and not by faith in Christ, we obtain remission of sins.

V That the power of the keys avails for the remission of sins, not before God, but before the Church.

VI That by the power of the keys, sins are not remitted before God, but that the power of the keys has been instituted to commute eternal to temporal punishments, to impose upon consciences certain satisfactions, to institute new acts of worship, and to oblige consciences to such satisfactions and acts of worship.

VII That according to divine right, the enumeration of offenses in confession, concerning which the adversaries teach, is necessary.

VIII That canonical satisfactions are necessary for redeeming the punishment of purgatory, or they profit as a compensation for the blotting out of guilt. For thus uninformed persons understand it.

IX That the reception of the sacrament of repentance *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using it, i. e. without faith in Christ, obtains grace.

X That by the power of the keys, our souls are freed from purgatory through indulgences.

XI That, in the reservation of cases,<sup>4</sup> not only canonical punishment, but the guilt also, ought to be reserved in reference to one who is truly converted.

[171] In order, therefore, to deliver pious consciences from these labyrinths of the sophists, we have ascribed to repentance these two parts, viz. contrition and faith. If any one desire to add a third, viz. fruits worthy of repentance, i. e. a change of the entire life and character for the better [good works following conversion], we will not make any opposition.<sup>5</sup> From contrition, we separate those idle and infinite discussions, as to when we grieve from love of God, and when from fear of punishment. But we say that contrition is the true terror of conscience, which feels that God is angry with sin, and which grieves that it has sinned. And this contrition thus occurs, when sins are censured from the Word of God, because the sum of the preaching of the Gospel is this, viz. to convict of sin, and to offer for Christ's sake the remission of sins and righteousness, and the Holy Ghost, and eternal life, and that as regenerate men we should do good works. Thus Christ comprises the sum of the Gospel, when he says in the last chapter of Luke (v. 47): "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in my name among all nations." And of these terrors, Scripture speaks, as Ps. 38:4, 8: "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." And Ps. 6:2, 3: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak; O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but thou, O Lord, how long?" And Isa. 38:10, 13: "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. . . . I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones." In these terrors, conscience feels the wrath of God against sin, which is unknown to secure men walking according to the flesh [as the sophists and their like]. It sees the turpitude of sin, and seriously grieves that it has sinned; meanwhile it also flees from the dreadful wrath of God, because human nature, unless sustained by the Word of God, cannot endure it. Thus Paul says (Gal. 2;

19): “I through the Law, am dead to the Law.” For the Law only accuses and terrifies consciences. In these terrors, our adversaries say nothing of faith; they present only the Word which convicts of sin. When this is taught alone, it is the doctrine of the Law, not of the Gospel. By these griefs and terrors, they say that men merit grace, if they still love God. But how will men love God when they feel the terrible and inexpressible wrath of God? What else than despair do those teach who, in these terrors, display only the Law?

[172] We therefore add as the second part of repentance, Of Faith in Christ, that in these terrors the Gospel concerning Christ ought to be set forth to conscience, in which Gospel the remission of sins is freely promised concerning Christ. Therefore, they ought to believe that for Christ’s sake sins are freely remitted to them. This faith cheers, sustains, and quickens the contrite, according to Rom. 5:1: “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” This faith obtains the remission of sins. This faith justifies before God, as the same passage testifies: “Being justified by faith.” This faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and Peter, of Saul and of David. The contrition of Judas or Saul is of no avail, for the reason that to this there is not added this faith, which apprehends the remission of sins, bestowed as a gift for Christ’s sake. The contrition of David or Peter avails, because to it there is added faith, which apprehends the remission of sins granted for Christ’s sake. Neither is love present before reconciliation has been made by faith. For without Christ, the Law [God’s Law or the First Commandment] is not performed, according to Eph. 2:8; Rom. 5:2: “By Christ we have access to God.” And this faith grows gradually and throughout the entire life, struggles with sin [is tested by various temptations] in order to overcome sin and death. But love follows faith, as we have above said. And thus filial fear can be clearly defined as such anxiety as has been connected with faith, i. e. where faith consoles and sustains the anxious heart. *Servile fear* is where faith does not sustain the anxious heart [is fear without faith, where there is nothing but wrath and doubt].

[173] Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which is the true voice of the Gospel. Thus we also comprise absolution, when we speak of faith, because “faith cometh by hearing” (Rom. 10:17). For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [i. e. the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged, and receives consolation. And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God, according to Luke 10:16: “He that heareth you heareth me.” Wherefore the voice of the one absolving must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven. And absolution properly can be called a sacrament of repentance, as also the more learned scholastic theologians speak.

Meanwhile this faith is nourished in a manifold way in temptations, through the declarations of the Gospel [the hearing of sermons, reading] and the use of the sacraments. For these are [seals and] signs of the New Testament, i. e. signs of the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the Lord's Supper clearly testify (Matt. 26:26, 28): "This is my body which is given for you. This is the cup of the New Testament," etc. Thus faith is conceived and strengthened through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the sacraments, so that it may not succumb while it struggles with the terrors of sin and death. This theory of repentance is plain and clear, and increases the worth of the power of the keys and of the sacraments, and illumines the benefit of Christ, and teaches us to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator.

[174] But as the confutation condemns us for having assigned these two parts to repentance, we must show that Scripture expresses these as the chief parts in repentance or conversion. For Christ says (Matt. 11:28): "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here there are two members. The "labor" and the "burden" signify the contrition, anxiety and terrors of sin and of death. "To come to Christ" is to believe that sins are remitted for Christ's sake; when we believe our hearts are quickened by the Holy Ghost through the Word of Christ. Here, therefore, there are these two chief parts, contrition and faith. And in Mark 1:15, Christ says: "Repent ye and believe the Gospel." As in the first member, he convicts of sins, in the latter he consoles us, and shows the remission of sins. For to believe the Gospel is not that general faith which devils also have [is not only to believe the history of the Gospel], but it is peculiarly to believe that the remission of sins has been granted for Christ's sake. For this is revealed in the Gospel. You see also here that the two parts are joined, contrition when sins are reprov'd, and faith, when it is said: "Believe the Gospel." If any one should say here that Christ includes also the fruits of repentance or the entire new life, we will not dissent. For this suffices us, that contrition and faith are named as the chief parts.

Paul almost everywhere, when he describes conversion or renewal, designates these two parts, mortification and quickening, as in Col. 2:11: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," viz. by the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." And afterward (y. 12): "Wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God." Here are two parts. One is the putting off the body of sins; the other is the rising again through faith. Neither ought these words, mortification, quickening, putting off the body of sins, rising again, to be understood in a Platonic way, concerning a feigned change; but mortification signifies true terrors, such as those of the dying, which

nature cannot sustain unless it be supported by faith. So he names that as “the putting off of the body of sins,” which we ordinarily call contrition, because in these griefs the natural concupiscence is purged away. And quickening ought not to be understood as a Platonic fancy, but as consolation which truly sustains life that is escaping in contrition. Here, therefore, are two parts: contrition and faith. For as conscience cannot be pacified except by faith, therefore faith alone quickens, according to the declaration (Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17): “The just shall live by faith.”

And then in Col. 2:14, it is said that Christ blots out the handwriting which through the Law is against us. Here also there are two parts, the handwriting, and the blotting out of the handwriting. The handwriting, however, is conscience, convicting and condemning us. The Law moreover is the word which reproves and condemns sins. Therefore, this utterance which says, “I have sinned against the Lord,” as David says (2 Sam. 12:13), is the handwriting. And wicked and secure men do not seriously give forth this utterance. For they do not see, they do not read the sentence of the Law written in the heart. In true griefs and terrors, this sentence is perceived. Therefore the handwriting which condemns us is contrition itself. To blot out the handwriting is to expunge this sentence, by which we declare that we are condemned, and to engross the sentence, according to which we know that we have been freed from this condemnation. But faith is the new sentence which reverses the former sentence, and gives peace and life to the heart.

[175] Although what need is there to cite many testimonies, since they are everywhere obvious in the Scriptures? Ps. (118:18): “The Lord hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death.” Ps. 118 (119:28): “My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen thou me, according unto thy word.” Here in the first member, contrition is contained, and in the second the mode is clearly described, how in contrition we are revived, viz. by the word of God, which offers grace. This sustains and quickens hearts. And Kings (1 Sam. 2:6): “The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up.” By one of these, contrition is signified; by the other, faith is signified. And Isa. 28:21: “The Lord shall be wroth, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.” He calls it the strange work of the Lord, when he terrifies, because to quicken and console is God’s own work. [Other works, as to terrify and to kill, are not God’s own works, for God only quickens.] But he terrifies, he says, for this reason, viz. that there may be a place for consolation and quickening, because hearts that are secure and do not feel the wrath of God loath consolation. In this manner. Scripture is accustomed to join these two, the terrors and the consolation, in order to teach that in repentance

there are these chief members, *contrition and faith that consoles and justifies*. Neither do we see how the nature of repentance can be presented more clearly and simply. [We know with certainty that God thus works in his Christians in the Church].

For the two chief works of God in men are these, to terrify, and to justify and quicken those who have been terrified. Into these two works all Scripture has been distributed. The one part is the *Law*, which shows, reproveth and condemns sins. The other part is the *Gospel*, i. e. the promise of grace bestowed in Christ, and this promise is constantly -repeated in the whole of Scripture, first having been delivered to Adam [“I will put enmity,” etc. (Gen. 3:15)]: afterwards to the patriarchs; then, still more clearly proclaimed by the prophets; lastly, preached and set forth among the Jews by Christ, and disseminated over the entire world by the apostles. For all the saints were justified by faith in this promise, and not by their own attrition or contrition.

[176] And the examples of their lives show likewise these two parts. After his sin, Adam is reprov'd, and becomes terrified; this was contrition. Afterward God promises grace, and speaks of a future seed (the blessed seed, i. e. Christ), by which the kingdom of the devil, death and sin will be destroyed; there he offers the remission of sins. These are the chief things. For although the punishment is afterwards added, yet this punishment does not merit the remission of sin. And concerning this kind of punishment, we will speak after a while.

So David is reprov'd by Nathan, and, terrified, says (2 Sam. 12:13): “I have sinned against the Lord.” This is contrition. Afterward he hears the absolution: “The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.” This voice encourages David, and by faith sustains, justifies and quickens him. Here a punishment is also added, but this punishment does not merit the remission of sins. Nor are special punishments always added, but in repentance these two things ought always to exist, viz. contrition and faith, as Luke 7:37, 38. The woman which was a sinner came to Christ weeping. By these tears, the contrition is recognized. Afterward she hears the absolution: “Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” This is the second part of repentance, viz. faith which encourages and consoles her. From all these, it is apparent to godly readers that we assign to repentance those parts which properly belong to it in conversion, or regeneration and the remission of sin. Worthy fruits and punishment (likewise, patience that we be willing to bear the cross, and punishments, which God lays upon the old Adam), follow regeneration and the remission of sin. We have mentioned these two parts in order that the faith which we require in repentance (of which the sophists and canonists have all been silent) might be the better seen. And what that faith is, which the Gospel proclaims, can be better



understood when it is set over against contrition and mortification.<sup>6</sup>

But as the adversaries expressly condemn our statement that men obtain the remission of sins by faith, we will add a few proofs, from which it will be understood that the remission of sins occurs not *ex opere operato* because of contrition, but by that special faith by which an individual believes that sins are remitted to him. For this is the chief article, concerning which we are contending with our adversaries, and whose knowledge we regard especially necessary to all Christians. As, however, it appears that we have spoken sufficiently above concerning the same subject, we will here be briefer. For very closely related are the topics of the doctrine of repentance and the doctrine of justification.

[177] When the adversaries speak of faith, and say that it precedes repentance, they understand by faith, not that which justifies, but that which, in a general way, believes that God exists, that punishments have been threatened to the wicked [that there is a hell], etc. In addition to this faith we require that each one believe that his sins are remitted him. Concerning this special faith we are disputing, and we oppose it to the opinion which bids us trust not in the promise of Christ, but in the *opus operatum* of contrition, confession, and satisfactions, etc. This faith follows terrors in such a manner as to overcome them, and render the conscience pacified. To this faith we ascribe justification and regeneration, while it frees from terrors, and brings forth in the heart not only peace and joy, but also a new life. We maintain that this faith is truly necessary for the remission of sins, and accordingly place it among the parts of repentance. Nor does the Church of Christ believe otherwise, although our adversaries contradict us.

Moreover, in the beginning, we ask the adversaries whether to receive absolution be a part of repentance, or not? But if they separate it from confession, as they are subtle in making the distinction, we do not see of what avail confession is without absolution. If, however, they do not separate the receiving absolution from confession, it is necessary for them to hold that faith is a part of repentance, because absolution is not received unless by faith. That absolution, however, is not received unless by faith, can be proved from Paul, who teaches (Rom. 4:16) that the promise cannot be received unless by faith. But absolution is the promise of the remission of sins. Therefore, it necessarily requires faith. Neither do we see how he who does not assent to it, may be said to receive absolution. And what else is the refusal to assent to absolution, but the charging God with falsehood? If the heart doubt, it regards those things which God promises as uncertain and of no account. Accordingly, in John 5:10 it is written: "He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

[178] Secondly, we think that the adversaries acknowledge that the remission of sins is either a part, or the end, or, to speak in their manner, the *terminus ad quem* of repentance [for what does repentance help, if the forgiveness of sins be not obtained?]. Therefore that, by which the remission of sins is received, is correctly added to the parts of repentance. It is very certain, however, that even though all the gates of hell contradict us, yet the remission of sins cannot be received unless by faith alone, which believes that sins are remitted for Christ's sake, according to Rom. 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." Likewise Rom. 5:2: "By whom also we have access by faith unto grace," etc. For a terrified conscience cannot set over against God's wrath our works or our love, but it is at length pacified, when it apprehends Christ as Mediator, and believes the promises given for his sake. For those who dream that, without faith in Christ, hearts become pacified, do not understand what the remission of sins is, or how it came to us. Peter (1 Ep. 2:6) cites from Isa. (49:23, and 28:16): "He that believeth on him, shall not be confounded," It is necessary therefore, that hypocrites be confounded, who are confident that they receive the remission of sins because of their own works, and not because of Christ. Peter also says in Acts 10:43: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," What he says, "through his name," could not be expressed more clearly, and he adds: "Whosoever believeth in him," Thus therefore we receive the remission of sins only through the name of Christ, i. e. for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of any merits and works of our own. And this occurs when we believe that sins are remitted to us for Christ's sake.

[179] Our adversaries cry out that they are the Church, that they are following the consensus of the Church [what the Catholic, universal Church holds]. But Peter also here cites in our behalf the consensus of the Church: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," etc. The consensus of the prophets is assuredly to be judged as the consensus of the Church universal. [I verily think that if all the holy prophets were to unanimously agree in a declaration (since God regards even a single prophet as an inestimable treasure), it would also be a decree, a declaration, and a unanimous strong conclusion of the universal. Catholic, Christian, holy Church, and would be justly regarded such.] We concede neither to the Pope, nor to the Church, the power to make decrees against this consensus of the prophets. But the bull of Leo openly condemns this article, "Of the Remission of Sins," and the adversaries condemn it in the Confutation. From which it is apparent what sort of a Church we must judge that of these men to be, who not only by their decrees censure the doctrine that we obtain the remission

of sins by faith, not on account of our works, but on account of Christ, but who also give the command, by force and the sword to abolish it, and by every kind of cruelty to put to death good men, who thus believe.

[180] But they have authors of a great name, Scotus, Gabriel, and the like, and passages of the Fathers which are cited in a mutilated form in the decrees. Certainly if the testimonies are to be counted, they surpass us. For there is a very great crowd of most trifling writers upon the *Sententiae*, who, as though they had conspired, defend these figments concerning the merit of attrition, and of works, and other things, which we have above recounted. But lest any one may be moved by the multitude of citations, there is no great weight in the testimonies of the later writers, who did not originate their own writings, but only by compiling from the writers before them, transferred these opinions from some books into others. They have exercised no judgment, but just like *pedarii* senators silently have approved the errors of their superiors, which they have not understood. Let us not, therefore, hesitate to oppose this utterance of Peter, which cites the consensus of the prophets, to ever so many legions of the *Sententiaries*. And to this utterance of Peter, the testimony of the Holy Ghost is added. For the text speaks thus (Acts 10:44): “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word.” Therefore, let pious consciences know that the command of God is this, that they believe that they are freely forgiven for Christ’s sake, and not for the sake of our works. And by this command of God, let them sustain themselves against despair, and against the terrors of sin and of death. And let them know that this belief has existed among saints from the beginning of the world. [Of this the idle sophists know little; and the blessed proclamation, the Gospel, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins through the blessed seed, that is Christ, has from the beginning of the world been the greatest consolation and treasure to all pious kings, all prophets, all believers. For they have believed in the same Christ in whom we believe; for from the beginning of the world no saint has been saved in any other way than through the faith of the same Gospel. Therefore Peter says also, etc.] For Peter clearly cites the consensus of the prophets, and the writings of the apostles testify that they believe the same thing. Nor are testimonies of the Fathers wanting. For Bernard says the same thing in words that are in no way obscure: “For it is necessary first of all to believe that you cannot have remission of sins, unless by the indulgence of God, but add yet that you believe this, viz. that through him sins are forgiven thee. This is the testimony which the Holy Ghost asserts in thy heart, saying: ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee.’ For thus the apostle judges that man is justified freely through faith.” These words of Bernard shed light upon our cause wonderfully, because he not only requires that we in a

general way believe that sins are remitted through mercy, but he bids us add special faith, by which we believe that sins are remitted even to us; and he teaches how we may be rendered certain concerning the remission of sins, viz. when our hearts are encouraged by faith, and become tranquil through the Holy Ghost. What more do the adversaries require? [But how now, ye adversaries? Is St. Bernard also a heretic?] Do they still dare to deny that by faith we obtain the remission of sins, or that faith is a part of repentance?

Thirdly, the adversaries say that sin is remitted, because an attrite or contrite person elicits an act of love to God [if we undertake from reason to love God], and by this act merits to receive the remission of sins. This is nothing but to teach the Law, the Gospel being blotted out, and the promise concerning Christ being abolished. For they require only the Law and our works, because the Law demands love. Besides, they teach us to be confident that we obtain remission of sins because of contrition and love. What else is this than to put confidence in our works, not in the promise of God's Word and the promise concerning Christ? But if the Law be sufficient for obtaining the remission of sins, what need is there of the Gospel? what need is there of Christ, if we obtain remission of sins because of our own work? We, on the other hand, call consciences away from the Law to the Gospel; and from confidence in their own works, to confidence in the promise and Christ; because the Gospel presents to us Christ, and promises freely the remission of sins for Christ's sake. In this promise it bids us trust, viz. that, for Christ's sake, we are reconciled to the Father, and not for the sake of our own contrition or love. For there is no other Mediator or Propitiator than Christ. Neither can we do the works of the Law, unless we have first been reconciled through Christ. And if we would do anything, yet we must believe that not for the sake of these works, but for the sake of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator, we obtain the remission of sins.

[181] Yea, it is a reproach to Christ and a repeal of the Gospel, to believe that we obtain the remission of sins, on account of the Law, or otherwise than by faith in Christ. This theory also we have discussed above in the chapter Of Justification,<sup>7</sup> where we declared why we confess that men are justified by faith, not by love. Therefore, the doctrine of the adversaries, when they teach that by their own contrition and love men obtain the remission of sins, and trust in this contrition and love, is merely the doctrine of the Law, and of that too as not understood [which they do not understand with respect to the kind of love towards God which it promotes]; just as the Jews looked upon the veiled face of Moses. For let us imagine that love is present, let us imagine that works are present, yet neither love nor works can be a propitiation for sin [or be of as much value as Christ]. And they cannot even be opposed to the wrath and judgment of

God, according to Ps. 143:2: “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” Neither ought the honor of Christ to be transferred to our works.

For these reasons, Paul contends<sup>8</sup> that we are not justified by the Law, and he opposes to the Law the promise of the remission of sins, which is granted for Christ’s sake, and teaches that we freely receive the remission of sins for Christ’s sake. Paul calls us away from the Law to this promise. Upon this promise he bids us look [and regard the Lord Christ our treasure], which certainly will be void,<sup>9</sup> if we be justified by the Law before we are justified through the promise, or if we obtain the remission of sins on account of our own righteousness. But it is evident that the promise was given us and Christ was tendered to us for the very reason that we cannot do the works of the Law.<sup>10</sup> Wherefore, it is necessary that we be reconciled by the promise before we do the works of the Law. The promise, however, is received only by faith. Therefore, it is necessary for contrite persons to apprehend by faith the promise of the remission of sins granted for Christ’s sake, and to be confident that freely for Christ’s sake, they have a reconciled Father. This is the meaning of Paul, Rom. 4:16, where he says: “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure.” And Gal. 3:22: “The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given them that believe,” i. e, all are under sin, neither can they be freed otherwise than by apprehending by faith the promise of the remission of sins. Therefore, we must by faith accept the remission of sins before we do the works of the Law; although, as has been said above, love follows faith, because the regenerate receive the Holy Ghost, and accordingly begin [to become friendly to the Law and] to do the works of the Law.

[182] We would cite more testimonies, if they were not obvious to every godly reader in the Scriptures. And we do not wish to be prolix, in order that this case may be the more readily seen through. Neither indeed is there any doubt that the meaning of Paul is what we are defending, viz. that by faith we receive the remission of sins for Christ’s sake, that by faith we ought to oppose to God’s wrath Christ as Mediator, and not our works. Neither let godly minds be disturbed, even though the adversaries find fault with the judgments of Paul. Nothing is said so simply that it cannot be distorted by caviling. We know that this which we have mentioned is the true and genuine meaning of Paul; we know that this our belief brings to godly consciences [in agony of death and temptation] sure comfort, without which no one can stand in God’s judgment.

Therefore let these pharisaic opinions of the adversaries be rejected, viz. that we do not receive by faith the remission of sins, but that it ought to be merited

by our love and works; that we ought to oppose our love and our works to the wrath of God. Not of the Gospel, but of the Law is this doctrine, which feigns that man is justified by the Law before he has been reconciled through Christ to God, since Christ says (John 15:5): “Without me, ye can do nothing;” likewise: “I am the true Vine; ye are the branches.” But the adversaries feign that we are branches not of Christ, but of Moses. For they wish to be justified by the Law, and to offer their love and works to God, before they are reconciled to God through Christ, before they are branches of Christ. Paul, on the other hand [who is certainly a much greater teacher than the adversaries], contends that the Law cannot be observed without Christ. Accordingly, in order that we may be reconciled to God for Christ’s sake, the promise must be received before we do the works of the Law. We think that these things are sufficiently clear to godly consciences. And hence they will understand why we have declared above that men are justified by faith, not by love, because we must oppose to God’s wrath not our love or works, or confidence in our love and works, but Christ as Mediator [for all our ability, all our deeds and works are far too weak to remove and appease God’s wrath]. And we must apprehend the promise of the remission of sins, before we do the works of the Law. I«q Lastly, when will conscience be pacified if we receive remission of sins on the ground that we love, or that we do the works of the Law? For the Law will always accuse us, because we never satisfy God’s Law. Just as Paul says (Rom. 4:15): “The Law worketh wrath.” Chrysostom asks concerning repentance. Whence are we made sure that our sins are remitted us? The adversaries even in their “Sentences,” ask concerning the same subject. This cannot be explained, consciences cannot be made tranquil, unless they know that it is God’s command and the very Gospel, that they should be firmly confident that for Christ’s sake sins are remitted freely, and that they should not doubt that these are remitted to them. If any one doubt, he charges, as John says (1 Ep. 5:10), the divine promise with falsehood. We teach that this certainty of faith is required in the Gospel. The adversaries leave consciences uncertain and wavering. Consciences do nothing from faith, since they perpetually doubt whether they have remission. [For it is not possible that there should be rest, or a quiet and peaceful conscience, if they doubt whether God be gracious. For if they doubt whether they have a gracious God, whether they be doing right, whether they have forgiveness of sins, how can, etc.] How can they in this doubt call upon God, how can they be confident that they are heard? Thus the entire life is without God [faith], and without the true worship of God. This is what Paul says (Rom. 14:23), that “Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.” And because they are constantly occupied with this doubt, they never experience what faith [God or Christ] is. Thus it comes to pass, that they rush at last into

despair [die in doubt, without God, without all knowledge of God]. Such is the doctrine of the adversaries, the doctrine of the Law, the annulling of the Gospel, the doctrine of despair. [Whereby Christ is suppressed, men are led into overwhelming sorrow and torture of conscience, and finally, when temptation comes, into despair.] Now we are glad to refer to all good men the judgment concerning this topic of repentance, for it has no obscurity, in order that they may decide whether we or the adversaries have taught those things which are more godly and healthful to consciences. Indeed these dissensions in the Church<sup>11</sup> do not delight us; wherefore unless we would have great and necessary reasons for dissenting from the adversaries, we would with the greatest pleasure be silent. But now, since they condemn the manifest truth, it is not right for us to desert a cause which is not our own, but is that of Christ and the Church. [We cannot with fidelity to God and conscience, deny this blessed doctrine and divine truth, from which we expect at last when this poor temporal life ceases, and all help of creatures fails, the only eternal highest consolation; nor will we in anything recede from this cause, which is not only ours, but that of all Christendom, and concerns the highest treasure, Jesus Christ.]<sup>12</sup>

[184] We have declared for what reasons we assigned to repentance these two parts, contrition and faith. And we have done this the more freely, because many expressions concerning repentance are published which are cited in a mutilated form from the Fathers [Augustine and the other ancient Fathers], and which the adversaries have distorted, in order to put faith out of sight. Such are: “Repentance is to lament past evils, and not to commit again deeds that ought to be lamented.” Again: “Repentance is a punishment of the one grieving, punishing in himself what he is sorry that he has committed.” In these passages, no mention is made of faith. And not even in the schools, when they interpret, is anything added concerning faith. Wherefore, in order that the doctrine of faith might be the more conspicuous, we have enumerated it among the parts of repentance. For the subject itself shows that those passages which require contrition or good works, and make no mention of justifying faith, are dangerous [as experience proves]. And prudence can justly be desired in those who have collected these centos of the Sentences and decrees. For since the Fathers speak in some places concerning one part, and in other places concerning another part of repentance, and not only concerning one part, but concerning both, i. e. concerning contrition and faith, it would have been well to select and combine their judgments.

[185] For Tertullian speaks excellently concerning faith, dwelling upon the oath in the prophet (Ez. 33:11): “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” For



as God swears that he does not wish the death of a sinner, he shows that faith is required, in order that we may believe the one swearing, and be firmly confident that he forgives us. The authority of the divine promises ought by itself to be great in our estimation. But this promise has also been confirmed by an oath. Wherefore, if any one be not confident that he is forgiven, he denies that God has sworn what is true, than which a more horrible blasphemy cannot be imagined. For Tertullian speaks thus: "He invites by reward to salvation, even swearing. Saying, 'I live,' he desires that he be believed. Oh blessed we, for whose sake God swears! Oh most miserable, if we believe not the Lord when he swears!" But here we must know that this faith ought to be confident that God freely forgives us, for the sake of Christ, for the sake of his own promise, not for the sake of our works, contrition, confession or satisfactions. For if faith rely upon these works, it immediately becomes uncertain, because the terrified conscience sees that these works are unworthy. Accordingly Ambrose speaks admirably concerning repentance: "Therefore it is proper for us to believe both that we are to repent and that we are to be pardoned; that, nevertheless we should hope for pardon as from faith; and faith obtains it as from a handwriting." Again: "It is faith which covers our sins." Therefore, there are sentences extant in the Fathers, not only concerning contrition and works, but also concerning faith. But the adversaries, since they understand neither the nature of repentance, nor the language of the Fathers, select passages concerning a part of repentance, viz. concerning works; they pass over the declarations made elsewhere concerning faith, since they do not understand them.

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1. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part iii., Art. iii., § 16, p. 314.↵
  2. Apology, c. vi., Art. xii., §§ 26, 37, p. 189 sq.↵
  3. Apology, c. xii., Art. xxiv., §§ 64, 91, pp. 264, 268.↵
  4. The more atrocious crimes which the Pope and his bishops reserve for their own judgment.↵
  5. Var. adds: Neither are we ignorant that with the grammarians the term *paenitentia* signifies to disapprove that which we before approved. This agrees better with contrition than with faith. But for the purpose of teaching, we here understand repentance to be the entire conversion, in which there are two *termini*, mortification and quickening. According to the usual names we call them contrition and faith.↵
  6. Var. adds: And in order that the whole world may see how great is the want of acquaintance with true godliness in our critics, who have written the



Confutation, we will add also the judgment of Bernard, who joins the two members in repentance, contrition and faith, precisely in the same manner that we do. In his third sermon concerning the Annunciation, these words occur: “‘Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness in the wording, for in thee do I trust’ (Ps. 143:8). Hope alone doubtless obtains with thee the place of compassion, neither dost thou place the oil of mercy except in the vessel of trust. But it is a faithless trust, capable assuredly of cursing only, since we evidently sin in hope. Although it ought not to be called trust, but an insensibility and pernicious dissimulation. For what is trust to one who does not attend to danger? Or what remedy is there for fear, where neither fear is perceived, nor the matter itself of fear? Trust is a solace; but he does not need solace who rejoices when he has done wrong, and exults rather in the worst things. Therefore, let us ask, brethren, and desire that the answer be given us as to how great are the iniquities and sins which we have, and that our crimes and offenses be shown us. Let us search our ways, and with earnest attention examine all our pursuits and dangers. Let every one say to his fear: ‘I will go to the gates of hell,’ so that now we may take courage in no other way than in the mercy alone of God. This is the true confidence of man forsaking self and relying on his Lord. This I say is true confidence, to which mercy is not denied, according to the testimony of the prophet: ‘Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy’ (Ps. 33:18). Neither assuredly does a small trust suffice us; in us indeed there is cause of fear: but in him cause of trust.” Thus far Bernard, whose opinion we have gladly quoted in order that readers may see how we here understand faith as referring to trust in mercy, which cheers and consoles the terrified, which he is right in calling trust. And this can be clearly seen when there is an opposition of terrors and of consolation. Just as Bernard here wishes the knowledge of sins or contrition or terrors to exist in men, and wishes trust to be added, which cheers in contrition.↵

7. § 61 sqq., p. 98; Of Love and Fulfilling of the Law, § 26sqq., p. 11.↵
8. Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:13 sq.; Gal. 3:22.↵
9. Rom. 4:14.↵
10. Rom. 4:16.↵
11. Apology, Preface, § 16.↵
12. Cf. § 2.↵

## Chapter VI. Of Confession and Satisfaction.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Aug. Conf.*, Arts. xi. and xii., § 10; *Apology*, Art. xi. § 63 sqq.; xii., § 13 sqq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. iii., §§ 10, 19 sqq.; Art vii.; *Small Catechism*, Part V.; *Formula of Concord*, Ep. and Sol. Decl., Art. iii

Good men can easily judge that it is of the greatest importance that the true doctrine concerning the above-mentioned parts, viz. contrition and faith, be preserved. [For the great fraud of indulgences, etc. and the preposterous doctrines of the sophists have sufficiently taught us what great vexation and danger arise therefrom, if a foul stroke be here made. How many a godly conscience under the Papacy sought with great labor the true way, and in the midst of such darkness did not find it!] Therefore, we have always been occupied more with the elucidation of these topics, and have disputed nothing as yet concerning *confession* and *satisfaction*. For we also retain confession, especially on account of the absolution, which is the Word of God, that, by divine authority, the power of the keys proclaims concerning individuals. Wherefore it would be wicked to remove private absolution from the Church. Neither do they understand what the remission of sins or the power of the keys is, if they despise private absolution. But in reference to the enumeration of offenses in confession, we have said above that we hold that it is not necessary by divine right. For the objection, made by some, that a judge ought to know a case before he pronounces upon it, pertains in no way to this subject; because<sup>1</sup> the ministry of absolution is favor or grace, it is not a judgment or law. Therefore ministers in the Church have the command to remit sin; they have not the command to investigate secret sins. And indeed they absolve from those that we do not remember; for which reason absolution, which is the voice of the Gospel remitting sins and consoling consciences, does not require judicial examination.

[186] And it is ridiculous to transfer hither the saying of Solomon (Prov. 27:23): “Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks.” For Solomon says nothing of confession, but gives to the father of a family a domestic precept, that he should use what is his own, and abstain from what is another’s; and he commands him to take care of his own property diligently, yet in such a way that with his mind occupied with the increase of his resources, he should not cast away the fear of God, or faith or care in God’s Word. But our adversaries by a wonderful metamorphosis transform passages of Scripture to whatever moaning they please. Here “to know” signifies with them to hear confessions, “the state,”

not the outward life, but the secrets of conscience; and “the flocks” signify men. [“Stable,” we think, means a school, within which there are such doctors and orators. But it has happened aright to those who thus despise the Holy Scriptures and all sound interpretation, that they make great mistakes in grammar.] The interpretation is assuredly neat, and is worthy of these despisers of the pursuits of eloquence. But if any one desire by a similitude to transfer a precept from a father of a family to a pastor of a Church, he ought certainly to interpret “state” [V. *vultus*, *countenance*] as applying to the outward life. This similitude will be the most consistent.

But let us omit such matters as these. At different times in the Psalms mention is made of confession, as (Ps. 32:5): “I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” Such confession of sin which is made to God, is contrition itself. For when confession is made to God, it must be made with the heart, not alone with the voice, as is made on the stage by actors. Therefore, such confession is contrition, in which, feeling God’s wrath, we confess that God is justly angry, and that he cannot be appeased, and, nevertheless, we seek for mercy because of God’s promise. Such is the following confession (Ps. 51:4): “Against thee only have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified, and be clear when thou judgest,” i. e. “I confess that I am a sinner, and have merited eternal wrath, and that I cannot set my righteousnesses, my merits, over against thy wrath; accordingly I declare that thou art just when thou condemnest and punishest us; I declare that thou art clear when hypocrites judge thee as being unjust in punishing them, or condemning the well-deserving. Yea, our merits cannot be opposed to thy judgment; but we will thus be justified, viz. if thou justifiest us, if, through thy mercy, thou accountest us righteous.” Perhaps some one may also cite James (5:16): “Confess your faults one to another.” But here the reference is not to confession that is to be made to the priests, but in general concerning the reconciliation of brethren to each other. For it commands that the confession be mutual.

[187] Again, our adversaries will condemn many most generally received teachers, if they will contend that in confession an enumeration of offenses be necessary according to divine law. For although we approve of confession, and judge that an examination is of advantage, in order that men may be the better instructed [young and inexperienced persons be questioned], yet the matter must be so controlled that snares be not cast upon consciences, which never will be tranquil, if they think that they cannot obtain the remission of sins, unless this precise enumeration be made. That which the adversaries have expressed in the Confutation<sup>2</sup> is certainly most false, viz. that a full confession is necessary for salvation. For this is impossible. And what snares they here cast upon the

conscience when they require a full confession! For when will conscience be sure that the confession is full? In the Church writers mention is made of confession, but they do not speak of this enumeration of secret offenses, but of the rite of public repentance. For as the fallen or notorious [those guilty of public crimes] were not received without fixed satisfactions [without a public ceremony or reproof], they made confession on this account to the presbyters, in order that satisfactions might be prescribed to them according to the measure of their offenses. This entire matter contained nothing similar to the enumeration concerning which we are disputing. This confession was made, not because without it the remission of sins before God could not occur, but because satisfactions could not be prescribed unless the kind of offense were first known. For other offenses had other canons.

[188] And from this rite of public repentance, we have derived the name, “satisfaction.” For the holy Fathers were unwilling to receive those who had fallen, or who had become notorious, unless, as far as it was possible, their repentance had been first examined into, and observed. And there seem to have been many causes for this. For to chastise those who had fallen served as an example, just as also the gloss upon the decrees admonishes, and it was improper immediately to admit notorious men to the communion [without being tested]. These customs have long since grown obsolete. Neither is it necessary to restore them, because they are not necessary for the remission of sins before God. Neither did the Fathers hold this, viz. that men merit the remission of sins through such customs or such works. Although these spectacles [such outward ceremonies] are accustomed to lead astray the ignorant, to think that by these works they merit the remission of sins before God. But if any one thus hold, he holds to the faith of a Jew and heathen. For even the heathen had certain expiations for offenses, through which they imagined that they were reconciled to God. Now, however, since the custom has become obsolete, the name “satisfaction” still remains, and a trace of the custom also remains in prescribing in confession certain satisfactions, which they define as works that are not due. We call them *canonical satisfactions*. Of these we hold, just as of the enumeration, that canonical satisfactions [these public ceremonies] are not necessary by divine law for the remission of sins; just as also the ancient ceremonies of satisfactions in public repentance were not necessary by divine law for the remission of sins. For the belief concerning faith must be retained, that by faith we obtain remission of sins for Christ’s sake, and not for the sake of our works that precede or follow (when we are converted or born anew in Christ). And for this reason, we have discussed especially the question of satisfactions, that by supporting them the righteousness of faith be not obscured,

or men think that, for the sake of these works, they obtain remission of sins. And many sayings that are current in the schools aid the error, such as that which they give in the definition of satisfaction, viz. that it is wrought for the purpose of appeasing the divine displeasure.

[189] But, nevertheless, the adversaries acknowledge that satisfactions are of no profit for the remission of guilt. Yet they imagine that satisfactions are of profit in redeeming from the punishments, whether of purgatory, or other punishments. For thus they teach that in the remission of sins, God [without means, alone] remits the guilt, and yet, because it belongs to divine justice to punish sin, that he commutes eternal into temporal punishment. They add farther that a part of this temporal punishment is remitted by the power of the keys, but that the rest is redeemed by means of satisfactions. Neither can it be understood of what punishments a part is remitted by the power of the keys, unless they say that a part of the punishments of purgatory are remitted, from which it would follow that satisfactions are only punishments redeeming from purgatory. And these satisfactions, they say, avail even though they are rendered by those who have relapsed into mortal sin, as though indeed the divine displeasure could be appeased by those who are in mortal sin.<sup>3</sup> This entire matter is fictitious, and recently fabricated without the authority of Scripture and the old writers of the Church. And not even Longobardus speaks in this way of satisfactions. The scholastics saw that there were satisfactions in the Church; and they did not notice that these ceremonies had been instituted both for the purpose of example, and for testing those who desired to be received by the Church. In a word, they did not see that it was a discipline, and entirely a matter pertaining to external discipline. Accordingly they superstitiously imagined, that these avail not for discipline before the Church, but for appeasing God. And just as in other places they frequently, with great inaptness, have confounded spiritual and civil matters [the kingdom of Christ which is spiritual and the kingdom of the world, and external discipline], the same happens also with regard to satisfactions. But the gloss on the canons at various places testifies that these observances were instituted for the sake of church discipline [should serve alone for an example before the Church].

Let us see, moreover, how in the Confutation which they had the presumption to obtrude upon His Imperial Majesty, they prove these their figments. They cite many passages from the Scriptures, in order to impose upon the inexperienced, as though this subject, which was unknown even in the time of Longobard, had authority from the Scriptures. They bring forward such passages as these: “Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance” (Matt. 3:8; Mark 1:15). Again: “Yield your members servants to righteousness” (Rom. 6:19). Again Christ

preaches repentance (Matt. 4:17): “Repent.” Again Christ (Luke 24:47) commands the apostles “to preach repentance,” and Peter preaches repentance (Acts 2:38). Afterward they cite certain passages of the Fathers and the canons, and conclude that satisfactions in the Church are not to be abolished contrary to the plain Gospel and the decrees of the Councils and Fathers [against the decision of the Holy Church], nay even that those who have been absolved by the priest ought to bring to perfection the repentance that has been enjoined, following the declaration of Paul (Tit. 2:14): “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

[190] May God put to confusion these godless sophists who so wickedly distort God’s Word to their own most vain dreams! What good man is there who is not moved by such dishonesty? “Christ says, ‘Repent,’ the apostles preach repentance; therefore eternal punishments are compensated by the punishments of purgatory, therefore the keys have the power to remit part of the punishments of purgatory, therefore satisfactions redeem the punishments of purgatory!” Who has taught these asses such logic? Yet this is neither logic nor sophistry, but cunning trickery. Accordingly they appeal to the expression repent in such a way that, when the inexperienced hear such a passage cited against us, they derive the opinion that we deny all repentance. By these arts, they endeavor to alienate minds and to enkindle hatred, so that the inexperienced may cry out against us, that such pestilent heretics as disapprove of repentance should be removed from their midst.

[191] But we hope that among good men these calumnies [and misrepresentations of Holy Scripture] may make little headway. And God will not long endure such impudence and wickedness. [They will certainly be consumed by the first and second commandments.] Neither has the Pope of Rome consulted well for his own dignity in employing such patrons, because he has entrusted a matter of the greatest importance to the judgment of these sophists. For since we include in the confession almost the sum of the entire Christian doctrine, judges should have been appointed to make a declaration concerning matters so important and so many and various, whose learning and faith would have been more approved than that of the sophists who have written this Confutation. It was particularly becoming for you, O Carapegius, in accordance with your wisdom, to have taken care, that in regard to matters of such importance they should write nothing which either at this time, or with posterity might seem to be able to diminish regard for the Roman See. If the Roman See judges it right that all nations should acknowledge her as mistress of the faith, she ought to take pains that learned and uncorrupt men make

investigation concerning matters of religion. For what will the world judge, if at any time a writing of the adversaries be brought to light? what will posterity judge concerning these reproachful judicial investigations? You see, O Campegius, that these are the last times, in which Christ predicted that there would be the greatest danger to religion. You, therefore, who ought as it were to sit on the watchtower, and control religious matters, should in these times employ unusual wisdom and diligence. There are many signs which, unless you beware of them, threaten a change to the Roman state. And you make a mistake if you think that Churches should be retained by force and arms. Men ask to be taught concerning religion. How many do you suppose that there are, not only in Germany, but also in England, in Spain, in France, in Italy, and finally even in the city of Rome, who, since they see that controversies have arisen concerning subjects of the greatest importance, are beginning somewhere to doubt, and to be silently indignant that you refuse to investigate and judge aright subjects of such weight as these; that you do not deliver consciences in suspense; that you only bid us be overthrown and annihilated by arms? There are many good men, to whom this doubt is more bitter than death. You do not consider sufficiently how great a subject religion is, if you think that good men are in anguish for a slight cause, whenever they begin to doubt concerning any dogma. And this doubt can have no other effect than to produce the greatest bitterness of hatred against those who, when they ought to heal consciences, plant themselves in the way of the explanation of the subject. We do not here say that you ought to fear God's judgment. For the hierarchs think that they can easily provide against this, for since they hold the keys, of course they can open heaven for themselves, whenever they wish. We are speaking of the judgments of men, and the silent desires of all nations, which indeed at this time require that these matters be investigated and decided in such a manner that good minds may be healed and freed from doubt. For, in accordance with your wisdom, you can easily decide what will take place, if at any time this hatred against you should break forth. But by this favor, you will be able to bind to yourself all nations, as all sane men regard it the highest and most important matter, if you heal doubting consciences. We have said these things not because we doubt concerning our confession. For we know that it is true, godly and useful to godly consciences. But it is likely that there are many in many places, who waver concerning matters of no light importance, and yet do not hear such teachers as are able to heal their consciences.

But let us return to the main point. The Scriptures cited by the adversaries speak in no way of canonical satisfactions, and of the opinions of the scholastics, since it is evident that the latter were only recently born. Therefore it is pure

perversion, since they distort Scripture to their own opinions. We say that good fruits, good works in every kind of life, ought to follow repentance, i. e. conversion or regeneration [the renewal of the Holy Ghost in the heart]. Neither can there be true conversion or true contrition, where mortifications of the flesh and good fruits do not follow [if we do not externally render good works and Christian patience]. True terrors, true griefs of soul, do not allow the body to indulge in sensual pleasures, and true faith is not ungrateful to God, neither does it despise God's commandments. In a word, there is no inner repentance, unless it also produce outwardly mortifications of the flesh. We say also that this is the meaning of John, when he says (Matt. 3:8): "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." Likewise, of Paul when he says (Rom. 6:19): "Yield your members servants to righteousness," just as he likewise says elsewhere (Rom. 12:1): "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," etc. And when Christ says (Matt. 4:17): "Repent," he certainly speaks of the entire repentance, of the entire newness of life and its fruits; he does not speak of those hypocritical satisfactions which the scholastics imagine avail for compensating the punishment of purgatory or other punishments, when they are made by those who are in mortal sin.

[192] Many arguments, likewise, can be collected to show that these passages of Scripture pertain in no way to scholastic satisfactions. These men imagine that satisfactions are works that are not due; but Scripture, in these passages, requires works that are due. For this word of Christ, "Repent," is the word of a commandment. Likewise the adversaries write that if any one should refuse to undertake satisfactions, he does not sin, but will pay these penalties in purgatory. Now the following passages are, without controversy, precepts pertaining to this life: "Repent;" "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance;" "Yield your members servants to righteousness." Wherefore, they cannot be distorted to the satisfactions which it is permitted to refuse. For to refuse God's commandments is not permitted. [For God's commands are not thus left to our discretion.] Thirdly, indulgences remit these satisfactions, as is taught by the chapter. *De Poenitentiis et Remissione*, beginning *Quum ex eo*, etc. But indulgences do not free us from the commandments: "Repent;" "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Therefore, it is manifest that these passages of Scripture have been wickedly distorted to apply to canonical satisfactions. See further what follows. If the punishments of purgatory are satisfactions, or sufferings sufficient, or if satisfactions are a redemption of the punishments of purgatory, do these passages also give commandment that souls be punished in purgatory? [The above-cited passages of Christ and Paul must also show and prove that souls enter purgatory and there suffer pain.] Since this must follow from the opinions of the



adversaries, these passages should be interpreted in a new way: “Bring forth fruits meet for repentance;” “Repent,” i. e. suffer the punishments of purgatory after this life. But we do not care about refuting in more words these absurdities of the adversaries. For it is evident that Scripture speaks of works that are due, of the entire newness of life, and not of these observances of works that are not due, of which the adversaries speak. And yet by these figments they defend orders [of monks], the sale of Masses and infinite observances, namely as works which, if they do not make satisfaction for guilt, yet make satisfaction for punishment.

[193] Since, therefore, the passages of Scripture cited do not say, that eternal punishments are to be compensated by works that are not due, the adversaries are rash in affirming that these satisfactions are compensated by canonical satisfactions.<sup>4</sup> Nor do the keys have the command to commute some punishments, and likewise to remit a part of the punishments. For where are such things read in the Scriptures? Christ speaks of the remission of sins when he says (Matt. 18:18): “Whatsoever ye shall loose,” etc. [i. e.], sin being forgiven, death eternal is taken away, and life eternal bestowed. Nor does, “Whatsoever ye shall bind,” speak of the imposing of punishments, but of the retaining the sins of those who are not converted. Moreover the declaration of Longobard concerning j remitting a part of the punishments has been taken from the canonical punishments; a part of these the pastors remitted. Although, therefore, we hold that repentance ought to bring forth good fruits for the sake of God’s glory and command; and good fruits, true fastings, true prayers, true alms, etc., have the commands of God; yet in the Holy Scriptures, we nowhere find this, viz. that eternal punishments are not remitted, unless on account of the punishment of purgatory, or canonical satisfactions, i. e. on account of certain works not due, or because the power of the keys has the command to commute their punishments, or to remit a portion. These things should be proved by the adversaries. [This they will not attempt.]

[194] Besides, the death of Christ is a satisfaction not only for guilt, but also for eternal death, according to Hos. 13:14: “O death, I will be thy death.” How monstrous, therefore, it is to say that the satisfaction of Christ redeemed from the guilt, and our punishments redeem from eternal death; as the expression: “I will be thy death,” ought then to be understood not concerning Christ, but concerning our works, and indeed not concerning the works commanded by God, but concerning the frigid observances devised by men! And these are said to abolish death, even when they are wrought in mortal sin. It is incredible with what grief we recite these absurdities of the adversaries, which cannot but cause one who considers them to be enraged against such doctrines of demons, which the devil

has spread in the Church, in order to suppress the knowledge of the Law and Gospel, of repentance and quickening and the benefits of Christ. For of the Law, they speak thus: “God condescending to our weakness has given to man a measure of those things, to which of necessity he is bound; and this is the observance of precepts, so that from what is left, i. e., from works of supererogation, he can render satisfaction with reference to offenses that have been committed.”<sup>5</sup> Here men imagine that they can observe the Law of God in such a manner as to be able to do even more than the Law exacts. But Scripture everywhere exclaims that we are far distant from the perfection which the Law requires. Yet these men imagine that the Law of God has been comprised in outward and civil righteousness; they do not see that it requires true love to God “with the whole heart,” etc., and condemns the entire concupiscence in the nature. Therefore no one does as much as the Law requires. Hence their imagination that we can do more is ridiculous. For although we can perform outward works not commanded by God’s Law [which Paul calls beggarly ordinances], yet the confidence that satisfaction is rendered God’s Law [yea, that more is done than God demands] is vain and wicked. And true prayers, true alms, true fastings have God’s command; and where they have God’s command, they cannot without sin be omitted. But these works, in so far as they have not been commanded by God’s Law, but have a fixed form derived from human rule, are works of human traditions of which Christ says (Matt. 15:9): “In vain they do worship me with the commandments of men,” as are fixed fasts appointed not for restraining the flesh, but that, by this work, honor may be given to God, as Scotus says, and eternal death be made up for; likewise, a fixed number of prayers, a fixed measure of alms when they are rendered in such a way that this measure is a worship *ex opere operato*, giving honor to God, and making up for eternal death. For they ascribe satisfaction to these *ex opere operato*, because they teach that they avail even in those who are in mortal sin. There are works which depart still farther from God’s commands, as [rosaries and] pilgrimages; and of these there is a great variety: one makes a journey clad in mail, and another with bare feet. Christ calls these “vain acts of worship,” and hence they do not serve to appease God’s displeasure, as the adversaries say. And yet they adorn these works with magnificent titles; they call them works of supererogation; to them the honor is ascribed of being a price paid instead of eternal death. Thus they are preferred to the works of God’s commandments [the true works expressly mentioned in the Ten Commandments]. In this way, the Law of God is obscured on two sides, both because satisfaction is thought to be rendered God’s Law by means of outward and civil works, and because human traditions are added, whose works are preferred to the works of the divine Law.

[195] In the second place, repentance and grace are obscured. For eternal death is not atoned for by this compensation of works, because it is inoperative, and does not in the present life taste of death. Something else must be opposed to death, when it tries us. For just as the wrath of God is overcome by faith in Christ, so death is overcome by faith in Christ. Just as Paul says (1 Cor. 15:57): “But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” He does not say “Who giveth us the victory if we oppose our satisfactions against death.” The adversaries treat of idle speculations concerning the remission of guilt, and do not see how, in the remission of guilt, the heart is freed by faith in Christ from God’s anger, and eternal death. Since, therefore, the death of Christ is a satisfaction for eternal death, and since the adversaries themselves confess that these works of satisfactions are works that are not due, but are works of human traditions, of which Christ says (Matt. 15:9) that they are “vain acts of worship,” we can safely affirm that canonical satisfactions are not necessary by divine law for the remission of guilt, or eternal punishment, or the punishment of purgatory.

But the adversaries object that vengeance or punishment is necessary for repentance, because Augustine says that “repentance is vengeance punishing,” etc. We grant<sup>6</sup> that vengeance or punishment is necessary in repentance, yet not as merit or price, as the adversaries imagine that satisfactions are. But vengeance, in repentance formally, i. e., because regeneration itself occurs by a perpetual mortification of the oldness of life. The saying of Scotus may indeed be very beautiful, that *poenitentia* is so called as though *poenitentia*, holding to punishment. But of what punishment, of what vengeance does Augustine speak? Certainly of true punishment, of true vengeance, viz. of contrition, of true terrors. Nor do we here exclude the outward mortifications of the body, which follow true grief of mind. The adversaries make a great mistake, if they imagine that canonical satisfactions are more truly punishments than are true terrors in the heart. It is most foolish to distort the name of punishment to these frigid satisfactions, and not to refer them to those horrible terrors of conscience of which David says (Ps. 18:4; Sara. 22:5): “The sorrows of death compassed me.” Who would not rather clad in mail and equipped seek the church of James, the cathedral of Peter, etc. than bear that ineffable violence of grief, which exists even in persons of ordinary lives, if there be true repentance.

[196] But they say that it belongs to God’s justice to punish sin. He certainly punishes<sup>7</sup> it in contrition, when in these terrors he shows his wrath. Just as David indicates when he prays (Ps. 6:1): “O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger.” And Jeremiah (10:24): “O Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.” Here indeed the most bitter punishments are

spoken of. And the adversaries acknowledge that contrition can be so great that satisfaction is not required. Contrition is therefore more truly a punishment than is satisfaction. Besides, saints are subject to death, and all general afflictions, as Peter says (1 Ep. 4:17): “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?” And although these afflictions are for the most part the punishments of sin, yet in the godly they have a better end,<sup>8</sup> viz. to exercise them, that they may learn amidst trials to seek God’s aid, to acknowledge the distrust of their own hearts, etc., as Paul says of himself (2 Cor. 1:9) “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” And Isaiah says (26:16): “They poured out prayer when thy chastening was upon them,” i. e. afflictions are a discipline by which God exercises the saints. Likewise afflictions are inflicted because of present sin, since in the saints they mortify and extinguish concupiscence, so that they may be renewed by the Spirit, as Paul says (Rom. 8:10): “The body is dead because of sin,” i. e. it is mortified [more and more every day] because of present sin which is still left in the flesh. And death itself serves this purpose, viz. to abolish this flesh of sin, that we may rise absolutely new. Neither<sup>^</sup> is there now in the death of the believer, since by faith he has overcome the terrors of death, that sting and sense of wrath of which Paul speaks (1 Cor. 15:56): “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the Law.” This strength of sin, this sense of wrath, is truly a punishment as long as it is present; without this sense of wrath, death is not properly a punishment. Moreover canonical satisfactions do not belong to these punishments; as the adversaries say that, by the power of the keys, a part of the punishments is remitted. Likewise according to these very men, the keys remit the satisfactions, and the punishments, on account of which the satisfactions are made. But it is evident that the common afflictions are not removed by the power of the keys. And if they wish to be understood concerning these punishments, why do they add that satisfaction is to be rendered in purgatory?

[197] They oppose the example of Adam, and also of David, who was punished for his adultery. From these examples, they derive the universal rule that peculiar temporal punishments in the remission of sins correspond to individual sins. It has ig.<sup>^</sup> been said before that saints suffer punishments, which are works of God; they suffer contrition or terrors, they also suffer other common afflictions. Thus for example some suffer punishments of their own that have been imposed by God. And these punishments pertain in no way to the keys, because the keys neither can impose nor remit them, but God, without the ministry of the keys, imposes and remits them [as he will].

Neither does the universal rule follow: Upon David a peculiar punishment was imposed; therefore in addition to common afflictions there is another punishment of purgatory, in which each degree corresponds to each sin. Where does Scripture teach, that we cannot be freed from eternal death, unless by the compensation of certain punishments in addition to common afflictions? But, on the other hand, it most frequently teaches that the remission of sins occurs freely for Christ's sake, that Christ is the victor of sin and death. Wherefore the merit of satisfaction is not to be attached to this. And although afflictions still remain, yet Scripture interprets these as the mortifications of present sin [to kill and humble the old Adam], and not as the compensations of eternal death or as prices for eternal death.

Job is excused because it was not on account of past evil deeds that he was afflicted; therefore afflictions are not always punishments or signs of wrath. Yea, terrified consciences are to be taught, that the other ends of afflictions are the more important [that they should learn to regard troubles far differently, viz. as signs of grace]; so that they are not to think that they are rejected by God, if in afflictions they see nothing except God's punishment and anger. The other more important ends are to be considered, viz. that God is doing his strange work so that he may be able to do his own work, etc., as Isaiah teaches in a long discourse, ch. 28. And when the disciples asked concerning the blind man who sinned, John 9:2, 3, Christ replies that the cause of his blindness is not sin, but "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." And in Jeremiah (49:12) it is said: "They whose judgment was not to drink of the cup, have assuredly drunken." Thus the prophets and John the Baptist and other saints were killed. Wherefore afflictions are not always punishments for certain past deeds, but they are the works of God, intended for our profit, and that the power of God might be made more manifest in our weakness [how he can help in the midst of death].

[198] Thus Paul says (2 Cor. 12:5, 9): "The strength of God is made perfect in my weakness." Therefore, because of God's will, our bodies ought to be sacrifices, to declare our obedience [and patience], and not to compensate for eternal death, for which God has another price, viz. the death of his own Son. And in this sense, Gregory interprets also even the punishment of David when he says: "If God on account of that sin had threatened that he would thus be humbled by his Son, why, when the sin was forgiven, did he fulfill that which he had threatened against him? The reply is that this remission was made that man might not be hindered from receiving eternal life, but that the example of the threatening followed, in order that the piety of the man might be exercised and tested even in this humility. Thus God both inflicted upon man death of body on

account of sin, and, after the remission of sins, for the sake of exercising justice, viz. in order that the righteousness of those who are sanctified, might be exercised and tested, he did not remove the death thus inflicted.”

[199] Nor indeed are common calamities [as war, famine, and such calamities] removed properly by these works of canonical satisfactions, i. e. by these works of human traditions, which, they say, avail *ex opere operato*, in such a way that even though they are wrought in mortal sin, yet they redeem from the punishments. And when the passage of Paul (1 Cor. 11:31) is cited on the other hand: “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged by the Lord” [they conclude therefrom that if we impose punishment upon ourselves, God will judge us the more graciously], the word “to judge” ought to be understood of the entire repentance, and the fruits that are due, and not of those works which are not due. Our adversaries pay the penalty for despising grammar, when they understand “to judge” to be the same as to make a pilgrimage clad in mail to the church of St. James, or similar works. “To judge” signifies the entire repentance, signifies to condemn sins. This condemnation truly occurs in contrition and change of life. The entire repentance, contrition, faith, the good fruits obtain the mitigation of public and private punishments and calamities, as Isaiah teaches, ch. 1:17-19: “Cease to do evil: learn to do well,” etc. “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.” Neither should a most important and salutary doctrine be transferred from the entire repentance, and works, due or commanded by God, to the satisfactions and works of human traditions. And it is profitable to teach, that common evils are mitigated by our repentance, and by the true fruits of repentance, by good works wrought from faith, not, as these men imagine, wrought in mortal sin. And here belongs the example of the Ninevites (Jon. 3:10), who by their repentance (we speak of the entire repentance) were reconciled to God and obtained the favor that their city was not destroyed.

Moreover the making mention, by the Fathers, of satisfaction, and the framing of canons by the councils, we have said above was a matter of Church discipline instituted on account of the example. Nor did they hold that this discipline is necessary, for the remission either of the guilt, or of the punishment. For if in these they made mention of purgatory, they interpret it not as compensation for eternal punishment [which only Christ makes], not as satisfaction, but as purification of imperfect souls. Just as Augustine says that venial [daily] offenses are consumed, i. e. distrust towards God and other similar dispositions are mortified. Now and then, the writers transfer the term satisfaction from the rite itself or spectacle, to signify true mortification. Thus Augustine says: “True satisfaction is to cut off the causes of sin,” i. e. to mortify

the flesh, likewise to restrain the flesh, not in order that eternal punishments may be compensated for, but so that the flesh may not allure to sin.

Thus concerning restitution, Gregory says that repentance is false, “if it do not satisfy those whose property we have taken.” For he who still steals does not truly grieve that he has stolen or robbed. For he is a thief or robber, so long as he is the unjust possessor of the property of another. This civil satisfaction is necessary, because it is written (Eph. 4:28): “Let him that stole, steal no more.” Likewise Chrysostom says: “In the heart, contrition; in the mouth, confession; in the work, entire humility.” This amounts to nothing against us. Good works ought to follow repentance; repentance ought to be not a dissembling, but a change, for the better, of the entire life.

[200] Likewise, the Fathers wrote that it is sufficient, if once in life this public or ceremonial penitence occur, concerning which canonical satisfactions have been made. Wherefore, it can be understood that they held that these canons are not necessary for the remission of sins. For in addition to this penitence according to religious rites, they frequently wish that penitence be rendered otherwise, where canons of satisfactions were not required.

The composers of the Confutation write that the abolition of satisfactions contrary to the plain Gospel, is not to be endured. We, therefore, have thus far shown that these canonical satisfactions, i. e. works not due, and that are to be performed in order to compensate for punishment, have not the command of the Gospel. The subject itself shows this. If works of satisfaction are works which are not due, why do they cite the plain Gospel? For if the Gospel would command that punishments be compensated for by such works, the works would already be due. But they thus speak, in order to impose upon the inexperienced, and they cite testimonies, which speak of works that are due, although they themselves in their own satisfactions prescribe works that are not due. Yea in their schools, they themselves concede that satisfactions can be refused without [mortal] sin. Therefore, they here write falsely that we are compelled by the plain Gospel to undertake these canonical satisfactions.

[201] But we have already frequently testified that repentance;; ought to produce good fruits, and what the good fruits are the [ten] commandments teach [truly and from the heart, to most highly esteem, fear and love God, joyfully to call upon him in need], viz. prayer, thanksgiving, the confession of the Gospel [hearing this word], to teach the Gospel, to obey parents and magistrates, to be faithful to one’s calling, not to kill, not to retain hatred, but to be forgiving [to be agreeable and kind to one’s neighbor], to give to the needy, so far as we can according to our means, not to commit adultery or fornication, but to restrain and bridle and chastise the flesh, not for a compensation of eternal punishment, but



so as not to obey the devil, or offend the Holy Ghost; likewise to speak the truth. These fruits have God's injunction, and ought to be brought forth for the sake of God's glory and command; and they have also rewards. But that eternal punishments are not remitted, except on account of the compensation rendered by certain traditions or by purgatory. Scripture does not teach. Indulgences were formerly remission of these public observances, so that men should not be excessively burdened. But if, by human authority, satisfactions and punishments can be remitted, this compensation, therefore, is not necessary by divine law; for a divine law is not annulled by human authority. Furthermore, since the custom has now of itself become obsolete and the bishops have passed it by in silence, there is no necessity for these remissions. And yet the name "indulgences" remained. And just as satisfactions were understood not with reference to external discipline, but with reference to the compensation of punishment; so indulgences were incorrectly understood to free souls from purgatory. But the keys have not the power of binding and loosing, unless upon earth, according to Matt. 16:19: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Although, as we have said above, the keys have not the power to impose penalties, or to institute rites of worship, but only the command to remit sins to those who are converted, and to convict and excommunicate those who are unwilling to be converted. For just as "to loose" signifies to remit sins, so "to bind" signifies not to remit sins. For Christ speaks of a spiritual kingdom. And the command of God, is that the ministers of the Gospel, should absolve those who are converted, according to Cor. 10:8: "The authority which the Lord hath given us for edification." Wherefore, the reservation of cases is a matter of external government. For there is a reservation of canonical punishment, there is not a reservation of guilt before God in those who are truly converted. Wherefore the adversaries judge aright when they confess that in the article of death, the reservation of cases ought not to hinder absolution.<sup>9</sup>

We have set forth the sum of our doctrine concerning repentance, which we certainly know is godly and salutary to good minds [and highly necessary]. And if good men will compare our doctrine with the very confused discussions of our adversaries, they will perceive that the adversaries have omitted the doctrine concerning faith justifying and consoling godly hearts. They will also see that the adversaries invent many things concerning the merits of attrition, concerning the endless enumeration of offences, concerning satisfactions; they say things agreeing neither with human nor divine law and which not even the adversaries themselves can satisfactorily explain.



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1. Var. continues thus: Absolution is the execution of the benefit of another, and not a judgment. For Christ gave the command to remit sins; this command ministers execute. They have not a command concerning taking cognizance of secret things. This can be understood from the fact that they remit infinite sins, which not even we ourselves, to whom they are remitted, remember. And if the remission would depend upon knowledge, the entire matter would be uncertain. But it does not pertain to the present disputation to determine what sort of jurisdiction the Church has in offenses which are publicly known. For inasmuch as these are known, they are accused by name, and afterwards they are remitted by name, if their author wish to be received by the Church.↵
  2. Confutation, Art. xi.↵
  3. Rom. 2:28 sqq.; Gal. 6:15.↵
  4. Var. continues: Besides, since it is very certain that the remission of sins is gratuitous, or gratuitously granted for Christ's sake, it follows that satisfactions are not required. And the Gospel has the command to gratuitously remit sins, not to impose punishments and new laws, or to impose a part of the punishments, a part being remitted. For where, etc., § 63.↵
  5. These words are from Gabriel Biel, Senten., Lib. iv. dist. 16, qu. 2 notab. 8.↵
  6. Var: Just as elsewhere, as often as works are enjoined, the adversaries interpret them to be satisfactions and propitiations, so here, because mention is made of punishment, they pervert it to satisfaction. Augustine did not hold this, viz. that sorrow in repentance is a price, on account of which the remission of sins is due. For he knew that sins are remitted freely for Christ's sake; he knew that the death of Christ is the sacrifice for our sins. Whatever, therefore, is cited concerning vengeance and concerning punishments ought always to be received, so as not to overturn the free remission of sins, nor to obscure the merit of Christ nor to withdraw men from trust in Christ to trust in works. But we grant that in repentance there is vengeance not as a price, but as vengeance upon our old nature. There are terrors and there are other movements which are aroused against sin, but remission is not due these. Yea if faith would not be added, these sorrows would bring eternal death. It may indeed be very well to say *paenitentia*, provided it be understood as a punishment, and not as a price for which remission is due. And Augustine does not speak of punishments

which the keys remit; and hence it is not right to pervert this expression to satisfactions. He is speaking concerning true punishments, i. e. concerning the terrors and true sorrows of mind which exist in repentance. Nevertheless we do not exclude the outward vexation of the flesh; for this of its own accord follows true Borrowings of mind. And far, etc. In the Germ, much briefer.↵

7. Var. adds: First, in disputing that it is becoming that sin be punished they sufficiently show that they despise Christ's benefit. God has appointed as the price for our sins, not our punishments, not our satisfactions, but the death of his Son. What madness then it is to prefer our satisfactions to the satisfaction of Christ! Secondly, when God punishes with the greatest severity, we must not think that because of such punishment the remission of sins is due; both in order that no injury be done to the benefit of Christ, and because conscience cannot be pacified if the remission of sins is not freely granted. Lastly, when God punishes with the greatest severity, these punishments nevertheless pertain nothing to the keys. They have a command neither concerning imposing, nor remitting such punishments as are works of God. But we grant that God punishes sins, first in contrition, when, sqq.↵
8. Var. thus expresses what follows: For they are inflicted to mortify the present sin; because in saints they extinguish and mortify concupiscence. For in saints death still remains in order to abolish this impure nature. Accordingly Paul says: "The body is dead because of sin," i. e. it is mortified because of present sin still left in the flesh. The cross, therefore, is not a punishment, but an exercise and preparation for renewal. For when the present sin is mortified, and when in the midst of temptations we learn to seek the aid of God, and experience God's presence, we acknowledge more and more distrust in [our own] hearts, and comfort ourselves by faith. Thus newness of spirit increases, as Paul says: "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16). Isaiah likewise says [26:16 as above]. Besides death is truly punishment, when the terrified heart feels the wrath of God, according to the passage:"The sting of death is sin." But when in saints the terrors of sin are overcome by faith, death without this sense of wrath is not properly punishment. Moreover the keys neither impose nor remit these punishments. Wherefore satisfactions do not pertain to these punishments. For the keys do not remit either death or a part of the common afflictions. Now if by satisfactions they compensate for these punishments, why do they bid us make satisfaction in purgatory?↵
9. L. iv. Decretal, 1. v., tit. 9, cap. 5. Clementin, 1. v., tit. 8, cap. 3.↵

## Chapter VII. Of The Number And Use Of The Sacraments.

### XI. Of the Thirteenth Article.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xiii.; *Apology*, Art. xxiv, § 16 sqq.; 68 sq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Art. v.; *Small Catechism*, Of Baptism; *Large Catechism*, Part iv., § 28 sqq.; Part v., § 8 sqq.; *Formula of Concord*. Epitome vii., § 21 sqq.; *Sol. Dec.* vii., § 109 sqq.

[202] In the thirteenth article, the adversaries approve our statement that the sacraments are not only marks of profession among men, as some imagine, but that they are rather signs and testimonies of God's will toward us, through which God moves hearts to believe [are not mere signs, whereby men may recognize each other, as the watchword in war, livery, etc., but are efficacious signs and sure testimonies, etc.]. But here they bid us also count seven sacraments. We hold that it should be maintained that the matters and ceremonies instituted in the Scriptures, whatever the number, be not neglected. Neither do we think that it makes much difference, even though, for the purpose of teaching, others reckon otherwise, provided they still preserve aright the matters handed down in Scripture. Neither have the ancients reckoned in the same manner. [But concerning this number of seven sacraments, the fact is that the Fathers have not been uniform in their enumeration; thus also the seven ceremonies are not equally necessary.]

If we call the sacraments, "rites which have the command of God and to which the promise of grace has been added," it is easy to decide what are properly sacraments. For rites instituted by men will not in this way be sacraments properly so called. For it does not belong to human authority to promise grace. Wherefore signs instituted without God's command, are not sure signs of grace, even though they perhaps instruct the rude [children or the uncultivated], or admonish as to something [as a painted cross]. Therefore *Baptism*, the *Lord's Supper* and *Absolution*,<sup>1</sup> which is the sacrament of repentance, are truly sacraments. For these rites have God's command and the promise of grace, which is peculiar to the New Testament. For when we are baptized, when we eat the Lord's body, when we are absolved, they ought certainly to assure us that God truly forgives us for Christ's sake. And God, at the same time, by the Word and by rites, moves hearts to believe and conceive

faith, just as Paul says (Rom. 10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing.” But just as the Word enters the ears in order to strike hearts; so the rite itself meets the eyes, in order to move hearts. The effect of the Word and of the rite is the same, as it has been well said by Augustine that a sacrament is “a visible word,”<sup>2</sup> because the rite is received by the eyes, and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, signifying the same thing as the Word. Wherefore the effect of both is the same.

[203] *Confirmation* and *Extreme Unction* are rites received from the Fathers, which not even the Church requires as necessary to salvation, because they do not have God’s command. Besides it is not useless to distinguish these rites from the former, which have God’s express command and a clear promise of grace.

The adversaries understand *priesthood* not of the ministry; cf the Word, and administering the sacraments to others, but they understand it as referring to sacrifice; as though in the New Testament there ought to be a priesthood like the Levitical, to sacrifice for the people, and merit the remission of sins for others. We teach that the sacrifice of Christ dying on the cross has been sufficient for the sins of the whole world, and that there is no need besides of other sacrifices, as though this were not sufficient for our sins. Men<sup>3</sup> accordingly are justified not because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ, if they believe that they have been redeemed by this sacrifice. They are accordingly called priests, not in order to make any sacrifices for the people as in the Law, so that by these they may merit remission of sins for the people; but they are called to teach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to the people. Nor do we have another priesthood like the Levitical, as the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>4</sup> sufficiently teaches. But if ordination be understood as applying to the ministry of the Word, we are not unwilling to call ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has God’s command and glorious promises (Rom. 1:16): “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Likewise, (Isa. 55:11): “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.” If ordination be understood in this way, neither will we refuse to call the imposition of hands a sacrament. For the Church has the command to appoint ministers, which should be most pleasing to us, because we know that God approves this ministry, and is present in the ministry [that God will preach and work through men and those who have been chosen by men]. And it is of advantage, so far as can be done, to adorn the ministry of the Word with every kind of praise against fanatical men, who dream that the Holy Ghost is given not through the Word, but because of certain preparations of their own, if they sit unoccupied and silent in obscure places, waiting for illumination, as the enthusiasts formerly taught, and the Anabaptists now teach.

[204] *Matrimony* was not first instituted in the New Testament, but in the beginning, immediately on the creation of the human race. It has moreover God's command; it has also promises, not indeed properly pertaining to the New Testament, but pertaining rather to the bodily life. Wherefore, if any one should wish to call it a sacrament, he however ought to distinguish it from those preceding ones [the two former ones], which are properly signs of the New Testament, and testimonies of grace and the remission of sins. But if marriage will have the name of sacrament for the reason that it has God's command, other states or offices also, which have God's command, may be called sacraments, as for example the magistracy.

Lastly, if among the sacraments, all things ought to be numbered which have God's command, and to which promises have been added, why do we not add prayer, which most truly can be called a sacrament? For it has both God's command and very many promises; and if placed among the sacraments, as though in a more eminent place, it would invite men to pray. Alms could also be reckoned here, and likewise afflictions, which are even themselves signs, to which God has added promises. But let us omit these things. For no prudent man will strive greatly concerning a number or term, if the objects still be retained which have God's command and promises.

[205] It is still more needful to understand *how the sacraments are to be used*. Here we condemn the whole crowd of scholastic<sup>5</sup> doctors, who teach that the sacraments confer grace *ex opere operato* without a good disposition on the part of the one using them, provided he do not place a hindrance in the way. This is absolutely a Jewish opinion, to hold that we are justified by a ceremony, without a good disposition of heart, i. e. without faith. And yet this impious and pernicious opinion is taught with great authority throughout the entire realm of the Pope. Paul contradicts this, and denies (Rom. 4:9) that Abraham was justified by circumcision, but asserts that circumcision was a sign presented for exercising faith. Thus we teach that in the use of the sacraments faith ought to be added, which should believe these promises, and receive the promised things which are there offered in the sacraments. And the reason is plain and thoroughly grounded. The promise is useless, unless it be received by faith. But the sacraments are the signs [and seals] of the promises. Therefore in the use of the sacraments *faith* ought to be added, so that if any one use the Lord's Supper, he use it thus. Because this is a sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says,<sup>6</sup> he ought for this very reason to be confident that what is promised in the New Testament, viz. the free remission of sins, is offered him. And let him receive this by faith, let him comfort his alarmed conscience, and know that these testimonies are not fallacious, but as sure as though [and still surer than if]

God by a new miracle would declare from heaven that it was his will to grant forgiveness. But of what advantage would these miracles and promises be to an unbeliever? And here we speak of *special faith* which believes the present promise, not only that which in general believes that God exists, but which believes that the remission of sins is offered. This use of the sacrament consoles godly and alarmed minds.

Moreover no one can express in words what abuses in the Church this fanatical opinion concerning the *opus operatum* without a good disposition on the part of the one using the sacraments, has produced. Hence, the profanation of the Masses is infinite; but of this we will speak below. Neither can a single letter be produced from the old writers which in this matter favors the scholastics. Yea Augustine says the contrary, that the faith of the sacrament, and not the sacrament justifies. And the declaration of Paul is well known (Rom. 10:10): “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”

## **XII. Of the Fourteenth Article (Ecclesiastical Orders).**

*Parallel Passages.* — Augsburg Confession, Art. xiv.; Smalcald Articles Part iii., Art. x.; of the Power of Pope, § 60 sqq., p. 340.

[206] The fourteenth article, in which we say that the administration of the sacraments and Word, in the Church, ought to be allowed no one *unless he be rightly called*, they receive in such a way as though we nevertheless employ canonical ordination. Concerning this subject, we have frequently testified in this assembly<sup>7</sup> that it is our greatest wish to maintain Church polity and the grades in the Church, even though they have been made by human authority [provided the bishops allow our doctrine and receive our priests]. For we know that Church discipline was instituted by the Fathers, in the manner laid down in the ancient canons, with a good and useful intention. But the bishops either compel our priests to reject and condemn the kinds of doctrine which we have confessed, or, by a new and unheard-of cruelty, they put to death the poor innocent men. These causes hinder our priests from acknowledging such bishops. Thus the cruelty of the bishops is the reason why that canonical government, which we greatly desired to maintain, is in some places dissolved. Let them see to it how they will give an account to God for dispersing the Church. In this matter, our consciences are not in danger, because since we know that our confession is true, godly and catholic, we ought not to approve the cruelty of those who persecute this doctrine. And we know that the Church is with those who teach the Word of God

aright, and administer the sacraments aright, and not with those who not only by their edicts endeavor to efface God's Word, but also put to death those who teach what is right and true; towards whom, even though they do something contrary to the canons, yet the very canons are milder. Furthermore, we wish here again to testify that we will gladly maintain ecclesiastical and canonical order, provided the bishops only cease to rage against our Churches. This our desire will clear us both before God and among all nations to all posterity from the imputation against us, that the authority of the bishops is being undermined, when men read and hear, that, although protesting against the unrighteous cruelty of the bishops, we could not obtain justice.

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1. Cf. Apology, Art. xi.; Art. xii., § 39 sqq.; and, on the other hand Large Catechism, Part iv.: § 1, p. 485.↵
2. Augustine on John, Tract 80: § 3: "The Word comes to the sacrament, even though it is itself a visible Word."↵
3. Germ. omits until § 16.↵
4. See Chapters VII.-X.↵
5. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part iii., Art. viii., p. 321; Formula of Concord pp. 588, 608.↵
6. Luke 22:20.↵
7. Especially in conferences from Aug. 16.↵



## Chapter VIII. Of Human Traditions in the Church.

### XIII. Of the Fifteenth Article.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xv., vii.: 3; xxvi.; xxviii § 30 sqq.; *Apology*, Chap. iv., Art. vii., § 30 sqq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Art. xv. *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome*, Art. x.; *Sol. Dec. do.*

In the fifteenth article, they receive the first part, in which we say that such *ecclesiastical rites* are to be observed as can be observed without sin, and are of profit in the Church for tranquility and good order. They altogether condemn the second part, in which we say that human traditions instituted to appease God, to merit grace, and make satisfactions for sins are contrary to the Gospel. Although in the Confession itself, when treating of the distinction of meats,<sup>1</sup> we have spoken at sufficient length concerning traditions, yet certain things should be briefly recounted here.

[207] Although we supposed that the adversaries would defend human traditions on other grounds, yet we did not think that this would come to pass, viz. that they would condemn this article: that we do not merit the remission of sins or grace by the observance of human traditions. Since, therefore, this article has been condemned, we have an easy and plain case. The adversaries are now openly Judaizing, are openly suppressing the Gospel by the doctrines of demons,<sup>2</sup> when it is taught that religious rites are serviceable to merit the remission of sins and grace. For they are then obscuring the Gospel, the benefit of Christ, and the righteousness of faith. [For they are just as directly contrary to Christ, and to the Gospel, as are fire and water to one another.] The Gospel teaches that by faith we receive freely for Christ's sake the remission of sins, and are reconciled to God. The adversaries, on the other hand, appoint another mediator, viz. these traditions. On account of these, they wish to acquire remission of sins; on account of these, they wish to appease God's wrath. But Christ clearly says (Matt. 15:9): "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

We have above discussed at length that men are justified by faith, when they believe that they have God reconciled, not because of our works, but gratuitously for Christ's sake. It is certain that this is the doctrine of the Gospel, because Paul clearly teaches (Eph. 2:8, 9): "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works." Now these men say, that men



merit the remission of sins by these human observances. What else is this but to appoint another justifier, another mediator in addition to Christ? Paul says to the Galatians (5:4): “Christ has become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law;” i. e, if you hold that by the observance of the Law you merit to be accounted righteous before God, Christ will profit you nothing, because what need of Christ have those who hold that they are righteous by their own observance of the Law? God has set forth Christ with the promise that on account of this Mediator, and not on account of our righteousness, he wishes to be propitious to us. But these men hold that God is reconciled and propitious, because of the traditions, and not because of Christ. Therefore, they take away from Christ the honor of Mediator. Neither, so far as this matter is concerned, is there any difference between our traditions and the ceremonies of Moses. Paul condemns the ceremonies of Moses, just as he condemns traditions, for the reason that they were regarded works which merit righteousness before God. Thus the office of Christ and the righteousness of faith were obscured. Wherefore the Law being removed, and traditions being removed, he contends that the remission of sins has been promised not because of our works, but freely because of Christ, provided that by faith we receive it. For the promise is not received unless by faith. Since, therefore, by faith we receive the remission of sins, since by faith we have God propitious to us for Christ’s sake, it is an error and impiety to think that, because of these observances, we merit the remission of sins. If any one should say here that we do not merit the remission of sins, but that those who have already been justified by these traditions merit grace; Paul here again replies (Gal. 2:17) that Christ would be the minister of sin, if after justification we must hold that we are not even then accounted righteous for Christ’s sake, but we ought first, by other observances, to merit that we be accounted righteous. Likewise (Gal. 3:15): “Though it be but a man’s covenant, no man addeth thereto.” Therefore, neither to God’s covenant who promises that for Christ’s sake he will be propitious to us, ought we to add that we must first through these observances attain such merit as to be accounted accepted and righteous.

[208] Although what need is there of a long discussion? No tradition was instituted by the holy Fathers with the design that it should merit the remission of sins or righteousness, but they have been instituted for the sake of good order in the Church and for the sake of tranquility. And when any one wishes to institute certain works to merit the remission of sins or righteousness, how will he know that these works please God, since he has not the testimony of God’s Word? How without God’s Word and command will he render men certain of God’s will? Does he not everywhere in the prophets prohibit men from

instituting without his commandment peculiar rites of worship? In Ez. 20:18, 19, it is written: "Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the Lord our God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them." If men are allowed to institute religious rites, and through these rites merit grace, the religious rites of all the heathen will have to be approved, and the rites instituted by Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:26 sq.), and by others, in addition to the Law, will have to be approved. For what difference does it make? If we have been allowed to institute religious rites that are profitable for meriting grace, or righteousness, why was the same not allowed the heathen and the Israelites? But the religious rites of the heathen and the Israelites were rejected for the very reason that they held that by these they merited remission of sins and righteousness, and yet did not know [the highest service of God] the righteousness of faith. Lastly, whence are we rendered certain, that rites, instituted by men without God's command, justify, inasmuch as nothing can be affirmed of God's will without God's Word? What if God does not approve these services? How, therefore, do the adversaries affirm that they justify? Without God's Word and testimony, this cannot be affirmed. And Paul says (Rom. 14:23): "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." But as these services have no testimony of God's Word, conscience must doubt as to whether they please God.

[209] And what need is there of words on a subject so manifest? If the adversaries defend these human services as meriting justification, grace and the remission of sins, they absolutely establish the kingdom of Antichrist. For the kingdom of Antichrist is a new service of God, devised by human authority rejecting Christ, just as the kingdom of Mohammed has services, and works through which it wishes to be justified before God, nor does it hold that men are gratuitously justified before God for Christ's sake. Thus the Papacy also will be a part of the kingdom of Antichrist, if it thus defends human services as justifying. For honor is taken away from Christ when they teach that we are not justified gratuitously by faith for Christ's sake, but by such services; especially when they teach that such services are not only useful for justification, but are also necessary, as they hold above in Art. vii. where they condemn us for saying, that, to the true unity of the Church, it is not necessary that rites instituted by man should be everywhere alike. Daniel (11:38) indicates that new human services will be the very form and constitution of the kingdom of Antichrist. For he says thus: "But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces; and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold and silver and precious stones." Here he describes new services, because he says that such a god shall be worshiped as the fathers were ignorant of. For although the holy Fathers

themselves had both rites and traditions, yet they did not hold that these matters are useful or necessary for justification; they did not obscure the glory and office of Christ, but taught that we are justified by faith for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of these human services. But they observed human rites for the sake of bodily advantage, so that the people might know at what time they should assemble; so that, for the sake of example, all things in the churches might be done in order and becomingly. For the distinctions of times and the variety of rites are of service in admonishing the common people. The Fathers had these reasons for maintaining the rites,<sup>3</sup> and for these reasons we also judge that it is right that traditions [good customs] be maintained. And we are greatly surprised that the adversaries [against the entire Scriptures of the Apostles, against the Old and New Testaments] contend for another design of traditions, viz. that they may merit the remission of sins, grace or justification. What else is this than to honor God "with gold and silver and precious stones?" [as Daniel says], i. e. to hold that God becomes reconciled by a variety in clothing, ornaments and by similar rites [many kinds of church decorations, banners, tapers], as are infinite in human traditions.

[210] Paul writes to the Colossians (2:23) that traditions have "a show of wisdom." And they indeed have. For this good order is very becoming in the Church, and for this reason is necessary. But human reason, because it does not understand the righteousness of faith, naturally imagines that such works justify men because they reconcile God, etc. Thus the common people among the Israelites thought, and by this opinion increased such ceremonies, just as among us they have grown in the monasteries [as in our time, one altar after another and one church after another is founded]. Thus human reason judges also of bodily exercises, of fasts; although the end of these is to restrain the flesh, reason imagines the end to be, that they may be services which justify. As Thomas writes: "Fasting avails for the extinguishing and the prevention of guilt." These are the words of Thomas. Thus the semblance of wisdom and righteousness in such works deceives men. And the examples of the saints are added [when they say: St. Francis wore a cap, etc.]; while they desire to imitate these men, they imitate for the most part the outward exercises; their faith they do not imitate.

After this semblance of wisdom and righteousness has deceived men, then infinite evils follow; the Gospel concerning the righteousness of faith in Christ is obscured, and vain confidence in such works succeeds. Then the commandments of God are obscured; these works arrogate to themselves the title of a perfect and spiritual life, and are far preferred to the works of God's commandment [the true, holy, good works], as the works of one's own calling, the administration of the state, the management of a family, married life, the bringing up of children.

Compared with these ceremonies the former are judged to be profane, so that they are exercised by many with some doubts of conscience. For it is evident that many, the administration of the state and marriage being abandoned, have embraced these observances as better and holier [have gone into cloisters in order to become holy and spiritual].

[211] Nor is this enough. When the persuasion has taken possession of minds that such observances are necessary to justification, consciences are in miserable anxiety because they cannot exactly fulfill all observances. For how many are there who could enumerate all these observances? There are immense books, yea whole libraries, containing not a syllable concerning Christ, concerning faith in Christ, concerning the good works of one's own calling, but which only collect the traditions and interpretations by which they are sometimes augmented and sometimes relaxed. [They write of such precepts, as of fasting for forty days, the four canonical hours for prayer, etc.] How that most excellent man, Gerson, is tortured while he searches for the grades and extent of the precepts! Nevertheless, he is not able to fix, *ἐπιχειρία* [*alleviation, equity*] in any grade [and yet cannot find any sure grade where he could confidently promise the heart assurance and peace]. Meanwhile, he sometimes deplores the dangers of godly consciences, which this rigid interpretation of tradition produces.

Against this semblance of wisdom and righteousness in human rites, which deceives men, let us therefore fortify ourselves by the Word of God, and be assured that these neither merit before God the remission of sins or justification, nor are necessary for justification. We have above cited some testimonies. And Paul is full. To the Colossians (2:16, 17) he clearly says: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." But this embraces at the same time both the Law of Moses and human traditions, in order that the adversaries may not elude these testimonies, according to their custom, upon the ground that Paul is speaking only of the Law of Moses. He indeed testifies here clearly that he is speaking of human traditions. Although the adversaries do not see what they are saying; if the Gospel says that the ceremonies of Moses, which were divinely instituted, do not justify, how much less do human traditions justify!

[212] Neither have the bishops the power to institute services, as though they justify, or are necessary for justification. Yea the apostles (Acts 15:10) say: "Why tempt ye God to put a yoke," etc., where Peter declares this purpose to burden the Church a great sin. And Paul forbids the Galatians (5:1) to "be entangled again with the yoke of bondage," The apostles wish therefore that this liberty remain in the Church, that no services of the Law or of traditions may be

judged to be necessary (just as in the Law ceremonies were for a time necessary), lest the righteousness of faith may be obscured, if men judge that these services merit justification, or are necessary for justification. Many seek in traditions various *ἐπιχειρᾶς* [alleviations] in order to heal consciences; and yet they do not find any sure grades by which to free consciences from these chains. But just as Alexander once loosened the Gordian knot by cutting it with his sword when he could not disentangle it, so the apostles once for all free consciences from traditions, especially if they are taught for meriting justification. The apostles compel us to oppose this doctrine by teaching and examples. They compel us to teach that traditions do not justify; that they are not necessary for justification; that no one ought to frame or receive traditions with the opinion that they merit justification. Then even though any one should observe them, let him observe them without superstition as civil customs, just as without superstition soldiers are clothed in one way, and scholars in another. [As I regard my wearing of a German costume among the Germans, and a French costume among the French, as an observance of the usage of the land, and not for the purpose thereby of being saved.] The apostles violate traditions and are excused by Christ.<sup>4</sup> For the example was to be shown the Pharisees that these services are unprofitable. And if our people neglect some traditions that are of little advantage, they are now sufficiently excused, when these are required as though they merit justification. For such an opinion with regard to traditions is impious [an error not to be endured].

[213] But we cheerfully maintain the old traditions [as the three high festivals, the observance of Sunday and the like] made in the Church for the sake of usefulness and tranquility; and we interpret them in a more moderate way, to the exclusion of the opinion which holds that they justify. And our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and Church discipline. For we can truly declare that the public form of the churches is more becoming with us than with the adversaries [that the true worship of God is observed in our churches in a more Christian, honorable way]. And if any one will consider it aright, we conform to the canons more truly than do the adversaries. With the adversaries, unwilling celebrants, and those hired for pay, and very frequently only for pay, celebrate the Masses. They sing psalms, not that they may learn or pray [for the greater part do not understand a verse in the psalms], but for the sake of the service, as though this work were a service, or at least a cause of reward. With us man) use the Lord's Supper [willingly and without constraint] every Lord's Day, but after having been first instructed, examined and absolved. The children sing psalms in order that they may learn [become familiar with passages of Scripture];<sup>5</sup> the people also sing, in order that they may either learn

or pray. With the adversaries there is no catechization of the children whatever, concerning which even the canons give instructions.<sup>6</sup> With us the pastors and ministers of the churches are compelled publicly [and privately] to instruct and hear the youth; and this ceremony produces the best fruits. [And the Catechism is not a mere childish thing, as is the bearing of banners and tapers, but instruction that will always be profitable.] Among the adversaries, in many regions [as in Italy and Spain] during the entire year no sermons are delivered, except in Lent. But the chief service of God is to teach the Gospel. And when the adversaries do preach, they speak of human traditions, of the worship of saints [of consecrated water] and similar trifles, which the people justly loath; therefore, they are deserted immediately in the beginning, after the text of the Gospel has been recited. A few better ones begin now to speak of good works, but of the righteousness of faith, of faith in Christ, of the consolation of consciences, they say nothing; yea this most wholesome part of the Gospel they rail at with their reproaches. [This blessed doctrine, the precious holy Gospel, they call Lutheran.] On the contrary, in our churches all the sermons are occupied with such topics as these; of repentance, of the fear of God, of faith in Christ, of the righteousness of faith, of the consolation of consciences by faith, of the exercises of faith, of prayer, what its nature should be, and that we should be fully confident that it is efficacious, that it is heard, of the cross, of the authority of magistrates and all civil ordinances [likewise how each one in his station should live in a Christian way, and, out of obedience to the command of the Lord God, should conduct himself in reference to every worldly ordinance and law], of the distinction between the kingdom of Christ, or the spiritual kingdom, and political affairs, of marriage, of the education and instruction of children, of chastity, of all the offices of love. From this condition of the churches, it can be judged that we diligently maintain Church discipline and godly ceremonies and good Church customs.

[214] And of the mortification of the flesh, and discipline of the body, we thus teach, just as the Confession states,<sup>7</sup> that a true and not a feigned mortification occurs through the cross, and afflictions by which God exercises us [when God breaks our will, inflicts the cross and trouble]. In these we must obey God's will, as Paul says (Rom. 12:1); "Present your bodies a living sacrifice." And these are the spiritual exercises of fear and faith. But in addition to this mortification which occurs through the cross [which does not depend upon our will] there is also a voluntary kind of exercise necessary, of which Christ says (Luke 21:34): "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting." And Paul (1 Cor. 9:27): "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," etc. And these exercises are to be undertaken not

because they are services that justify, but in order to curb the flesh, lest fulness may overpower us, and render us secure and indifferent, the result of which is that men indulge and obey the dispositions of the flesh. This diligence ought to be perpetual, because it has the perpetual command of God. And this prescribed form of certain meats and times does nothing [as experience shows] towards curbing the flesh. For it is more luxurious and sumptuous than other feasts [for they practiced greater gluttony with fish and various Lenten meats than when the fasts were not observed], and not even the adversaries observe the form given in the canons.

This topic concerning traditions contains many and difficult questions of controversy, and we have actually experienced that traditions are truly snares of consciences. When they are exacted as necessary, they torture in wonderful ways the conscience omitting any observance [as godly hearts indeed experience when in canonical hours they have omitted a compline or offended against them in a similar way]. Again their abrogation has its own evils, and its own questions. [On the other hand, to teach absolute freedom has also its considerations and questions, according as the common people need outward discipline and instruction.] But we have an easy and plain case, because the adversaries condemn us for teaching that human traditions do not merit the remission of sins. Likewise they require universal traditions, as they thus call them, as necessary for justification [and place them in Christ's stead]. Here we have Paul as a constant champion, who everywhere contends that these observances neither justify, nor are necessary in addition to the righteousness of faith. And nevertheless we teach that in these matters the use of liberty is to be so controlled, that the inexperienced may not be offended, and, on account of the abuse of liberty, may not become more hostile to the true doctrine of the Gospel, or that without a reasonable cause nothing in customary rites be changed, but that in order to cherish harmony such old customs be observed which can be observed without sin or without great inconvenience. And in this very assembly we have shown sufficiently that for love's sake we do not refuse to observe adiaphora with others, even though they should have some disadvantage, but we have judged that such public harmony as could indeed be produced without offense to consciences ought to be preferred to all other advantages [all other less important matters]. But concerning this entire subject we will speak later, when we will treat of vows and ecclesiastical power.<sup>8</sup>

#### **XIV. Of the Sixteenth Article (Civil or Political Order).**

[215] The sixteenth article the adversaries receive without any exception, in which we have confessed that it is lawful for the Christian to bear civil office, sit in judgment, determine matters by the imperial laws, and other laws in present force, appoint just punishments, engage in just wars, act as a soldier, make legal contracts, hold property, take an oath when magistrates require it, contract marriage; finally, that legitimate civil ordinances are good creatures of God and divine ordinances, which a Christian can use with safety. This entire topic *concerning the distinction between the kingdom of Christ and a political kingdom* has been explained to advantage [to the remarkably great consolation of many consciences] in the literature of our writers, [viz.] that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, to wit, that it is in the heart the knowledge of God, and fear and faith in God, beginning eternal righteousness and eternal life; meanwhile it permits us outwardly to use legitimate political ordinances of every nation in which we live, just as it permits us to use medicine or the art of building, or food, drink, air. Neither does the Gospel bring new laws concerning the civil state, but commands that we obey present laws, whether they have been framed by heathen or by others, and that in this obedience we should exercise love. For Carlstadt was insane in imposing upon us the judicial laws of Moses. Concerning these subjects, our theologians have written more fully, because the monks diffused many pernicious opinions in the Church. They called a community of property the polity of the Gospel; they gave the advice not to hold property, not to vindicate one's self at law [not to have wife and child]. These opinions greatly obscure the Gospel and the spiritual kingdom, and are dangerous to the commonwealth. For the Gospel does not destroy the Church or the family [buying, selling and other civil regulations], but much rather approves them, and bids us obey them as a divine ordinance, not only on account of punishment, but also on account of conscience.

[216] Julian the apostate, Celsus and very many others made the objection to Christians, that the Gospel would rend asunder states, because it prohibited legal redress, and taught certain other things not at all suited to political association. And these questions wonderfully exercised Origen, Nazianzen and others, although indeed they can be most readily explained, if we keep in mind the fact that the Gospel does not introduce laws concerning the civil state, but is the remission of sins, and the beginning of a new life in the hearts of believers; besides that it not only approves outward governments, but subjects us to them (Rom, 13:1), just as we have been necessarily placed under the laws of seasons,



the changes of winter and summer, as divine ordinances. The Gospel forbids private redress, and Christ inculcates this so frequently with the design that the apostles should not think that they ought to seize the governments from those who held otherwise, just as the Jews dreamed concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, but that they might know that they ought to teach concerning the spiritual kingdom that it does not change the civil state. Therefore private redress is prohibited not by advice, but by a command (Matt. 6:39; Rom. 12:19). Public redress, which is made through the office of the magistrate, is not advised against, but is commanded, and is a work of God, according to Paul (Rom. 13:1 sqq.). Now the different kinds of public redress are legal decisions, capital punishment, wars, military service. Concerning these matters, how incorrectly many writers have judged is manifest from the fact that they have been in the error that the Gospel is an external, new and monastic form of government, and that they have not seen that the Gospel brings eternal righteousness to hearts, while it outwardly approves the civil state.

[217] It is also a most vain delusion that it is Christian perfection not to hold property. For Christian perfection consists not in the contempt of civil ordinances, but in dispositions of the heart, in great fear of God, in great faith, just as Abraham, David, Daniel, even in great wealth and while exercising civil power, were no less perfect than any hermits. But the monks have extended this outward hypocrisy before the eyes of men, so that it could not be seen in what things true perfection exists. With what praises have they brought forward this communion of property, as though it were evangelical! But these praises have the greatest danger, especially since they differ much from the Scriptures. For Scripture does not command that property be common, but the Law of the Decalogue, when it says (Ex. 20:15): “Thou shalt not steal,” distinguishes rights of ownership, and commands each one to hold what is his own. Wickliffe manifestly was out of his mind when he said that priests were not allowed to hold property. There are infinite discussions concerning contracts, in reference to which good consciences can never be satisfied unless they know the rule that it is lawful for a Christian to make use of civil ordinances and laws. This rule protects consciences when it teaches that contracts are lawful before God just to the extent that the magistrates or laws approve them.

This entire topic concerning civil affairs has been so clearly set forth by our theologians, that very many good men occupied in the state and in business have declared that they have been greatly benefited, who before, troubled by the opinion of the monks, were in doubt as to whether the Gospel allowed these civil offices and business. Accordingly we have recounted these things in order that those without also may understand, that by the kind of doctrine which we follow,

the influence of magistrates and the authority of all civil ordinances are not undermined, but are much the more strengthened [and that it is only this doctrine which gives true instruction, as to how eminently glorious an office, full of good Christian works, the office of ruling is]. The importance of these matters was greatly obscured before by those silly monastic opinions, which far preferred the hypocrisy of poverty and humility to the state and the family, although these have God's command, while this Satanic communion [monasticism] has not God's command.

## **XV. Of the Seventeenth Article (The Return of Christ to Judgment).**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XVII.; *The Apostles' Creed*; *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xvii.; *Small Catechism*, Creed, Art. ii.; *Large Catechism*, Creed, Art ii.; *Lord's Prayer*, *Petition ii.*

The seventeenth article the adversaries receive without exception, in which we confess that in the consummation of the world Christ shall appear and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give to the godly eternal life and eternal joys, but shall condemn the ungodly to be punished with the devil without end.

## **XVI. Of the Eighteenth Article (Free Will.)**

*Parallel Passages.*— Art. XVIII.: *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xviii.; xx. 31-34; *Apology*, Art. iv.: sq.; iv. (III.) "Of Love and the Fulfilling," § 17 sq.; § 17 sq; § 169 sq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part iii., Art. i.; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome and Sol. Dec.* ii., *Of Free Will.*

[218] The eighteenth article Of Free Will the adversaries receive; although they add some testimonies not at all adapted to this case. They add also a declaration that neither with the Pelagians is too much be granted to the free will, nor with the Manicheans is all freedom to be denied it. Very well; but what difference is there between the Pelagians and our adversaries, since both hold that, without the Holy Ghost, men can love God and perform God's commandments with respect to the substance of the acts, and can merit grace and justification by works which reason performs by itself without the Holy Ghost? How many absurdities follow from these Pelagian opinions, which are taught with great authority in the schools! These Augustine, following Paul, refutes with great emphasis, whose judgment we have recounted above in the article *Of Justification*, Nor indeed do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will

has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works, it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service in outward works, obey magistrates, parents; by a choice in outward works can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls that righteousness of the flesh<sup>9</sup> which the carnal nature, i. e. reason by itself without the Holy Ghost, renders. Although the power of concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, as Paul says (Eph. 2:2), does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offenses. These are the reasons why even civil righteousness is rare among men, as we see that not even the philosophers themselves, who seem to have aspired after this righteousness, attained it. But it is false that the man does not sin, who performs the works of the commandments without grace. And they add further that such works merit *de congruo*<sup>10</sup> the remission of sins and justification. For human hearts without the Holy Ghost are without the fear of God; without trust toward God, they do not believe that they are hearkened to, forgiven, benefited, and preserved by God. Therefore they are godless. For “neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt. 7:18). And “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6).

Therefore, although we concede to free will the liberty and power to perform the outward works of the Law, yet to the free will we do not ascribe these spiritual matters, viz. truly to fear God, truly to believe God, truly to be confident and hold that God regards us, hearkens to us, forgives us, etc. These are the true works of the First Table, which the heart cannot render without the Holy Ghost, as Paul says (1 Cor. 2:14): “The natural man,” i. e. man using only natural strength, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” And this can be decided if men consider how hearts are disposed toward God’s will, whether they are truly confident that they are regarded and hearkened to by God. Even for saints to retain this faith is difficult, so far is it from existing in the godless. But it is conceived, as we have said above, when terrified hearts hear the Gospel and receive consolation [when we are born anew of the Holy Ghost, as is said above].

Therefore such a distribution is of advantage, in which civil righteousness is ascribed to the free will, and spiritual righteousness to the governing of the Holy Ghost in the regenerate. For thus the outward discipline is retained, because all men ought to know equally both that God requires this civil righteousness, and

that after a manner we can afford it. And yet a distinction is shown between human and spiritual righteousness, between philosophical doctrine and the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and it can be understood for what there is need of the Holy Ghost. Nor has this distribution been invented by us, but Scripture most clearly teaches it. Augustine also treats of it, and recently it has been well treated of by William of Paris, but it has been wickedly suppressed by those who have dreamt that men can obey God's law without the Holy Ghost, but that the Holy Ghost is given in order that respect to that which is meritorious may be added.

## **XVII. Of the Nineteenth Article (The Cause of Sin).**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XIX.: Augsburg Confession, Art. xix.; Formula of Concord, Epitome, i: 22; Sol. Dec, i.:26 sqq.; xi. 81.

The nineteenth article the adversaries receive, in which we confess that although God only and alone has framed all nature, and preserves all things which exist, yet the cause of sin is the will in the devil and men, turning itself away from God, according to the saying of Christ concerning the devil (John 8:44): "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh it of his own."

## **XVIII. Of the Twentieth Article (Good Works).**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XX.: Augsburg Confession, Art. xx Compare Arts, iv., vi., xii.; Apology (Art. iii.); Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xiii. Formula of Concord, Epitome, Art iv.; Sol. Dec, Art. iii., § 35 sq.; Sol. Dec. Art. iv.

[220] In the twentieth article they distinctly lay down these words, viz. that they reject and condemn our statement that men do not merit the remission of sins by good works. This article they clearly declare that they reject and condemn. What is to be said on a subject so manifest? Here the framers of the Confutation openly show by what spirit they are led. For what in the Church is more certain than that the remission of sins occurs freely for Christ's sake, that Christ and not our works is the propitiation for sins, as Peter says (Acts 10; 43): "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins?" To this Church of the prophets we would rather assent than to these abandoned writers of the Confutation, who so impudently blaspheme Christ. For although there were writers who held that after the remission of sins men are just before God, not by faith, but by works themselves,

yet they did not hold this, viz. that the remission of sins itself occurs on account of our works, and not freely for Christ's sake.

[221] Therefore the blasphemy of ascribing Christ's honor to our works is not to be endured. These theologians are now entirely without shame, if they dare to bring such an opinion into the Church. Nor do we doubt that His Most Excellent Imperial Majesty and very many of the princes will not allow this passage of the Confutation to remain, if they be admonished of it. On this topic we could cite infinite testimonies from Scripture and from the Fathers. But above we have quoted a sufficient number on this subject. And there is no need of more testimonies for one who knows why Christ has been given to us, who knows that Christ is the propitiation for our sins. [Godfearing, pious hearts that know well why Christ has been given, who for all the possessions and kingdoms of the world would not be without Christ as our only treasure, our only Mediator and Redeemer, must here be shocked and terrified, that God's holy word and truth should be so openly despised and condemned by poor men.] Isaiah says (53:6). "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all."\* The adversaries on the other hand teach that God hath laid our iniquities not on Christ, but on our works. Neither are we disposed to mention here the sort of works [rosaries, pilgrimages and the like] which they teach. We see that a horrible decree<sup>11</sup> has been prepared against us, which would terrify us still more if we were contending concerning doubtful or trifling subjects. Now since our consciences understand that by the adversaries the manifest truth is condemned, whose defense is necessary for the Church, and increases the glory of Christ; we easily despise the terrors of the world, and patiently will bear whatever is to be suffered for the glory of Christ and the advantage of the Church. Who would not rejoice to die in the confession of such articles as that we obtain the remission of sins by faith freely for Christ's sake, that we do not merit the remission of sins by our works? The consciences of the pious will have no sufficiently sure consolation against the terrors of sin and of death, and against the devil soliciting to despair [and who in a moment blows away all our works like dust], if they do not know that they ought to be confident that they have the remission of sins freely for Christ's sake. This faith sustains and quickens hearts in the most violent conflict with despair [when no creature can help, yea, when we must depart from this entire visible creation into another state and world, and must die].

[222] Therefore the cause is one which is worthy that for its sake we should refuse no danger. "Do not yield to the wicked, but on the contrary go forward the more boldly,"<sup>12</sup> whosoever thou art who hast assented to our confession, when the adversaries endeavor, by means of terrors and tortures and punishments, to drive away from thee that consolation which has been tendered to the entire

Church in this article of ours. Testimonies of Scripture will not be wanting to one seeking them, which will establish his mind. For Paul with his entire voice, as the saying is, cries out (Rom. 3:24 sq., and 4:16), that sins are freely remitted for Christ's sake. "It is of faith," he says, "that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure." That is, if the promise would depend upon our works, it would not be sure. If remission of sins would be given on account of our works, when would we know that we had obtained this, when would a terrified conscience find a work which it would consider as sufficient to appease God's wrath? But we have above spoken of the entire matter. Thence let the reader derive testimonies. For the unworthy treatment of the subject has forced from us the present, not discussion, but complaint that on this topic they have distinctly recorded themselves as disapproving of this article of ours, that we obtain remission of sins not on account of our works, but by faith and freely on account of Christ.

The adversaries also add testimonies to their own condemnation; and it is worth while to recite several of them. They quote from Peter (2 Ep. 1:10): "Give diligence to make your calling sure," etc. Now you see, reader, that our adversaries have not wasted labor in learning logic, but have the art of inferring from the Scriptures whatever pleases them. "Make your calling sure by good works." Therefore works merit the remission of sins. A very striking mode of reasoning, if one would argue thus concerning a person sentenced to capital punishment, whose punishment has been remitted: "The magistrate commands that hereafter you abstain from that which belongs to another. Therefore you have merited the remission of the penalty, because you are now abstaining from what belongs to another." Thus to argue is to make a cause out of that which is not a cause. For Peter speaks of works following the remission of sins, and teaches why they should be done, viz. that the calling may be sure, i. e. lest they may fall from their calling if they sin again. Do good works that you may persevere in your calling, that you may not lose the gifts of your calling, which were given you before, and not on account of works that follow, and which now are retained by faith; for faith does not remain in those who lose the Holy Ghost, who reject repentance, just as we have above^ said, that faith exists in repentance.

[223] They add other testimonies cohering no better. Lastly they say that this opinion was condemned a thousand years before in the time of Augustine. This also is very false. For the Church of Christ always held that the remission of sins was given freely. Yea, the Pelagians were condemned who contended that grace is given on account of our works. Besides we have above shown sufficiently that we hold that good works ought necessarily to follow faith. "For we do not make

void the Law,” says Paul (Rom. 3:31): “yea we establish the Law,” because when by faith we have received the Holy Ghost, the fulfilling of the Law necessarily follows, by which love, patience, chastity and other fruits of the Spirit gradually grow.

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1. Aug. Conf., xxvi.↵
2. I Tim. 4 sq.↵
3. In the Var. Melanchthon adds the testimony of Epiphanius (cf. Apology, Art. xxiii., § 45), and continues: “As Epiphanius [Haer. 46], clearly testifies that it was a class like our monks. For they were fraternities that imposed upon themselves certain traditions; they also abstained from wine even in the Lord’s Supper; they ate no flesh, not even of fish, and in this respect far surpassed the brethren of the Dominican order. They also indeed in the greatest degree were averse to marriage, although they were not averse to intercourse with women. For Epiphanius presents this charge against them, as they had crowds of women following the same kind of life, just as at the present time the monks have almost everywhere neighboring monasteries of women. And they imagined that these observances were a worship of God, and righteousness on account of which they were accepted of God, and whereby they appeased God’s wrath. This opinion Epiphanius disapproves, and shows that there are other designs of traditions, and says that such traditions are to be approved as have been made *δια την εγκρατειαν, η δια την πολιτειαν*, i. e, either for restraining the flesh on account of discipline of the rude, or on account of political order. And we judge that it may be right to observe traditions, for the following reasons, viz. that a sober people may participate in the sacred [rites], just as Jehoshaphat and the king of Nineveh proclaimed fasts (2 Chron. 20:3; Jonah 3: sq.); and also that the order and polity of the Church may instruct the ignorant what has been done at any time Hence Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and the like. That is, as Epiphanius says, that traditions have been instituted for the sake of the polity, viz. for the sake of order, and that this order should teach men concerning the history and benefits of Christ. For the marks of things painted as it were upon the customs and rites teach much more effectually than letters. It was of profit to present and set forth these designs to the people. But to these designs the adversaries with a pharisaic persuasion, add another, viz. that such observances merit the remission of sins, that they are services necessary for justification, that on account of them men are accounted just

before God. This is plainly to honor God”with gold and silver and precious stones," that is, to hold that God becomes reconciled by a variety in clothing, ornaments and by similar things, as are infinite in human traditions, or that the worship of God consists of such things as distinctions in times, meats, vessels, clothing.↵

4. See Matt. 12:1-8.↵
5. Cf. Aug. Conf., xxvi.: 3.↵
6. Decrees of Gratian, Part III., dist. 4, c. 54-60.↵
7. Augsburg Confession, xxvi.: § 30 sqq.↵
8. Apology, Arts, xxvii., xxviii.↵
9. Heb. 9:10.↵
10. Apology, c ii., Art. iv. Of Justification, § sqq., p. 90; c. iii., Of Love and Fulfilling, etc., g 200 sqq., p. 14)↵
11. The “Recess” of November 19th.↵
12. Virgil’s Aeneid, vi. 95.↵



## Chapter IX. Of the Invocation of Saints.

### XIX. Of the Twenty-First Article.

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, Art. xxi.; Smalcald Articles Part ii., Art. ii., § 25 sqq.  
Cf Large Catechism on 2nd Commandment, § 74 sq.*

The twenty-first article they absolutely condemn, because we do not require the invocation of saints. Nor on any topic do they rhetoricate with more prolixity. Nevertheless they do not effect anything else than that the saints should be honored; likewise that the saints who live should pray for others; as though indeed the invocation of dead saints were in addition necessary. They cite Cyprian, because he asked Cornelius while yet alive to pray for his brothers when departing. By this example they approve the invocation of the dead. They quote also Jerome against Vigilantius; “On this field,” they say, “eleven hundred years ago, Jerome overcame Vigilantius.” Thus the adversaries triumph, as though the war were already ended. Nor do they, in their stupidity, see that in Jerome against Vigilantius there is not a syllable concerning invocation. He speaks concerning honors to the saints, not concerning invocation. Neither have the rest of the ancient writers before Gregory made mention of invocation. Certainly this invocation, with these opinions which the adversaries now teach concerning the application of merits, has not the testimonies of the ancient writers.

Our Confession approves honors to the saints. For here a threefold honor is to be approved. The first is thanksgiving. For we ought to give thanks to God because he has shown examples of mercy; because he has shown that he wishes to save men; because he has given teachers or other gifts to the Church. And these gifts, as they are the greatest, should be amplified, and the saints themselves should be praised, who have faithfully used these gifts, just as Christ praises faithful businessmen (Matt. 25:21, 23). The second service is the strengthening of our faith; when we see the denial forgiven Peter, we also are encouraged to believe the more that grace truly superabounds over sin (Rom. 5:20). The third honor is the imitation first of faith, then of the other virtues, which every one should imitate according to his calling. These true honors the adversaries do not require. They dispute only concerning invocation, which, even though it would have no danger, nevertheless is not necessary.

[224] Besides we also grant that the angels pray for us. For there is a testimony in Zach. 1:12: “O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?” Although concerning the saints we concede that just as when alive they pray for the Church universal in general, so in heaven they pray for the Church in general, albeit no testimony concerning the dead praying is extant in the Scriptures, except the dream taken from the second book of Maccabees (15:14).

Moreover even supposing that the saints certainly pray for the Church, yet it does not follow that they are to be invoked. Although our Confession affirms only this, that Scripture does not teach the invocation of the saints, or that we are to ask the saints for aid. But since neither a command, nor a promise, nor an example can be produced from the Scriptures concerning the invocation of saints, it follows that conscience can have nothing concerning this invocation that is certain. And since prayer ought to be made from faith, how do we know that God approves this invocation? Whence do we know without the testimony of Scripture that the saints perceive the prayers of each one? Some plainly ascribe divinity to the saints, viz. n that they discern the silent thoughts of the minds in us. They dispute concerning morning and evening knowledge,<sup>1</sup> perhaps because they doubt whether they hear us in the morning or the evening. They invent these things not in order to treat the saints with honor, but to defend lucrative services. Nothing can be produced by the adversaries against this reasoning, that, since invocation does not have a testimony from God’s Word, it cannot be affirmed that the saints perceive our invocation, or that they especially perceive that God approves it. Wherefore the adversaries ought not to force us to an uncertain matter, because a prayer without faith is not prayer. For as they cite the example of the Church, it is evident that this is a new custom in the Church; for although the old prayers make mention of the saints, yet they do not invoke the saints.<sup>2</sup> Although also this new invocation in the Church is dissimilar to the invocation of individuals.

[225] Again, the adversaries not only require invocation in the worship of the saints, but also apply the merits of the saints for others, and make of the saints not only intercessors, but also propitiators. This is in no way to be endured. For here the honor belonging only to Christ is altogether transferred to the saints. For they make them mediators and propitiators, and although they make a distinction between mediators of intercession and mediators of redemption, yet they plainly make out of the saints mediators of redemption. But even that they are mediators of intercession they declare without the testimony of Scripture, which, to speak as modestly as possible, nevertheless obscures Christ’s office, and transfers the confidence of mercy due Christ to the saints. For men imagine that Christ is

more severe and the saints more easily appeased, and they trust rather to the mercy of the saints than to the mercy of Christ, and fleeing from Christ they seek the saints. Thus of them they actually make mediators of redemption.

Therefore we will show that they truly make of the saints, not only intercessors, but propitiators, i. e. mediators of redemption. Here we do not as yet recite the abuses of the common people. We are still speaking of the opinions of the doctors The inexperienced can judge also as to the rest.

[226] In a propitiator these two things concur. In the first place, there ought to be a Word of God, from which we may certainly know that God wishes to pity and hearken to those calling upon him through this propitiator. There is such a promise concerning Christ (John 16:23): "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you." Concerning the saints there is no such promise. Wherefore consciences cannot be firmly confident that by the invocation of saints we are heard. Therefore this invocation is not made from faith. Then we have also the command to call upon Christ, according to Matt. 11:28: "Come unto me, all ye who labor," etc., which certainly is said also to us. And Isaiah says (11:10): "In that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign to the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek." And Ps. (45:12): "Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor." And Ps. (72:11, 15): "Yea all kings shall fall down before him." And shortly after: "Prayer also shall be made for him continually." And in John 5:23 Christ says: "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." And Paul (2 Thess. 2:16, 17) says, praying: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father .... comfort your hearts and establish you." But concerning the invocation of saints, what commandment, what example can the adversaries produce from the Scriptures? There is a second matter in a propitiator, that his if merits have been presented as those which make satisfaction for others, which are bestowed by divine imputation to others, in order that through these, just as by their own merits, they may be accounted righteous. As if any friend pays a debt for a friend, the debtor is freed by the merit of another, as though it were by his own. Thus the merits of Christ are bestowed upon us, in order that, when we believe in him, we may be accounted righteous by our confidence in Christ's merits, as though we would have merits of our own.

And from both, viz. from the promise and the bestowment of merits, confidence in mercy arises [upon both parts must a Christian prayer be founded]. Such confidence in the divine promise, and likewise in the merits of Christ, ought to add prayer. For we ought to be truly confident both that for Christ's sake we are hearkened to, and that by his merits we have a reconciled Father.

[227] Here the adversaries first bid us invoke the saints, although they have

neither God's promise, nor a command, nor an example from Scripture. And yet they cause greater confidence in the mercy of the saints to be conceived than in that of Christ, although Christ bade us come to him, and not to the saints. Secondly, they apply the merits of the saints just as the merits of Christ to others, they bid us trust in the merits of the saints, as though we were accounted righteous by the merits of the saints, in like manner as we are accounted righteous by the merits of Christ. Here Ave fabricate nothing. In indulgences they say that they apply the merits of the saints. And Gabriel, the interpreter of the canon of the Mass, confidently declares: "According to the order instituted by God, we should betake ourselves to the aid of the saints, in order that we may be saved by their merits and vows." These are the words of Gabriel. And nevertheless in the books and sermons of the adversaries still more absurd things are read here and there. What is it to make propitiators if this be not? They are all made equal to Christ, if we ought to trust that we are saved by their merits.

But where has this arrangement, to which he refers when he says that we ought to resort to the aid of the saints, been instituted by God? Let him produce an example or command from the Scriptures. Perhaps they derive this arrangement from the palaces of kings, where friends must be employed as intercessors. But if a king will appoint a certain intercessor, he will not desire that cases be brought to him through others. Thus, since Christ has been appointed Intercessor and High Priest, why do we seek others?

Here and there this form of absolution is used: "The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the most blessed virgin Mary and of all the saints, be to thee for the remission of sins." Here the absolution is pronounced that we are reconciled and accounted righteous not only by the merits of Christ, but also by the merits of the other saints. Some of us have seen a doctor of theology dying, for consoling whom a certain theologian, a monk, was employed. He pressed upon the dying man nothing but this prayer: "Mother of grace, protect us from the enemy, receive us in the hour of death."

Granting that the blessed Mary prays for the Church, does she receive souls in death, does she conquer death, does she quicken? What has Christ to do, if the blessed Mary do these things? Although she is most worthy of the most ample honors, nevertheless she does not wish to be made equal to Christ, but rather wishes us to consider and follow her example [the example of her faith and her humility]. But the subject itself declares that in public opinion the blessed Virgin has succeeded altogether to the place of Christ. Men have invoked her, have trusted in her mercy, through her have desired to appease Christ, as though he were not a Propitiator, but only a dreadful judge and avenger. We believe, however, that we must not trust that the merits of the saints are applied to us,

that, on account of these, God is reconciled to us, or accounts us just, or saves us. For we obtain remission of sins only by the merits of Christ, when we believe on him. Of the other saints it has been said (1 Cor. 3:8): “Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor,” i. e. they cannot mutually bestow their own merits, the one upon the other, as the monks sell the merits of their orders. Even Hilary says of the foolish virgins: “And as the foolish virgins could not go forth with their lamps extinguished, they besought those who were prudent to lend them oil; to whom they replied that they could not give it, because peradventure there is not that which is enough for all; i. e, no one can be aided by the works and merits of another, because it is necessary for every one to buy oil for his own lamp.”

[228] Since therefore the adversaries teach us to place confidence in the invocation of saints, although they have neither the Word of God nor the example of Scripture [of the Old or of the New Testament]; since they apply the merits of the saints on behalf of others, not otherwise than they apply the merits of Christ, and transfer the honor belonging only to Christ, to the saints; we can receive neither their opinions concerning the worship of the saints, nor the practice of invocation. For we know that confidence is to be placed in the intercession of Christ, because this alone has God’s promise. We know that the merits of Christ alone are a propitiation for us. On account of the merits of Christ, we are accounted righteous when we believe in him, as the text says (Rom. 9:33; cf. Pet. 2: and Isa. 28:16): “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be confounded.” Neither are we to trust that we are accounted righteous by the merits of the blessed Virgin or of the other saints.

With the learned,<sup>3</sup> this error also prevails, viz. that to each saint a particular administration has been committed, that Anna bestows riches [protects from poverty], Sebastian keeps off pestilence, Valentine heals the epilepsy, George protects horsemen. These opinions have clearly sprung from heathen examples. For thus<sup>4</sup> among the Romans Juno was thought to enrich, Febris to keep off fever. Castor and Pollux to protect horsemen, etc. Even though we should imagine that the invocation of saints were taught with the greatest prudence, yet since the example is most dangerous, wherefore is it necessary to defend it when it has no command or testimony from God’s Word? Ay, it has not even the testimony of the ancient writers. First because, as I have said above, when other mediators are sought in addition to Christ, and confidence is put in others, the entire knowledge of Christ is suppressed. The subject shows this. In the beginning, mention of the saints seems to have been admitted with a design that is enduring, as in the ancient prayers. Afterwards invocation followed, and abuses that are prodigious and more than heathen followed invocation. From

invocation the next step was to images; these also were worshiped, and a virtue was supposed to exist in these, just as magicians imagine that a virtue exists in images of the heavenly bodies carved at a particular time. In a certain monastery, we [some of us] have seen a statue of the blessed Virgin, which was moved by art [within by a string] as though it were an automaton, so as to seem either to refuse or to assent to those inquiring.

[229] Still the fabulous stories concerning the saints, which are publicly taught with great authority, surpass the marvelous tales of the statues and pictures. Barbara, amidst her torments, asks for the reward that no one who would invoke her should die without the Eucharist. Another, standing on one foot, recited daily the whole psalter. Some wise man painted [for children] Christophorus, in order by the allegory to signify that there ought to be great strength in those who would bear Christ, i. e. who would teach or confess the Gospel, because it is necessary to undergo the greatest dangers [for they must wade by night through the great sea, i. e. endure all kinds of temptations and dangers]. Then the foolish monks taught among the people that they ought to invoke Christophorus, as though such a Polyphemus had once existed. And although the saints did very great deeds, either useful to the state or affording private examples, the remembrance of which would conduce much both for strengthening faith and for imitation in the administration of affairs, no one has searched for these from true narratives. [Although God Almighty through his saints, as a peculiar people, has wrought many great things in both realms, in the Church and in worldly transactions; although there are many great examples in the lives of the saints which would be very profitable to princes and lords, to true pastors and guardians of souls, for the government both of the world and of the Church, especially for strengthening faith in God; yet they have passed these by, and preached the most insignificant matters concerning the saints, concerning their hard beds, their hair shirts, etc., which are for the greater part falsehoods.] Yet indeed it is of advantage to hear how holy men administered governments [as in the Holy Scriptures it is narrated of the kings of Israel and Judah], what calamities, what dangers they underwent, how holy men were of aid to kings in great dangers, how they taught the Gospel, what encounters they had with heretics. Examples of mercy are also of service, as when we see the denial forgiven Peter, when we see Cyprian forgiven for having been a magician, when we see Augustine, having experienced the power of faith in sickness, steadily affirming that God truly hearkens to the prayers of believers. It was profitable that such examples as these, which contain admonitions for either faith or fear or the administration of the state, be recited. But certain triflers, endowed with y] no knowledge either of faith or for governing states, have invented stories in

imitation of poems, in which there are nothing but superstitious examples concerning certain prayers, certain fastings, and certain additions of service for bringing in gain [where there are nothing but examples as to how the saints wore hair shirts, how they prayed at the seven canonical hours, how they lived upon bread and water]. Such are the miracles that have been invented concerning rosaries and similar ceremonies. Nor is there need here to recite examples. For the legends, as they call them, and the mirrors of examples, and the rosaries, in which there are very many things not unlike the true narratives of Lucian, are extant.

[230] The bishops, theologians, and monks applaud these monstrous and wicked stories [and they have permitted them so long, to the great injury of consciences, that it is terrible to think of it] because they aid them to daily bread. They do not tolerate us, who, in order that the honor and office of Christ may be more conspicuous, do not require the invocation of saints, and censure the abuses in the worship of saints. And although all good men everywhere, in the correction of these abuses, greatly longed for either the influence of the bishops or the diligence of the preachers, nevertheless our adversaries in the Confutation altogether pass over vices that are even manifest, as though they wish, by the reception of the Confutation, to compel us to approve even the most notorious abuses.

[231] Thus the Confutation has been artfully written, not only on this topic, but almost everywhere. [They pretend that they are as pure as gold; that they have never muddied the water.] There is no passage in which they make a distinction between the manifest abuses and their dogmas. And nevertheless if there are any of sounder mind among them, they confess that many false opinions inhere in the doctrine of the scholastics and canonists, and, besides, that, in such ignorance and negligence of the pastors, many abuses crept into the Church. For Luther was not the first to complain of public abuses. Many learned and excellent men long before these times deplored the abuses of the Mass, confidence in monastic observances, services to the saints intended to yield a revenue, the confusion of doctrine concerning repentance, which ought to be as clear and plain in the Church as possible. We ourselves<sup>5</sup> have heard that excellent theologians desire moderation in the scholastic doctrine, which contains much more for philosophical quarrels than for piety. And nevertheless among these the older ones are generally nearer Scripture than are the more recent. Thus their theology degenerated more and more. Neither had many good men, who from the very first began to be friendly to Luther, any other reason than that they saw that he was freeing the minds of men from these labyrinths of infinite and most confused discussions which exist among the scholastic

theologians and canonists, and was teaching things profitable for godliness.

Wherefore the adversaries have not acted candidly in passing over the abuses when they wished us to assent to the Confutation. And if they wished to care for the interests of the Church, especially on this topic, they ought to exhort our most excellent Emperor to take measure for the correction of abuses [which furnish grounds for derision from the Turks, the Jews and all unbelievers], as we undoubtedly consider him most desirous of healing and well establishing the Church. But the adversaries do not act so as to aid the most honorable and most holy will of the Emperor, but so as in every way to crush us. They give many signs that they have little anxiety concerning the state of the Church. [The}’lose little sleep from concern that Christian doctrine and the pure Gospel be preached.] They take no pains that there should be among the people a summary of the dogmas of the Church. They defend manifest abuses by new and unusual cruelty. They allow no suitable teachers in the churches. Good men can easily judge whither these things tend. But in this way they have regard to the interest neither of their own authority, nor of the Church. For after the good teachers have been killed, and sound doctrine suppressed, fanatical spirits will rise up whom the adversaries will not be able to restrain, who both will disturb the Church with godless dogmas, and will overthrow the entire ecclesiastical government, which we are very greatly desirous of maintaining.

Wherefore, most excellent Emperor Charles, for the sake of the glory of Christ, which we have no doubt that you desire to praise and magnify, we beseech you not to assent to the violent counsels of our adversaries, but to seek other honorable ways of so establishing harmony that godly consciences be not burdened, that no cruelty be exercised against innocent men, as we have hitherto seen, and that sound doctrine be not suppressed in the Church. To God most of all you owe the duty to maintain sound doctrine and hand it down to posterity, and to defend those who teach what is right. For God demands this when he honors kings with his own name and calls them gods, oqo saying (Ps. 82:6): “I have said, Ye are gods,” viz. that they should attend to the preservation and propagation of divine things, i. e. the Gospel of Christ, on the earth, and, as the vicars of God, should defend the life and safety of the innocent [true Christian teachers and preachers].

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1. See Gabriel Biel, *Expos. Can. Miss.*, lec. 31.↩
  2. But pray for them: Bingham’s *Antiquities*, 777, 1164, 1249.↩
  3. Biel. *Expos. Can. Miss.*, Lect. 23.↩



4. Germ, omits to end of §.↵
5. Remainder of § omitted in Germ,↵

## Chapter X. Of Both Kinds in the Lord's Supper.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxii.; *Smalcald Articles Part iii.* Art. vi.; *Formula of Concord, Epitome*, vii.: 24; *Sol. Dec.*, vii.: 110.

It cannot be doubted that it is godly and in accordance with the institution of Christ and the words of Paul to use both parts in the Lord's Supper. For Christ instituted both parts, and instituted them not for a part of the Church, but for the entire Church. For not only the presbyters, but the entire Church uses the sacrament, by the authority of Christ, and not by human authority, and this we suppose that the adversaries acknowledge. Now if Christ has instituted it for the entire Church, why is one kind denied to a part of the Church? why is the use of the other kind prohibited? why is the ordinance of Christ changed, especially when he himself calls it his testament? But if it is not allowable to annul man's testament, much less will it be allowable to annul the testament of Christ. And Paul says (1 Cor. 11:23 sqq.) that he had received of the Lord that which he delivered. But he had delivered the use of both kinds, as the text, Cor. 11, clearly shows. "This do," he says first *concerning his body*; afterwards he repeats the same words *concerning the cup*. And then: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." These are the words of Him who has instituted the sacrament. And indeed he says before that those who will use the Lord's Supper should use it together. Wherefore it is evident that the sacrament was instituted for the entire Church. And the custom still remains in the Greek churches, and was also once in the Latin churches, as Cyprian and Jerome testify. For thus Jerome says on Zephaniah: "The priests who administer the Eucharist, and distribute the Lord's blood to the people," etc. The Council of Toledo gives the same testimony. Nor would it be difficult to accumulate a great multitude of testimonies. Here we exaggerate nothing, only we leave the prudent reader to determine what should be held concerning the divine ordinance.

[233] The adversaries in the Confutation do not endeavor to excuse the Church, to which one part of the sacrament has been denied. This was becoming to good and religious men. For a strong reason for excusing the Church, and instructing consciences to whom only a part of the sacrament could be granted, should have been sought. Now these very men maintain that it is right to prohibit the other part, and forbid that the use of both parts be allowed. They first imagine that, in the beginning of the Church, the custom was at some places that only one part was administered. Nevertheless they are not able to produce any

ancient example of this matter. But they cite the passages in which mention is made of bread, as in Luke (24:35), where it is written that the disciples recognized Christ in the breaking of bread. They quote also other passages (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7) concerning the breaking of bread. But although we do not greatly oppose the receiving of some of these passages as referring to the sacrament; yet it does not follow that one part only has been given, because, according to the ordinary usage of language, by the naming of one part the other is also signified. They refer also to Lay Communion,<sup>1</sup> which was not the use of only one kind, but of both; and if priests ever are commanded to use Lay Communion, it is meant that they have been removed from the ministry of consecration. Neither are the adversaries ignorant of this, but they abuse the inexperience of the unlearned, who, when they hear of Lay Communion, immediately dream of the custom of our time, by which only a part of the sacrament is given to the laymen.

[234] And consider their impudence. Gabriel recounts among other reasons why both parts are not given, that a distinction should be made between laymen and presbyters. And it is credible that the chief reason why the prohibition of the one part is defended is this, viz. that the dignity of the order may be the more highly exalted by a religious rite. To say nothing more severe, this is a human design; and the direction in which this tends can easily be judged. In the Confutation they also quote concerning the sons of Eli, that, after the loss of the high priesthood, they were to seek<sup>2</sup> the one part pertaining to the priests (1 Sam. 2:36).<sup>3</sup> Here they say that the use of one kind was signified. And they add: "Thus therefore our laymen ought also to be content with one part pertaining to the priests, with one kind."<sup>4</sup> The adversaries are clearly trifling when they are transferring the history of the posterity of Eli to the sacrament. The punishment of Eli is there described. Do they also say this, that as a punishment the laymen have been removed from the other part? The sacrament was instituted to console and comfort terrified minds, when they believe that the flesh of Christ, given for the life of the world, is food, when they believe that being joined to Christ [through this food] they are made alive. But the adversaries argue that laymen are removed from the other part as a punishment. "They ought," they say, "to be content." This is sufficient for a despot. But why ought they? "The reason ought not to be asked, but let whatever the theologians say be law." This is the *εωλοχρασια*<sup>5</sup> of Eck. For we recognize those vainglorious words, which if we would wish to criticize, there would be no want of language. For you see how great the impudence is. He commands, as a tyrant in the tragedies: "Whether they wish or not, they ought to be content." Will the reasons which he cites excuse, in the judgment of God, those who prohibit a part of the sacrament, and rage against men using an entire sacrament? If they<sup>6</sup> make the prohibition in

order that there should be a distinction of orders, this very reason ought to move us not to assent to the adversaries, even though we would be disposed in other respects to comply with their custom. There are other distinctions of order between priests and people, but it is not obscure what design they have for defending this distinction so earnestly. That we may not seem to detract from the true worth of orders, we will not say more concerning this shrewd advice.

They also allege the danger of spilling and certain similar things, which do not have force sufficient to change the ordinance of Christ. And indeed if we imagine that we are free to use either one part or both, how can the prohibition be defended? Although the Church does not assume to itself the liberty to convert the ordinances of Christ into matters of indifference. We indeed excuse the Church which has borne the injury [the poor consciences which have been deprived of one part by force], since both parts could not be granted; but the authors who maintain that the use of the entire sacrament is prohibited aright, and who now not only prohibit, but even excommunicate and violently persecute those using an entire sacrament, we do not excuse. Let them see to it how they will give an account to God for their decisions. Neither is it to be at once judged that the Church determines or approves whatever the pontiffs determine, especially since Scripture prophesies concerning the bishops and pastors to the effect as Ezekiel says (7:26): “The Law shall perish from the priest” [there will be priests or bishops who will know no command or Law of God].

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1. In the ancient Church, Lay Communion was a punishment of the clergy, by which they were degraded to the condition of laymen, and were accordingly compelled also to receive the communion with the laity. See Bingham’s *Antiquities*, Eng. ed., p. 1030 sq.↵
  2. Rech. Tit.: Would lose.↵
  3. Vulgate: *Dimitte me, obsecro, ad unam partem sacerdotalem.*↵
  4. Melanchthon narrates briefly this folly of Faber also in a letter to Luther. See *Corpus Reformationum*, ii., No. 824.↵
  5. “A mixture of all the dregs with which the drunken were sometimes dosed at the end of a revel by their stronger-headed companions.” — *Liddell and Scott*, Wittily applied by Melanchthon to Eck, because of his well-known fondness for wine.↵
  6. German omits § 13.↵

# Chapter XI. Of The Marriage Of Priests.

## Article XXIII.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxiii.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part iii., Art. xi.; *Large Catechism*, Commandment vi., § 206 sq. Cf. *Torgau*. Art. XV.

### A. Of the Reasons for Disapproving Celibacy.

[235] In the midst of so great infamy of a defiled priesthood, the adversaries have the presumption not only to defend the pontifical law by the wicked and false pretext of the divine name, but even to exhort the Emperor and princes, to the disgrace and infamy of the Roman Empire, not to tolerate the marriage of priests. For thus they speak.<sup>1</sup>

[236] What greater impudence has ever been read of in any history than this of the adversaries? For the arguments which they use we will afterwards review. Now let the wise reader consider this, viz. what shame these men, of no account, have, who say that marriages [which the Holy Scriptures praise and command] produce infamy and disgrace to the government, as though indeed this public infamy of flagitious and unnatural lusts which glow among these very holy fathers, ‘who feign that they are Curii and live like bacchanals,’<sup>2</sup> were a great ornament to the Church! And most things which these men do with the greatest license cannot even be named without a breach of modesty. And these their lusts they ask you to defend with your chaste right hand, Emperor Charles (whom even certain ancient predictions name as the king of modest face; for the saying appears concerning you:<sup>3</sup> One modest in face shall reign everywhere"). For they ask that, contrary to divine law, contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the canons of Councils, you sunder marriages, so as merely for the sake of marriage to impose atrocious punishments upon innocent men, to put to death priests, whom even barbarians reverently spare, to drive into exile banished women and fatherless children. Such laws they bring to you, most excellent and most chaste Emperor, to which no barbarity however monstrous and cruel could lend its ear. But because the stain of no disgrace or cruelty falls upon your character, we hope that you will mildly treat with us in this case, especially when you have learned that we have the weightiest reasons for our belief, derived from the Word of God, to which the adversaries oppose the most trifling and vain opinions.

And nevertheless they do not seriously defend celibacy. For they are not ignorant how few there are who practice chastity, but they devise a sham of religion in their domain, which they think that celibacy profits, in order that we may understand Peter to have been right in admonishing (2 Ep. 2:1) that there will be false teachers who will deceive men with feigned words. For the adversaries say, write or do nothing truly, frankly and candidly in this entire case, but they actually contend only concerning the dominion which they falsely think to be imperilled, and which they endeavor to fortify with a wicked pretense of godliness.

[237] We cannot approve this law concerning celibacy which the adversaries defend, because it conflicts with divine and natural law, and is at variance with the very canons of the Councils. And that it is superstitious and dangerous is evident. For it produces infinite scandals, sins and corruption of public morals. Our other controversies need some discussion by the doctors; in this, the subject is so manifest in both parts, that it requires no discussion. It only requires as judge a man that is honest and fears God. And although the manifest truth is defended by us, yet the adversaries have devised certain reproaches for satirizing our arguments.

*First*, Genesis (1:28) teaches that men were created to be fruitful, and that one sex in a proper way should desire the other. For we are speaking not of concupiscence, which is sin, but of that appetite which was to have been in nature in its integrity, which they call physical love. And this love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance. But since this ordinance of God cannot be removed without an extraordinary work of God, it follows that the right to contract marriage cannot be removed by statutes or vows.

The adversaries cavil at these arguments; they say that in the beginning the commandment was given to replenish the earth, but that now since the earth has been replenished, marriage is not commanded. See how wisely they judge! The nature of men is so formed by the Word of God, that it is fruitful not only in the beginning of the creation, but as long as this nature of our bodies exists; just as the earth became fruitful by the Word (Gen. 1:11): "Let the earth bring forth grass, yielding seed." Because of this ordinance, the earth not only commenced in the beginning to bring forth plants, but the fields are clothed every year as long as this nature of bodies exists. Therefore, just as by human laws the nature of the earth cannot be changed, so, without a special work of God, the nature of man can be changed neither by vows nor by human law.

[238] *Secondly*. And because this creation or divine ordinance in man is a natural right, jurists have accordingly said wisely and correctly that the union of male and female belongs to natural right. But since natural right is immutable,

the right to contract marriage must always remain. For where nature does not change, that ordinance also with which God has endowed nature does not change, and cannot be removed by human laws. Therefore it is ridiculous for the adversaries to prate that marriage was commanded in the beginning, but is not now. This is the same as if they would say: Formerly when men were born, they brought with them sex; now they do not. Formerly when they were born, they brought with them natural right, now they do not.<sup>4</sup> No cunning craftsman (Faber) could think otherwise<sup>5</sup> than that these absurdities were devised to elude a right of nature. Therefore let this remain in the case in which both Scripture teaches and the jurist says wisely, viz. that the union of male and female belongs to natural right. Moreover a natural right is truly a divine right, because it is an ordinance divinely impressed upon nature. But inasmuch as this right cannot be changed without an extraordinary work of God, it is necessary that the right to contract marriage remains, because the natural desire of sex for sex is an ordinance of God in nature, and for this reason is a right; otherwise why would both sexes have been created? And we are speaking, as it has been said above, not of concupiscence, which is sin, but of that desire which they call physical love [which would have existed between man and woman even though their nature had remained pure], which concupiscence has not removed from nature, but inflames, so that now it has greater need of a remedy, and marriage is necessary not only for the sake of procreation, but also as a remedy [to guard against sins]. These things are clear, and so well established that they can in no way be overthrown.

[239] *Thirdly*. Paul says (1 Cor. 7:2): “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.” This now is an express command pertaining to all who are not fit for celibacy. The adversaries ask that a commandment be shown them which commands priests to marry.<sup>6</sup> As though priests are not men! We judge indeed that the things which we maintain concerning human nature in general pertain also to priests. Does not Paul here command those who have not the gift of continence to marry? For he interprets himself a little after when he says (v. 9): “It is better to marry than to burn.” And Christ has clearly said (Matt. 19:11): “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.” Because now, since sin, these two things concur, viz. natural appetite and concupiscence, which inflames the natural appetite, so that there is more need of marriage than in nature in its integrity; Paul accordingly speaks of marriage as a remedy, and on account of these flames commands to marry. Neither can any human authority, any law, any vows remove this declaration: “It is better to marry than to burn;” because they do not remove the nature or concupiscence. Therefore all who burn, retain the right to marry. By this commandment of Paul: “To avoid

fornication, let every man have his own wife,” all are held bound who do not truly keep themselves continent; the decision concerning which pertains to the conscience of each one.

For as they here give the command to seek continence of God, and to weaken the body by labors and hunger, why do they not proclaim these magnificent commandments to themselves? But, as we have said above, the adversaries are only playing; they are doing nothing seriously. If continence were possible to all, it would not require a peculiar gift. But Christ shows that it has need of a peculiar gift; wherefore it does not belong to all. God wishes the rest to use the common law of nature, which he has instituted. For God does not wish his ordinances, his creations to be despised. He wishes men to be chaste in the use of the remedy divinely presented, just as he wishes to nourish our life, if we use food and drink. Gerson also testifies that there have been many good men who endeavored to subdue the body, and yet made little progress. Accordingly Ambrose is right in saying: “Virginité alone is such a thing as can be recommended, but cannot be commanded;” it is a matter of vow rather than of precept. If any one here would raise the objection that Christ praises those “which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake” (Matt. 19:12), let him also consider this, that he is praising such as have the gift of continence; for, on this account, he adds: “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” For an impure continence [such as there is in monasteries and cloisters] does not please Christ. We also praise true continence. But now we are disputing concerning the Law, and concerning those who do not have the gift of continence. The matter ought to be left free, and through this Law snares ought not to be cast upon the weak.

[240] *Fourthly*. The pontifical law differs from the canons of the Councils. For the ancient canons do not prohibit marriage, neither do they dissolve marriages that have been contracted, even if they remove from the administration of their office those who have contracted them in the ministry. At those times this dismissal was an act of kindness. But the new canons which have been framed in the Synods, but have been made according to the private judgment of the popes, both prohibit the contraction of marriages, and dissolve them when contracted; and this is to be done openly, contrary to the command of Christ (Matt. 19:6): “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” In the Confutation the adversaries exclaim that celibacy has been commanded by the Councils. We do not find fault with the decrees of the Councils; for, under a certain condition, these allow marriage, but we find fault with the laws which, since the ancient Synods, the popes of Rome have framed contrary to the authority of the Synods. The popes despise the authority of the Synods, just as



much as they wish it to appear holy to others. Therefore this law concerning perpetual celibacy is peculiar to this new pontifical government. Nor is it without a reason. For Daniel (11:37) ascribes to the kingdom of Antichrist this mark, viz. the contempt of women.

*Fifthly.* Although the adversaries do not defend the Law because of superstition, since they see that it is not generally observed, nevertheless they diffuse superstitious opinions, while they give a pretext of religion. They proclaim that they require celibacy, because it is purity; as though marriage were impurity and a sin, or as though celibacy merited justification more than does marriage. And to this end they cite the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, because, since, under the Law, the priests, at the time of ministering, were separated from their wives; the priest in the New Testament, inasmuch as he ought always to pray, ought always to practice continence. This silly comparison is presented as a proof which should compel priests to perpetual celibacy, although indeed in this comparison marriage is allowed, only, in the time of ministering, its use is interdicted. And it is one thing to pray; another, to minister. The saints prayed even when they did not exercise the public ministry, nor did conjugal intercourse hinder them from praying.

[241] But we will reply, in order, to these figments. In the first place it is necessary for the adversaries to acknowledge this, viz. that in believers, marriage is pure because it has been sanctified by the Word of God, i. e. it is a matter that is permitted and approved by the Word of God, as Scripture abundantly testifies. For Christ calls marriage a divine union, when he says (Matt. 19:6); “What God hath joined together.” And Paul says of marriage, of meats and similar things (1 Tim. 4:5): “It is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer,” i. e. by the Word, by which consciences become certain that God approves; and by prayer, i. e. by faith which used it with thanksgiving as a gift of God. Likewise (1 Cor. 7:14): “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife,” etc., i. e. the use of marriage is permitted and holy on account of faith in Christ, just as it is permitted to use meat, etc. Likewise (1 Tim. 2:15): “She shall be saved in child-bearing,” etc. If the adversaries could produce such a passage concerning celibacy, then indeed they would celebrate a wonderful triumph. Paul says that woman is saved by child-bearing. What more excellent could be said against the hypocrisy of celibacy than that woman is saved by the conjugal works themselves, by conjugal intercourse, by bearing children and the other duties? But what does St. Paul mean? Let the reader observe that faith is added, and that domestic duties without faith are not praised. “If they continue,” he says, “in faith.” For he speaks of the whole class of mothers. Therefore he requires especially faith [that they should have God’s Word and be believing], by which

woman receives the remission of sins and justification. Then he adds a particular work of the calling, just as in every man a good work of a particular calling ought to follow faith. This work pleases God on account of faith. Thus the duties of the woman please God on account of faith, and the believing woman is saved who, in such duties, devoutly serves her calling.

These testimonies teach that marriage is a lawful [a holy and Christian] thing. If therefore purity signifies that which has been allowed and approved before God, marriages are pure, because they have been approved by the Word of God. And Paul says of lawful things (Tit. 1:15): “Unto the pure all things are pure,” i. e. to those who believe in Christ and are righteous by faith. Therefore as virginity is impure in the godless, so in the godly marriage is pure, on account of the Word of God and faith.

[242] Again. If purity is properly opposed to concupiscence, it signifies purity of heart, i. e. mortified concupiscence, because the Law does not prohibit marriage, but concupiscence, adultery, licentiousness. Therefore celibacy is not purity. For there may be greater purity of heart in a married man, as in Abraham or Jacob, than in most of those who are even truly continent [who even, according to bodily purity, really maintain their chastity].

*Lastly.* If they understand that celibacy is purity in the sense that it merits justification more than does marriage, we most emphatically contradict it. For we are justified neither on account of virginity, nor on account of marriage, but freely for Christ’s sake, when we believe that for his sake God is propitious to us. Here perhaps they will exclaim, that, in the manner of Jovinian, marriage is made equal to virginity. But, on account of such clamors, we will not reject the truth concerning the righteousness of faith, which we have above explained. Nevertheless we do not make virginity and marriage equal. For just as one gift surpasses another, as prophecy surpasses eloquence, the science of military affairs surpasses agriculture, and eloquence surpasses architecture; so virginity is a more excellent gift than marriage. And nevertheless, just as an orator is not more righteous before God because of his eloquence, than an architect because of his skill in architecture, so a virgin does not merit justification by virginity, more than a married person merits it by conjugal duties, but each one ought faithfully to serve in his own gift, and to believe that for Christ’s sake he receives the remission of sins, and is accounted righteous by faith before God.

Neither does Christ or Paul praise virginity for justifying, but because it is freer and less distracted with domestic occupations, in praying, teaching, serving. For this reason, Paul says (1 Cor. 7:32): “He that is unmarried careth for the things which belong to the Lord.” Therefore virginity is praised on account of meditation and study. Thus Christ does not simply praise those “who make

themselves eunuchs,” but adds, “for the kingdom of heaven’s sake,” i. e, that they may have leisure to learn or teach the Gospel, for he does not say that virginity merits the remission of sins or salvation.

[243] To the examples of the Levitical priests we have replied that they do not establish the duty of imposing perpetual celibacy upon the priests. In the second place, the Levitical impurities are not to be transferred to us. Then intercourse was an impurity contrary to the Law. Now it is not impurity, because Paul says (Tit. 1:15): “Unto the pure all things are pure.” For the Gospel frees us from these Levitical impurities [from all the ceremonies of Moses, and not alone from the laws concerning uncleanness]. And if any one defends the law of celibacy with the design to burden consciences by these Levitical observances, we must strive against this, just as the apostles in Acts 15:10 sqq. strove against those who required circumcision and endeavored to impose the Law of Moses upon Christians.

Yet, in the meanwhile, good men will know how to control the use of marriage, especially when they are occupied with public offices, which often indeed give good men so much labor as to expel all domestic thoughts from their minds. Good men know also this, that Paul (1 Thess. 4:4) commands that every one possess his vessel in sanctification. They know likewise that they must sometimes retire, in order that there may be leisure for prayer; but Paul does not wish this to be perpetual (1 Cor. 7:5). Now such continence is easy to those who are good and occupied. But this great crowd of unemployed priests which is in the fraternities cannot afford, in this voluptuousness, even this Levitical continence, as the facts show. And the lines are well known:

*Desidium puer ille sequi solet, odit agentes, etc.*

The boy accustomed to pursue a slothful life hates those who are busy.

Many heretics who have incorrectly understood the Law of Moses, have treated marriage with contempt<sup>7</sup> among whom, nevertheless, celibacy has obtained extraordinary admiration. And Epiphanius complains that, by this commendation especially, the Encratites captured the minds of the unwary. They abstained from wine even in the Lord’s Supper, they abstained from the flesh of all animals, in which they surpassed the Dominican brethren, who lived upon fish. They abstained also from marriage; and just this obtained the chief admiration. These works, these services, they thought, merited grace more than the use of wine and flesh, and than marriage, which seemed to be a profane and unclean matter, and which scarcely could please God, even though it were not altogether condemned.

[244] Paul to the Colossians (2:18) greatly disapproves the worshiping of angels. For when men believe that they<sup>8</sup> are pure and righteous on account of

such hypocrisy, they suppress the knowledge of Christ, and suppress also the knowledge of God's gifts and commandments. For God wishes us to use his gifts in a godly way. And we could mention examples where certain godly consciences were greatly disturbed on account of the lawful use of marriage. This evil was derived from the opinions of monks superstitiously praising celibacy [and proclaiming the marriage estate as a life that would be a great obstacle to salvation, and full of sins]. Nevertheless<sup>9</sup> we do not find fault with temperance or continence, but we have above said that exercises and mortifications of the body are necessary. We indeed deny that confidence should be placed in certain observances, as though they made righteous. And Epiphanius has elegantly said that these observances ought to be praised *δια την εγχρατειαν και την πολιτειαν*, i. e, for restraining the body or on account of public morals; just as certain rites were instituted for instructing the ignorant, and not as services that justify.

But it is not through superstition that our adversaries require celibacy, for they know that chastity is not ordinarily afforded. But they feign superstitious opinions, so as to delude the ignorant. They are therefore more worthy of hatred than the Encratites, who seem to have erred by a kind of religion; these Sardanapali [Epicureans] designedly misuse the pretext of religion.

*Sixthly.* Although we have given so many reasons for disapproving the law of perpetual celibacy, yet, besides these, dangers to souls and public scandals also are added, which even though the law were not unjust, ought to deter good men from approving such a burden as has destroyed innumerable souls.

For a long time all good men have complained of this burden, either on their own account, or on account of others, whom they saw to be in danger, but no popes give ear to these complaints. Neither is it doubtful how greatly injurious to public morals this is, and what vices and shameful lusts it has produced. The Roman satires are extant. In these Rome still "recognizes and reads its own morals."

[245] Thus God avenges the contempt of his own gift and ordinance in those who prohibit marriage. But since the custom in regard to other laws was that they should be changed if manifest utility would advise it, why is the same not done with respect to this law, in which so many weighty reasons concur, especially in these last times, why a change ought to be made? Nature is growing old and is gradually becoming weaker,<sup>10</sup> and vices are increasing; wherefore the remedies divinely given ought to be employed. We see what vice it was which God denounced before the flood, what he denounced before the burning of the five cities. Similar vices have preceded the destruction of many other cities, as of Sybaris and Rome. And in these there has been presented an image of the times

which will be next to the end of things. Accordingly, at this time, marriage ought to have been especially defended by the most severe laws and institutions, and men ought to have been invited to marriage. This duty pertains to the magistrates, who ought to maintain public discipline. [God has now so blinded the world that adultery and fornication are permitted almost without punishment; on the contrary, punishment is inflicted on account of marriage. Is not this terrible to hear?] Meanwhile the teachers of the Gospel should do both; they should exhort incontinent men to marriage, and should exhort others not to despise the gift of continence.

The popes daily dispense and daily change other laws which Are most excellent, yet, in regard to this one law of celibacy they are immovable as iron, and inexorable, although indeed it is manifest that this belongs absolutely to human law. And they are now making this law more grievous in many ways. The canon<sup>11</sup> bids them suspend priests; they suspend them not from office, but from trees. They cruelly kill many men for nothing but marriage. And these very murders show that this law is a doctrine of demons.<sup>12</sup> For since the devil is a murderer, he defends his law by these murders.

[246] We know that there is some complaint in regard to schism, because we seem to have separated from those who are thought to be regular bishops. But our consciences are very secure, since we know that, as we most earnestly desire to establish harmony, we cannot please the adversaries unless we cast away manifest truth, and then agree with these very men in being willing to defend this unjust law, to dissolve marriages that have been contracted, to put to death priests if they do not obey, to drive poor women and fatherless children into exile But since it is well established that these conditions are displeasing to God, we can in no way grieve that we have no alliance with the multitude of murderers among the adversaries.

## **B. Of the Arguments of the Adversaries.**

We have explained the reasons why we cannot assent with a good conscience to the adversaries when they defend the pontifical law concerning perpetual celibacy, because it conflicts with divine and natural law and is at variance with the canons themselves;<sup>13</sup> and is superstitious and full of danger; and, lastly, because the entire matter has been feigned. For the law is enacted not for the sake of religion, but for the sake of dominion, and the pretext of religion is wickedly given this. Neither can anything be produced by sane men against these most firmly established reasons. The Gospel allows marriage to those to whom it is necessary. Nevertheless it does not compel those to marry who can be

continent, provided they be truly continent. We hold that this liberty should also be conceded to the priests, nor do we wish to compel any one by force to celibacy, nor to dissolve marriages that have been contracted.

We have also indicated incidentally, while we have recounted our arguments, how the adversaries cavil at several; and we have explained away these false accusations. Now we will relate as briefly as possible with what important reasons they defend the law.

*First*, they say that it has been revealed by God. You see the extreme impudence of these sorry fellows. They dare to affirm that the law of perpetual celibacy has been divinely revealed, although it is contrary to manifest testimonies of Scripture, which command that to avoid fornication each one should have his own wife (1 Cor. 7:2); which likewise forbid to dissolve marriages that have been contracted (cf. Matt. 5:32; 19:6; Cor. 7:27). Paul teaches what an author such a law was to have when he calls it a doctrine of demons (1 Tim. 4:1). And the fruits show their author, viz. so many monstrous lusts and so many murders which are now committed under the pretext of that law.

[247] The *second* argument of the adversaries is that the priests ought to be pure, according to Isa. 62:11: “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” And they cite many things to this effect. We have above removed the reason which they display as especially specious. For we have said that virginity without faith is not purity before God, and marriage, on account of faith, is pure, according to Tit. 1:15: “Unto the pure, all things are pure.” We have said also this, that outward purity and the ceremonies of the Law are not to be transferred hither, because the Gospel requires purity of heart, and does not require the ceremonies of the Law. And it may be that the heart of a husband, as of Abraham or Jacob, who were polygamists, may be pure, and may burn less with lusts than that of many virgins who are even truly continent<sup>14</sup> What Isaiah indeed says: “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,” ought to be understood as referring to cleanness of heart, and to the entire repentance. Besides, the saints will know by external use how far it is profitable to restrain the use of marriage, and as Paul says (1 Thess. 4:4), “to possess his vessel in sanctification.” Lastly, since marriage is pure, it is rightly said to those who are not continent in celibacy that they should marry wives, in order to be pure. Thus the same law: “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord,” commands that impure bachelors become pure husbands.

The *third* argument is horrible, viz. that the marriage of priests is the heresy of Jovinian. Good words! This is a new crime, that marriage is a heresy! In the time of Jovinian the world had not as yet known the law concerning perpetual

celibacy. Therefore it is an impudent falsehood that the marriage of priests is the heresy of Jovinian, or that such marriage was then condemned by the Church. In such passages we can see 6? what design the adversaries had in writing the Confutation. They judged that the ignorant would be thus most easily excited, if they would frequently hear the reproach of heresy; if they would imagine that our cause had been despatched and condemned by many previous decisions of the Church. Thus they frequently cite falsely the judgment of the Church. Because they are not ignorant of this, they were unwilling to exhibit to us a copy of their Apology,<sup>15</sup> lest this falsehood and these reproaches might be exposed. Our opinion as to what indeed pertains to the case of Jovinian, concerning the comparison of virginity and marriage, we have above expressed. For we do not make marriage and virginity equal, although neither virginity nor marriage merits justification.

[248] By such false arguments they defend a law that is godless and destructive to good morals. By such reasons, they set the minds of princes firmly against God's judgment, in which God will call them to account as to why they have dissolved marriages, and why they have tortured and killed priests. For do not doubt but that, as the blood of dead Abel cried out (Gen. 4:10), so the blood of many good men, against whom they have unjustly raged, will also cry out. And God will avenge this cruelty; there you will discover how empty are these reasons of the adversaries, and you will perceive that in God's judgment no calumnies against God's Word remain standing, as Isaiah says (40:6): "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." [That their arguments are straw and hay, and God a consuming fire, before whom nothing but God's Word can abide, Pet. 1:24.]

Whatever will happen, our princes will be able to console themselves with the consciousness of right counsels, because even though the priests would have done wrong in contracting marriages, yet this disruption of marriages, these proscriptions, and this cruelty, are manifestly contrary to the will and Word of God. Neither does novelty or dissent delight our princes, but to the Word of God more regard must be paid, especially in a matter that is not doubtful, than to all other things.

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1. German at great length, and much more severe.↩
  2. Juvenal, ii. 3.↩
  3. Sibylline Oracles, viii. 169. "We think that no one will be convinced that Melanchthon believed that this prophecy was published with respect to the



Emperor himself, and that he quoted it for the purpose of showing how it had now been fulfilled. He only applies the prophecy to the Emperor, .... that he is an Emperor of such chastity as is predicted,” etc. Walch’s Introduction, p. 467.↵

4. Luther in copy of edition of 1531-34 sent him by Melanchthon wrote; ‘And it follows at the same time, that as long as the earth is replenished all men ought to refrain from marriage until the earth be made empty by death for future marriages.”↵
5. By these words, which are wanting in the German, John Faber, the chief composer of the Confutation, is attacked.↵
6. Luther wrote on the margin of his copy: “Show also the commandment which declares that it is not lawful for priests to have wives.”↵
7. Var. continues: As were the Encratites, of whom we have spoken above. And it is evident that the monks were accustomed to spread abroad superstitious declarations here and there concerning celibacy, which disturbed many devout consciences with reference to the lawful use of marriage. Neither would it be difficult for us to recount examples. For although, on account of procreation, they did not entirely condemn marriage, yet they found fault with it as a kind of life which scarcely ever pleased God, or certainly would not please him except on account of procreation. But they extolled celibacy as though it were an angelic mode of life, proclaimed that it was a sacrifice most grateful to God, that it merited the remission of sins, merited eminent rewards, bore fruit a hundred-fold, and infinite other things. Paul to the Col., etc. (§ 46).↵
8. Var. continues: That they are accounted righteous because of such observances, and not because of Christ; then they suppress the knowledge of God’s commands, when in addition to God’s commands new services are devised, and preferred to God’s commands. Wherefore these superstitious persuasions concerning celibacy must be constantly resisted in the Church, both to the end that godly consciences may know that marriage is pleasing to God, and may understand what kind of services God approves. But the adversaries, sq. (§ 60).↵
9. Germ, omits §§ 48 and 49.↵
10. Cf. Aug. Conf., xxiii.: 14.↵
11. Canon of First Council of New Caesarea (a. d. 314), recorded in *De eret Grat.*, P. I., dist. 28, c 9. German omits.↵
12. See Tim. 4:1,3.↵
13. See *Decret. Grat.*, P. I., dist. 31, cans. 12, 13.↵
14. Cf. § 35.↵



15. Apology, Preface, § 2.↩

## Chapter XII. Of the Mass.

### Article XXIV.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxiv.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part ii., Art. ii.; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome*, vii.: 21 sq. Cf. *Torgau Articles*, xvi..

In the beginning we must again make the preliminary statement that we do not abolish the Mass, but religiously maintain and defend it. For among us masses are performed every Lord's Day and on the other festivals, in which the sacrament is offered to those who wish to use it, after they have been examined and absolved. And the usual public ceremonies are observed, the series of lessons, of prayers, vestments and other like things.

[249] The adversaries have a long declamation concerning the use of the Latin language in the Mass, in which they absurdly trifle as to how it would profit a hearer untaught in the faith of the Church to hear Mass that is not understood. They evidently imagine that the mere work of hearing is a service, that it profits without being understood. We are unwilling to malignantly pursue these things, but we leave them to the judgment of the reader. We mention them only for the purpose of stating, in passing, that even among us the Latin lessons and prayers are retained.

Since ceremonies, however, ought to be observed both to teach men Scripture, and that those, admonished by the Word, may conceive faith and fear, and thus that they also may pray (for these are the designs of ceremonies); we retain the Latin language on account of those who are learning and understand Latin, and we mingle with it German hymns, in order that the people also may have something to learn, and by which faith and fear may be called forth. This custom has always existed in the churches. For although some more frequently, and others more rarely, mingled German hymns, nevertheless the people almost everywhere sang in their own tongue. It has indeed nowhere been written or represented that the act of hearing lessons not understood profits men, or that ceremonies profit, not because they teach or admonish, but *ex opere operato*, because they are thus performed or are looked upon. Away with such pharisaic opinions!

The fact that we hold only *Public* or Common Mass is no offense against the Catholic Church. For in the Greek churches even today private masses are not

held, but there is only a public mass, and that on the Lord's Day and festivals. In the monasteries, daily Mass is held, but this is only public. These are the traces of former customs. For nowhere do the ancient writers before Gregory make mention of private masses. We now omit noticing the nature of their origin. It is evident that after the mendicant monks began to prevail, from most false opinions and on account of gain they were so increased that all good men for a long time desired some limit to this thing. Although St. Francis wished to provide aright for this matter, as he decided that each fraternity should be content with a single common Mass daily, afterwards this was changed, either by superstition or for the sake of gain. Thus where it is of advantage, they themselves change the institutions of the Fathers; and afterwards they cite against us the authority of the Fathers. Epiphanius writes that in Asia the communion was celebrated three times a week, and that there were no daily masses. And indeed he says that this custom was handed down from the apostles. For he speaks thus: "Assemblies for communion were appointed by the apostles to be held on the fourth day, on Sabbath eve, and the Lord's Day."

[250] Moreover, although the adversaries collect many testimonies on this topic to prove that the Mass is a sacrifice, yet this great tumult of words will be quieted when the single reply is advanced, that this long line of authorities, reasons and testimonies does not prove however that the Mass confers grace *ex opere operato*, or that, when applied on behalf of others, it merits for them the remission of venial and mortal sins, of guilt and punishment. This one reply overthrows all things to which the adversaries object, not only in this Confutation, but in all writings which they have published concerning the Mass.

And this is the state of the case of which our readers are to be admonished as Aeschines admonished the judges, that just as boxers contend with one another for their position, so they should strive with their adversary concerning the state of the controversy, and not permit him to wander beyond the case. In the same manner our adversaries ought to be here compelled to speak on the subject presented. And when the state of the controversy has been thoroughly understood, a decision concerning the arguments on both sides will be very easy.

For in our Confession<sup>1</sup> we have shown that we hold that the Lord's Supper does not confer grace *ex opere operato*, and that, when applied on behalf of others alive or dead, it does not merit for them *ex opere operato* the remission of sins, of guilt or of punishment. And of this position a clear and firm proof exists in that it is impossible to obtain the remission of our sins on account of our own work *ex opere operato*, but the terrors of sin and death must be overcome by faith when we comfort our hearts with the knowledge of Christ, and believe that for Christ's sake we are forgiven, and that the merits and righteousness of Christ

are granted us (Rom. 5:1): “Being justified by faith, we have peace.” These things are so sure and so firm, that they can stand against all the gates of hell.

[251] If we had to speak only so far as it is necessary, the case has already been stated. For no sane man can approve that pharisaic and heathen opinion concerning the *opus operatum*. And nevertheless this opinion inheres in the people, and has increased infinitely the number of masses. For masses are purchased to appease God’s wrath, and by this work they wish to obtain the remission of guilt and of punishment; they wish to procure whatever is necessary in every kind of life [health, riches, prosperity and success in business]; they wish even to liberate the dead. Monks and sophists in the Church have taught this pharisaic opinion.

But although our case has already been stated, yet because the adversaries foolishly pervert many passages of Scripture to the defense of their errors, we will add a few things to this topic. In the Confutation they have said many things concerning “sacrifice,” although in our Confession we purposely avoided this term on account of its ambiguity. We have set forth what those persons whose abuses we condemn now understand as a sacrifice. Now in order to explain the passages of Scripture that have been wickedly perverted, it is necessary in the beginning to set forth what a sacrifice is. Already for an entire period of ten years the adversaries have published almost infinite volumes concerning sacrifice, neither has any of them thus far given a definition of sacrifice. They only appropriate the name “sacrifices” either from the Scriptures or the Fathers [and where they find it in the Concordances of the Bible, apply it here whether it fit or not]. Afterward they append their own dreams, as though indeed a sacrifice signifies whatever pleases them.

### **A. What a Sacrifice is, and what are the Species of Sacrifice.**

[252] Socrates in the *Phaedrus* of Plato says, that he is especially fond of divisions, because, without these, nothing can either be explained or understood in speaking, and if he would discover any one skilful in making divisions, he says that he attends and follows his footsteps as those of a god. And he instructs the one dividing to separate the members in their very joints, in order that he may not, after the manner of an unskilful butcher, break to pieces some member. But the adversaries wonderfully despise these precepts, and according to Plato are truly *χαχοι μαγειροι* (poor butchers), since they break the members of “sacrifice,” as can be understood when we have enumerated the species of sacrifice. Theologians are rightly accustomed to distinguish between a sacrament and a sacrifice. Therefore let the genus comprehending both of these be either a

ceremony or a sacred work. A sacrament is a ceremony or work, in which God presents to us that which the promise annexed to the ceremony offers, as baptism is a work, not which we offer to God, but in which God baptizes us, i. e. a minister in the place of God; and God here offers and presents the remission of sins, etc., according to the promise (Mark 16:16): “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” A sacrifice, on the contrary, is a ceremony or work which we render God in order to afford him honor.

Moreover the proximate species of sacrifice are two, and there are no more. One is the *propitiatory* sacrifice, i. e. a work which makes satisfaction for guilt and punishment, i. e. one that reconciles God, or appeases God’s wrath, or which merits the remission of sins for others. Another species is the eucharistic sacrifice, which does not merit the remission of sins or reconciliation, but is rendered by those who have been reconciled, in order that we may give thanks or return gratitude for the remission of sins that has been received, or for other benefits received.

These two species of sacrifice we ought especially to have in view and placed before the eyes in this controversy and in many other discussions; and especial care must be taken lest they be confounded. But if the limits of this book would suffer it, we would add the reasons for this division. For it has many testimonies in the Epistle to the Hebrews and elsewhere. And all Levitical sacrifices can be referred to these members as to their own homes. For in the Law certain propitiatory sacrifices were named on account of their signification or similitude, and not because they merited the remission of sins before God; but because they merited the remission of sins according to the righteousness of the Law, in order that those for whom they were made might not be excluded from that commonwealth [from the people of Israel]. Therefore they were called sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, burnt-offerings. Whereas the eucharistic sacrifices were the oblation, the drink-offering, thank-offerings, first-fruits, tithes.

[253] But in fact there has been only one propitiatory sacrifice in the world, viz. the death of Christ, as the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches, which says (10:4): “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” And a little after, of the will of Christ, v. 10: “By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” And Isaiah interprets the Law, in order that we may know that the death of Christ is truly a satisfaction for our sins, or expiation, and that the ceremonies of the Law are not; wherefore he says (53:10): “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he will see his seed,” etc. For the word employed here, *אֲשָׁמָה*, signifies a victim for transgression; which signified in the Law that a Victim was to come to make satisfaction for our sins and reconcile God, in order that men might know that

God wishes to be reconciled to us, not on account of our own righteousnesses, but on account of the merits of another, viz. of Christ. Paul interprets the same word ἁμαρτία as sin, Rom. 8:3: “For sin condemned sin,” i. e. he punished sin for sin, i. e. by a victim for sin. The significance of the word can be the more easily understood from the customs of the heathen, which we see have been received from the misunderstood expressions of the Fathers. The Latins called a victim which, in great calamities where God seemed to be especially enraged, was offered to appease God’s wrath, a *piaculum*, and they sometimes sacrificed human victims, perhaps because they had heard that a human victim would appease God for the entire human race. The Greeks sometimes called them χαθάρματα and sometimes περιφηματα. Isaiah and Paul, therefore, mean that Christ became a victim, i. e. an expiation, that by his merits, and not by our own, God might be reconciled. Therefore let this remain in the case, viz. that the death of Christ alone is truly a propitiatory sacrifice. For the Levitical propitiatory sacrifices were so called only to signify a future expiation. Besides, on account of a certain resemblance, they were satisfactions redeeming the righteousness of the Law, lest those persons who sinned should be excluded from the commonwealth. But after the Gospel has been revealed they ought to cease; and as they ought to cease in the revelation of the Gospel, they are not truly propitiations, since the Gospel was promised in order to set forth a propitiation.

Now the rest are eucharistic sacrifices, which are called sacrifices of praise (Lev. 3:1 sq.; 7: sq.; Ps. 56: sq.), viz. the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of saints, yea all good works of saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions for those making them, or applicable on behalf of others, so as to merit for these *ex opere operato* the remission of sins or reconciliation. For they are made by those who have been reconciled. And such are the sacrifices of the New Testament, as Peter teaches (1 Ep. 2:5): “An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices.” Spiritual<sup>2</sup> sacrifices, however, are contrasted not only with those of cattle, but even with human works offered *ex opere operato*, because “spiritual” refers to the movements of the Holy Ghost in us. Paul teaches the same thing (Rom. 12:1): “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, which is your reasonable service.” “Reasonable service” signifies, however, a service in which God is known, and apprehended by the mind, as it is rendered by movements of fear and trust towards God. Therefore it is opposed not only to the Levitical service, in which cattle are slain, but also to a service in which a work is imagined to be offered *ex opere operato*. The Epistle to the Hebrews (13:15) teaches the same thing: “By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually;” and he adds the interpretation, “that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.” He bids

us offer praises, i. e. prayer, thanksgiving, confession and the like. These avail not *ex opere operato*, but on account of faith. This is taught by the clause: "By him let us offer," i. e. by faith in Christ.

[254] In short, the worship of the New Testament is spiritual, i. e. it is the righteousness of faith in the heart, and the fruits of faith. It accordingly abolishes the Levitical services. [In the New Testament no offering avails *ex opere operato, sine bono motu utentis*, i. e. on account of the work without a good thought in the heart] And Christ says (John 4:23, 24): "True worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." This passage clearly condemns opinions concerning sacrifices which they imagine avail *ex opere operato*, and teaches that men ought to worship "in spirit," i. e. with the dispositions of the heart and by faith. [The Jews also did not understand their ceremonies aright, and imagined that they were righteous before God when they had wrought works *ex opere operato*. Against this, the prophets contend with the greatest earnestness.] Accordingly the prophets also in the Old Testament condemn the opinion of the people concerning the *opus operatum*, and teach the righteousness and sacrifices of the Spirit. Jer. 7:22, 23: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings, or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice and will be your God," etc. How do we suppose that the Jews received this arraignment, which seems to conflict openly with Moses? For it was evident that God had given the fathers commands concerning burnt-offerings and victims. But Jeremiah condemns the opinion concerning sacrifices that God had not delivered, viz. that these services should please him *ex opere operato*. But he adds concerning faith that God had commanded this: "Hear me" i. e. believe me that I am your God; that I wish to become thus known when I pity and aid; neither have I need of your victims; believe that I wish to be God the Justifier and Saviour, not on account of works, but on account of my word and promise; truly and from the heart seek and expect aid from me.

Ps. 49 (50:13, 15), which rejects the victims and requires prayer, also condemns the opinion concerning the *opus operatum*: "Will I eat the flesh of bulls?" etc. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." The Psalmist testifies that this is true service, that this is true honor, if we call upon him from the heart.

[255] Likewise Ps. (40:6): "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened," i. e. thou hast offered to me thy Word that I might hear it, and thou dost require that I believe thy Word and thy promises, that thou truly

desirest to pity, to bring aid, etc. Likewise Ps. (51:16, 17): Qt-tr " Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Likewise Ps. 4:5: "Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust [*hope*, V.] in the Lord." He bids us hope, and says that this is a righteous sacrifice, signifying that other sacrifices are not true and righteous sacrifices. And Ps. 115 (116:17): "I will offer to thee the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord." He calls invocation a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

But Scripture is full of such testimonies, which teach that sacrifices *ex opere operato* do not reconcile God. Accordingly the New Testament, since Levitical services have been abrogated, teaches that new and pure sacrifices will be made, viz. faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession and the preaching of the Gospel, afflictions on account of the Gospel, and the like.

[256] And of these sacrifices Malachi speaks (1:11): "From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." The adversaries pervert this passage to the Mass, and quote the authority of the Fathers. A reply, however, is easy, because as they speak most particularly of the Mass, it does not follow that the Mass justifies *ex opere operato*, or that when applied to others it merits the remission of sins, etc. The prophet says nothing of those things which the monks and sophists impudently fabricate. Besides the very words of the prophet express his meaning. For they first say this, viz. that "the name of the Lord will be great." This is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel. For through this the name of Christ is made known, and the mercy of the Father, promised in Christ, is recognized. The preaching of the Gospel produces faith in those who receive the Gospel. They call upon God, they give thanks to God, they bear afflictions for their (confession, they produce good works for the glory of Christ. Thus the name of the Lord becomes great among the Gentiles. Therefore incense and a pure offering signify not a ceremony *ex opere operato* [not the ceremony of the Mass alone], but all sacrifices through which the name of the Lord becomes great, viz. faith, invocation, the preaching of the Gospel, confession, etc. And if any one desire "ceremony" to be here included, we readily concede it, provided he neither understand a ceremony alone, nor teach that the ceremony profits *ex opere operato*. For just as among the sacrifices of praise, i. e., among the praises of God, we include the preaching of the Word, so the reception itself of the Lord's Supper can be praise or thanksgiving; but it does not justify *ex opere operato*; neither is it to be applied to others so as to merit for them the remission of sins. But later we will explain how even a ceremony is a sacrifice. Yet as



Malachi speaks of all the services of the New Testament, and not only of the Lord's Supper; likewise, as he does not favor the pharisaic opinion of the *opum operatum*; he is not against us, but rather aids us. For he requires services of the heart, through which the name of the Lord becomes truly great.

Another passage also is cited from Malachi (3:3): "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness." This passage clearly requires the sacrifices of the righteous, and hence does not favor the opinion concerning the *opus operatum*. But the sacrifices of the sons of Levi, i. e. of those teaching in the New Testament, are the preaching of the Gospel, and the good fruits of preaching, as Paul says (Rom. 15:16): "Ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," i. e. that the Gentiles might be offerings acceptable to God by faith, etc. For the slaying of victims signified in the Law both the death of Christ and the preaching of the Gospel, by which this oldness of flesh should be mortified, and the new and eternal life be begun in us.

But the adversaries everywhere pervert the name "sacrifice" to the ceremony alone. They omit the preaching of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and similar things, although the ceremony has been established on account of these, and the New Testament ought to have sacrifices of the heart, and not ceremonials for sin that are to be performed after the manner of the Levitical priesthood.

[257] They cite also the "daily sacrifice" (cf. Ex. 29:38 sq.; 35 Dan. 8: sq.; 12:11); as if just as in the Law there was a daily sacrifice, so the Mass ought to be a daily sacrifice of the New Testament. The adversaries have managed well if we permit ourselves to be overcome by allegories. It is evident, however, that allegories do not produce firm proofs. [That in matters so highly important before God we must have a sure and clear Word of God, and not introduce by force obscure and foreign passages; such uncertain explanations do not stand the test of God's judgment.] Although we indeed easily suffer the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided that the entire Mass be understood, i. e. the ceremony with the preaching of the Gospel, faith, invocation and thanksgiving. For these joined together are a daily sacrifice of the New Testament, because the ceremony was instituted on account of these things, neither is it to be separated from these. Paul says accordingly (1 Cor. 11:26): "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." But it in no way follows from this Levitical type that a ceremony justifying *ex opere operato* is necessary, or ought to be applied on behalf of others, that it may merit for them the remission of sins.

And the type aptly represents not only the ceremony, but also the preaching of

the Gospel. In Num. 28: sq. three parts of that daily sacrifice are represented, the burning of the lamb, the libation, and the oblation of wheat flour. The Law had pictures or shadows of future things. Accordingly in this spectacle Christ and the entire worship of the New Testament are portrayed. The burning of the lamb signifies the death of Christ. The libation signifies that, everywhere, in the entire world, by the preaching of the Gospel, believers are sprinkled with the blood of that lamb, i. e. sanctified, as Peter says (1 Ep. 1:2): "Through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The oblation of wheat flour signifies faith, prayer, and thanksgiving in hearts. As, therefore, in the Old Testament, the shadow is perceived; so in the New, the thing signified should be sought, and not another type sufficient as a sacrifice.

Wherefore, although a ceremony is a memorial of Christ's death, nevertheless it alone is not the daily sacrifice; but the memory itself is the daily sacrifice, i. e. preaching and faith, which truly believes that, by the death of Christ, God has been reconciled. A libation is required, i. e. the effect of preaching, in order that, being sprinkled by the Gospel with the blood of Christ, we may be sanctified, as those put to death and made alive. Oblations also are required, i. e., thanksgiving, confessions and afflictions.

[258] Thus the pharisaic opinion of the *opus operatum* being cast aside, let us understand that spiritual worship and a daily sacrifice of the heart are signified, because in the New Testament the substance of good things should be sought for,<sup>3</sup> i. e. the Holy Ghost, mortification and quickening. From these things it is sufficiently apparent that the type of the daily sacrifice testifies nothing against us, but rather for us; because we seek for all the parts signified by the daily sacrifice. The adversaries falsely imagine that the ceremony alone is signified, and not also the preaching of the Gospel, mortification and quickening of heart, etc.

Now, therefore, good men will be able to judge readily that the complaint against us that we abolish the daily sacrifice, is most false. Experience shows what sort of tyrants<sup>4</sup> they are who hold power in the Church; who under the pretext of religion assume to themselves the kingdom of the world, and who rule without concern for religion and the teaching of the Gospel; who wage war like kings of the world, and have instituted new services in the Church. For in the Mass the adversaries retain only the ceremony, and publicly apply this to sacrilegious gain. Afterward they feign that this work, as applied on behalf of others, merits for them grace and all good things. In their sermons they do not teach the Gospel, they do not console consciences, they do not show that sins are freely remitted for Christ's sake; but they set forth the worship of saints, human satisfactions, human traditions, and by these they affirm that men are justified

before God. And although some of these traditions are manifestly godless, nevertheless they defend them by violence. If any preachers wish to be regarded more learned, they treat of philosophical questions, which neither the people nor even those who propose them understand. Lastly, those who are more tolerable teach the Law, and say nothing concerning the righteousness of faith.

[259] The adversaries in the Confutation make a great ado concerning the desolation of churches, viz. that the altars stand unadorned, without candles and without images. These trifles they regard an ornament to churches. [Although it is not true that we abolish all such outward ornament; yet even if it were so, Daniel is not speaking of such things as are altogether external and do not belong to the Christian Church, but means, etc.] A far different desolation Daniel means (11:31; 12:11), viz. ignorance of the Gospel. For the people, overwhelmed by the multitude and variety of traditions and opinions, were in no way able to embrace the sum of Christian doctrine. [For the adversaries preach mostly of human ordinances, whereby consciences are led from Christ to confidence in their own works.] For who of the people ever understood the doctrine of repentance, of which the adversaries treat? And yet this is the chief topic of Christian doctrine.

Consciences were tormented by the enumeration of offenses, and by satisfactions. Of faith, by which we freely receive the remission of sins, no mention whatever was made by the adversaries. Concerning the exercises of faith, struggling with despair, and the free remission of sins for Christ's sake, all the books and all the sermons of the adversaries were silent. To these, the horrible profanation of the masses, and many other godless services in the churches, were added. This is the desolation which Daniel describes.

On the contrary, by the favor of God, the priests among us attend to the ministry of the Word, teach the Gospel concerning the blessings of Christ, and show that the remission of sins occurs freely for Christ's sake. This doctrine brings sure consolation to consciences. The doctrine of good works which God commands is also added. The worth and use of the sacraments are declared.

But if the use of the sacrament would be the daily sacrifice, nevertheless we would retain it rather than the adversaries; because with them priests hired for pay use the sacrament. With us the use is more frequent and more sacred. For the people use it, but after having first been instructed and examined. For men are taught concerning the true use of the sacrament, that it was instituted for the purpose of being a seal and testimony of the free remission of sins, and that it accordingly ought to admonish alarmed consciences to be truly confident and believe that their sins are freely remitted. Since, therefore, we retain both the preaching of the Gospel and the lawful use of the sacrament, the daily sacrifice remains with us.

[260] And if we must speak of the outward form, attendance upon church is better with us than with the adversaries. For the audiences are held by useful and clear sermons. But neither the people nor the teachers have understood the doctrine of the adversaries. [But our adversaries preach their people out of the churches; for they teach nothing of the necessary parts of Christian doctrine; they narrate the legends of saints and other fables.] And the true adornment of the churches is godly, useful and clear doctrine, the devout use of the sacraments, ardent prayer and the like. Candles, golden vessels [tapers, altar-cloths, images] and similar adornments are becoming, but they are not the adornment that properly belongs to the Church. But if the adversaries make worship consist in such matters, and not in the preaching of the Gospel, in faith and the conflicts of faith, they are to be numbered among those whom Daniel describes as worshipping their God with gold and silver [Dan. 11:38].

They quote also from the Epistle to the Hebrews (5:1): “Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.” Hence they conclude that since in the New Testament there are high priests and priests, it follows that there is also a sacrifice for sins. This topic particularly affects the unlearned, especially when the pomp of the priesthood and the sacrifices of the Old Testament are spread before the eyes. This resemblance deceives the ignorant, so that they judge that, according to the same manner, a ceremonial ought to exist among us which should be applied on behalf of the sins of others, just as in the Old Testament. Neither is the service of the masses and the rest of the polity of the Pope anything else than affectation for the Levitical polity as misunderstood.

[261] And although our belief has its chief testimonies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, nevertheless the adversaries pervert against us passages wrested from this Epistle, as in this very passage, where it is said that every high priest is ordained to offer sacrifices for sins. Scripture itself immediately adds that Christ is high priest (Heb. 6:5, 6, 10). The preceding words speak of the Levitical priesthood, and signify that the Levitical priesthood was an image of the priesthood of Christ. For the Levitical sacrifices for sins did not merit the remission of sins before God; they were only an image of the sacrifice of Christ, which was to be the one propitiatory sacrifice, as we have above said. Therefore the Epistle is occupied to a great extent with the topic, that the ancient priesthood and the ancient sacrifices were instituted not for the purpose of meriting the remission of sins before God or reconciliation, but only to signify that there would be a sacrifice of Christ alone. For in the Old Testament it was necessary for saints to be justified by faith derived from the promise of the remission of sins that was to be granted for Christ’s sake, just as saints are also

justified in the New Testament. From the beginning of the world it was necessary for all saints to believe that an offering and satisfaction for sins was to be made by Christ, who was promised, as Isaiah teaches (53:10): “When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.”

Since, therefore, in the Old Testament, sacrifices did not merit reconciliation, unless by a figure (for they merited civil reconciliation), but signified that a sacrifice would come; it follows that Christ is the only sacrifice applied on behalf of the sins of others. Therefore, in the New Testament no sacrifice is left to be applied for the sins of others, except the one sacrifice of Christ, upon the cross.

They<sup>5</sup> altogether err who imagine that Levitical sacrifices merited the remission of sins before God, and, by this example in addition to the death of Christ, require in the New Testament sacrifices that are to be applied on behalf of others. This imagination absolutely destroys the merit of Christ’s passion and the righteousness of faith, and corrupts the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, and, instead of Christ, makes for us other mediators and propitiators out of the priests and sacrificers, who daily sell their work in the churches.

[262] Wherefore, if any one would thus infer that in the New Testament a priest is needed to make offering for sins, this must be conceded only of Christ. And the entire Epistle to the Hebrews confirms this explanation. And if, in addition to the death of Christ, we were to seek for any other satisfaction to be applied for the sins of others and to reconcile God, this would be nothing more than to make other mediators in addition to Christ. Again, as the priesthood of the New Testament is the *ministry of the Spirit*, as Paul teaches (2 Cor. 3:6), it has the sacrifice alone of Christ, which is satisfactory and applied for the sins of others. Besides it has no sacrifices like the Levitical, which could be applied *ex opere operato* on behalf of others; but it tenders to others the Gospel and the sacraments, that, by means of these, they may conceive faith and the Holy Ghost, and be mortified and quickened, because the ministry of the Spirit conflicts with the application of an *opus operatum*. For the ministry of the Spirit is that through which the Holy Ghost is efficacious in hearts; and therefore this ministry is profitable to others, when it is efficacious in them, and regenerates and quickens them. This does not occur by the application *ex opere operato* of the work of another on behalf of others.

We have shown the reason why the Mass does not justify *ex opere operato*, and why, when applied on behalf of others, it does not merit remission, because both conflict with the righteousness of faith. For it is impossible that remission of sins should occur, and the terrors of death and sin be overcome by any work or anything, unless by faith in Christ, according to Rom. 5:1: “Being justified by

faith, we have peace.”

In addition, we have shown that the Scriptures, which are cited against us, in no way favor the godless opinion of the adversaries concerning the *opus operatum*. All good men among all nations can judge this. Wherefore the error of Thomas is to be rejected, who wrote: “That the body of the Lord, once offered on the cross for original debt, is continually offered for daily offenses on the altar, in order that, in this, the Church might have a service whereby to reconcile God to herself.” The other common errors are also to be rejected, as that the Mass *ex opere operato* confers grace upon one employing it. Likewise that when applied for others, even for such wicked persons as do not interpose an obstacle, it merits for them the remission of sins, of guilt and punishment. All these things are false and godless, and lately invented by unlearned monks, and obscure the glory of Christ’s passion and the righteousness of faith.

And from these errors infinite others sprang, as that the masses avail when applied for many, just as much as when applied individually.<sup>6</sup> The sophists have particular degrees of merit, just as money-changers have grades of weight in gold or silver. Besides they sell the Mass, as a price for obtaining what each one seeks: to merchants, that business may be prosperous; to hunters, that hunting may be successful; and infinite other things. Lastly, they transfer it also to the dead; by the application of the sacrament they liberate souls from the pains of purgatory, although, without faith, the Mass is of service not even to the living. Neither are the adversaries able to produce even one syllable from the Scriptures in defense of these fables which they teach with great authority in the Church, neither do they have the testimonies of the ancient Church, nor of the Fathers.

## **B. What the Fathers Thought Concerning Sacrifice.**

[263] And since we have explained the passages of Scripture which are cited against us, we must reply also concerning the Fathers. We are not ignorant that the Mass is called by the Fathers a sacrifice; but they do not mean that the Mass confers grace *ex opere operato*, and that, when applied on behalf of others, it merits for them the remission of sins, of guilt and punishment. Where are such wonderful stories to be found in the Fathers? But they openly testify that they are speaking of thanksgiving.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly they call it a eucharist. We have said above, however, that a eucharistic sacrifice does not merit reconciliation, but is made by those who have been reconciled, just as afflictions do not merit reconciliation, but are eucharistic sacrifices when those who have been reconciled sustain them.

And this reply in general to the sayings of the Fathers defends us sufficiently

against the adversaries. For it is certain that these figments concerning the merit of the *opus operatum* never are found in the Fathers. But in order that the whole case may be the better seen, we will also state those things concerning the use of the sacrament which actually harmonize with the Fathers and Scripture.

### **C. Of The Use Of The Sacrament, And Of Sacrifice.**

[264] Some clever men imagine that the Lord's Supper was instituted for two reasons. First, that it might be a mark and testimony of profession, just as a particular shape of hood is the sign of a particular profession. Then they think that such a mark was especially pleasing to Christ, viz. a feast to signify mutual union and friendship among Christians, because banquets are signs of covenant and friendship. But this opinion relates to the outward life; neither does it show the chief use of the things delivered by God; it speaks only of the exercise of love, which men, however profane and worldly, understand; it does not speak of faith, the nature of which few understand.

The sacraments are signs of God's will toward us, and not merely signs of men among each other; and they are right in defining that sacraments in the New Testament are *signs of grace*. And because in a sacrament there are two things, a sign and the Word; the Word, in the New Testament, is the promise of grace added. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the remission of sins, as the text (Luke 22:19) says: "This is my body which is given for you. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Therefore the Word offers the remission of sins. And a ceremony is as it were a picture or "seal," as Paul (Rom. 4:11) calls it, of the Word, making known the promise. Therefore, just as the promise is useless unless it be received in faith, so a ceremony is useless unless such faith be added as is truly confident that the remission of sins is here offered. And this faith encourages contrite minds. And just as the Word has been given in order to excite this faith, so the sacrament has been instituted, in order that the outward appearance meeting the eyes might move the heart to believe [and strengthen faith]. For through these, viz. through Word and sacrament, the Holy Ghost works.

[265] And such use of the sacrament, in which faith quickens terrified hearts, is a service of the New Testament; because the New Testament requires spiritual dispositions, mortification and quickening. [For according to the New Testament the highest service of God is rendered inwardly in the heart.] And for this use Christ instituted it, since he commanded them thus to do in remembrance of him. For to remember Christ is not the idle celebration of a show, or one instituted for

the sake of example, as the memory of Hercules or Ulysses is celebrated in tragedies; but it is to remember the benefits of Christ and receive them by faith, so as by them to be quickened. The Psalm (111:4, 5) accordingly says: "He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him." For it signifies that the will and mercy of God should be discerned in the ceremony. But faith which apprehends mercy quickens. And this is the principal use of the sacrament, in which it is apparent who are fit for the sacrament, viz. terrified consciences, and how they ought to use them.

The sacrifice [thank-offering or thanksgiving] also is added. For there are several ends for one object. After conscience encouraged by faith has perceived from what terrors it is freed, then indeed it fervently gives thanks for the benefit and passion of Christ, and uses the ceremony itself to the praise of God; in order by this obedience to show its gratitude; and testifies that it holds in high esteem the gifts of God. Thus the ceremony becomes a sacrifice of praise.

And the Fathers indeed speak of a twofold effect, of the comfort of consciences, and of thanksgiving or praise. The former of these effects pertains to the nature [the right use] of the sacrament; the latter pertains to the sacrifice. Of consolation Ambrose says: "Go to him and be absolved, because he is the remission of sins. Do you ask who he is? Hear him himself saying (John 6:35): 'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'" This passage testifies that in the sacrament the remission of sins is offered; it also testifies that this ought to be received in faith. Infinite testimonies to this effect are found in the Fathers, all of which the adversaries pervert to the *opus operatum*, and to a work to be applied on behalf of others; although the Fathers clearly require faith, and speak of the consolation belonging to every one, and not of the application.

[266] Besides these, expressions are also found concerning thanksgiving; as it is most beautifully said by Cyprian concerning those communing in a godly way. "Piety," says he, "in thanking the Bestower of such abundant blessing, makes a distinction between what has been given and what has been forgiven, i. e. piety regards both what has been given and what has been forgiven, i. e. it compares the greatness of God's blessings and the greatness of our evils, sin and death, with each other, and gives thanks, etc. And hence the term eucharist arose in the Church. Nor indeed is the ceremony itself of thanksgiving to be applied *ex opere operato* on behalf of others, in order to merit for them the remission of sins, etc., in order to liberate the souls of the dead. These things conflict with the righteousness of faith; as though, without faith, a ceremony can profit either the one performing it or others.



#### D. Of the Term Mass<sup>8</sup>.

The adversaries also refer us to philology. From the names of the Mass they derive arguments which do not require a long discussion. For even though the Mass be called a sacrifice, it does not follow that it must confer grace *ex opere operato*, or, when applied on behalf of others, merit for them the remission of sins, etc. Αιτουγια, they say, signifies a sacrifice, and the Greeks call the Mass, liturgy. Why do they here omit the old appellation *synaxis*<sup>9</sup> which shows that the Mass was formerly the communion of many? But let us speak of the word “liturgy.” This word does not properly signify a sacrifice, but rather the public ministry, and agrees aptly with our belief, viz. that the minister who consecrates tenders the body and blood of the Lord to the rest of the people, just as the minister who preaches tenders the Gospel to the people, as Paul says (1 Cor. 4:1): “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,” i. e. of the Gospel and the sacraments. And Cor. 5:20: “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Thus the term λειτουργια agrees aptly with the ministry. For it is an old word, ordinarily employed in public civil administrations, and signified to the Greeks public burdens, as tribute, the expense of equipping a fleet, or similar things, as the oration of Demosthenes, “For Leptines,” testifies, all of which is occupied with the discussion of public duties and immunities: Φησει δε αναξιους τινας ανθρωπους ευρομενοθς ατελειαν εχοεουχεναι τας λειτουργιας, i. e. he will say that some unworthy men having found an immunity have withdrawn from public burdens. And thus they spake in the time of the Romans, as the rescript of Pertinax, *De jure immunitatis*, l. Semper, shows: Ει χαι μη πασοιν λειτουργιων τους πατερας ο των τεχνων αρεθμος ανειται, even though the number of children does not liberate parents from all public burdens. And the Commentary upon Demosthenes states that λειτουργια is a kind of tribute, the expense of the games, the expense of equipping vessels, of attending to the gymnasia and similar public offices. And Paul in Cor. 9: applies it to a collection. The taking of the collection Dot only supplies those things which are wanting to the saints, but also causes them to give more thanks abundantly to God, etc. And in Phil. 2:25 he calls Epaphroditus a λειτουργος, one “who ministered to my wants,” where assuredly a sacrificer cannot be understood. But there is no need of more testimonies, since examples are everywhere obvious to those reading the Greek writers, in whom λειτουργια is employed for public civil burdens or ministries. And on account of the diphthong, grammarians do not derive it from λιτη, which signifies prayers, but from public goods, which they call λειτα, so that λειτοθργεω means, I attend to, I

administer public goods.

Ridiculous is the inference that in the Holy Scriptures mention is made of an altar, and therefore the Mass must be a sacrifice; since the figure of an altar is referred to by Paul only by way of comparison. And they fabricate that the Mass has been so called from *הכֹּחַ*, an altar. What need is there of an etymology so far fetched, unless it be to show their knowledge of the Hebrew language? What need is there to seek the etymology from a distance, when the term Mass is found in Deut. 6:10, where it signifies the collections or gifts of the people, not the offering of the priest. For individuals coming to the celebration of the Passover were obliged to bring some gift as a contribution. In the beginning the Christians also retained this custom. Coming together, they brought bread, wine and other things, as the Canons of the Apostles testify. Thence a part was taken to be consecrated; the rest was distributed to the poor. With this custom they also retained *Mass* as the name of the contributions. And on account of such contributions it appears also that the Mass was elsewhere called *ἀγάπη* unless any one prefer that it be so called on account of the common feast. But let us omit these trifles. For it is ridiculous that the adversaries should produce such trifling conjectures concerning a matter of such great importance. For although the Mass is called an offering, in what does the term favor the dreams concerning the *opus operatum*, and the application which, they imagine, merits for others the remission of sins? And it can be called an offering for the reason that prayers, thanksgivings and the attire worship are there offered, as it is also called a eucharist. But neither ceremonies nor prayers profit *ex opere operato* without faith. Although we are disputing here not concerning prayers, but particularly concerning the Lord's Supper.

[267] The Greek canon says also many things concerning offering, but it shows plainly that it is not speaking properly of the body and blood of the Lord, but of the whole service, of prayers and thanksgivings. For it says thus: *Καὶ ποιήσον ἡμῖς ἀξιόους γενέσθαι τοῦ προσφέρειν σοὶ δεήσεις καὶ ἰχέσιαι καὶ θυσίας ἀναιμάχτους ὑπὲρ παντὸς λαοῦ*. When this is rightly understood it gives no offense. For it prays that "we be made worthy to offer prayers and supplications and bloodless sacrifices for the people." For he calls even *praters* bloodless sacrifices. Just as also a little afterward: *Ἐτι προσφερούμεν σοὶ τὴν λογιχὴν ταύτην καὶ ἀναιμάχτου κατρελάν*, "we offer," he says, "this reasonable and bloodless service." For they explain this inaptly who prefer that a reasonable sacrifice be here interpreted, and transfer it to the very body of Christ, although the canon speaks of the entire worship, and in opposition to the *opus operatum* Paul has spoken of *λογικὴ λατρεία* [reasonable service], viz. of the worship of the mind, of fear, of faith, of prayer, of thanksgiving, etc. Some think that *Missa*

comes not from the Hebrew, but that it is equivalent to *Remissio*, i. e. the forgiveness of sins. For when they had communed, it was said: *Ite missa est*, Depart, ye have forgiveness of sins. And that this is so they infer from the fact that among the Greeks it was the custom to say Αἰοις ἀφεισις, which is equivalent to, It is forgiven them. If this were so it would be an excellent idea; for in this ceremony the forgiveness of sins would always be preached and proclaimed; yet whatever the word *Missa* may mean, helps this matter but little.

## **E. Of the Mass for the Dead.**

Our adversaries have no testimonies and no command from Scripture for defending the application of a ceremony for liberating the souls of the dead; although from this they derive infinite revenue. Nor indeed is it a light sin to establish such services in the Church without the command of God and without the example of Scripture, and to transfer to the dead the Lord's Supper, which was instituted for commemoration and preaching among the living [for the purpose of strengthening the faith of those who use the ceremony]. This is to violate the Second Commandment, by abusing God's name.

[268] For, in the first place, it is a dishonor to the Gospel to hold that a ceremony *ex opere operato* without faith is a sacrifice reconciling God, and making satisfaction for sins. It is a horrible assertion to ascribe as much to the work of a priest as to the death of Christ. Again, sin and death cannot be overcome unless by faith in Christ, as Paul teaches (Rom. 5:1): "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and therefore the punishment of purgatory cannot be overcome by the application of the work of another.

Now we will omit the sort of testimonies concerning purgatory that the adversaries have; the nature of the punishment they regard as belonging to purgatory; the kind of arguments whereby the doctrine of satisfactions is supported; all of which we have shown above to be most vain. We will only present this in opposition: It is certain that the Lord's Supper was instituted on account of the remission of guilt. For it offers the remission of sins where it is necessary that guilt be truly understood. And nevertheless it does not make satisfaction for guilt; otherwise the Mass would be equal to the death of Christ. Neither can the remission of guilt be received in any other way than by faith. Therefore the Mass is not satisfaction, but a promise and sacrament that require faith.

And indeed it is necessary that all godly persons be affected with the most bitter grief, if they consider that the Mass has been in great part transferred to the dead and to satisfactions for punishments. This is to banish the daily sacrifice

from the Church, this is the kingdom of Antiochus, who transferred the most salutary promises concerning the remission of guilt and concerning faith to the most vain opinions concerning satisfactions, i. e. to defile the Gospel, to corrupt the use of the sacraments. These are the persons whom Paul has said (1 Cor. 11:27) to be “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” who have suppressed the doctrine concerning faith and the remission of sins, and, under the pretext of satisfactions, have devoted the body and blood of the Lord to sacrilegious gain. And they will at some time pay the penalty for this sacrilege. Wherefore we and all godly consciences should be on our guard against approving the abuses of the adversaries.

[269] But let us return to the case. Since *ex opere operato* without faith the Mass is not a satisfaction; it follows that the application on behalf of the dead is useless. Nor is there need here of a longer discussion. For it is evident that these applications on behalf of the dead have no testimonies from the Scriptures. Neither is it safe, without the authority of Scripture, to institute services in the Church. And if it will at any time be necessary, we will speak at greater length concerning this entire subject. For why do we now contend with adversaries who understand neither what a sacrifice, nor what a sacrament, nor what remission of sins, nor what faith, is?

Neither does the Greek canon apply the offering as a satisfaction for the dead, because it applies it equally for all the blessed patriarchs, prophets, apostles. It appears therefore that the Greeks make an offering as thanksgiving, and do not apply it as satisfaction for punishments. [For of course it is not their intention to deliver the prophets and apostles from purgatory, but only to offer up thanks along and together with them for the exalted eternal blessings that have been given to them and us.] Although<sup>10</sup> they also speak not of the offering alone of the body and blood of the Lord, but of the other parts of the Mass, viz. prayers and thanksgiving. For after the consecration, they pray that it may profit those who partake of it; they do not speak of others. Then they add: Ετι προσφερουμεν σοι την λογικην ταυτην λατρειαν υπερ των εν πιστει αναπαυσαμενων προπατορων, πατερων, πατριαρχων, προφητων, αποστολων, etc. [Yet we offer to you this reasonable service for those having departed in faith, forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, etc.”] But reasonable service does not signify the offering itself but prayers and all things which are there transacted. As indeed the adversaries cite the Fathers concerning the offering for the dead, we know that the ancients speak of prayer for the dead, which we do not prohibit; but we disapprove of the application *ex opere operato* of the Lord’s Supper on behalf of the dead. Neither do the ancients favor the adversaries concerning the *opus operatum*. And although they have the testimonies especially of Gregory or the

moderns, we oppose to them the most clear and certain Scriptures. And there is a great diversity among the Fathers. They were men, and could err and be deceived. Although if they would now become alive again, and would see their sayings assigned as pretexts for the notorious falsehoods which the adversaries teach concerning the *opus operatum*, they would interpret themselves far differently.

[270] The adversaries also falsely cite against us the condemnation of Aarius, who they say was condemned for the reason that he denied that in the Mass an offering is made for the living and the dead. They frequently use this dexterous turn, cite the ancient heresies, and falsely compare our cause with these in order by this comparison to crush us. Epiphanius testifies that Aarius held that prayers for the dead are useless. With this he finds fault. Neither do we favor Aarius, but we on our part are contending with you who are defending a heresy manifestly conflicting with the prophets, apostles and holy Fathers, viz. that the Mass justifies *ex opere operato*, that it merits the remission of guilt and punishment even for the unjust, to whom it is applied, if they do not present an obstacle. Of these pernicious errors, which detract from the glory of Christ's passion, and entirely overthrow the doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith, we disapprove. There was a similar persuasion of the godless in the Law, viz. that they merited the remission of sins, not freely by faith, but through sacrifices *ex opere operato*. Therefore they increased these services and sacrifices, instituted the worship of Baal in Israel, and even sacrificed in the groves in Judah. Wherefore the prophets condemn this opinion, and wage war not only with the worshipers of Baal, but also with other priests who, with this godless opinion, made sacrifices ordained by God. But this opinion inheres in the world, and always will inhere, viz. that services and sacrifices are propitiations. Carnal men cannot endure that to the sacrifice alone of Christ the honor be ascribed that it is a propitiation, because they do not understand the righteousness of faith, but ascribe equal honor to the rest of the services and sacrifices. Just as, therefore, among the godless priests in Judah a false opinion concerning sacrifices inhered; just as in Israel, Baalitic services continued, and, nevertheless, a Church of God was there which disapproved of godless services; so Baalitic worship inheres in the domain of the Pope, viz. the abuse of the Mass, which they apply, that, by it, they may merit for the unrighteous the remission of guilt and punishment. [And yet as God still kept his Church, i. e. some saints, in Israel and Judah, so God still preserved his Church, i. e. some saints, under the Papacy, so that the Christian Church has not entirely perished.] And it seems that this Baalitic worship will endure as long as the reign of the Pope, until Christ will come to judge, and, by the glory of his advent, will destroy the reign of Antichrist.

Meanwhile all who truly believe the Gospel [that they may truly honor God and have a constant comfort against sins; for God has graciously caused his Gospel to shine, that we might be warned and saved] ought to condemn these wicked services, devised, contrary to God's command, in order to obscure the glory of Christ and the righteousness of faith.

We have briefly said these things of the Mass in order that all good men in all parts of the world may be able to understand that, with the greatest zeal, we maintain the dignity of the Mass, and show its true use, and that we have the most just reasons for dissenting from the adversaries. And we wish to admonish all good men not to aid the adversaries in the profanation of the Mass, lest they may burden themselves with complicity in the sin of another. It is a great cause, and a great subject not inferior to the transaction of the prophet Elijah, who condemned the worship of Baal. We have presented a case of such importance with the greatest moderation, and now reply without casting any reproach. But if the adversaries will compel us to collect all kinds of abuses of the Mass, the case will not be treated with such forbearance.

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1. Augsburg Confession, xxiv.: 21-28.↵
  2. Germ. omits rest of §.↵
  3. Col. 2:17.↵
  4. "Antiochi, with evident reference to Antiochus Epiphanes. See Macc. § 57; Dan. 11:31.↵
  5. Germ, omits this §.↵
  6. Cf. Augsburg Conf., xxiv.: 23.↵
  7. Cf. Apology, Art. xxiv.: 29, p. 254↵
  8. German treats what follows very briefly.↵
  9. Cf. Apology, xxiv., § 8, p. 249.↵
  10. Germ, omits to end of §↵

## Chapter XIII. Of Monastic Vows.

### Article XXVII.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Arts, xvi., xxvii; *Apology*, Art. xvi.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part iii., Arts, iii., xiv. Cf. *Torgau Articles*, xv.

[271] In the town of Eisenach in Thuringia there was, to our knowledge, a monk, John Hilten<sup>1</sup> who thirty, years ago was cast by his fraternity into prison, because he had protested against certain most notorious abuses. For we have seen his writings, from which it can be well understood what the nature of his doctrine was. And those who knew him testify that he was a mild old man, and serious indeed, but without moroseness. He predicted many things, some of which have thus far transpired, and others still seem to impend, which we do not wish to recite, lest it may be inferred that they are narrated either from hatred toward one or from partiality to another. But finally when, either on account of his age or the foulness of the prison, he fell into disease, he sent for the guardian, in order to tell him of his sickness; and when the guardian, inflamed with pharisaic hatred, had begun to reprove the man harshly on account of his kind of doctrine which seemed to be injurious to the kitchen; then, passing by the mention of his sickness, he said with a sigh that he had borne these injuries patiently for Christ's sake, since he had indeed neither written nor taught anything which could overthrow the position of the monks, but had only protested again some well known abuses. "But another one," he said, "will come in A. D. 1516, who will destroy you, neither will you be able to resist him." This very opinion concerning the downward career of the power of the monks, and this number of years, his friends afterwards found also written by him in his Commentaries,<sup>2</sup> which he had left, concerning certain passages of Daniel. But although the issue will teach how much weight should be given to this declaration, yet there are other signs which threaten a change in the power of the monks, that are no less certain than oracles. For it is evident how much hypocrisy, ambition, avarice there is in the monasteries, how much ignorance and cruelty among all the unlearned, what vanity in their sermons and in devising continually new means of gaining money. And there are other faults, which we do not care about mentioning. Although there once were schools for Christian instruction, now they have degenerated as though from a golden to an iron age, or as the Platonic

cube degenerates into bad harmonies, which Plato says brings destruction. All the most wealthy monasteries support only an idle crowd, which gluttonizes upon the public alms of the Church. Christ, however, teaches concerning the salt that has lost its savor, that it should be cast out and be trodden under foot (Matt. 5:13). Wherefore the monks by such morals are singing their own fate [requiem]. And now another sign is added, because they are, in many places, the instigators of the death of good men. These murders God undoubtedly will shortly avenge. Nor indeed do we find fault with all; for we are of the opinion that there are here and there some good men in the monasteries, who judge moderately concerning human and factitious services, as some writers call them, and who do not approve of the cruelty which the hypocrites among them exercise.

[272] But we are now discussing the kind of doctrine which the composers of the Confutation are now defending, and not the question whether vows should be observed. For we hold that lawful vows ought to be observed; but whether these services merit the remission of sins and justification; whether they are satisfactions for sins; whether they are equal to baptism; whether they are the observance of precepts and counsels; whether they are evangelical perfection; whether they have the merits of supererogation; whether these merits when applied on behalf of others save them; whether vows made with these opinions are lawful; whether vows are lawful that are undertaken under the pretext of religion, merely for the sake of appetite and idleness; whether those are truly vows that have been extorted either from the unwilling, or from those who on account of age were not able to judge concerning the kind of life, whom parents or friends thrust into the monasteries, that they might be supported at the public expense without the loss of private patrimony; whether vows are lawful that openly tend to an evil issue, either because on account of weakness they are not observed, or because those who are in these fraternities are compelled to approve and aid the abuses of the Mass, the godless worship of saints, and the counsels to rage against good men concerning such questions as these we are treating. And although we have said very many things in the Confession concerning such vows as even the canons of the popes condemn, nevertheless the adversaries command that all things which we have produced be rejected. For they have used these words.

And it is worthwhile to hear how they pervert our reasons, and what they adduce to establish their own cause. Accordingly we will briefly run over a few of our arguments, and, in passing, explain away the sophistry of the adversaries in reference to them. Since, however, this entire case has been carefully and fully treated by Luther in the book to which he gave the title *De Votis Monasticis*, we wish here to consider that book as repeated.



[273] *First*, it is very certain that a vow is not lawful, by which he ii who vows thinks that he merits the remission of sins before God, or makes satisfaction before God for sins. For this opinion is a manifest insult to the Gospel, which teaches that the remission of sins is freely granted us for Christ's sake, as has been said above at some length. Therefore we have correctly quoted the declaration of Paul to the Galatians (Gal. 5:4): "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace." Those who seek the remission of sins, not by faith in Christ, but by monastic works, detract from the honor of Christ, and crucify Christ afresh. But hear, hear how the composers of the Confutation escape in this place! They explain this passage of Paul only concerning the Law of Moses, and they add that the monks observe all things for Christ's sake, and endeavor to live the nearer the Gospel in order to merit eternal life. And they add a horrible peroration in these words: "Wherefore those things are wicked that are here alleged against monasticism." O Christ, how long wilt thou bear these reproaches with which our enemies treat thy Gospel? We have said in the Confession<sup>3</sup> that the remission of sins is received freely for Christ's sake through faith. If this is not the very voice of the Gospel, if it is not the judgment of the eternal Father, which thou who art in the bosom of the Father hast revealed to the world, we are justly blamed. But thy death is a witness, thy resurrection is a witness, the Holy Ghost is a witness, thy entire Church is a witness, that it is truly the judgment of the Gospel that we obtain remission of sins, not on account of our merits, but on account of thee, through faith.

When Paul denies that, by the Law of Moses, men merit the remission of sins, much more does he withdraw this praise from human traditions; and this (Col. 2:16) clearly testifies. If the Law of Moses, which was divinely revealed, did not merit the remission of sins, how much less do these silly observances [monasticism, rosaries, etc.], differing from the civil custom of life, merit the remission of sins!

The adversaries feign that Paul abolishes the Law of Moses, and that Christ succeeds in such a way that he does not freely grant the remission of sins, but on account of the works of other laws, if any are now devised. By this godless and fanatical imagination, they bury the benefit of Christ. Then they feign that among those who observe this Law of Christ, the monks observe it more rigidly than others, on account of the hypocrisy of poverty, obedience and chastity, since indeed all things are full of dissembling. In the greatest abundance of all things they boast of poverty. Although no class of men has greater license than the monks, they boast of obedience. Of celibacy we do not like to speak; how pure this is in most of those who desire to be continent, Gerson indicates. And how

many of them desire to be continent?

Of course, by this dissimulation, the monks live more strictly in accordance with the Gospel! Christ has not succeeded Moses in such a way as on account of our works to remit sins, but so as to set his own merits and his own propitiation on our behalf over against God's wrath, that we may be freely forgiven. He who, indeed, in addition to Christ's propitiation, opposes his own merits to God's wrath, and on account of his own merits endeavors to obtain the remission of sins, whether he present the works of the Mosaic Law, or of the Decalogue, or of the rule of Benedict, or of the rule of Augustine, or of other rules, *annuls the promise of Christ, has cast away Christ, and has fallen from grace*. This is the belief of Paul.

But, behold, most clement Emperor Charles, behold, ye princes, behold, all ye ranks, how great is the impudence of the adversaries! Although we have cited the declaration of Paul to this effect, they have written: "Wicked are those things that are here cited against monasticism." But what is more certain than that men obtain the remission of sins by faith for Christ's sake? And these wretches dare to call this a wicked opinion! We do not at all doubt that if you had been admonished of this passage, you would have taken care that such blasphemy be removed from the Confutation.

[275] But since above it has been fully shown that the opinion is wicked, that we obtain the remission of sins on account of our works, we will be briefer on this topic. For the prudent reader will easily be able to reason thence that we do not merit the remission of sins by monastic works. Therefore this blasphemy also is in no way to be endured which is read in Thomas, that "the monastic profession is equal to baptism."<sup>4</sup> It is madness to make human tradition, which has neither God's command nor promise, equal to the ordinance of Christ, which has both the command and promise of God, which contains the covenant of grace and of eternal life.

*Secondly.* Obedience, poverty and celibacy, if nevertheless the latter be not impure, are, as exercises, adiaphora. And, for this reason, the saints can use these without impiety, just as Bernard, Franciscus and other holy men used them. And they used them on account of bodily advantage, that they might have more leisure to teach and to perform other godly offices, and not that the works themselves are, by themselves, works that justify or merit eternal life. Finally, they belong to the class of which Paul says (1 Tim. 4:8): "Bodily exercise profiteth little." And it is credible that in some places there are also at present good men, who exercise the ministry of the Word, who use these observances without wicked opinions [without hypocrisy and with the understanding that they do not regard their monasticism as holiness]. But to hold that these

observances are services, on account of which they are accounted just before God, and through which they merit eternal life, conflicts with the Gospel concerning the righteousness of faith, which teaches that for Christ's sake righteousness and eternal life are granted us. It conflicts also with the saying of Christ (Matt. 15:9): "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." It conflicts also with this statement (Rom. 14:23): "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." But how can they affirm that they are services which God approves as righteousness before him, when they have no testimony of God's Word?

[276] But look at the impudence of the adversaries! They not only teach that these observances are justifying services, but they add that these services are more perfect, i. e. meriting more the remission of sins and justification, than do other kinds of life [that they are states of perfection, i. e. holier and higher states than the rest, such as marriage, rulership]. And here many false and pernicious opinions concur. They imagine that they observe precepts and counsels. Afterwards liberal men, when they dream that they have the merits of supererogation, sell these to others. All these things are full of pharisaic vanity. For it is the height of impiety to hold that they satisfy the Decalogue in such a way that merits remain, while such precepts as these are accusing all the saints: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart" (Deut. 6:5). Likewise: "Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7:7). [For as the First Commandment of God ("Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind") is higher than a man upon earth can comprehend, as it is the highest theology, from which all the prophets and all the apostles have drawn as from a spring their best and highest doctrines; yea, as it is such an exalted commandment, according to which alone all divine service, all honor to God, every offering, all thanksgiving in heaven and upon earth, must be regulated and judged, so that all divine service, high and precious and holy though it appear, if it be not in accordance with this commandment is nothing but husks and shells without a kernel, yea nothing but filth and abomination before God; which exalted commandment no saint whatever has perfectly fulfilled, so that even Noah and Abraham, David, Peter and Paul acknowledged themselves imperfect and sinners: it is an unheard-of, pharisaic, yea an actually diabolical pride, for a sordid barefooted monk or any similar godless hypocrite to say, yea preach and teach, that he has observed and fulfilled the holy high commandment so perfectly, and, according to the demands and will of God, has done so many good works, that merit even superabounds to him. Yea, dear hypocrites, if the holy Ten Commandments, and the exalted First Commandment of God were fulfilled just as the bread and remnants are put into the sack! They are shameless

hypocrites with whom the world is plagued in this last time.] The prophet says (Ps. 116:11): “All men are liars,” i. e. not thinking aright concerning God, not fearing God sufficiently, not believing him sufficiently. Wherefore the monks falsely boast that in the observance of a monastic life the commandments are fulfilled, and more is done than what is commanded [that their good works and several hundredweights of superfluous, superabundant holiness remain in store for them].

Again, this also is false, viz. that monastic observances are works of the counsels of the Gospel. For the Gospel does not advise concerning distinctions of clothing and meats and the renunciation of property. These are human traditions, concerning all of which it has been said (1 Cor. 8:8): “Meat commendeth us not to God.” Wherefore they are neither justifying services nor perfection; yea when they are presented covered with these titles, they are mere doctrines of demons.

Virginity is recommended, but to those who have the gift, as has been said above.<sup>5</sup> It is, however, a most pernicious error to hold that evangelical perfection lies in human traditions. For thus the monks even of the Mohammedans would be able to boast that they have evangelical perfection. Neither does it lie in the observance of other things which are called adiaphora, but because the kingdom of God is righteousness and life in hearts (Rom. 14:17), perfection is growth in the fear of God, and in confidence in the mercy promised in Christ, and in devotion to one’s calling; just as Paul also describes perfection (2 Cor. 3:18): “We are changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” He does not say: We are continually receiving another hood, or other sandals, or other girdles. It is deplorable that, in the Church, such pharisaic, yea Mohammedan, expressions should be read and heard, as that the perfection of the Gospel, of the kingdom of Christ, which is eternal life, should be placed in these foolish observances of vestments and of similar trifles.

Now hear our Areopagites, as to what an unworthy declaration they have recorded in the Confutation. Thus they say: “It has been expressly declared in the Holy Scriptures that the monastic life, if maintained by a due observance, which by the grace of God any monks can maintain, merits eternal life; and indeed Christ has promised this as much more abundant to those who have left home or brothers,” etc. (Matt. 19:29). These are the words of the adversaries, in which it is first said most impudently that it is expressed in the Holy Scriptures that a monastic life merits eternal life. For where do the Holy Scriptures speak of a monastic life? Thus the adversaries plead their case, thus men of no account quote the Scriptures. Although no one is ignorant that the monastic life has recently been devised, nevertheless they cite the authority of Scripture, and say

too that this their decree has been expressly declared in the Scriptures.

[278] Besides, they dishonor Christ when they say that, by monasticism, men merit eternal life. God has ascribed not even to his Law the honor that it should merit eternal life, as he clearly says in Ezek. 20:25: "I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." In the first place, it is certain that a monastic life does not merit the remission of sins, but we obtain this by faith freely, as has above been said. Secondly, for Christ's sake, through mercy, eternal life is granted to those who by faith receive remission, and do not set their own merits over against God's judgment, as Bernard also says with very great force:<sup>6</sup> "It is necessary first of all to believe that you cannot have the remission of sins, unless by God's indulgence. Secondly, that you can have no good work whatever, unless he have given also this. Lastly, that you can merit eternal life by no works, unless this also be given freely." The rest that follows to the same effect we have above recited. Moreover, Bernard adds at the end: "Let no one deceive himself, because if he will reflect well, he will undoubtedly find that with ten thousand he cannot meet Him [namely, God] who cometh against him with twenty thousand." Since, however, we do not merit the remission of sins or eternal life by the works of the divine Law, but it is necessary to seek the mercy promised in Christ; much less is this honor of meriting the remission of sins or eternal life to be ascribed to monastic observances, since they are mere human traditions.

Thus those who teach that the monastic life merits the remission of sins or eternal life, and transfer the confidence due Christ to these foolish observances, altogether suppress the Gospel concerning the free remission of sins and the promised mercy in Christ that is to be apprehended. Instead of Christ they worship their own hoods and their own sordidness. But since even they need mercy, they act wickedly in fabricating works of supererogation, and selling them [the superfluous part in heaven] to others.

We speak the more briefly concerning these subjects, because from those things which we have said above concerning justification, concerning repentance, concerning human traditions, it is sufficiently evident that monastic vows are not a price on account of which the remission of sins and life eternal are granted. And since Christ calls traditions useless services,<sup>7</sup> they are in no way evangelical perfection.

[279] But the adversaries cunningly wish to modify the common opinion concerning perfection. They say that a monastic life is not perfection, but that it is a state in which to acquire perfection. It is well said, and we remember that this correction is found in Gerson. For it is apparent that prudent men, offended by these immoderate praises of monastic life, since they did not venture to

remove entirely from it the praise of perfection, have added the correction that it is a state in which to acquire perfection. If we follow this, monasticism will be no more a state of perfection than the life of a farmer or mechanic. For these are also states in which to acquire perfection. For all men, in every vocation, ought to seek perfection, that is, to grow in the fear of God, in faith, in love towards one's neighbor, and similar spiritual virtues.

In the histories of the hermits there are examples of Anthony and of others which make the various spheres of life equal. It is written that when Anthony asked God to show him what progress he was making in this kind of life, a certain shoemaker in the city of Alexandria was indicated to him in a dream, to whom he should be compared. The next day Anthony came into the city, and went to the shoemaker in order to ascertain his exercises and gifts, and, having conversed with the man, heard nothing except that early in the morning he prayed in a few words for the entire state, and then attended to his trade. Here Anthony learned that justification is not to be ascribed to the kind of life which he had entered [what God had meant by the revelation; for we are justified before God not through this or that life, but alone through faith in Christ].

But although the adversaries now moderate their praises concerning perfection, yet they actually think otherwise. For they sell merits, and apply them on behalf of others, under the pretext that they are observing precepts and counsels, on account of which they actually hold that they have superfluous merits. But what is it to arrogate to one's self perfection, if this be not? Again it has been laid down in the Confutation that the monks endeavor to live more nearly in accordance with the Gospel. Therefore it ascribes perfection to human traditions if they are living more nearly in accordance with the Gospel by not having property, being unmarried, and obeying the rule in clothing, meats and like trifles.

[280] Again the Confutation says that the monks merit eternal life the more abundantly, and quotes Scripture (Matt. 19:29): "Every one that hath forsaken houses," etc., viz. that this claims perfection also for factitious religious rites. But this passage of Scripture in no way favors monastic life. For Christ does not mean that to forsake parents, wife, brethren, is a work that must be done because it merits the remission of sins and eternal life. Yea such a forsaking is cursed. For if any one forsake parents or wife, in order by this very work to merit the remission of sins or eternal life, this is done with dishonor to Christ.

There is, moreover, a twofold forsaking. One occurs without a call, without God's command; this Christ does not approve (Matt. 15:9). For the works chosen by us are useless services. But it appears the more clearly that Christ does not approve this flight from the fact that he speaks of forsaking wife and children.

We know, however, that God's commandment forbids the forsaking of wife and children. The forsaking which occurs by God's command is of a different kind, viz. when power or tyranny compels us either to depart or to deny the Gospel. Here we have the command that we should rather bear injury, that we should rather suffer not only wealth, wife and children, but even life, to be taken from us. This forsaking Christ approves, and accordingly he adds: "For the Gospel's sake" (Mark 10:29), in order to signify that he is speaking not of those who do injury to wife and children, but who bear injury on account of the confession of the Gospel. For the Gospel's sake we ought even to forsake our body. Here it would be ridiculous to hold that it would be a service to God to kill one's self, and without God's command to leave the body. So too it is ridiculous to hold that it is a service to God without God's command to forsake possessions, friends, wife, children.

Therefore it is evident that they wickedly distort Christ's word to a monastic life. Unless perhaps the declaration that they "receive a hundred-fold in this life" be in place here. For very many become monks not on account of the Gospel, but on account of sumptuous living and idleness, who find the most ample riches instead of slender patrimonies. But as the entire subject of monasticism is full of shams, so, by a false pretext, they quote testimonies of Scripture, and as a consequence they sin doubly, i. e, they deceive men, and that too under the pretext of the divine name.

[281] Another passage is also cited concerning perfection (Matt. 19:21): "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me."<sup>8</sup> This passage has exercised many, who have imagined that it is perfection to cast away possessions and the control of property. Let us allow the philosophers to extol Aristippus, who cast a great weight of gold into the sea. [Cynics like Diogenes, who would have no house, but lay in a tub, may commend such heathenish holiness.] Such examples pertain in no way to Christian perfection. [Christian holiness consists in much higher matters than such hypocrisy.] The division, control and possession of property are civil ordinances, approved by God's Word in the commandment (Ex. 20:15): "Thou shalt not steal." The abandonment of property has no command or advice in the Scriptures.<sup>9</sup> For evangelical poverty does not consist in the abandonment of property, but not to be avaricious, not to trust in wealth, just as David was poor in a most wealthy kingdom.

Wherefore since the abandonment of property is merely human tradition, it is a useless service. Excessive also are the praises in the *Extravagant*[<sup>^</sup>bgQ], which says that the abdication of -the ownership of all things for God's sake is meritorious and holy and a way of perfection. And it is very dangerous to extol



with such excessive praises a matter conflicting with political order. [When inexperienced people hear such commendations, they conclude that it is unchristian to hold property; whence then many errors and seditions follow; through such commendations Münzer was deceived, and thereby many Anabaptists were led astray.] But Christ here speaks of perfection. Yea they do violence to the text who quote it mutilated. Perfection is in that which Christ adds: “Follow me.”<sup>10</sup> The example of obedience in one’s calling has been presented. And as callings are unlike [one is called to rulership, a second to be father of a family, a third to be a preacher]; so this calling does not belong to all,<sup>11</sup> but pertains properly to that person with whom Christ there speaks, just as the call of David to the kingdom, and of Abraham to slay his son, are not to be imitated by us. Callings are personal,<sup>12</sup> just as matters of business themselves vary with times and persons; but the example of obedience is general. Perfection would have belonged to that young man if he had believed and obeyed this vocation. Thus perfection with us is that every one with true faith should obey his own calling. [Not that I should undertake a strange calling for which I have not the commission or command of God.]

[^bgQ]Extravag. of John XXII., tit., xiv., cap. 5, where these words of Pope Nicholas III. are quoted from Lib. vi., Decretal l. v., t. xii., c. 3.

[282] *Thirdly*. In monastic vows chastity is promised. We have said above, however, concerning the marriage of priests, that the law of nature in men cannot be removed by vows or enactments.<sup>13</sup> And as all do not have the gift of continence, many because of weakness are unsuccessfully continent. Neither indeed can any vows or any enactments abolish the command of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 7:2): “To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.” Wherefore this vow is not lawful in those who do not have the gift of continence, but who are polluted on account of weakness. Concerning this entire topic enough has been said above, in regard to which indeed it is wonderful, since the dangers and scandals are occurring before the eyes, that the adversaries still defend their traditions contrary to the manifest command of God. Neither does the voice of Christ move them, who chides the Pharisees (Matt. 23: sq.), who made traditions contrary to God’s command.

*Fourthly*. Those who live in monasteries are released from their vows by such godless ceremonies,<sup>14</sup> as of the Mass applied on behalf of the dead for the sake of gain; the worship of saints, in which the fault is twofold, both that the saints are put in Christ’s place and that they are wickedly worshiped, just as the Dominicans invented the rosary of the Blessed Virgin, which is mere idle talk, not less foolish than it is wicked, and nourishes the most vain presumption. Then, too, these very impieties are applied only for the sake of gain. Likewise,



they neither hear nor teach the Gospel concerning the free remission of sins for Christ's sake, concerning the righteousness of faith, concerning true repentance, concerning works which have God's command. But they are occupied either in philosophic discussions or in the handing down of ceremonies that obscure Christ.

We will not here speak of the entire service of ceremonies, of the lessons, singing and similar things which could be tolerated if they would be regarded as exercises, after the manner of lessons in the schools [and preaching], whose design is to teach the hearers, and, while teaching, to move some to fear or faith. But now they feign that these ceremonies are services of God, which merit the remission of sins for themselves and for others. For on this account they increase these ceremonies. But if they would undertake them in order to teach and exhort the hearers, brief and select lessons would be of more profit than these infinite babblings. Thus the entire monastic life is full of hypocrisy and false opinions [against the first and second commandments, against Christ]. To all these this danger also is added, that those who are in these fraternities are compelled to assent to those persecuting the truth. There are, therefore, many important and forcible reasons which free good men from the obligation to this kind of life.

[283] *Lastly*, the canons themselves release many, who either without judgment [before they have attained a proper age] have made vows when enticed by the arts of the monks, or have made vows under compulsion by friends. Such vows not even the canons declare to be vows. From all these considerations it is apparent that there are very many reasons which teach that monastic vows such as have hitherto been made are not vows; and for this reason a sphere of life full of hypocrisy and false opinions can be safely deserted.

Here they present an objection derived from the Law concerning the Nazarite (Num. 6: sq.). But the Nazarites did not take upon themselves their vows, with the opinions which, we have hitherto said, we censure in the vows of the monks. The rite of the Nazarites was an exercise [a bodily exercise with fasting and certain kinds of food] or declaration of faith before men, and did not merit the remission of sins before God, did not justify before God. [For they sought this elsewhere, viz. in the promise of the blessed Seed.] Again, just as circumcision or the slaying of victims would not be a service of God now, so the rite of the Nazarites ought not to be presented now as a service, but it ought to be judged simply as an adiaphoron. It is not right to compare monasticism, devised, without God's Word, as a service which should merit the remission of sins and justification, with the rite of the Nazarites, which had God's Word, and was not delivered for the purpose of meriting the remission of sins,<sup>15</sup> but to be an outward exercise, just as other ceremonies of the Law. The same can be said

concerning other ceremonies prescribed in the Law.

The Rechabites<sup>16</sup> also are cited, who did not have any possessions, and did not drink wine, as Jeremiah writes (ch. 35: sq.).<sup>17</sup> Yea truly, the example of the Rechabites accords beautifully with our monks, whose monasteries excel the palaces of kings, and who live most sumptuously! And the Rechabites, in their poverty of all things, were nevertheless married. Our monks, although abounding in all voluptuousness, profess celibacy.

[284] Besides examples ought to be interpreted according to the rule, i. e. according to certain and clear passages of Scripture, not contrary to the rule or contrary to the Scriptures. It is very certain, however, that our observances do not merit the remission of sins or justification. Wherefore when the Rechabites are praised, it is necessary that these have observed their custom, not for the purpose of believing that by this they merited remission of sins, or that the work is itself a justifying service, or one on account of which they obtained eternal life, instead of, by God's mercy, for the sake of the promised Seed. But because they had the command of their parents their obedience is praised,<sup>18</sup> concerning which there is the commandment of God: "Honor thy father and mother."

Then too the custom had a particular purpose: Because they were foreigners, not Israelites, it is apparent that their father wished to distinguish them by certain marks from their own people, so that they might not relapse into the impiety of their people. He wished by these marks to admonish them of the doctrine of faith and immortality. Such an end is lawful. But far different ends for monasticism are taught. They feign that the works of monasticism are a service, they feign that they merit the remission of sins and justification. The example of the Rechabites is therefore unlike monasticism; to omit here other evils which inhere in monasticism at present.

They cite also from Tim. 5: sqq. concerning widows, who, as they served the Church, were supported at the public expense, where it is said: "They will marry, having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith." First let us suppose that the apostle is here speaking of vows; still this passage will not favor monastic vows, which are made concerning godless services, and in the opinion that they merit the remission of sins and justification. For Paul, with his entire voice, condemns all services, all laws, all works, if they be observed in order to merit the remission of sins, or that, on account of them, instead of through mercy on account of Christ, we obtain remission of sins. On this account it was necessary for the vows of widows, if there were any, to be unlike monastic vows.

[285] Besides if the adversaries do not cease to misapply the passage to vows, the prohibition that no widow be selected who is less than sixty years (1 Tim. 5:9) must be misapplied in the same way. Thus vows made before this age will

be of no account. But the Church did not yet know these vows. Therefore Paul condemns widows, not because they marry, for he commands the younger to marry; but because, when supported at the public expense, they became wanton, and on this account cast off faith.<sup>19</sup> He calls this “first faith,” clearly not of a monastic vow, but of Christianity [of their baptism, their Christian duty, their Christianity]. And in this way he receives faith in the same chapter (v. 8): “If any one provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith.” For he speaks otherwise of faith than the sophists. He does not ascribe faith to those who have mortal sin. He accordingly says that those cast off faith who do not care for their relatives. And in the same way he says that wanton women cast off faith.

We have recounted some of our reasons, and, in passing, have explained away the objections urged by the adversaries. And we have collected these matters, not only on account of the adversaries, but much more on account of godly minds, that they may have in view the reasons why they ought to disapprove of hypocrisy and fictitious monastic services, all of which indeed this one voice of Christ annuls, when it says (Matt. 15; 9): “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Wherefore the vows themselves and the observance of meats, lessons, chants, vestments, sandals, girdles, are useless services in God’s sight. And all godly minds should certainly know that the opinion is pharisaic and condemned that these observances merit the remission of sins; that on account of them we are accounted righteous; that on account of them, and not through mercy on account of Christ, we obtain eternal life. And the holy men who have lived in these kinds of life must necessarily have learned, confidence in such observance having been rejected, that they had the remission of sins freely; that for Christ’s sake through mercy they would obtain eternal life, and not for the sake of these services [therefore godly persons who were saved and continued to live in monastic life had finally to come to this, viz. that they despaired of their monastic life, despised all their works as dung, condemned all their hypocritical service of God, and held fast to the promise of grace in Christ, as in the example of St. Bernard, saying, *Perdite vixi*, I have lived in a sinful way]; because God only approves services instituted by his Word, which services avail when used in faith.

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1. Luther wrote on the margin of his copy: “I think that this man was still alive, or had only recently died, when I was beginning my education at Eisenach. For I remember that my host, Henry Schalden, made mention of

him compassionately, as though bound in prison. I was moreover fourteen or fifteen years of age. The same Henry Schalden was likewise very intimate with the Minorites, and together with his entire family was almost their captive and slave.” Concerning Hilten, see Loescher, *Reformationesacta*, I., p. 148 sq.↵

2. Commentar. on the Apocalypse and the text of Daniel, in so far as it agrees with the Apocalypse or supplies it. Some quotations are made from this book in Melch. Adami, *Vitae Theologorum*, p. 2 sq.↵
3. Augsburg Confession, iv., vi., xii.↵
4. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Art. xiv., p. 335.↵
5. Apology, Art. xxiii., 19, p. 239↵
6. Apology, Art. xii., § 73, p. 179.↵
7. Matt. 15:9.↵
8. Luther wrote on the margin of his copy of the Apology: “‘Go, sell all things’ but for the same reason for which they should be forsaken, i. e. for Christ’s sake, not by one’s own choice.”↵
9. Luther on margin: “The poor in spirit are called blessed for the same reason as above.”↵
10. Luther adds: “I. e. Suffer with me.”↵
11. Luther on margin: “Yea, it does not belong to all, because on account of Christ, it is public.”↵
12. Luther on margin: “No.”↵
13. Cf. Apology xxiii., § 7 sq., p. 237.↵
14. I. e. The fact that these godless services are maintained releases all godly men from the obligations they may have formerly made to devote themselves to a monastic life. Cf. last sentence, § 68.↵
15. Luther added: “And it was temporal; and then too neither unmarried nor poor, nor obedient.”↵
16. Luther on margin: “Neither were these unmarried or obedient or poor, as the monks.”↵
17. Cf. Kings 10:15.↵
18. See Jer. 86:18, 19.↵
19. Luther on margin: “Perhaps they relapsed into Judaism, since they could not find in the Church one who was willing or able to marry them and the Jews gladly married them from hatred to Christ.”↵

## Chapter XIV. Of Ecclesiastical Power.

### Article XXVIII.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxviii.; *Apology*, Art. xvi.; *Smalcald Articles*, Appendix, *Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope*; *Small Catechism*, Preface; *Formula of Concord*, Epitome, x.:7; Sol. Dec, x.:9.

Here the adversaries vociferate violently concerning the privileges and immunities of the ecclesiastical estate, and they add the peroration: “All things are vain which we presented in the present article against the immunity of the churches and priests.” This is mere calumny; for in this article we have disputed concerning other things. Besides we have frequently testified that we do not find fault with political ordinances, and the gifts and privileges granted by princes.

But would that the adversaries would hear, on the others hand, the complaints of the churches and of godly minds! The adversaries courageously guard their own dignities and wealth; meanwhile, they neglect the condition of the churches; they do not care that the churches be rightly taught, and that , the sacraments be rightly administered. To the priesthood they admit all kinds of persons without distinction. Afterwards they impose intolerable burdens; as though they were delighted with the destruction of others, they demand that their traditions be observed far more accurately than the Gospel. Now in the most important and difficult controversies, concerning which the people urgently desire to be taught, in order that they may have something certain which they may follow, they do not release the minds which doubt most severely tortures; they only call to arms. Besides in manifest subjects they present decrees written in blood, which threaten horrible punishments to men unless they act clearly contrary to God’s command. Here, on the other hand, you ought to see the tears of the poor, and hear the pitiable complaints of many good men, which God undoubtedly considers and regards, to whom at the same time you will render an account for your stewardship.

[287] But although in the Confession we have on this article embraced various topics, the adversaries make no reply, except that the bishops have the power of rule and coercive correction, in order to direct their subjects to the goal of eternal blessedness; and that, for the power of ruling, there is required the power to judge, to define, to distinguish and fix those things which are serviceable or conduce to the end that has been before mentioned. These are the

words of the Confutation, in which the adversaries teach us that the bishops have the authority to frame laws [without the authority of the Gospel] useful for obtaining eternal life. The controversy is concerning this article.

But we must retain in the Church this doctrine, viz. that we receive the remission of sins freely for Christ's sake by faith. We must also retain this doctrine, viz. that human traditions are useless services, and therefore neither sin nor righteousness should be placed in meat, drink, clothing and like things, the use of which Christ wished to be left free, since he says (Matt. 15:11): "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth the man;" and Paul (Rom. 14:17): "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." Therefore the bishops have no right to frame traditions in addition to the Gospel, that they may merit the remission of sins, that they may be services for God to approve as righteousness, and which burden consciences, as though it were a sin to omit them. All this is taught especially by a passage in Acts (15: sqq.), where the apostles say [Peter says] that hearts are purified by faith. And then they prohibit the imposing of a yoke, and show how great the danger is, and enlarge upon the sin of those who burden the Church. "Why tempt ye God?" they say. By this thunderbolt our adversaries are in no way terrified, who defend by violence traditions and godless opinions.

For above they have also condemned Article XV., in which we have stated that traditions do not merit the remission of sins, and they here say that traditions conduce to eternal life. Do they merit the remission of sins? Are they services which God approves as righteousness? do they quicken hearts? Paul to the Colossians (2:20 sqq.) says that traditions do not profit with respect to eternal righteousness and eternal life; for the reason that food, drink, clothing and the like are things "that perish with the using," But eternal life is wrought in the heart by eternal things, i. e. by the Word of God and the Holy Ghost. Therefore let the adversaries explain how traditions conduce to eternal life.

[288] Since, however, the Gospel clearly testifies that traditions ought not to be imposed upon the Church in order to merit the remission of sins; in order to be services which God shall approve as righteousness; in order to burden consciences, so that it may be judged that to omit them is a sin, the adversaries will never be able to show that the bishops have the power to institute such services.

Besides, we have declared in the Confession<sup>1</sup> what power la the Gospel ascribes to bishops. Those who are now bishops do not perform the duties of bishops according to the Gospel; although indeed they may be bishops according to canonical polity, which we do not censure. But we are speaking of a bishop according to the Gospel. And the ancient division of power into "power of the order" and "power of jurisdiction" is pleasing to us. Therefore the bishop has the

power of the order, i. e. the ministry of the Word and sacraments; he has also the power of jurisdiction, i. e. the authority to excommunicate those guilty of open crimes, and again to absolve them if they are converted and seek absolution. Nor indeed have they power tyrannical, i. e. without law; or regal, i. e. above law; but they have a fixed command and a fixed Word of God, according to which they ought to teach, and according to which they ought to exercise their jurisdiction. Wherefore, even though they should have some jurisdiction, it does not follow that they are able to institute new services. For services pertain in no way to jurisdiction. And they have the Word, they have the command, how far they ought to exercise jurisdiction, viz. if any one would do anything contrary to that Word which they have received from Christ.

[289] Although in the Confession<sup>2</sup> we also have added how far it is lawful for them to frame traditions, viz. not as necessary services, but so that there may be order in the Church, for the sake of tranquility. And these traditions ought not to cast snares upon consciences, as though to enjoin necessary services; as Paul teaches when he says (Gal. 5:1): “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” The use of such ordinances ought therefore to be left free; provided that scandals be avoided; and that they be not judged to be necessary services; just as the apostles themselves ordained [for the sake of good discipline] very many things which have been changed with time. Neither did they hand them down in such a way that it would not be permitted to change them. For they did not dissent from their own writings, in which they greatly labor, lest the opinion that human rites are necessary services may destroy the Church.

This is the simple mode of interpreting traditions, viz. that we understand them not as necessary services, and nevertheless, for, the sake of avoiding scandals, we should observe them in proper place. And thus many learned and great men in the Church have held. Nor do we see what can be opposed to this. For it is certain that the expression (Luke 10:16): “He that heareth you, heareth me,” does not speak of traditions, but is most effective against traditions. For it is not a *mandatum cum libera* (a bestowal of unlimited authority), as they call it, but it is a *cautio de rato* (the giving of security for a trust) with respect to a particular charge [not a free, unlimited order and power, but a limited order, viz. not to preach their own word, but God’s Word and the Gospel], i. e. the approval given to the apostles, that we believe them concerning the word of another, and not concerning their own word. For Christ wishes to assure us as to how necessary it would be to know that the Word, delivered by men, is efficacious, and that no other word from heaven ought to be sought. “He that heareth you, heareth me,” cannot be received of traditions. For Christ requires that they teach



in such a way that he himself be heard, because he says: “He heareth me.” Therefore he wishes his own voice, his own Word, to be heard, not human traditions. Thus a saying which is most especially in our favor, and contains the most important consolation and doctrine, these stupid men pervert to the most trifling matters, the distinctions of food, vestments and the like.

They quote also Heb. 13:17: “Obey them that have the rule over you.” This passage requires obedience to the Gospel. For it does not establish a dominion for the bishops apart from the Gospel. Neither should the bishops frame traditions contrary to the Gospel, or interpret their traditions contrary to the Gospel. And when they do this, obedience is prohibited, according to Gal. 1:9: “If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.”

[290] We make the same reply to Matt. 23:3: “Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe,” because evidently a universal command is not given that we should receive all things [even contrary to God’s command and Word], since Scripture elsewhere (Acts 6:29) bids us obey God rather than men. When, therefore, they teach wicked things, they are not to be heard. But these are wicked things, viz. that human traditions are services of God, that they are necessary services, that they merit the remission of sins and eternal life.

They present, as an objection, the public scandals and commotions which have arisen from the pretext of our doctrine. To these we briefly reply. If all<sup>3</sup> the scandals be brought together, still the one article concerning the remission of sins, that for Christ’s sake through faith we freely obtain the remission of sins, brings so much good as to hide all evils. And this, in the beginning, gained for Luther not only our favor, but that also of many who are now contending against us.

“For former favor ceases, and mortals are forgetful,”

says Pindar. Nevertheless<sup>4</sup> we neither desire to desert truth that is necessary to the Church, nor can we assent to the adversaries in condemning it. “For we ought to obey God rather than men,” Those who in the beginning condemned manifest truth, and are now persecuting it with the greatest cruelty, will give an account for the schism that has been occasioned. Then,<sup>5</sup> too, are there no scandals among the adversaries? How much evil is there in the sacrilegious profanation of the Mass applied to gain! How great disgrace in celibacy! But let us omit a comparison. According to the circumstances we have made this reply to the Confutation. Now<sup>6</sup> we leave it to the judgment of all the godly whether the adversaries have been right in boasting that they have actually refuted our



## Confession from the Scriptures.

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1. Augsburg Confession, xxviii. 5-12.↵
2. Ibid., xxviii.: § 3.↵
3. Var. and Germ., which have greatly amplified the remaining sections (although they do not agree in the order of the sentences), continue thus:

“*In the first place*, it is evident that by the blessing of God our princes have an obedient people in their dominions. And this very kind of doctrine which we follow increases respect for them, because it honors the authority of magistrates with the most ample praises. This matter also is of very great service in preserving tranquility. *Secondly*, if all the scandals be brought together” [Germ.: And although it may not be otherwise than that, as is customary in the world, offenses have happened through wicked and imprudent people; for the devil causes such offenses, in order to disgrace the Gospel], “yet the two articles, viz. the one that we obtain the remission of sins freely for Christ’s sake through faith, and that we are accounted righteous for Christ’s sake by faith, and the other, that the laws of the magistrate and the entire government are divine ordinances which the Christian ought to use in a holy way, have so much good connected with them that they hide all inconveniences.” Then Var. alone: “For alarmed consciences can have no firm consolation against God’s wrath unless the former article be known. The latter article greatly protects the tranquility of states. Besides, with what pernicious opinions both kinds of doctrine were suppressed previous to this time no one is ignorant, and the books of the adversaries testify, who nowhere make mention of faith whet they speak of the remission of sins, nowhere teach of the worth civil matters, nowhere teach how the Gospel communicates eternal righteousness, and in the mean time wishes us in our bodily life to use political laws and customs. The declaration of these matters in the beginning gained favor for Luther, not only with us, but also with many who now most atrociously,” etc.↵
4. In Ed. Var. these words follow: “If any tumults have already arisen, the guilt can justly be charged upon the adversaries, who first excited a schism and scattered the churches by the unjust condemnation of Luther. And now they exercise wonderful cruelty towards good men, and those teaching godly things. They excite the minds of men also in other ways, which we are not disposed to recount here. Nor are we so hard-hearted, and so without feeling, that public offenses in no way disturb us. But we remember that it

has been said by Christ: ‘Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me’ (Matt. 11:6). For the devil tries both to suppress and to mar the Gospel in infinite ways. In some places he inflames tyrants against those who confess the Gospel, in other places he excites wars, in other places seditions, in other places heresies, in order to render this kind of doctrine hateful, because it seems to afford occasion for such movements. And indeed it is easier for prudent men to pay no attention to their own dangers than to these scandals of public commotions. But it is necessary for the Christian’s mind to be fortified against these also, lest on account of them he may cast away the Word of God.” Germ, has treated this passage thus: “But as to the want of unity and the dissension in the Church, it is well known how these matters first happened, and who have given occasion for the separation; namely, the vendors of indulgences, who without shame preached intolerable lies, and afterwards condemned Luther for not justifying these lies, and in addition continued to excite more controversies, so that Luther was induced to attack many other errors. But inasmuch as our opponents would not suffer the truth, and besides attempted to promote manifest errors by force, it is easy to Judge who is guilty of the schism. Indeed all the world, all wisdom and all power, should yield to Christ and his holy Word. But the devil is the enemy of God, and he therefore arrays all his power against Christ, to extinguish and suppress the Gospel. Therefore the devil with his members, who sets himself against God’s Word, is the cause of the dissension and want of unity.”↩

5. Var. (and Germ., but the latter less copiously): “But although the comparison does not delight us, nevertheless because the adversaries burden us with this charge, the vices of their own men are not to be dissembled [Germ.: If we were to narrate also the offenses of the opponents, .... it would be a very terrible list]. How much evil there is with the adversaries in the sacrilegious profanation of the masses! how much disgrace la connected with their celibacy! The worship of the saints is with them full of manifest idolatry. Is there no offense in the ambition of the popes, who for more than four hundred years have been waging war with our emperors, mostly in Italy, sometimes even in Germany, where they have arrayed against one another, son and father, kindred and citizens? But if the causes for these wars be sought, nothing will be found worthy of the popes: for we will speak very moderately.” [Germ, plainly: How the popes strove only how they might themselves become emperors, and subdue all Italy to themselves!] "How great an evil it is that in ordaining priests they do not choose such as are fit! What evil in the sale of benefits!

Again, is there no fault in their dangerous dispensations? But even these faults could be forgiven them if they nevertheless would preserve pure doctrine in the churches. But how this is contaminated by impious opinions and traditions the writings of the canonists attest, as also the books of the theologians, full of profane discussions which in part are useless to piety, and in part even dissent from the Gospel. Again, they trifle in the interpretation of Scripture and fabricate whatever they please. This confusion of doctrine is the chief offense, and is especially dangerous, concerning which particularly John complains in the Apocalypse when he describes the realm of the Pope. When we come to the superstitions of the monks, which were infinite, what shall we say? How many pernicious offenses are there What sort of application of merits was it when a hood was put upon a corpse, etc.? Moreover is there no offense in their endeavor at the present time to suppress the manifest truth of the Gospel, in their cruel slaughter of good men who teach what is godly, in their forbidding doubting consciences to be healed when their circumstances have been made known, in their exhorting kings to cruel robbery? Verily these are to be judged not as offenses, but as truly *καταρθώματα* [right actions] of the Pope! Nor indeed do we care about amplifying anything in proportion to the magnitude of the subjects involved, lest some one may think that we are delighted by this relation which the writers of the Confutation have forced from us against our will. For this cause ought to be judged not from the character of men, or from fortune, but from the Word of God, which we earnestly desire that all who would consult pronounce judgment in these controversies. But here we must say again what we have already said frequently: We are very desirous of public harmony and peace, which it is certainly becoming that Christians should cherish among one another to as great an extent as possible. Again we unwillingly differ with the Emperor, whom we revere not only on account of the exalted rank of government, but also on account of the truly heroic virtues with which we have known him to be endowed" [Germ, omits what is said concerning the Emperor]. "But the adversaries do not permit us to unite harmoniously unless with the condition that we assent to those condemning the truth of the Gospel that is manifest and is necessary to the Church. This we cannot do. For 'we ought to obey God, rather than men.' Wherefore the adversaries, who by a new and unusual cruelty are scattering the churches, will render to God an account of the schism. Nor is there any doubt that this cruelty will produce some change in public affairs. According to the circumstances we have made this reply," etc (§ 26).↵

6. Var continues: “And we leave to all godly men the decision as to which of the two parties believes aright. And we offer to declare more fully our opinion concerning each topic, in case it be anywhere desired.”↩

# Part IV. The Smalcald Articles.

*Articles Of Christian Doctrine, Which Were To Have Been Presented On Our Part To The Council, If Any Had Been Assembled At Mantua Or Elsewhere, Indicating What We Could Receive Or Grant, And What We Could Not. Written By Dr. Martin Luther In The Year 1537.*

## Preface of Dr. Martin Luther.

[295] When Pope Paul III. convoked a Council last year to assemble at Mantua about Whitsuntide, and afterwards transferred it from Mantua, so that it is not yet clear where he will or can fix it; and we on our part had reason to expect that we would either be summoned also to the Council or be condemned unsummoned; I was directed to compose and collect the articles of our doctrine, in case there should be any deliberation as to what and how far we could yield to the Papists, and upon what we intended finally to persevere and abide

I have accordingly collected these articles and presented a them to our side. They have also been accepted and unanimously confessed by those with us, and it has been resolved that in case the Pope with his adherents should ever be so bold as seriously and in good faith, without lying and cheating, to hold a truly free Christian Council (as indeed he would be in duty bound to do), they be publicly presented, and express the Confession of our faith.

[296] But since the Romish court is so dreadfully afraid of a free Christian Council, and shuns the light so shamefully, that it has removed, even from those who are on its side, the hope that it will permit a free Council, and much less itself hold it, whereat, as is just, they are greatly offended and have on that account no little trouble, since they notice thereby that the Pope prefers to see all Christendom lost, and all souls damned, rather than that either he or his adherents be reformed even a little, and permit a limit to be fixed to their tyranny; I have, nevertheless, determined to bring these articles to light through the public press, so that should I die before there would be a Council (as I fully expect and hope, because the knaves by fleeing the light and shunning the day take such wretched pains to delay and hinder the Council), they who live and remain after me may thereby have my testimony and confession to produce,

concerning the Confession which I had before published, whereby up to this time I still abide, and, by God's grace, will abide.

For what shall I say? How shall I complain? I am still in life, am writing, preaching and lecturing daily; and yet there are spiteful men, not only among the adversaries, but also false brethren that profess to be on our side, who attempt to represent my writings and doctrine directly contrary to myself, and compel me to hear and see it, although they know well that I teach otherwise, and who wish to adorn their venom with my labor, and under my name to mislead the poor people. How will such occurrences continually increase after my death!

Yea, it is but just that I should reply to everything while I am still living. But, on the other hand, how can I alone stop all the mouths of the devil? Especially of those (as they all are embittered) who will not hear or notice what we write, but solely exercise themselves with all diligence how they may most shamefully pervert and corrupt our word in every letter. These I let the devil answer, or at last God's wrath, as they deserve. I often think of the good Gerson, who doubts whether anything good should be published. If it be not done, many souls are neglected who could be delivered; but if it be done, the devil is there, with malignant, villainous tongues without number which envenom and pervert everything, so that the fruit is still prevented. Yet what they gain thereby is manifest. For seeing that they have lied so shamefully against us, and by means of lies wish to retain the people, God has constantly advanced his work, and been ever making their assembly less and ours greater, and by their lies they have been and still continue to be brought to shame.

[297] I must tell a story. There was a doctor<sup>1</sup> sent here to Wittenberg from France, who said publicly before us that his king was sure, and more than sure, that among us there is no Church, no magistrate, no marriage, but all live promiscuously as cattle, and each one does as he will. Say now, how will those who by their writings have represented such gross lies to the king and to other countries as the pure truth, look at us on that day before the judgment-seat of Christ? Christ, the Lord and Judge of us all, knows well that they lie and have lied, whose sentence they must again hear; that I know certainly. God convert those who can be converted to repentance! To the rest it will be said, Woe, and, alas! eternally.

But to return to the subject. I sincerely desire to see a truly Christian Council, whereby yet many matters and persons would be helped. Not that we need it, for our churches are now, through God's grace, so illumined and cared for by the pure Word and right use of the sacraments, by knowledge of the various callings and of right works, that we on our part ask for no Council, and on such points have nothing better to hope or expect from a Council; but because we see in the

bishoprics everywhere so many parishes vacant and desolate that one's heart would break. And yet neither the bishops nor canons care how the poor people live or die, for whom nevertheless Christ has died, and who cannot hear him speaking with them as the true Shepherd with his sheep. This causes me to shudder and fear that at some time he may send a council of angels upon Germany that may utterly destroy us, as Sodom and Gomorrah, because we so presumptuously mock him concerning this Council.

[298] Besides such necessary ecclesiastical affairs, there would be also in the political estate innumerable matters of great importance to improve. There is the disagreement between the princes and the states; usury and avarice have burst in like a flood, and have the semblance of right; wantonness, lewdness, pride in dress, gluttony, gambling, idle display, with all kinds of bad habits and wickedness, insubordination of subjects, domestics and laborers of every trade, also the exactions of the peasants (and who can enumerate all?) have so increased that they cannot be rectified by ten Councils and twenty Diets. If such chief matters of the spiritual and worldly estates as are contrary to God would be considered in the Council, they would render all hands so full that the child's play and absurdity of long gowns, large tonsures [wax tapers], broad cinctures, bishops' or cardinals' hats or maces, and like jugglery would be all the while forgotten. If we first had performed God's command and order in the spiritual and worldly estate, we would find time enough to reform food, clothing, tonsures and surplices. But if we swallow such camels, and instead strain out gnats, let the beams stand and judge the motes, we might indeed be satisfied with the Council.

Therefore I have presented a few articles; for we have without this so many commands of God to observe in the Church, the state, and the family, that we can never fulfill them. What then is the use? or wherefore does it profit that many decrees and statutes thereon are made in the Council, especially when these chief matters commanded of God are neither observed nor maintained? Just as though he were to be entertained by our jugglery while we tread his solemn commandments under foot. But our sins weigh upon us and cause God not to be gracious to us; for we do not repent, and besides wish to defend very abomination.

O Lord Jesus Christ, do thou thyself convoke a Council, and deliver thy servants by thy glorious advent. The Pope and his adherents are lost; they wish thee not. So do thou help us, poor and needy, who sigh to thee, and beg thee earnestly, according to the grace which thou hast given us, through the Holy Ghost, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Father, blessed for ever. Amen.

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1. Dr. Gervasius Waim, Professor at Sorbonne, sent in 1531 from the king of France to the elector of Saxony. — De Wette's Luther's Letters, 52; Seckendorf's History, iii. 145; Melancthon's Letters, C. R. ii.: 517.↩



# Part First. Of the Trinity and the Person of Christ.

*Parallel Passages. — (Ecumenical Creeds; Augsburg Confession, Arts. i. and iii.; Apology, Arts. i. and iii.; Small Catechism, Creed, Arts, i., ii.; Large Catechism, First Commandment; Creed, Introduction, Arts, i., ii.; Formula of Concord, Epitome and Sol. Decl., chap. viii.*

Of The Chief Articles Concerning The Divine Majesty, As:

- I. That Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine essence and nature, are one God, who has created heaven and earth.
- II. That the Father is begotten of no one; the Son of the Father; the Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son.
- III. That not the Father, not the Holy Ghost, but the Son became man.
- IV. That the Son became man thus: that he was conceived, without the co-operation of man, by the Holy Ghost, and was born of the pure, holy [and always] Virgin Mary. Afterwards he suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God, will come to judge the quick and the dead, etc., as the Creed of the Apostles, as well as that of St. Athanasius, and the Catechism in common use for children, teach.

Concerning these articles there is no contention or dispute, since we on both sides confess them. Wherefore it is not necessary to treat further of them.

## **Part Second. Of The Articles Concerning The Office And Work Of Jesus Christ, Or Our Redemption.**

### **I. Of the Merit of Christ and the Righteousness of Faith.**

*Parallel Passages.*— *Augsburg Confession*, Arts, vi., iv., xx.; *Apology* chap. ii. (Art. iv.), chap. iii.; *Smalcald Articles*, Art. xiii.; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome* and *Sol. Decl.*, chap. iii.

[300] The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25.

And he alone is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, John 1:29; and God has laid upon him the iniquities of us all, Isa. 53:6.

Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merits [freely, and without their own works or merits] by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in his blood, Rom. 3:23 sq.

Since it is necessary to believe this, and it can be acquired or apprehended otherwise by no work, law or merit, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us, as St. Paul says (Rom. 3:28): “For we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.” Likewise (v. 26): “That he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Christ.”

Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and all things should sink to ruin. “For there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved,” says Peter, Acts 4:12. “And with his stripes we are healed,” Isa. 63:5. And upon this article all things depend, which, against the Pope, the devil and the whole world, we teach and practice. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for otherwise all is lost, and the Pope and devil and all things against us gain the victory and suit.

### **II. Of The Mass. – Appendix: Of the Invocation of Saints.**

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Arts, xiii., xxi., xxiv.; *Apology*, ch. xii., Art. xxiv.; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome*, vii., 21 sqq.

[301] That the Mass in the Papacy must be the greatest and most horrible abomination, as it directly and powerfully conflicts with this chief article, and yet above all other popish idolatries it is the chief and most specious. For it is held that this sacrifice or work of the Mass, even though it be rendered by a wicked and abandoned scoundrel, frees men from sins, not only in this life, but also in purgatory, although only the Lamb of God frees us, as has been said above. Of this article nothing is to be surrendered or conceded; because the former article does not allow this.

With the more reasonable Papists we might speak thus in a friendly way: First, why do they so rigidly uphold the Mass? since it is only an invention of men, and has not been commanded by God; and every invention of man we may discard, as Christ declares (Matt. 15:9): “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Secondly. It is an unnecessary thing, which can be omitted without sin and danger.

Thirdly. The sacrament can be received in a better and more blessed way [more acceptable to God], (yea, the only blessed way), according to the institution of Christ. Why, therefore, on account of fictitious, unnecessary matters, do they drive the world to extreme misery, when even otherwise it can be well and more blessed?

Let care be taken that it be publicly preached to the people that the Mass as a toy [commentitious affair or human figment] can, without sin, be done away with, and that no one will be condemned who does not observe it, but that men can be saved in a better way without the Mass. Thus it will come to pass that the Mass will perish of its own accord, not only among the rude common people, but also in the minds of all pious. Christian, reasonable. God-fearing hearts; and this much the more when they have heard that the Mass is a very dangerous thing, fabricated and invented without the will and Word of God.

[302] Fourthly. Since such innumerable and unspeakable abuses have arisen in the whole world from the buying and selling of masses, the Mass should by right be relinquished for no other purpose than to prevent abuses, even though in itself it had something advantageous and good. But how much more, since it is altogether unnecessary, useless and dangerous, and without the Mass all things can be held with greater necessity, profit and certainty, ought we to relinquish it, so as to escape for ever these horrible abuses?

Fifthly. But since the Mass is nothing else, and can be nothing else (as the Canon and all books declare), than a work of men (even of wicked scoundrels), by which one attempts to reconcile to God himself and others with himself, and to obtain and merit the remission of sins and grace (for thus the Mass is regarded

when it is esteemed at the very best; otherwise what would it profit?); for this very reason it must and should be condemned and rejected. For this directly conflicts with the chief article, which says that it is not a wicked or a godly celebrant of the Mass with his own work, but the Lamb of God and the Son of God, that taketh away our sins.

But if any one should advance the pretext that for the sake of devotion he wishes to administer the communion to himself, this is not in earnest. For if he would commune in sincerity, the sacrament would be administered in the surest and best way according to Christ's institution. But that one commune by himself is a human persuasion, uncertain, unnecessary, yea even prohibited. For he does not know what he does, while without the Word of God he obeys a false human opinion and invention. So too it is not right (even though the matter were otherwise plain) for one to use the public sacrament of the Church for his own private devotion, and without God's Word and apart from the communion of the Church to trifle therewith.

The Council will especially labor and be occupied with this article concerning the Mass. For although it would be possible for them to concede to us all the other articles, yet they could not concede this. As Campegius said at Augsburg that he would be torn to pieces before he would relinquish the Mass, so, by the help of God, I too would suffer my body to be reduced to ashes before I would allow a celebrant of the Mass, be he good or bad, to be made equal to Christ Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, or to be exalted above him. Thus we are and remain eternally separated and opposed to one another. They think indeed with entire correctness, that when the Mass falls the Papacy lies in ruins. Before they would permit this to occur, they would put us all to death if they could.

Beyond all things, this dragon's tail (I mean the Mass) has produced manifold abominations and idolatries.

[303] First, purgatory. For by masses for souls, and vigils, and weekly, monthly and yearly celebrations of obsequies, and finally by the Common Week<sup>1</sup> and All Souls' Day, by lustrations for purgatory, they have been so occupied that the Mass is used almost alone for the dead, although Christ has instituted the sacrament alone for the living. Wherefore purgatory, and every solemnity, rite and profit connected with it, is to be regarded nothing but a specter of the devil. For it conflicts with the first article, which teaches that only Christ, and not the works of men, can help souls. Besides also nothing has been divinely commanded or enjoined upon us concerning the dead. Therefore all this can be safely omitted, even though there were no error and idolatry in it.

The Papists quote here Augustine and some of the Fathers who have written concerning purgatory, and they think that we do not understand for what purpose

and to what end they thus spake. Augustine does not write that there is a purgatory, neither does he have a testimony of Scripture to constrain him thereto, but leaves the question as to its existence in doubt, and says that his mother asked him that she should be remembered at the altar or sacrament. Now all this is indeed nothing but the devotion of men, and that too of individuals, and does not establish an article of faith, which is a work belonging to God alone.

Our Papists, however, cite those opinions of men, in order that faith may be had in their horrible, blasphemous and cursed traffic in masses for souls in purgatory [or in sacrifices for the dead and oblations]. But they will never prove these things from Augustine. And when they have abolished the traffic in masses for purgatory, of which Augustine never dreamt, we will then discuss with them as to whether the expressions of Augustine, being without the warrant of the Word, are to be admitted, and whether the dead should be remembered at the Eucharist. For it is of no consequence that articles of faith are framed from the works or words of the holy Fathers; otherwise their mode of life, style of garments, of house, etc., would become an article of faith, just as they have trifled with the relics of the saints. We have, however, another rule, viz. that the Word of God should frame articles of faith; otherwise no one, not even an angel.<sup>2</sup>

[304] Secondly. From this it has followed that evil spirits have exercised much wickedness, and appeared as the souls of the departed, and with horrible lies and tricks demanded masses, vigils, pilgrimages, and other alms. All of which we had to receive as articles of faith, and to live accordingly; and the Pope confirmed these things, as also the Mass and all other abominations. Here there is no yielding or surrendering.

Thirdly. Hence arose pilgrimages. Instead of these, masses, the remission of sins and the grace of God were demanded; for the Mass controlled everything. But it is very certain that such pilgrimages, without the Word of God, have not been commanded us, neither are they necessary, since the soul can be cared for in a better way, and these pilgrimages can be omitted without all sin and danger. Why do they leave at home their pastors, the Word of God, wives, children, etc., attention to whom is necessary and has been commanded, and run after unnecessary, uncertain, pernicious *ignes fatui* of the devil? Besides the devil was in the Pope when he praised and established these, whereby the people, in a great number, revolted from Christ to their own works, and became idolaters; which is worst of all, for the reason that it is neither necessary nor commanded, but is senseless and doubtful, and besides harmful. Wherefore to yield or concede anything here is not permitted, etc. And it should be taught in preaching that such pilgrimages are not necessary, but dangerous; and then see what will become of the pilgrimages. [For thus they will perish of their own accord.]

Fourthly. Fraternities [or societies], in which cloisters, chapters, and associations of vicars have bound themselves in writing, and by a definite contract and confirmed sale have made common property of all masses and good works, etc., both for the living and the dead. This is not only altogether a human bauble, without the Word of God, entirely unnecessary and not commanded, but also is contrary to the chief article. Of Redemption. Wherefore it is in no way to be tolerated.

Fifthly. The relics of the saints, about which there are so many falsehoods, trifles and absurdities concerning the bones of dogs and horses, that at such rascality even the devil has laughed, ought long ago to have been condemned, even though there were some good in them: and so much the more in that, without the Word of God, they are an entirely unnecessary and useless thing. But the worst is that they have imagined that these relics work the indulgence and forgiveness of sins [and have revered them] as a good work and service of God, as the Mass, etc.

[305] Sixthly. Here belong the precious indulgences granted (but only for money) to the living and the dead, by which the miserable Judas or pope has sold the merit of Christ, together with the superfluous merits of all saints and of the entire Church, etc. All of which is not to be borne, because it is without the Word of God, and without necessity, and is not commanded; but conflicts with the chief article. For the merit of Christ is [apprehended and] obtained not by our works or pence, but from grace through faith, without money and merit; and is offered [and presented] not through the power of the Pope, but through the preaching of God's Word.

### **Of the Invocation of Saints.**

The invocation of saints is also one of the abuses of Antichrist, which conflicts with the chief article, and destroys the knowledge of Christ. It is also neither commanded nor advised, has no example [or testimony] in Scripture, and in Christ we have everything a thousand-fold better, even though it were a precious thing, as it is not.

And although the angels in heaven pray for us (as even Christ also does), as also do the saints on earth, and perhaps also in heaven;<sup>3</sup> yet it does not follow thence that we should invoke and adore the angels and saints, and for them fast, hold festivals, celebrate Mass, make offerings, and establish churches, altars, divine worship, and in still other ways serve them, and regard them as helpers in need, and divide among them all kinds of help, and ascribe to each one a particular form of assistance, as the Papists teach and do. For this is idolatry, and

such honor belongs alone to God.

For as a Christian and saint upon earth, you can pray for me, not only in one, but in many necessities. But, for this reason, I ought not to adore and invoke you, and celebrate festivals, fasts, oblations, masses for your honor [and worship], and put my faith in you for my salvation. I can in other ways indeed honor, love and thank you in Christ. If now such idolatrous honor were withdrawn from angels and deceased saints, the remaining honor would be without danger, and would quickly be forgotten. For where advantage and assistance, both bodily and spiritual, are no more to be expected, there the worship of the saints will depart in peace, whether they be in their graves or in heaven. For without a purpose, or out of pure love, no one will much remember, or esteem, or honor them [bestow on them divine honor].

In short: Whatever the [Papal] Mass is, and whatever proceeds from it and clings to it, we cannot [in general] tolerate, but we are compelled to condemn, in order that we may retain the holy sacrament pure and certain, according to the institution of Christ, employed and received through faith.

### III. Of Chapters and Cloisters.

*Parallel Passages.*— *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxvii.; *Apology*, Art. xxvii.; *Smalcald Articles*, Art. xiv.

[306] That chapters and cloisters were formerly founded with the good intention to educate learned men and chaste and modest women, and ought again to be turned to such use, in order that pastors, preachers, and other ministers of the Churches may be had, and likewise other necessary persons for the administration of the government [or for the state] in cities and governments, and well-educated maidens for mothers and housekeepers, etc.

If they will not serve this purpose, it is better that they should be abandoned or altogether destroyed, rather than continued with their blasphemous services invented by men as something better than the ordinary Christian life and the offices and callings appointed by God. For all this also is contrary to the first chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ. In addition, that they also (as all other human inventions) have not been commanded, are needless and useless, and besides afford occasion for dangerous and vain labor [dangerous annoyances and fruitless worship], such services as the prophets call *Aven*<sup>4</sup> i. e. pain and labor.

## IV. Of the Papacy.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxviii.; *Apology*, Arts. vii, 23 sq.; xv., 18 sq.; xxviii. 7.; *Smalcald Articles*, 328.

That the Pope is not, according to divine law or according to the Word of God, the head of all Christendom (for this name belongs to Jesus Christ solely and alone), but is only the bishop and pastor of the Church at Rome, and of those who voluntarily [and of their own accord] or through a human creature (that is a political magistrate) attach themselves to him, not to be under him as a lord, but with him as brethren [colleagues] and associates, as Christians; as the ancient councils and the age of St. Cyprian show.

But today none of the bishops venture to address the Pope as brother [as was done in the age of Cyprian]; but they must call him most gracious lord, even though they be kings or emperors. Such arrogance we neither will, can, nor ought with a good conscience to approve. Let him, however, who will do it, do so without us.

[307] Hence it follows that all things which the Pope, from a power so false, mischievous, blasphemous and arrogant, has undertaken and done, have been and still are purely diabolical affairs and transactions (with the exception of the administration of his civil power, where God often blesses a people, even oM through a tyrant and faithless scoundrel) for the ruin of the entire holy [Catholic or] Christian Church (so far as it is in his power), and for the destruction of the first and chief article concerning the redemption made through Jesus Christ.

For all his bulls and books are extant, in which he roars like a lion (as the angel in Rev. 12 indicates), crying out that no Christian can be saved unless he obey him and be subject to him in all things that he wishes, that he says and that he does. All of which is nothing else than though it were said, that although you believe in Christ, and have in him everything that is necessary to salvation, yet nothing profits you unless you regard me your god, and be subject and obedient to me; although, it is nevertheless manifest that there was a holy Church without the Pope for at least more than five hundred years, and that even to the present day the churches of the Greeks and of many other languages neither have been nor are still under the Pope. Thus it is, as has often been said, a human figment which is not commanded, and is unnecessary and useless. For the holy Christian [or Catholic] Church can exist very well without such a head, and it would certainly have remained better [purer, and its career would have been more prosperous] if such a head had not been raised up by the devil. And the Papacy is



also of no use in the Church, because it exercises no ecclesiastical office; and therefore it is necessary for the Church to remain and continue to exist without the Pope.

But supposing that the Pope acknowledge<sup>5</sup> that he is supreme, not by divine right or from God's command, but that for the purpose of preserving the unity of Christians against sects and heretics they should have a head to whom all the rest should adhere; and that such a head should be chosen by men, and that it also be placed within the choice and power of men to change or remove this head, just as the Council of Constance almost in this very way treated the popes, deposing three and electing a fourth; supposing (I say), that the Pope and See at Rome would yield and accept this (which, nevertheless, is impossible; for thus he would suffer his entire realm and estate to be overthrown and destroyed, with all his rights and books, a thing which, to speak in few words, he cannot do); nevertheless, even in this way Christianity would not be helped, but many more sects would arise than before.

[308] For since obedience would be rendered this head not from God's command, but from man's free will, it would easily and in a short time be despised, and at last retain no member; neither would it be necessary that it be confined to Rome or any other place, but be wherever and in whatever church God would grant a man fit for the office. Oh, the indefiniteness and confusion that would result!

Wherefore the Church can never be governed and preserved better than if we all live under one head, Christ, and all the bishops, equal in office (although they be unequal in gifts), be diligently joined in unity of doctrine, faith, sacraments, prayer and works of love, etc., just as St. Jerome writes that the priests at Alexandria together and in common governed the churches, as did also the apostles, and afterwards all bishops throughout all Christendom, until the Pope raised his head above all. This article clearly shows that the Pope is the very lo Antichrist, who has exalted and opposed himself against Christ, because he does not wish Christians to be saved without his power, which nevertheless is nothing, and is neither established nor commanded by God. This is, properly speaking, to "exalt himself above all that is called God," as Paul says, 2 Thess. 2:4.<sup>6</sup> This indeed neither the Turks nor the Tartars do, although they are great enemies of Christians, but they allow whoever wishes to believe in Christ, and they receive [outward or] bodily tribute and obedience from Christians.

[309] The Pope, however, prohibits this faith, saying that if anyone wish to be saved he must obey. This we are unwilling to do, even though on this account we must die in God's name. This all proceeds from the fact that the Pope has wished to be considered the supreme head of the Christian Church according to divine

law. Accordingly he has made himself equal to and above Christ, and has caused himself to be proclaimed the head, and then the lord of the Church, and finally of the whole world, and simply God on earth, until he has attempted to issue commands even to the angels in heaven. And when a distinction is made between a dogma of the Pope and Holy Scripture, and a comparison of the two is made, it is found that the dogma of the Pope, even the best, has been taken from [civil] imperial and heathen law, and treats of political matters and decisions or rights, as the Decretals show; afterwards, it teaches of ceremonies concerning churches, garments, food, persons and like shows, masks and comical things above measure, but in all these things nothing at all of Christ, faith and the commandments of God; and lastly is nothing else than the devil himself, while over and against God he urges [and disseminates] his falsehoods concerning masses, purgatory, a monastic life, one's own works and [fictitious] divine worship (for this is the true Papacy, upon each of which the Papacy is altogether founded and is standing), and condemns, murders and tortures all Christians who do not exalt and honor these abominations of the Pope above all things. Wherefore just as we cannot adore the devil himself as Lord and God, so we cannot endure his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally, is a prerogative of the Papal government, as I have very clearly shown in many books.

In these four articles they will have enough to condemn in the Council. For they will not concede us even the least point in these articles. Of this we should be certain, and keep the hope in mind, that Christ our Lord has attacked his adversary, whom he will pursue and destroy, both by his Spirit and coming. Amen.

For in the Council we will stand not before the Emperor or the political magistrate, as at Augsburg (where the Emperor published a most gracious edict, and caused matters to be heard kindly and dispassionately), but we will appear before the Pope and devil himself, who intends to hear nothing, but merely [when the case has been publicly announced] to condemn, to murder and to force to idolatry. Wherefore we ought not here to kiss his feet, or to say: "Thou art my gracious lord," but as the angel in Zechariah 3:2 said to Satan: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan."

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1. A week every year devoted to the deliverance of all souls by various means from purgatory. It is the week in which All Souls' Day (Nov. 2nd) occurs.↵
  2. Cf. Formula of Concord, Epit., Intr.↵

3. Cf. Apology, Art. xxi., 8 sqq.↵
4. Isa. 66:3.; Hos. 4:15.↵
5. Cf. Smal. Art., Melancthon's Subscription, 326.↵
6. Cf. Sm. Art., 336, § 39.↵

## Part Third. Articles Concerning Which We Are Able To Treat.

[310] Concerning the following articles we will be able to treat with learned and reasonable men, or even among ourselves. The Pope and the Papal government do not care much about these. For with them conscience is nothing, but money, glory, honors, power are to them everything.

### Of Sin.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, ii., xviii.; *Apology*, ii., chaj (iii.); *Formula of Concord*, Ep. and Sol. Dec, i.

Here we must confess, as Paul says in Rom. 5:11, that sin originated [and entered the world] from one man Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, and subject to death and the devil.<sup>1</sup> This is called original or capital sin.

The fruits of this sin are afterwards the evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as [distrust] unbelief, false faith, idolatry, to be without the fear of God, arrogance, blindness, and, to speak briefly, not to know or regard God; secondly, to lie, to swear by [to abuse] God's name [to swear falsely], not to pray, not to call upon God, not to regard God's Word, to be disobedient to parents, to murder, to be unchaste, to steal, to deceive,<sup>2</sup> etc.

This hereditary sin is so deep [and horrible] a corruption of nature, that no reason can understand it, but it must be [learned and] believed from the revelation of Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12 sqq.; Ex. 33:3; Gen. 3:7 sqq. Wherefore the dogmas<sup>4</sup> of the scholastic doctors are pure errors and obscurations contrary to this article, for by them it is taught:

That since the fall of Adam the natural powers of man have remained entire and incorrupt, and that man by nature has right reason and a good will, as the philosophers teach.

[311] And that man has a free will to do good and omit evil, and, again, to omit good and do evil.

Also that man by his natural powers can observe and do all the commands of God.

And that, by his natural powers, he can love God above all things, and his

neighbor as himself.

Also if a man do as much as is in him, God certainly grants to him his grace.

And if he wish to come to the sacrament, there is no need of a good intention to do good, but it is sufficient if he have not a wicked purpose to commit sin; so entirely good is his nature and so efficacious the sacrament.

Also that it is not founded upon Scripture that, for a good work, the Holy Ghost with his grace is necessary.

Such and many similar things have arisen from want of understanding and learning concerning both sins and Christ our Saviour, and they are truly heathen dogmas which we cannot endure. For if these dogmas would be right, Christ has died in vain, since there is in man no sin and misery for which he should have died; or he would have died only for the body, not for the soul, inasmuch as the soul is entirely sound, and the body only is subject to death.

## II. Of the Law.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Apology*, chap, (iii.), xii.: 88 sq.; *Formula of Concord*, Ep. and Sol. Dec., v., vi.

Here we hold that the Law was given by God, first to restrain in by threats and the dread of punishment, and by the promise and offer of grace and favor. But all these miscarried, on account of the wickedness which sin has wrought in man. For thereby a part were rendered worse, who are hostile to the Law, because it forbids those things which they do willingly, and enjoins those things which they do unwillingly. Therefore, if they were not restrained by punishment, they would do more against the Law than before. For these are rude and wicked [unbridled and secure] men, who do evil wherever they have the opportunity.

[312] The rest are blind and arrogant, and think that they observe and can observe the Law by their own powers, as has been said above concerning the scholastic theologians; thence come the hypocrites and false saints.<sup>5</sup>

But the chief office or power of the Law is that it reveal original sin with all its fruits, and show man how very low his nature has fallen, and that it has become utterly corrupted; as the Law must tell that man neither has nor cares for God, and adores other gods, a matter which before and without the Law would not have been believed. In this way he becomes terrified, is humbled, desponds, despairs and anxiously desires aid; neither does he know whither to flee; he begins to be enraged at God, and to murmur, etc. This is what Paul says (Rom. 4:15): "The Law worketh wrath." And Rom. 5:20: "Sin is increased by the Law."

[“The Law entered that the offense might abound.”]

### III. Of Repentance.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, xii.; *Apology*, xii.; *chap.* (vi.;. 16 sq.; *Large Catechism*, *Baptism*, 497, § 77 sqq.; *Formula of Concord*, iv.: 16 sq.; v.: 7 sq.

This office [of the Law] the New Testament retains and exercises, as St. Paul (Rom. 1:18) does, saying: “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” And 3:19: “All the world is guilty before God.” “No man is righteous before him.” And Christ (John 16:8) says: “The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin.”

This therefore is a thunderbolt of God, by which he strikes manifest sinners and hypocrites in one mass, and declares no one righteous, but forces them all together to terror and despair.<sup>6</sup> This is the hammer, as Jeremiah says (23:29): “Is not my Word like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” This is not *activa contritio*, or manufactured repentance, but *passiva contritio* [torture of conscience], true sorrow of heart, suffering and sense of death.<sup>7</sup>

For that is the beginning of true repentance; and here man must hear such a sentence as this: “You are all of no account, whether you be manifest sinners or saints [in your own opinion]; you all must become different and do otherwise than you now are and are doing, be you great, wise, powerful and holy as you may. Here no one is [righteous, holy], godly,” etc.<sup>8</sup>

[313] But to this office the New Testament immediately adds the consolatory promise of grace through the Gospel, which must be believed, as Christ declares (Mark 1:15): “Repent and believe the Gospel,” i. e, become different and do otherwise, and believe my promise. And before him John is named a preacher of repentance, but “for the remission of sins,” i. e, John was to accuse all, and prove that they were sinners, that they might know what they were before God, and might acknowledge that they were lost men, and might thus be prepared for the Lord, to receive grace, and to expect and accept from him the remission of sins. Thus Christ also (Luke 24:47) 6 himself says: “That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.”

But when the Law alone, without the co-operation of the Gospel, exercises this, its office is death and hell, and man must despair, as Saul and Judas;<sup>9</sup> just as St. Paul (Rom. 7:10) says that through sin the Law killeth. On the contrary, the Gospel brings consolation and remission, not only in one way, but through the Word and sacraments and the like, as we will hear afterward that “with the Lord

is plenteous redemption,” as Ps. 130:7 says, against the dreadful captivity of sin.

We will next contrast the false repentance of the sophists with true repentance, in order that both may be the better understood.

*Of the False Repentance of the Papists*

It was impossible that they should teach correctly concerning repentance, since they did not rightly know what sins are. For, as has been shown above,<sup>10</sup> they do not believe aright concerning original sin, but say that the natural powers of man have remained unimpaired and incorrupt; that reason can teach aright, and the will can accordingly do aright [those things which are taught], that God certainly gives his grace when man does only as much as is in him, according to his free will.

[314] From this dogma it follows that they must repent only for: actual sins, such as wicked thoughts that are acquiesced in (for wicked emotion [concupiscence, vicious feelings and inclinations], lust and improper dispositions [according to them] are not sins). and for wicked words and deeds, which the free will could readily have omitted. And to such repentance they fix three parts, contrition, confession and satisfaction, with this consolation and promise added: If man truly repent, confess, render satisfaction, he thereby merits forgiveness, and settles for his sins with God. Thus in repentance men were instructed to repose confidence in their own works. Hence the expression originated, which was employed in the pulpit when public absolution was announced to the people: “Prolong, O God, my life, until I shall make satisfaction for my sins and amend my life.”

Here neither Christ nor faith was mentioned; but they hoped, by their own works, to overcome and efface sins before God. And with this intention we became priests and monks, that we might array ourselves against sin.

As to contrition, the state of the case was this: Since no one could retain all his sins in memory (especially as committed through an entire year), they inserted this provision, viz. that if the remembrance of a concealed sin should perhaps return, this also should be repented of and confessed, etc. Meanwhile they were commended to the grace of God.

Since also no one could know how great the contrition ought to be which would be sufficient before God, they gave this consolation: He who could not have contrition, at least ought to have attrition, which I may call a half or beginning of contrition. Both these terms every one of them has understood, and now knows, as little as I.<sup>11</sup> Such attrition is reckoned as contrition to those going

to confession.

And when any one said that he could not have contrition, or could not lament his sins (as might have occurred in illicit love or the desire for revenge, etc.), they asked whether he did not wish or desire to lament. When one would reply Yes (for who, save the devil himself, would here say No?), they accepted this as contrition, and forgave him his sins on account of this good work of his [which they adorned with the name of contrition]. Here they cite the example of Bernard, etc.

[315] Here we see how blind reason, in matters pertaining to God, gropes about, and, according to its own imagination, seeks for consolation in its own works, and cannot think of Christ and faith. But if it be considered in the light, this contrition is a manufactured and fictitious thought [or imagination], derived from man's own powers, without faith and without the knowledge of Christ. And in it, sometimes the poor sinner, when he reflected upon his own lust and desire for revenge, would have laughed, rather than wept, except one who either has been struck by [the lightning of] the Law, or has been vainly vexed by the devil with a sorrowful spirit. Such contrition is certainly mere hypocrisy, and has not mortified the lust for sins [flames of lust]; for they must grieve, even though, if it had been free to them, they would have preferred to sin.

With confession it stood thus: Every one must enumerate all his sins (which is an impossible thing). This was a great torment. But if any one had forgotten some sins, he would be absolved on the condition that if they would occur to him he must still confess them. Thereby he could never know whether he had confessed sufficiently, or when the confession would ever have an end. Yet they were pointed to their own works, and comforted thus: The more perfectly one confesses, and the more he is ashamed of himself and blames himself to the priest, the sooner and better he renders satisfaction for his sins; for such humility certainly earns grace before God.

Here there was no faith or Christ, and the virtue of the absolution was not declared to him, but upon the enumeration of sins and the shame depended the consolation. What torture, rascality and idolatry such confession has produced cannot be enumerated.

But the satisfaction is most indefinite [involved] of all. For no man could know how much to render for a single sin, to say nothing for all. Here they have resorted to the device of a small satisfaction, which could indeed be rendered, as five Paternosters, a day's fast, etc.; for the rest of the repentance they point to purgatory.

Here also there was extreme misery. For some thought that they would get out of purgatory, because, according to the old canons, seven years' repentance



belongs to a single mortal sin. Nevertheless confidence was placed upon our work of satisfaction, and if the satisfaction could have been perfect, confidence would have been placed in it entirely, and neither faith nor Christ would have been of use. But this was impossible. If anyone had repented in that way for a hundred years, he would still not have known whether he had repented enough. This is always to repent and never to come to repentance.

[316] Here now the holy See at Rome came to the aid of the poor Church, and invented indulgences, whereby it remitted and waived [expiation or] satisfaction, first, for a single year, for seven years, for a hundred years, and distributed them among the cardinals and bishops, so that one could grant indulgence for a hundred years, and another for a hundred days. But it reserved to itself alone the power to waive all the satisfaction.

Since now this began to yield money, and the traffic in bulls was profitable, it devised a golden jubilee year [a truly goldbearing year], and fixed it at Rome. It called this the remission of all punishment and guilt. Thither the people ran, because every one wished to be freed from a grievous, insupportable burden. This was to find and raise the treasures of the earth.

Immediately the Pope pressed still further, and multiplied the golden years one upon another. But the more he devoured money, the wider did his jaws open. Therefore by his legates these years were published [everywhere] in the countries, until all churches and houses were full of the jubilee. At length he resorted to purgatory among the dead, first by establishing masses and vigils, afterwards by indulgences and a golden year, and finally souls became so cheap that he released one for a farthing.

Nevertheless even this is not half. For although the Pope taught men to depend upon, and trust in, these indulgences for salvation, yet he rendered the whole matter again uncertain. For in his bulls he puts it thus: He who wishes to become participant in the indulgences of a year of jubilee, ought to be contrite, and to have confessed, and to pay money. Moreover we have heard above that this contrition and confession are with them uncertain and hypocrisy. Likewise also no one knew what soul was in purgatory, and if some were therein, no one knew who had repented and confessed aright. Therefore he took the coveted money, and comforted them meanwhile with his power and indulgence, and pointed them again to their uncertain work.

[317] If now there were some who did not regard themselves guilty of such actual sins in thoughts, words and works (as I and my like, in monasteries and chapters, wished to be monks and priests, and by fasting, watching, praying, saying Mass, harsh clothing and hard beds to protect ourselves from evil spirits, and with heart and soul to be holy), yet the hereditary, inborn evil sometimes in

sleep did that (as also St. Augustine and Jerome among others confess) which is its nature. Nevertheless each one was regarded by the others as so holy, as we taught, without sin and full of good works, that we could communicate and sell our good works to others, as being superfluous to us for heaven. This is indeed true, and seals, letters and illustrations are at hand.

Such as these did not need repentance. For of what would they repent, as they had not acquiesced in the wicked thoughts? What would they confess [concerning words not uttered], as they had avoided the expression? For what should they render satisfaction, as they were so guiltless of any deed that they could even sell their superfluous righteousness to other poor sinners? Such saints were also the Pharisees and Scribes in the time of Christ.

Here conies the fiery angel, St. John, the true preacher of repentance, and strikes with one bolt all of both classes [those selling and those buying works] in one mass, and says: "Repent" (Matt. 3:2). Thus the former imagine: We nevertheless have repented. The latter: We need no repentance. John says: Repent ye all, for ye are false penitents; so are these false saints, and all of both classes need the forgiveness of sins, because ye all still know not what true sin is, to be silent as to your obligation to repent and escape from it. For no one of you is good; you are full of unbelief, stupidity and ignorance of God and God's will. For here he is present: "Of whose fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16), and without him no man can be just before God. Wherefore if you wish to repent, repent aright; your repentance is nothing. And you hypocrites, who do not need repentance, you generation of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the wrath to come? etc. (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7).

[318] In the same way Paul also preaches (Rom. 3:10-12): "There is none righteous, there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, there is none that doeth good, no not one; they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable." And Acts 17:30: "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "All men," he says; no one excepted who is a man. This repentance teaches us to discern sin, viz. that we are altogether lost, and that with us, both within and without, there is nothing good, and that we ought absolutely to become other and new men.

This repentance is not partial and beggarly [incomplete], such as is that for actual sins, nor is it even as uncertain as that. For it does not dispute as to whether there is or is not sin, but it overthrows everything in a mass, and affirms that with respect to us, all is nothing but sin. For why do we wish longer to investigate, to divide or distinguish? Therefore, this contrition also is not uncertain. For nothing remains there by which we can think of any good thing to pay for sin, but we only despair concerning all things that we are, that we think,

that we speak and do, etc.

Likewise the confession also cannot be false, uncertain or partial. For he who confesses that all in him is nothing but sin, comprehends all sins, excludes none, forgets none. So also the satisfaction cannot be uncertain, because it is not an uncertain, sinful work of ours, but it is the suffering and blood of the innocent Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.

Of this repentance John preaches; and afterwards Christ in the Gospel, and we also. By this preaching of repentance we dash to the ground the Pope and everything that is built upon our good works. For all are built upon a rotten and vain foundation, which is called a good work or law, even though no good work be there, but only wicked works, and no one does the Law (as Christ, John 7:19, says), but all transgress it. Therefore the building is nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy, even [in the part] where it is most holy and beautiful.

[319] This repentance in Christians continues until death, because, through the entire life, it contends with sin remaining in the flesh, as Paul (Rom. 7:14-25) shows, that he wars with the law in his members, etc.; and this not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost that follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and purges the remaining sins, and works so as to render man pure and holy. Hereof the Pope, the theologians, the jurists, and every other man know nothing [from their own reason], but it is a doctrine from heaven revealed through the Gospel, and is proclaimed as heresy by the godless saints.

But if certain sectarists would arise, some of whom are perhaps already present, and in the time of the insurrection of the peasants came to my view, holding that all those who have once received the Spirit or the forgiveness of sins, or have become believers, even though they would afterwards sin, would still remain in the faith, and sin would not injure them, and cry thus: “Do whatever you please; if you believe, it is all nothing; faith blots out all sins,”<sup>12</sup> etc. — They say, besides, that if any one sins after he has received faith and the Spirit, he never truly had the Spirit and faith. I have seen and heard of many men so insane, and I fear that such a devil is still remaining in some. —

If, therefore, I say, such persons would hereafter also arise, it is necessary to know and teach that if saints who still have and feel original sin, and also daily repent, and strive with it, fall in some way into manifest sins, as David into adultery, murder and blasphemy, faith and the Holy Ghost are then absent from them [they cast out faith and the Holy Ghost]. For the Holy Ghost does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so as to be completed, but represses and restrains it so that it must not do what it wishes. But if it do what it wishes, the Holy Ghost and faith are not there present. For St. John says (1 Ep. 3:9): “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, .... and he cannot sin.”

And yet that is also the truth which the same St. John says (1 Ep. 1:8): “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

## **IV. Of the Gospel.**

*Parallel Passages.*— Art. IV: *Apology* iv., 48 sq., chap, (iii.), 62; *Formula of Concord*, Ep. and Sol. Dec, v.

We will now return to the Gospel, which not merely in one way gives us counsel and aid against sin; for God is superabundantly rich in his grace. First, through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world; which is the peculiar office of the Gospel. Secondly, through baptism. Thirdly, through the holy sacrament of the altar. Fourthly, through the power of the keys, and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, Matt. 18:20: “Where two or three are gathered together,” etc.

## **V. Of Baptism.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. V.: *Augsburg Confession*, ix.; *Apology*, ix.; *Small Catechism*, 361; *Large Catechism*, 384, 485; *Formula of Concord*, Ep. xii., 6 sq.; Sol. Dec, xii., 11 sq.

[320] Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God [with mersion] in the water, commanded by his institution, or as Paul says: “A washing in the Word;” just as Augustine also says: “The Word comes to the element, and it becomes a sacrament.” Therefore, we do not hold with Thomas and the monastic preachers or Dominicans, who forget the Word (God’s institution) and say that God has imparted to the water a spiritual power, which, through the water, washes away sin. Nor do we agree with Scotus and the Barefooted monks [Minorites or Franciscan monks], who teach that, by the assistance of the divine will, baptism washes away sins, and that this ablution occurs only through the will of God, and by no means through the Word and water.

Of the baptism of children, we hold that children ought to be baptized. For they belong to the promised redemption made through Christ, and the Church should administer it to them.

## **VI. Of the Sacrament of the Altar.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. VI.: *Augsburg Confession*, x., xxii. *Apology*, X., xxii.; *Small Catechism*,

Of the sacrament of the altar we hold that bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly, but also by wicked Christians.

And that not only one form is to be given. For we do not need that high art which teaches us that under the one form there is as much as under both, as the sophists and Council of Constance teach.

For although it may perhaps be true that there is as much under one as under both, yet the one form is not the entire ordinance and institution established and commanded by Christ. And we especially condemn, and in God's name execrate, those who not only omit both forms, but also tyrannically prohibit, condemn and blaspheme them as heresy, and so exalt themselves against and above Christ, our Lord and God, etc.

We care nothing about the sophistical subtlety concerning transubstantiation, by which they teach that bread and wine leave or lose their own natural substance, and remain only the appearance and color of bread, and not true bread. For it agrees best with Holy Scripture that the bread be and remain there, as Paul himself calls it (1 Cor. 10:16): "The bread which we break." And (1 Cor. 11:28): "Let him so eat of that bread."

## VII. Of the Keys.

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. VII.: *Augsburg Confession*, Art. xxviii.; *Apology*, Arts, xi., xii., 39 sq.; xxviii.; *Smalcald Articles*, 333, 24, 68.

[321] The keys are an office and power given by Christ to the Church for binding and loosing sins, not only such as are gross and well known, but also such as are subtle, hidden, and known only to God, as it is written in Ps. 19:13: "Who can understand his errors?" And in Rom. 7:25, St. Paul complains that with the flesh he serves the law of sin. For it is not in our power, but belongs to God alone, to judge what, how great and how many are sins, as it is written in Ps. 144 (143:2): "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." And Paul (1 Cor. 4:4) says: "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified?"

## VIII. Of Confession.

*Parallel Passages. — Art. VIII.: Augsburg Confession, Arts, xi., xxv.; Apology, Art. xi., xii., chap, (vi.); Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art iii., § 19 Small Catechism, 363.*

Since absolution or the power of the keys is also a consolation and aid against sin and a bad conscience, appointed by Christ himself in the Gospel, Confession or absolution ought by no means to be abolished in the Church, especially on account of [tender and] timid consciences and uncultivated youth, in order that they may be heard, and instructed in Christian doctrine.

But the enumeration of sins ought to be free to every one, as to what he wishes to enumerate or not to enumerate. For as long as we are in the flesh, we will not lie when we say, “I am a poor man, full of sins.” Rom. 7:23: “I see another law in my members,” etc. For since private absolution arises from the office of the keys, it should not be neglected, but must be esteemed of the greatest worth, just as all other offices also of the Christian Church.

[322] And in those things which concern the spoken, outward Word, we must firmly hold that God grants his Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word. Thereby we are protected against enthusiasts, i. e. spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the Word, and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain and stretch it at their pleasure, as Münzer did, and many still do at the present day; they wish to be acute judges between the Spirit and the letter, and yet know not what they say or propose. Because the Papacy also is nothing but enthusiasm, by which the Pope boasts that all laws exist in the shrine of his heart, and whatever he decides and commands in his churches is spirit and law, even though it be above and contrary to Scripture and the spoken Word.

All this is the old devil and old serpent, who also converted Adam and Eve into enthusiasts, and led them from the outward Word of God to spiritualism and self-conceit, and nevertheless he effected this through other outward words. Just so our enthusiasts [at the present day] condemn the outward Word, and nevertheless they themselves are not silent, but they fill the world with their pratings and writings, as though indeed the Spirit were unable to come through the writings and spoken word of apostles, but he must come through their writings and words. Why therefore do not they also omit their own sermons and writings, until the Spirit himself come to men, without their writings and before them, as they boast that they have received the Spirit without the preaching of the Scriptures? But of these matters there is not time now to dispute at greater length; we have heretofore paid sufficient attention to this subject.<sup>13</sup>

For even those who believe before baptism, or become believing in baptism, believe through the outward Word that precedes, as the adults, who have come to

reason, must first have heard: “He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved,” even though they are at first unbelieving, and receive the Spirit and baptism ten years afterwards. Cornelius (Acts 10:1 sqq.) had heard long before among the Jews of the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God, and in such faith his prayers and alms were acceptable to God (as Luke calls him devout and fearing God), and without such preceding Word and hearing could not have believed or been righteous. But St. Peter had to reveal to him that the Messiah (in whom, as one that was to come, he had hitherto believed) had already come, and his faith in the coming Messiah did not hold him captive among the hardened and unbelieving Jews, but he knew that he was now to be saved by a present Messiah, and he neither denied nor persecuted him, as did the Jews.

[323] In a word, enthusiasm inheres in Adam and his children from the beginning to the end of the world; its poison has been implanted and infused into them by the old dragon, and is the origin, power and strength of all heresy, especially of that of the Papacy and Mohammed. Therefore in regard to this we ought and must constantly maintain that God does not wish to deal with us otherwise than through the spoken Word and the sacraments, and that whatever without the Word and sacraments is extolled as spirit is the devil himself. For God also wished to appear to Moses through the burning bush and spoken Word; and no prophet, neither Elijah nor Elisha, received the Spirit without the Ten Commandments or spoken Word. Neither was John the Baptist conceived without the preceding word of Gabriel, nor did he leap in his mother’s womb without the voice of Mary. And Peter says (2 Ep. 1:21): “Then prophecy came not by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Without the outward Word they were not holy, neither as unholy did the Holy Ghost move them to speak; but they were holy Peter says, when the Holy Ghost spake through them.

## **IX. Of Excommunication.**

*Parallel Passages.— Art. IX.: Augsburg Confession, xxviii.; Apology xxviii.: 13, 14; Smalcald Articles, 342:74.*

The greater excommunication, as the Pope calls it, we regard only as a civil penalty, and not pertaining to us ministers of the Church. But the less is true Christian excommunication, which prohibits manifest and obstinate sinners from the sacrament and other communion of the Church until they are reformed and

avoid sin. And ministers ought not to confound this ecclesiastical punishment or excommunication with civil penalties.

## **X. Of Ordination and the Call.**

*Parallel Passages.*— Art. X.: *Augsburg Confession*, v., xiv.; *Apology* xiv.; *Smalcald Articles*, 340 sqq.; *Small Catechism*, 369 sqq.

If the bishops were true bishops, and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, they might be allowed, for the sake of love and unity, and not from necessity, to ordain and confirm us and our preachers; nevertheless, under the condition that all masks and phantoms [deceptions, absurdities and appearances] of unchristian nature and display be laid aside. Yet because they neither are nor wish to be true a bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church, but persecute and condemn those who being called discharge this duty; for their sake the Church ought not to remain without ministers.

Therefore, as the ancient examples of the Church and the Fathers teach us, we ourselves will and ought to ordain suitable persons to this office; and (even according to their own laws) they have not the right to forbid or prevent us. For their laws say that those ordained even by heretics should be regarded and remain as ordained, as St. Jerome writes of the Church at Alexandria, that at first it was governed in common by the bishops through the priests and preachers.

## **XI. Of the Marriage of Priests.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XI.: *Augsburg Confession*, xxiii.; *Apology* xxiii.; *Large Catechism*, 424 sq.

[324] In prohibiting marriage, and burdening the divine order of i priests with perpetual celibacy, they have neither reason nor right, but have treated it as antichristian, tyrannical, skeptical scoundrels, and have afforded occasion for all kinds of horrible, abominable sins of impurity, in which they still wallow. But just as the power has been given neither to us nor to them to make a woman out of a man, or man out of a woman, or to annihilate both, so also it has not been given them; so also power has not been given them to sunder and separate such creatures of God, or to forbid them from living honorably in marriage with one



another. Therefore we are unwilling to assent to their abominable celibacy, nor will we even tolerate it, but we wish to have marriage free as God has instituted and appointed it, and we wish neither to rescind nor hinder his work; for Paul says that this prohibition of marriage is a doctrine of devils (1 Tim. 4:1 sqq.).

## **XII. Of the Church.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XII.: *Apostles' Creed*, *Nicene Creed*, *Augsburg Confession*, vii., xv.; *Apology*, vii.; *Small Catechism*, 358; *Large Catechism*, 456 sqq.; *Formula of Concord*, Sol. Dec., x., 19 sq.

We do not acknowledge them as the Church, and they are not [because in truth they are not the Church]; we also will not listen to those things which, under the name of Church, they either enjoin or forbid. For, thank God, today a child seven years old knows what the Church is, viz. saints, believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd. For the children repeat: “I believe in one holy [Catholic or] Christian Church.” This holiness does not consist in an alb, a tonsure, a long gown and other of their ceremonies devised by them beyond Holy Scripture, but consists in the Word of God and true faith.

## **XIII. When Man is Justified Before God, and of Good Works.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XIII.: *Augsburg Confession*, iv., vi., xx.; *Apology*, ii. (iii.), xx.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part II., Art. i.; *Formula of Concord*, Epit. and Sol. Dec, iii., iv.

What I have hitherto and constantly taught concerning this I cannot in the least change, viz. that by faith (as St. Peter says) we acquire a new and clean heart, and God accounts, and will account us righteous and holy, for the sake of Christ, our Mediator. And although sin in the flesh has not been altogether removed and become dead, yet he will not punish or regard this.

[325] For good works follow this faith, renewal and forgiveness a of sins. And that in them which is still sinful and imperfect is not accounted as sin and defect, even for Christ's sake; but the entire man, both as to his person and his works, is and is called just and holy, from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us [unfolded] and displayed in Christ. Wherefore we cannot boast of our many merits and works, if they be viewed apart from grace and mercy, but as it is written, (1 Cor. 1:31): “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,” viz. that he

has a gracious God. For thus all is well. We say besides that if good works do not follow, faith is false and not true.

## **XIV. Of Monastic Vows.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Art. XIV.: Augsburg Confession, xxvii.; Apology, xvi., xxvii.; Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art. iii. Cf. Luther: “De Votis Monasticis,” Wittenberg, 1521.

As monastic vows directly conflict with the first chief article,<sup>14</sup> they ought to be absolutely abolished. For it is of them that Christ says (Matt. 24:6, 23 sqq.): “I am Christ,” etc. For he who makes a vow to live in a monastery believes that he will enter upon a mode of life holier than the ordinary Christians, and by his own works wishes to earn heaven not only for himself, but also for others; this is to deny Christ. And they boast from their St. Thomas that a monastic vow is on an equality with baptism.<sup>15</sup> This is blasphemy against God.

## **XV. Of Human Traditions.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Augsburg Confession, xv., xxvi.; Apology, vii., 30 sq.. Formula of Concord, Epitome and Sol. Dec, x.

The declaration of the Papists that human traditions serve for the remission of sins, or merit salvation, is altogether unchristian and condemned, as Christ says (Matt. 15:9): “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” And Tit. 1:14: “That turn from the truth.” Also their declaration that it is a mortal sin if one do not observe these statutes, is not right.

These are the articles on which I must stand; and if God so will I shall stand even to my death. And I do not know how to change or to concede anything in them. If any one else will concede anything, he will do it at the expense of his conscience.

[326-327] Lastly, the Pope’s bundle of impostures still remains, concerning foolish and childish articles, as the dedication of churches, the baptism of bells, the baptism of the altar-stone, with its godfathers to pray and offer gifts. Such baptism is administered to the reproach and mockery of holy baptism, and should not be tolerated. Afterwards, concerning the consecration of wax tapers, palm-branches, cakes, spices, oats, etc., which nevertheless cannot be called consecrations, but are nothing but mockery and fraud. There are infinite other such deceptions, which we commit to their god, and which may be adored by

them, until they are weary of them. We will not be confused by [ought to have nothing to do with] them.

Dr. Martin Luther subscribed.

Dr. Justus Jonas, Rector, subscribed.

Dr. John Bugenhagen, Pomeranus subscribed.

Dr. Caspar Creutziger subscribed.

Niclas Amsdorf of Magdeburg subscribed.

George Spalatine of Altenburg subscribed.

I, Philip Melanchthon, approve the above articles as right and Christian. But of the Pope, I hold that if he would allow the Gospel, for the sake of the peace and general unity of Christians, who are now under him, and may be under him hereafter, the superiority over bishops which he has in other respects could be allowed to him, according to human right, also by us.

John Agricola of Eisleben subscribed.

Gabriel Didymus subscribed.

I, Dr. Urban Rhegius, Superintendent of the churches in the Duchy of Luneburg, subscribe my name and the names of my brethren, and of the Church of Hanover.

I, Stephen Agricola, Minister at Hof, subscribe.

Also I, John Draconites, Professor and Minister at Marburg.

I, Conrad Figenbotz, for the glory of God subscribe that I have thus believed, and am still preaching and firmly believing as above.

I, Andrew Osiander of Nürnberg, subscribe.

I, M. Veit Dieterich, Minister at Nurnberg, subscribe.

I, Erhard Schnepf, Preacher at Stuttgart, subscribe.

Conrad Oetinger, Preacher of Duke Ulrich at Pforzheim.

Simon Schneeweis, Pastor of the Church at Crailsheim.

I, John Schlainhauffen, Pastor of the Church at Koethen, subscribe.

M. George Helt of Forchheim.

M. Adam of Fulda, Preacher in Hesse.

M. Anthony Corvinus, Preacher in Hesse.

I, John Bugenhagen, Pomeranus, Doctor, again subscribe in the name of M. John Brentz, as on departing from Smalcald he directed me orally and by a letter which I have shown to these brethren who have subscribed.

I, Dionysius Melander, subscribe to the Confession, the Apology, and the Concordia on the subject of the Eucharist.

Paul Rhodius, Superintendent of Stettin.

Gerard Oeniken, Superintendent of the Church at Minden.

I, Brixius Northanus, Minister of the Church of Christ which is at Soest, subscribe to the Articles of the reverend Father, Martin Luther, and confess that hitherto I have thus believed and taught, and by the Spirit I will continue thus to believe and teach.

Michael Coelius, Preacher at Mansfeldt, subscribed.

M. Peter Geltner, Preacher at Frankfort, subscribed.

Wendal Faber, Pastor of Seeburg in Mansfeldt.

I, John Aepinus, subscribe.

Likewise, I, John Amsterdam of Bremen.

I, Frederick Myconius, Pastor of the Church at Gotha in Thuringia, subscribe in my own name, and in that of Justus Menius of Eisenach.

I, John Lang, D., and Preacher of the Church at Erfurt, in my own name, and  
in that of my other co-worker in the Gospel, viz.:

Licentiate Ludwig Platz of Melsungen.

M. Sigismund Kirchner.

M. Wolfgang Kismetter.

M. Melchior Weitman.

M. John Tall.

M. John Killian.

M. Nicholas Faber.

M. Andrew Menser, I subscribe with my hand.

And I, Egidius Mechler, have subscribed with my hand.

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1. Rom. 5:12, 19.↵
  2. Apology, ii.: 7 sq.; 24 sq.↵
  3. Formula of Concord, Epit., i.: 8, p. 520.↵
  4. Aug. Conf., xviii.: 8, p. 43; Apology, ii.: 8 sq., p. 79.↵
  5. Cf. Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec, v.: 10, p. 636.↵
  6. See above. Part III., Art. ii., § 4.↵
  7. Cf. Apology, xii.: 29, p. 254.↵
  8. Cf. Rom. 3:10-12.↵
  9. Apology, xii., 8, p. 168.↵
  10. See above, Part III., i., 4 sq., p. 310.↵
  11. Apology, chap, (vi.): 81, p. 201.↵
  12. Antinomians; cf. Form, of Con., v.: 15, p. 636.↵
  13. E. g. Luther's Exposition of Gospel of John, Luther's Works, Walch's ed.,vii., p. 1149 sq., 2225, 2327; Seckendorf's History, 3:166.↵
  14. See Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art i., § 1.↵
  15. Apology, xxvii., § 20. Luther wrote on the margin of the Apology 'Blasphemy of St. Thomas.'↵

# Appendix. Treatise Concerning the Power and Primacy of the Pope.

*Treatise Written by the Theologians assembled at Smalkald in the year 1538.*

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, Art. xxviii.; Apology, Art vii., 23 sqq., xxviii.; Smalcald Articles, Part. II., Art. iv.; Part III., Art. viii, § 4 sqq; Art. x.*

[328] The Roman pontiff claims for himself that by divine right he is above all bishops and pastors [in all Christendom].

Secondly, he adds also that by divine right he has both swords, i. e. the right of bestowing and transferring kingdoms.

And thirdly, he says that to believe this is necessary for salvation. And for these reasons the Roman bishop calls himself the vicar of Christ on earth.

These three articles we hold to be false, godless, tyrannical and pernicious to the Church.

In order, moreover, that our affirmation may be understood, we will first define what they call to be above all by divine right. For they mean that he is universal, or as they say oecumenical bishop, i. e. from whom all bishops and pastors throughout the entire world ought to seek ordination and confirmation, who has the right of electing, ordaining, confirming, deposing all bishops [and pastors]. Besides this, he claims for himself the authority to frame laws concerning services, concerning changing the sacraments and concerning doctrine, and wishes his articles, his decrees, his laws to be regarded equal to the divine laws, i. e. he holds that, by the Papal laws, the consciences of men are so bound that those who neglect them, even without public offense, sin mortally [that they cannot be discontinued without sin. For he wishes to found this power upon divine right and the Holy Scriptures; yea, he wishes that they be preferred to the Holy Scriptures and God's commands]. And it is still more horrible that he adds that belief in all these things belongs to the necessity of salvation.

## I. Of the Fictitious Authority of The Pope.

### Of the First Article.

#### A. From the Gospel.

[329] First, therefore, we will show from the Gospel that the Roman bishop is not by divine right above other bishops and pastors.

Luke 22:25. Christ expressly prohibits lordship among the apostles [that any apostle should have the preeminence over the rest]. For this was the very question which they were disputing when Christ spake of his passion, viz. who should command, and be as it were the vicar of the absent Christ. There Christ reproves this error of the apostles, and teaches that there shall not be lordship or superiority among them, but that the apostles would be sent forth as equals to the common ministry of the Gospel. Accordingly, he says: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors, but ye shall not be so; but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." The antithesis here shows that lordship is disapproved.

The same is taught by the parable when Christ in the same dispute concerning the kingdom (Matt. 18:2) sets a little child in the midst, signifying that among ministers there is not to be sovereignty, just as a child neither takes nor seeks sovereignty for himself.

John 20:21. Christ sends forth his disciples on an equality without any distinction when he says: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." He says that he sends individuals in the same manner as he himself was sent; and hence grants a prerogative or lordship to no one above the rest.

[330] Gal. 2:7 sq. Paul manifestly affirms that he was neither ordained nor confirmed by Peter, nor does he acknowledge Peter to be one from whom confirmation should be sought. And he expressly contends from this circumstance that his call does not depend upon the authority of Peter. But he ought to have acknowledged Peter as a superior if by divine right Peter was superior. Paul accordingly says that he had at once preached the Gospel without consulting Peter. Also: "Of those who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; God accepteth no man's person)." And: "They who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me." Since Paul therefore clearly testifies that he did not even wish to seek for the confirmation of Peter, even when he had come to him, he teaches that the authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God, and that Peter was not superior to the other apostles, and that ordination or confirmation was not to be sought from Peter alone [that the office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the apostles, and that it is not necessary for all to have the call or confirmation of this person alone].

In 1 Cor. 3:6, Paul makes ministers equal, and teaches that the Church is above the ministers. Hence superiority or lordship over the Church or the rest of

the ministers is not ascribed to Peter. For he says thus: "All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas," i. e. Let not other ministers or Peter assume for themselves lordship or superiority to the Church; let them not burden the Church with traditions; let not the authority of any avail more than the Word [of God]; let not the authority of Cephas be opposed to the authority of the other apostles, as they reasoned at that time; "Cephas, who is an apostle of higher rank, observes this; therefore, Paul and the rest ought to observe this." Paul removes this pretext from Peter, and denies that his authority is to be preferred to the rest or to the Church.

#### **B. From History.**

[331] The Council of Nice resolved that the bishop of Alexandria should administer the churches in the East, and the Roman bishop the suburban, i. e. those which were in the Roman provinces in the West.<sup>1</sup> Hence it was first by human law, i. e. the resolution of the Council, that the authority of the Roman bishop arose. If already by divine law the Roman bishop would have had the superiority, it would not have been lawful for the Council to have removed any right from him and to have transferred it to the bishop of Alexandria; yea all the bishops of the East ought perpetually to have sought ordination and confirmation from the bishop of Rome.

The Council of Nice determined also<sup>2</sup> that bishops should be 1 3 elected by their own churches, in the presence of a neighboring bishop or of several. The same was observed also in the West and in the Latin churches, as Cyprian and Augustine testify. For Cyprian says in his fourth letter to Cornelius: "For which reason you must diligently observe and keep the divine observance and apostolic practice, as it is also observed among us and in almost all the provinces, that for celebrating properly ordinances all the neighboring bishops of the same province should assemble; and the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who have most fully known the life of each one, which we also see was done among us in the ordination of our colleague, Sabinus; so that by the suffrage of the entire brotherhood, and by the judgment of the bishops, who had assembled in their presence, the episcopate was conferred and hands imposed upon him."

Cyprian calls this custom a divine tradition and an apostolic observance, and affirms that it was observed in almost all the provinces. Since therefore neither ordination nor confirmation was sought from a bishop of Rome in the greater part of the world in the Latin and Greek churches, it is sufficiently apparent that the churches did not then ascribe superiority and domination to the bishop of Rome.

Such superiority is impossible. For it is impossible for one bishop to be the



inspector of the churches of the whole world, or for churches situated in the most remote lands [all the ministers] to seek ordination from one. For it is manifest that the kingdom of Christ has been dispersed through the whole world; and today there are many churches in the East which do not seek ordination or confirmation from the Roman bishop [which have ministers ordained neither by the Pope nor his bishops]. Therefore since such superiority [which the Pope, contrary to all Scripture, arrogates to himself] is impossible, and the churches in the greater part of the world have not acknowledged it, it is sufficiently apparent that it was not established [by Christ, and does not spring from divine law].

[332] Many ancient Synods have been proclaimed and held in which the bishop of Rome did not preside; as that of Nice and very many others. This also testifies that the Church did not then acknowledge the primacy or superiority of the bishop of Rome.

Jerome says: “If authority is sought, the world is greater than the city. Wherever there has been a bishop, whether at Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, he is of the same merit and priesthood.”<sup>3</sup>

Gregory, writing to the patriarch at Alexandria, forbids himself to be called universal bishop. And in the “Register” he says that in the Council of Chalcedon the primacy was offered to the bishop of Rome, and was not accepted.

Lastly, how can the Pope be by divine right over the entire Church, when the Church has the election, and the custom gradually prevailed that bishops of Rome should be confirmed by emperors?

Also,<sup>4</sup> since there had been for a long time contests concerning the primacy between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, the emperor Phocas at length determined that the primacy should be assigned to the bishop of Rome. But if the ancient Church had acknowledged the primacy of the Roman pontiff, this contention would not have occurred, neither would there have been need of a decree of the emperor.

### **C. Arguments of the Adversaries.**

But they cite against us certain passages, viz. (Matt. 16:18 22 sq.): “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.” Also: “I will give unto thee the keys.” Also (John 21:15): “Feed my sheep,” and some others. But since this entire controversy has been fully and accurately treated of elsewhere in the books of our theologians, and all things cannot be reviewed in this place, we refer to those writings, and wish them to be regarded as repeated. Yet we will briefly reply concerning the interpretation of the passages quoted.

[333] In all these passages Peter is the representative of the entire assembly of

apostles, as appears from the text itself. For Christ asks not Peter alone, but says: “Whom do ye say that I am?”<sup>5</sup> And what is here said in the singular number: “I will give unto thee the keys; and whatsoever thou shalt bind,” etc., is elsewhere expressed in the plural (Matt. 18:18): “Whatsoever ye shall bind,” etc. And in John 20:23: “Whosoever sins ye remit,” etc. These words testify that the keys are given alike to all the apostles, and that all the apostles are alike sent forth.

In addition to this, it is necessary to confess that the keys pertain not to the person of a particular man, but to the Church, as many most clear and firm arguments testify. For Christ, speaking concerning the keys (Matt. 18:19), adds: “If two of you shall agree on earth,” etc. Therefore he ascribes the keys to the Church principally and immediately; just as also for this reason the Church has principally the right of calling. [For just as the promise of the Gospel belongs certainly and immediately to the entire Church, so the keys belong immediately to the entire Church, because the keys are nothing else than the office whereby this promise is communicated to every one who desires it, just as it is actually manifest that the Church has the power to ordain ministers of the Church. And Christ speaks in these words: “Whatsoever ye shall bind,” etc., and means that to which he has given the keys, namely, the Church: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name” (Matt. 18:20). Likewise Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church, when he says: “Tell it to the Church.”]

Therefore it is necessary in these passages that Peter be the representative of the entire assembly of the apostles, and for this reason they do not ascribe any prerogative, or superiority, or lordship to Peter.

As to the declaration: “Upon this rock I will build my Church,” certainly the Church has not been built upon the authority of man, but upon the ministry of the confession which Peter made, in which he proclaims that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He accordingly addresses him as a minister: “Upon this rock,” i. e. upon this ministry. [Therefore he addresses him as a minister of such an office as is to be pervaded by this confession and doctrine, and says: “Upon this rock,” i. e., this declaration and ministry.]

Furthermore, the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to persons and places, as the Levitical ministry, but it is dispersed throughout the whole world, and is there where God gives his gifts, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers; neither does this ministry avail on account of the authority of any person, but on account of the Word given by Christ.

[334] And in this way most of the holy Fathers, as Origen, Cyprian, Augustine, Hilary and Bede, interpret this passage (Upon this rock). Chrysostom<sup>6</sup> says thus: “‘Upon this rock,’ not upon Peter. For he built his Church not upon man, but upon the faith of Peter. But what was his faith? ‘Thou

art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” And Hilary says: “To Peter the Father revealed that he should say, ‘Thou art the Son<sup>^</sup> of the living God.’ Therefore the building of the Church is upon this rock of confession; this faith is the foundation of the Church,” etc.

And as to that which is said (John 21; 15 sqq.): “Feed my sheep,” and “Lovest thou me more than these?” it does not as yet follow hence that a peculiar superiority was given Peter. He bids him “feed,” i. e. teach the Word, or rule the Church with the Word, which Peter has in common with the other apostles.

## **Of the Second Article.**

The second article is still clearer, because Christ gave to the apostles only spiritual power, i. e. the command to teach the Gospel, to announce the forgiveness of sins, to administer the sacraments, to excommunicate the godless without temporal force; and he did not give the power of the sword or the right to establish, occupy or confer kingdoms of the world. For Christ says (Matt. 28:20): “Go ye, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Also (John 20:21): “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” But it is manifest that Christ was not sent to bear the sword or possess a worldly kingdom, as he himself says (John 18:36): “My kingdom is not of this world.” And Paul says (2 Cor. 1:24): “Not for that we have dominion over your faith.” And (2 Cor. 10:4): “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,” etc.

[335] As, therefore, Christ in his passion is crowned with thorns, and led forth to be derided in royal purple, it was thereby signified that his spiritual kingdom being despised, i. e. the Gospel being suppressed, another kingdom of the world would be established with the pretext of ecclesiastical power. Wherefore the constitution of Boniface VIII. and the chapter *Omnes*, Dist. 22, and similar opinions which contend that the Pope is by divine right the ruler of the kingdoms of the world, are false and godless. From this persuasion horrible darkness has overspread the Church, and also great commotions have arisen in Europe. For the ministry of the Gospel was neglected, and the knowledge of faith and a spiritual kingdom became extinct; Christian righteousness was supposed to be that external government which the Pope had established. Then the popes began to seize upon kingdoms for themselves, they transferred kingdoms, they vexed with unjust excommunications and wars the kings of almost all nations in Europe, but especially the German emperors; so that they sometimes occupied the cities of Italy, and at other times reduced to subjection the bishops of Germany, and wrested from the emperors the conferring of episcopates. Yea in the Clementines it is even written: That when the empire is

vacant, the Pope is the legitimate successor. Thus the Pope has not only usurped dominion, contrary to Christ's command, but has also tyrannically exalted himself above all kings. Neither in this matter is the deed itself so much to be reprehended as it is to be detested, that he assigns as a pretext the authority of Christ; that he transfers the keys to a worldly government; that he binds salvation to these godless and execrable opinions, when he says that it belongs to necessity for salvation that men believe that this dominion is in accordance with divine right. Since such errors as these obscure faith and the kingdom of Christ, they are in no way to be disguised. For the result shows that they have been great pests to the Church.

### **Of the Third Article.**

In the third place, this must be added: Even though the bishop of Rome would have, by divine right, the primacy and superiority, nevertheless obedience is not due those pontiffs who defend godless services, idolatry and doctrine conflicting with the Gospel; yea such pontiffs and such a government ought to be regarded as a curse, as Paul clearly teaches (Gal. 1:8): "Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And in Acts (5:29): "We ought to obey God, rather than men." Likewise the canons<sup>7</sup> also clearly teach that we should not obey an heretical Pope.

[336] The Levitical priest was high priest by divine right, and yet godless priests were not to be obeyed, as Jeremiah and other prophets dissented from the priests. So the apostles dissented from Caiaphas, and were under no obligations to obey them.

It is, however, manifest that the Roman pontiffs, with their adherents, defend godless doctrines and godless services. And the marks of Antichrist plainly agree with the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents. For Paul (2 Ep. 2:3), in describing to the Thessalonians Antichrist, calls him an adversary of Christ, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God." He speaks therefore of one ruling in the Church, not of heathen kings, and he calls this one the adversary of Christ, because he will devise doctrine conflicting with the Gospel, and will assume to himself divine authority.

Moreover, it is manifest, in the first place, that the Pope rules in the Church, and by the pretext of ecclesiastical authority and of the ministry has established for himself this kingdom. For he assigns as a pretext these words: I will give to thee the keys." Secondly, the doctrine of the Pope conflicts in many ways [in all

ways] with the Gospel, and the Pope assumes to himself divine authority in a threefold manner: First, because he takes to himself the right to change the doctrine of Christ and services instituted by God, and wishes his own doctrine and his own services to be observed as divine. Secondly, because he takes to himself the power not only of binding and loosing in this life, but also the right concerning souls after this life. Thirdly, because the Pope does not wish to be judged by the Church or by any one, and prefers his own authority to the decision of Councils and the entire Church. But to be unwilling to be judged by the Church or by any one is to make one's self God. Lastly, these errors so horrible, and this impiety, he defends with the greatest cruelty, and puts to death those dissenting.

[337] This being the case, all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies and unjust cruelties of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents, as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded (Matt. 7:15): "Beware of false prophets." And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated as cursed (Gal. 1:8; Tit. 3:10). And (2 Cor. 6:14) says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what communion hath light with darkness?"

To dissent from the agreement of so many nations and to be called schismatics is a serious matter. But divine authority commands all not to be allies and defenders of impiety and unjust cruelty.

On this account our consciences are sufficiently excused; for the errors of the kingdom of the Pope are manifest. And Scripture with its entire voice exclaims that these errors are a doctrine of demons and of Antichrist.<sup>8</sup> The idolatry in the profanation of the masses is manifest, which, besides other faults, are shamelessly applied to most base gain. The doctrine of repentance has been utterly corrupted by the Pope and his adherents. For they teach that sins are remitted because of the worth of our works. Then they bid us doubt whether the remission occur. They nowhere teach that sins are remitted freely for Christ's sake, and that by this faith we obtain remission of sins. Thus they obscure the glory of Christ, and deprive consciences of firm consolation, and abolish true divine services, viz. the exercises of faith struggling with [unbelief and] despair [concerning the promise of the Gospel].

They have obscured the doctrine concerning sin, and have framed a tradition concerning the enumeration of offenses, producing many errors and despair. They have devised in addition satisfactions, whereby they have also obscured the benefit of Christ.

From these, indulgences have been born, which are pure falsehoods,

fabricated for the sake of gain.

[338] Then how many abuses, and what horrible idolatry, the invocation of saints has produced!

What shameful acts have arisen from the tradition concerning celibacy!

What darkness the doctrine concerning vows has spread over the Gospel! They have there feigned that vows are righteousness before God, and merit the remission of sins. Thus they have transferred the benefit of Christ to human traditions, and have altogether extinguished the doctrine concerning faith. They have feigned that the most trifling traditions are services of God and perfection, and they have preferred these to the works of callings which God requires and has ordained. Neither are these errors to be regarded light; for they detract from the glory of Christ and bring destruction to souls, neither can they be passed by unnoticed.

Then to these errors two great sins are added: The first, that he defends these errors by unjust cruelty and punishments. The second, that he appropriates the decision of the Church, and does not permit ecclesiastical controversies [such matters of religion] to be judged according to the prescribed mode; yea, he contends that he is above the Council, and that the decrees of Councils can be rescinded, just as the canons sometimes impudently speak.<sup>9</sup> But the examples testify that this was done with much more impudence by the pontiffs.

Quest. 9, canon 3,<sup>10</sup> says: “No one shall judge the first seat; for the judge is judged neither by the emperor, nor by all the clergy, nor by the kings, nor by the people.”

The Pope exercises a twofold tyranny; he defends his errors by force and by murders, and forbids judicial examination. The latter does even more injury than any punishments. Because when the true judgment of the Church is removed, godless dogmas and godless services cannot be removed, and for many ages are destroying infinite souls.

Therefore let the godly consider the great errors of the kingdom of the Pope and his tyranny, and let them ponder first that the errors must be rejected and the true doctrine embraced, goQ for the glory of God and to the salvation of souls. Then let them ponder also how great a crime it is to aid unjust cruelty in killing saints, whose blood God will undoubtedly avenge.

But especially the chief members of the Church, kings and princes, ought to guard the interests of the Church, and to see to it that errors be removed and consciences be healed [rightly instructed], as God expressly exhorts kings (Ps. 2:10): “Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.” For it should be the first care of kings [and great lords] to advance the glory of God. Wherefore it is very shameful for them to exercise their influence

and power to confirm idolatry and infinite other crimes, and to slaughter saints.

And in case the Pope should hold Synods [a Council], how can the Church be healed if the Pope suffer nothing to be decreed contrary to his will, if he allow no one to express his opinion except his adherents, whom by dreadful oaths and curses he has bound, without any exception concerning God's Word, to the defense of his tyranny and wickedness?

But since the decisions of Synods are the decisions of the Church, and not of the Popes, it is especially incumbent on kings to check the license of the popes [not allow such roguery], and to so act that the power of judging and decreeing from the Word of God be not wrested from the Church. And as other Christians ought to censure the remaining errors of the Pope, so they ought also to rebuke the Pope when he evades and impedes the true knowledge and true decision of the Church.

Therefore even though the bishop of Rome would have the primacy by divine right, yet since he defends godless services and doctrine conflicting with the Gospel, obedience is not due him, yea it is necessary to resist him as Antichrist. The errors of the Pope are manifest and not trifling.

[340] Manifest also is the cruelty [against godly Christians] which he exercises. And it is clear that it is God's command that we flee from idolatry, godless doctrine and unjust cruelty. On this account all the godly have great, manifest and necessary reasons for not obeying the Pope. And these necessary reasons comfort the godly against all the reproaches which are usually cast against them concerning offenses, schism and discord.

But those who agree with the Pope and defend his doctrine and [false] services, defile themselves with idolatry and blasphemous opinions, become guilty of the blood of the godly, whom the Pope [and his adherents] persecutes, detract from the glory of God, and hinder the welfare of the Church, because they strengthen errors and crimes [for injury to all the world and] to all posterity.

## **II. Of The Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops.**

[In our Confession and the Apology we have in general narrated what we have had to say concerning ecclesiastical power. For, etc.] The Gospel has assigned to those who preside over churches the command to teach the Gospel, to remit sins, to administer the sacraments, and besides jurisdiction, viz. the command to excommunicate those whose crimes are known, and again of absolving the repenting.

And by the confession of all, even of the adversaries, it is clear that this power by divine right is common to all who preside over churches, whether they

be called pastors, or elders, or bishops. And accordingly Jerome openly teaches in the apostolic letters that all who preside over churches are both bishops and elders, and cites from Titus (Tit. 1:5 sq.): “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city.” Then he adds: “A bishop must be the husband of one wife.” Likewise Peter and John call themselves elders (1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1). And he then adds: “But that afterwards one was chosen to be placed over the rest,” occurred as a remedy for schism, lest each one by attracting to himself might rend the Church of Christ. For at Alexandria, from Mark the evangelist to the bishops Heracles and Dionysius, the elders always elected one from themselves, and placed him in a higher station, whom they called bishop; just as an army would make a commander for itself. The deacons, moreover, may elect from themselves one whom they know to be active, and name him archdeacon. For with the exception of ordination, what does the bishop that the elder does not?

[341] Jerome therefore teaches that it is by human authority that the grades of bishop and elder or pastor are distinct. And the subject itself declares this, because the power [the office and command] is the same, as he has said above. But one matter afterwards made a distinction between bishops and pastors, viz. ordination, because it was so arranged that one bishop might ordain ministers in a number of churches.

But since by divine authority the grades of bishop and pastor are not diverse, it is manifest that ordination by a pastor in his own church has been appointed by divine law [if a pastor in his own church ordain certain suitable persons to the ministry, such ordination is, according to divine law, undoubtedly effective and right].

Therefore when the regular bishops become enemies of the Church, or are unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain their own right. [Because the regular bishops persecute the Gospel and refuse to ordain suitable persons, every church has in this case full authority to ordain its own ministers.]

For wherever the Church is, there is the authority [command] to administer the Gospel. Wherefore it is necessary for the Church to retain the authority to call, elect and ordain ministers. And this authority is a gift exclusively given to the Church, which no human power can wrest from the Church, as Paul also testifies to the Ephesians (4:8) when he says: “He ascended, he gave gifts to men.” And he enumerates among the gifts specially belonging to the Church “pastors and teachers,” and adds that such are given “for the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ.” Where there is therefore a true church, the right to elect and ordain ministers necessarily exists. Just as in a case of necessity even a layman absolves, and becomes the minister and pastor of another; as Augustine



narrates the story of two Christians in a ship, one of whom baptized the catechumen, who after baptism then absolved the baptizer.

Here belong the words of Christ which testify that the keys have been given to the Church, and not merely to certain persons (Matt. 18:20): “Where two or three are gathered together in my name,” etc.

[342] Lastly, the declaration of Peter also confirms this (1 Ep. 2:9): “Ye are a royal priesthood.” These words pertain to the true Church, which, since it alone has the priesthood, certainly has the right to elect and ordain ministers.

And this also a most common custom of the Church testifies. For formerly the people elected pastors and bishops. Then a bishop was added, either of that church or a neighboring one, who confirmed the one elected by the laying on of hands; neither was ordination anything else than such a ratification. Afterwards, new ceremonies were added, many of which Dionysius describes. But he is a recent and fictitious author [this book of Dionysius is a new fiction under a false title], just as the writings of Clement also are supposititious. Then the moderns added: “I give thee the power to sacrifice for the living and the dead.” But not even this is in Dionysius. From all these things it is clear that the Church retains the right to elect and ordain ministers. And the wickedness and tyranny of bishops afford cause for schism and discord [therefore, if the bishops either are heretics or will not ordain suitable persons, the churches are in duty bound before God, according to divine law, to ordain for themselves pastors and ministers. Even though this be now called an irregularity or schism, it should be known that the godless doctrine and tyranny of the bishops is chargeable with it], because Paul (Gal 1:7 sq.) enjoins that bishops who teach and defend a godless doctrine and godless services should be regarded accursed.

We have spoken of ordination, which alone, as Jerome says,<sup>11</sup> distinguished bishops from other elders. Therefore there is need of no discussion concerning the other duties of bishops. Nor is it indeed necessary to speak of confirmation, nor of the consecration of bells, which are almost the only things which they have retained. Something must be said concerning jurisdiction.

[343] It is manifest that the common jurisdiction of excommunicating those guilty of manifest crimes belongs to all pastors. This they have tyrannically transferred to themselves alone, and have applied it to the acquisition of gain. For it is manifest that the officials, as they are called, employed a license not to be tolerated, and either on account of avarice or because of other wanton desires tormented men and excommunicated them without any due process of law. But what tyranny is it for the officials in the states to have arbitrary power to condemn and excommunicate men without due process of law! And with respect to what did they abuse this power? Clearly not in punishing true offenses, but in

regard to the violation of fasts or festivals, or like trifles? Only they sometimes punished adulteries; and in this matter they often vexed [abused and defamed] innocent and honorable men.

Since, therefore, bishops have tyrannically transferred this jurisdiction to themselves alone, and have basely abused it, there is no need, because of this jurisdiction, to obey bishops. But since the reasons why we do not obey are just, it is right also to restore this jurisdiction to godly pastors [to whom, by Christ's command, it belongs], and to see to it that it be legitimately exercised for the reformation of life and the glory of God.

Jurisdiction remains in those cases which, according to canonical law, pertain to the ecclesiastical court, as they say, and especially in cases of matrimony. It is only by human right that the bishops have this also; and indeed the ancient bishops did not have it, as it appears from the *Codex* and *Novelli* of Justinian that decisions concerning marriage at that time belonged to the magistrates. And by divine law worldly magistrates are compelled to make these decisions if the bishops [judge unjustly or] be negligent. The canons also concede the same. Wherefore also on account of this jurisdiction it is not necessary to obey bishops. And indeed since they have framed certain unjust laws concerning marriages, and observe them in their courts, also for this reason there is need to establish other courts. For the traditions concerning spiritual relationship [the prohibition of marriage between sponsors] are unjust. Unjust also is the tradition which forbids an innocent person to marry after divorce. Unjust also is the law which in general approves all clandestine and underhanded betrothals in violation of the right of parents. Unjust also is the law concerning the celibacy of priests. There are also other snares of consciences in their laws, to recite all of which is of no profit. It is sufficient to have recited this, that there are many unjust laws of the Pope concerning matrimonial subjects on account of which the magistrates ought to establish other courts.

[344] Since therefore the bishops, who are devoted to the Pope, defend godless doctrine and godless services, and do not ordain godly teachers, yea aid the cruelty of the Pope, and besides have wrested the jurisdiction from pastors, and exercise this only tyrannically [for their own profit]; and lastly, since in matrimonial cases they observe many unjust laws; the reasons why the churches do not recognize these as bishops are sufficiently numerous and necessary.

But they themselves should remember that riches have been given to bishops as alms for the administration and advantage of the churches [that they may serve the Church, and perform their office the more efficiently], just as the rule says: "The benefice is given because of the office." Wherefore they cannot with a good conscience possess these alms, and meanwhile defraud the Church,

which has need of these means for supporting ministers, and aiding studies [educating learned men], and caring for the poor, and establishing courts, especially matrimonial. For so great is the variety and extent of matrimonial controversies, that there is need of a special tribunal for these, and for establishing this there is need of the means of the Church. Peter predicted (2 Ep. 2:13) that there would be 82 godless bishops, who would abuse the alms of the Church for luxury and neglect the ministry. Therefore let those who defraud know that they will pay God the penalty for this crime.

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## **Doctors and Preachers who Subscribed the Augsburg Confession and Apology, A.D. 1537.**

According to the command of the most illustrious princes and of the orders and states professing the doctrine of the Gospel, we have re-read the articles of the Confession presented to the Emperor in the Assembly at Augsburg, and by the favor of God all the preachers who have been present in this Assembly at Smalcald harmoniously declare that they hold and teach in their churches according to the articles of the Confession and Apology; they also declare that they approve the article concerning the primacy of the Pope, and his power, and the power and jurisdiction of bishops, which was presented to the princes in this Assembly at Smalcald. Accordingly they subscribe their names.

I, Dr. John Bugenhagen, Pomeranus, subscribe the Articles of the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Article presented to the princes at Smalcald concerning the Papacy.

I also, Dr. Urban Rhegius, Superintendent of the churches in the Duchy of Lüneburg, subscribe.

Nicolaus Amsdorf of Magdeburg subscribed.

George Spalatine of Altenburg subscribed.

I, Andrew Osiander, subscribe.

M. Veit Dieterich of Nürnberg subscribed.

Stephen Agricola, Minister at Hof, subscribed with his own hand.

John Draconites of Marburg subscribed.

Conrad Fiqenbotz subscribed to all throughout.

Martin Bucer.

I, Erhard Schnepf, subscribe.

Paul Rhodius, Preacher in Stettin.  
 Gerhard Oeniken, Minister of the Church at Minden.  
 Simon Schneeweis, Pastor of Crailsheim.  
 Brixius Northanus, Minister at Soest.  
 I, Pomeranus, again subscribe in the name of M. John Brentz, as he enjoined me.  
 Philip Melanchthon subscribes with his own hand.  
 Anthony Corvinus subscribes with his own hand, as well as in the name of  
 Adam A Fulda.  
 John Schlainhaupten subscribes with his own hand.  
 M. George Helt of Forchheim.  
 Michael Coelius, Minister at Mansfeldt.  
 Peter Geltner, Minister of the Church of Frankfort.  
 Dionysius Melander subscribed.  
 [346]  
 Paul Fagius of Strassburg.  
 Wendel Faber, Pastor of Seeburg in Mansfeldt.  
 Conrad Oetinger of Pforzheim, Chaplain of Ulric, Duke of Wiirtemberg.  
 Boniface Wolfart, Minister of the Word of the Church at Augsburg.  
 John AEpinus, Superintendent of Hamburg, subscribed with his own hand.  
 John Amsterdam of Bremen does the same.  
 John Fontanus. Superintendent of Lower Hesse, subscribed.  
 Frederick Myconius subscribed for himself and Justus Menius.  
 Ambrose Blaurer.

I have read, and again and again re-read, the Confession and Apology  
 presented at Augsburg by the Most Illustrious Prince, the Elector of Saxony, and  
 by the other princes and estates of the Roman Empire, to his Imperial Majesty. I  
 have also read the Formula of Concord concerning the sacrament, made at  
 Wittenberg with Dr. Bucer and others. I have also read the articles written at the  
 Assembly at Smalcald in the German language by Dr. Martin Luther, our most  
 revered preceptor, and the tract concerning the Papacy and the Power and  
 Jurisdiction of Bishops. And, according to my mediocrity, I judge that all these  
 agree with Holy Scripture, and with the belief of the true and lawful Catholic  
 Church. But although in so great a number of most learned men who have now  
 assembled at Smalcald I acknowledge that I am the least of all, yet as I am not  
 permitted to await the end of the assembly, I ask you, most renowned man,  
 Dr. John Bugenhagen, most revered Father in Christ, that your courtesy may add  
 my name, if it be necessary, to all that I have above mentioned. For I testify in  
 this my own handwriting that I thus hold, confess and constantly will teach,

through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Done at Smalcald, Feb. 23, 1537.

John Brentz, Minister of Hall.

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1. Council of Nice (326), Canon 6.↵
2. Canon 4.↵
3. Ed. princeps and Selnecker in edition of 1582 add from Jerome: “The influence of wealth and the humility of poverty do not render him higher or lower.”↵
4. Germ, omits § 21.↵
5. Matt. 16:15.↵
6. Germ, omits § 28, 29.↵
7. Decrees of Gratian, P. I., Dist. 40, c. 6.↵
8. 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:3 sq.↵
9. Cf. Decret. Grat., P. I., Dist. 17.↵
10. See Decret. Grat., P. II., caus. 9, qu. 3, c. 13.↵
11. Cf. above, § 62.↵

ENCHIRIDION.

THE SMALL CATECHISM OF DR. MARTIN  
LUTHER FOR PASTORS AND PREACHERS

# Part V. The Small Catechism of Martin Luther

## Preface Of Dr. Martin Luther.

Martin Luther to all faithful and godly pastors and preachers, Grace, Mercy and Peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord!

The deplorable condition in which I found religious affairs during a recent visitation of the congregations, has impelled me to publish this Catechism, or statement of the Christian doctrine, after having prepared it in very brief and simple terms. Alas! what misery I beheld! The people, especially those who live in the villages, seem to have no knowledge whatever of Christian doctrine, and many of the pastors are ignorant and incompetent teachers. And, nevertheless, they all maintain that they are Christians, that they have been baptized, and that they have received the Lord's Supper. Yet they cannot recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments; they live as if they were irrational creatures, and now that the Gospel has come to them, they grossly abuse their Christian liberty.

Ye bishops! what answer will ye give to Christ for having so shamefully neglected the people, and paid no attention to the duties of your office? I invoke no evil on your heads. But you withhold the cup in the Lord's Supper, insist on the observance of your human laws, and yet, at the same time, do not take the least interest in teaching the people the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or any other part of the Word of God. Woe unto you!

Wherefore I beseech you in the Name of God, my beloved brethren, who are pastors or preachers, to engage heartily in the discharge of the duties of your office, to have mercy on the people who are entrusted to your care, and to assist us in introducing the Catechism among them, and especially among the young. And if any of you do not possess the necessary qualifications, I beseech you to take at least the following forms, and read them, word for word, to the people, on this wise: —

In the first place; let the preacher take the utmost care to avoid all changes or

variations in the text and wording of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, etc. Let him, on the contrary, take each of the forms respectively, adhere to it and repeat it anew, year after year. For young and inexperienced people cannot be successfully instructed, unless we adhere to the same text or the same forms of expression. They easily become confused, when the teacher at one time employs a certain form of words and expressions, and, at another, apparently with a view to make improvements, adopts a different form. The result of such a course will be, that all the time and labor which we have expended will be lost.

This point was well understood by our venerable fathers, who were accustomed to use the same words in teaching the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. We, too, should follow this plan when we teach these things, particularly in the case of the young and ignorant, not changing a single syllable, nor introducing any variations when, year after year, we recur to these forms and recite them anew before our hearers.

Choose, therefore, the form of words which best pleases you, and adhere to it perpetually. When you preach in the presence of intelligent and learned men, you are at liberty to exhibit your knowledge and skill, and may present and discuss these subjects in all the varied modes which are at your command. But when you are teaching the young, retain the same form and manner without change; teach them, first of all, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., always presenting the same words of the text, so that those who learn can repeat them after you, and retain them in the memory.

But if any refuse to receive your instructions, tell them plainly that they deny Christ and are not Christians; such persons shall not be admitted to the Lord's Table, nor present a child for Baptism, nor enjoy any of our Christian privileges, but are to be sent back to the pope and his agents, and indeed, to Satan himself. Their parents and employers should, besides, refuse to furnish them with food and drink, and notify them that the government was disposed to banish from the country all persons of such a rude and intractable character.

For although we cannot, and should not, compel them to exercise faith, we ought, nevertheless, to instruct the great mass with all diligence, so that they may know how to distinguish between right and wrong in their conduct towards those with whom they live, or among whom they desire to earn their living. For whoever desires to reside in a city, and enjoy the rights and privileges which its laws confer, is also bound to know and obey those laws. God grant that such persons may become sincere believers! But if they remain dishonest and vicious, let them at least withhold from public view the vices of their hearts.

In the second place; when those whom you are instructing have become



familiar with the words of the text, it is time to teach them to understand the meaning of those words, so that they may become acquainted with the object and purport of the lesson. Then proceed to another of the following forms, or, at your pleasure, choose any other which is brief, and adhere strictly to the same words and forms of expression in the text, without altering a single syllable; besides, allow yourself ample time for the lessons. For it is not necessary that you should, on the same occasion, proceed from the beginning to the end of the several parts; it will be more profitable if you present them separately, in regular succession. When the people have, for instance, at length correctly understood the First Commandment, you may proceed to the Second, and so continue. By neglecting to observe this mode, the people will be overburdened, and be prevented from understanding and retaining in memory any considerable part of the matter communicated to them.

In the third place; when you have thus reached the end of this short Catechism, begin anew with the Large Catechism, and by means of it furnish the people with fuller and more comprehensive explanations. Explain here at large every Commandment, every Petition, and, indeed, every part, showing the duties which they severally impose, and both the advantages which follow the performance of those duties, and also the dangers and losses which result from the neglect of them. Insist in an especial manner on such Commandments or other parts as seem to be most of all misunderstood or neglected by your people. It will, for example, be necessary that you should enforce with the utmost earnestness the Seventh Commandment, which treats of stealing, when you are teaching workmen, dealers, and even farmers and servants, inasmuch as many of these are guilty of various dishonest and thievish practices. So, too, it will be your duty to explain and apply the Fourth Commandment with great diligence, when you are teaching children and uneducated adults, and to urge them to observe order, to be faithful, obedient and peaceable, as well as to adduce numerous instances mentioned in the Scriptures, which show that God punished such as were guilty in these things, and blessed the obedient.

Here, too, let it be your great aim to urge magistrates and parents to rule wisely, and to educate the children, admonishing them, at the same time, that such duties are imposed on them, and showing them how grievously they sin if they neglect them. For in such a case they overthrow and lay waste alike the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, acting as if they were the worst enemies both of God and of man. And show them very plainly the shocking evils of which they are the authors, when they refuse their aid in training up children to be pastors, preachers, writers, etc., and set forth that on account of such sins God will inflict an awful punishment upon them. It is indeed, necessary to

preach on these things; for parents and magistrates are guilty of sins in this respect, which are so great that there are no terms in which they can be described. And truly, Satan has a cruel design in fostering these evils.

Finally; inasmuch as the people are now relieved from the tyranny of the pope, they refuse to come to the Lord's Table, and treat it with contempt. On this point, also, it is very necessary that you should give them instructions, while, at the same time, you are to be guided by the following principles: That we are to compel no one to believe, or to receive the Lord's Supper; that we are not to establish any laws on this point, or appoint the time and place; but that we should so preach as to influence the people, without any law adopted by us, to urge, and, as it were, to compel us who are pastors, to administer the Lord's Supper to them. Now this object may be attained, if we address them in the following manner: It is to be feared that he who does not desire to receive the Lord's Supper at least three or four times during the year, despises the Sacrament, and is no Christian. So, too, he is no Christian, who neither believes nor obeys the Gospel; for Christ did not say: "Omit, or despise this," but, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it," etc. He commands that this should be done, and by no means be neglected and despised. He says: "This do."

Now he who does not highly value the Sacrament, shows thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is to say, he does not believe that such evils exist, although he may be deeply immersed in them, and completely belong to the devil. On the other hand, he needs no grace, no life, no Paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, no good thing. For if he believed that he was involved in such evils, and that he was in need of such blessings, he could not refrain from receiving the Sacrament, wherein aid is afforded against such evils, and, again, such blessings are bestowed. It will not be necessary to compel him by the force of any law to approach the Lord's Table; he will hasten to it of his own accord, will compel himself to come, and indeed urge you to administer the Sacrament to him.

Hence, you are by no means to adopt any compulsory law in this case, as the pope has done. Let it simply be your aim to set forth distinctly the advantages and losses, the wants and the benefits, the dangers and the blessings, which are to be considered in connection with the Sacrament; the people will, doubtless, then seek it without urgent demands on your part. If they still refuse to come forward, let them choose their own ways, and tell them that those who do not regard their own spiritual misery, and do not desire the gracious help of God, belong to Satan.

But if you do not give such solemn admonitions, or if you adopt odious compulsory laws on the subject, it is your own fault if the people treat the

Sacrament with contempt. Will they not necessarily be slothful, if you are silent and sleep? Therefore consider the subject seriously, ye Pastors and Preachers! Our office has now assumed a very different character from that which it bore under the pope; it is now of a very grave nature, and is very salutary in its influence. It consequently subjects us to far greater burdens and labors, dangers and temptations, while it brings with it an inconsiderable reward, and very little gratitude in the world. But Christ Himself will be our reward, if we labor with fidelity. May He grant such mercy unto us who is the Father of all grace, to whom be given thanks and praises through Christ our Lord, for ever! Amen. Wittenberg, A. D. 1529.

# **I. The Ten Commandments.**

In the plain form in which the head of the family should teach them to his household.

*I am the Lord Thy God.*

## **The First Commandment.**

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

## **The Second Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.<sup>1</sup>*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not curse,<sup>2</sup> swear,<sup>3</sup> use witchcraft,<sup>4</sup> lie<sup>5</sup> or deceive<sup>6</sup> by His name, but call upon His name in every time of need, and worship Him with prayer,<sup>7</sup> praise<sup>8</sup> and thanksgiving.<sup>9</sup>

## The Third Commandment.

*Remember the sabbath day<sup>10</sup> to keep it holy.<sup>11</sup> Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not despise preaching and His Word, but keep it holy<sup>12</sup> and gladly hear and learn it.

## The Fourth Commandment.

*Honor<sup>13</sup> thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not despise our parents and masters, nor provoke them to anger, but honor,<sup>14</sup> serve,<sup>15</sup> obey,<sup>16</sup> love and esteem them.

## The Fifth Commandment.

*Thou shalt not kill.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not hurt nor harm our neighbor<sup>17</sup> in his body, but help<sup>18</sup> and befriend<sup>19</sup> him in every bodily need.

## The Sixth Commandment.

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.<sup>20</sup>*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and live chaste<sup>21</sup> and pure<sup>22</sup> in words and deeds, each one loving and honoring his spouse.

## **The Seventh Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not steal.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God and not take<sup>23</sup> our neighbor's money or property, nor get it by false wares or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and living.

## **The Eighth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not falsely<sup>24</sup> belie,<sup>25</sup> betray,<sup>26</sup> slander<sup>27</sup> nor defame<sup>28</sup> our neighbor, but excuse<sup>29</sup> him, speak well<sup>30</sup> of him, and make the best<sup>31</sup> of all he does.

## **The Ninth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not craftily seek to gain our neighbor's inheritance or home, nor get it by a show of right, but help and serve him in keeping it.

## **The Tenth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We should fear and love God, and not estrange, force<sup>32</sup> or entice<sup>33</sup> away from our neighbor his wife, servants or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Q: WHAT DOES GOD SAY OF ALL THESE COMMANDMENTS?

A: He says: I the Lord thy God am a jealous<sup>34</sup> God, visiting<sup>35</sup> the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments; therefore we should fear His wrath, and do nothing against such commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments; therefore we should love and trust in Him, and gladly do according to His commandments.

- 
1. That is, to use it otherwise, than God meant it to be used.↵
  2. To wish some evil to be done by the Lord.↵
  3. To call God as a witness.↵
  4. To employ God's Name (Word or creature) by aid of the devil, to find out what God has hidden, or to get what He has withheld↵
  5. To falsify God's Word and truth.↵
  6. If the lie is believed by another to his injury.↵
  7. To ask of God.↵
  8. To tell God's wonderful qualities and works.↵
  9. To acknowledge and confess God's good gifts.↵
  10. Day of rest. In Hebrew, *Sabbath*; in German, *Feiertag*.↵
  11. To separate it from common, everyday use, and give it to the service of God.↵
  12. Keep it as God's word, i. e., as unlike every other word, and exalted above

- every word.↵
13. To respect the dignity which God has given to each, and to esteem him accordingly.↵
  14. Show in all our behavior, that we honor them in our hearts.↵
  15. In every way even without bidding, to do as pleases them.↵
  16. To heed their bidding and do it.↵
  17. Our fellowman, whom it is in our power to help.↵
  18. Relieve him from need.↵
  19. Further him.↵
  20. To break the love and fidelity promised to wife or husband.↵
  21. To try to keep one's own body and soul free from evil lust.↵
  22. By neither word nor deed giving another an occasion of evil lust, but rather moving all to a pure and holy life by our example.↵
  23. That is, wrongfully.↵
  24. Out of a false heart.↵
  25. To lie against our neighbor.↵
  26. To tell our neighbor's secret to his harm.↵
  27. To lie against him behind his back.↵
  28. To raise bad reports.↵
  29. Defend him against unjust blame.↵
  30. If others speak of him only evil, forgetting the good that may be said.↵
  31. Put the best explanation on what he does or does not.↵
  32. Leave him no peace, until he gives.↵
  33. To take away their heart and confidence from husband or master.↵
  34. Who strictly requires the love we owe Him.↵
  35. In order to punish.↵



## II. The Creed.

*The Creed*<sup>1</sup>.

In the plain form in which the head of the family should teach it to his household.

### The First Article.<sup>2</sup>

#### Of Creation.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: I believe that God has made me<sup>3</sup>, together with all creatures;<sup>4</sup> that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses; also clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and home, wife and child, land, cattle and all my goods; that He richly and daily provides me with all that I need for this body and life, protects<sup>5</sup> me against all danger, and keeps me and guards me from all evil; and all this purely out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am in duty-bound to thank and praise, to serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

### The Second Article.

#### Of Redemption.

*And in Jesus*<sup>6</sup> *Christ*<sup>7</sup> *His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate*<sup>8</sup>, *was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge*<sup>9</sup> *the quick*

*and the dead.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed<sup>10</sup> me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased<sup>11</sup> and won<sup>12</sup> me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death: in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns<sup>13</sup> to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

## **The Third Article.**

### **Of Sanctification.**

*I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church,<sup>14</sup> the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; the Resurrection of the body; and the Life everlasting. Amen.<sup>15</sup>*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called<sup>16</sup> me by the Gospel,<sup>17</sup> enlightened<sup>18</sup> me with His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He daily and richly forgives me and all believers all our sins, and at the last day<sup>19</sup> will raise up me and all the dead, and will grant me and all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

- 
1. Statement and confession of what we believe and ought to believe.↵
  2. Member. Part.↵
  3. Out of nothing.↵
  4. All things made.↵

5. Covers me, so that I am safe.↵
6. Saviour.↵
7. Messiah, the Anointed One.↵
8. The Governor of Judea, appointed by the Roman Emperor.↵
9. To distinguish and separate the bad from the good.↵
10. Ransomed.↵
11. Earned me by His labor. Bought me with a price.↵
12. In battle.↵
13. As a king.↵
14. A spiritual Temple of the Lord, built of living stones, in which He dwelleth.↵
15. This is most certainly true.↵
16. To summon from one place to another.↵
17. The good tidings of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of the sufferings and death Christ bore in our stead.↵
18. To give light or knowledge.↵
19. The last day of the world.↵

### **III. The Lord's Prayer.**

In the plain form in which the head of the family should teach it to his household.

*Our Father who art in heaven.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: God would hereby tenderly invite us to believe that He is truly our Father, and we are truly His children, so that we may ask of Him with all cheerfulness and confidence, as dear children of their dear father.

#### **The First Petition.**

*Hallowed be Thy name.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: The name of God is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may be hallowed also among us.

Q: HOW IS THIS DONE?

A: When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God, lead holy lives, in accordance with it; this grant us, dear Father in heaven! But he that teaches and lives otherwise than the Word of God teaches, profanes the name of God among us: from this preserve us, Heavenly Father!

#### **The Second Petition.**

*Thy kingdom come.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: The kingdom of God comes indeed of itself, without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may come also to us.

Q: HOW IS THIS DONE?

A: When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word, and live godly here in time, and in heaven forever.

### **The Third Petition.**

*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done also among us.

Q: HOW IS THIS DONE?

A: When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and purpose, which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our own flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

### **The Fourth Petition.**

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: God gives daily bread indeed without our prayer even to all the wicked; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to acknowledge and receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY "DAILY BREAD"?

A: All that belongs to the wants and support of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, order, honor, good friends, trusty neighbors and the like.

### **The Fifth Petition.**

*And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor, on account of them, deny our prayer; for we are not worthy of anything we ask, neither have we deserved it; but that He would grant us all through grace; for we sin much every day, and deserve nothing but punishment. And we on our part will heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us.

### **The Sixth Petition.**

*And lead us not into temptation.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: God indeeds tempts<sup>1</sup> no one, but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, that the devil, the world and our flesh<sup>2</sup> may not deceive us, nor lead us into misbelief,<sup>3</sup> despair<sup>4</sup> and other shameful sin and vice; and, though we be thus tempted,<sup>5</sup> that we may still in the end overcome, and have the victory.

### **The Seventh Petition.**

*But deliver us from evil.*

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: We pray in this petition, as the sum of all, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil — in body and soul, property and honor — and at last, when the hour of death shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of sorrow to himself in heaven.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

A: That I am to be sure that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in

heaven, and are heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised to hear us. Amen, Amen, that is, Yea, Yea; it shall be so.

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1. Puts no one to the test, in order to bring him to sin.↵
2. Our inborn sinful nature.↵
3. A false belief.↵
4. Ceasing to doubt, but yielding to unbelief.↵
5. Brought into such inward battle.↵

## **IV. The Sacrament [Holy Mystery] Of Holy Baptism.**

In the plain form in which the head of the family should teach it to his household.

### **I.**

Q: WHAT IS BAPTISM?

A: Baptism is not simply water, but it is the water comprehended in God's command, and connected with God's word.

Q: WHAT IS THAT WORD OF GOD?

A: That which Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"

### **II.**

Q: WHAT BENEFITS DOES BAPTISM CONFER?

A: It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what the words and promises of God declare.

Q: WHICH ARE THOSE WORDS AND PROMISES OF GOD?

A: Those which Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Mark: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

### **III.**

Q: HOW CAN WATER DO SUCH GREAT THINGS?



A: It is not water indeed that does it, but the word of God, which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts this word of God in the water. For without the word of God, the water is simply water, and no baptism; but with the word of God, it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost; as St.<sup>1</sup> Paul says, Titus 3:5-8: “According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.”

#### IV.

Q: WHAT DOES SUCH BAPTIZING WITH WATER SIGNIFY?

A: It signifies that the old Adam<sup>2</sup> in us should, by daily sorrow and repentance, be drowned and die, with all sins and evil lusts; and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity for ever.

Q: WHERE IS THIS WRITTEN?

A: St. Paul says, Rom. 6:4: “We are buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

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1. I.e., the holy Paul.↩
  2. The sinful nature born in us.↩

## **Of The Office Of The Keys And Confession.**

### **A. (From the *Kinderpredigten* [Children's Sermons] of the Brandenburg-Nürnberg Order of 1533.)**

Q: WHAT WORD OF GOD BELONGS TO THE OFFICE OF THE KEYS?

A: Jesus breathed on His disciples, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. John 20:22, 23.

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THIS?

I believe that what the called ministers of Christ do to us by His divine commandment, especially when they shut open and impenitent sinners out of the Fellowship of the Christian Church, and absolve those who repent of their sin and intend to amend, is as valid and certain even in Heaven, as if our Lord Jesus Christ did it Himself.

### **B. How People Should Be Taught To Confess.**

Q: WHAT IS CONFESSION?

A: Confession embraces two parts: one, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the pastor as from God Himself and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe that through it our sins are forgiven before God in heaven.

Q: WHAT SINS SHOULD WE CONFESS?

A: Before God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not discern; as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the pastor we should confess those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts.

Q: WHICH ARE THESE?

A: Here consider your station in the light of the Ten Commandments: whether you be a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether you

have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have wronged any one by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted aught, done any harm.

Q: PLEASE SHOW ME A SHORT WAY TO CONFESS?

A: You should say, Reverend and dear sir, I beseech you to hear my confession, and to announce to me forgiveness for God's sake.

*Say,*

I, a poor sinner, confess before God that I am guilty of all sins; especially before thee I confess that I am a man-servant, a maidservant, etc.; but I have been unfaithful to my master; in this case or in that I have not done what he bade me; I have provoked him and caused him to curse; I have neglected many things and let them go to waste; in words and deeds I have been immodest; I have been angry with my fellows; I have grumbled and sworn at my wife, etc. For all this I am sorry and ask forgiveness. I mean to do better.

*A Master or Mistress should say thus:*

In particular I confess before thee that I have not been faithful in training my children, domestics, family, to God's glory. I have cursed. I have set a bad example by unchaste words and deeds. I have injured my neighbor. I have slandered, have overcharged, or given false goods, or false measure. And whatever more he may have done in violation of God's commandment.

If any one do not feel oppressed by such or greater sins, let him not be anxious, or hunt up and invent sins, and thereby make his confession a torture, but let him name the one or two sins he knows. Thus: In particular, I confess that once I cursed. Once I used immodest words. I have neglected this or that, etc. This is enough.

But if you know of none at all (which is hardly possible), mention none in particular, but receive the forgiveness after the General Confession which you make before God to the minister.

Then the Confessor should say: God be merciful unto thee and strengthen thy faith. Amen.

*And*

Dost thou believe that my forgiveness is the forgiveness of God?

A. Yes, dear sir.

*Then let him say.*

As thou believest, so be it done unto thee. And in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive thee thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Depart in peace.

A pastor will know how to console with passages of Scripture those who have great burdens on their conscience, or are distressed and tempted, and can encourage them to believe. The form just given is intended only as a pattern for the simple.

## V. The Sacrament Of The Altar.

A table of wood or stone, on which the Holy Supper is made ready, and at which we bring to God an offering of prayer.

In the plain form in which the head of the family should teach it to his household.

Q: WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR?

A: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Q: WHERE IS THIS WRITTEN?

A: The holy Evangelists,<sup>1</sup> Matthew, Mark and Luke, together with St. Paul, write thus:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take eat; this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take and drink ye all of it: this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

Q: OF WHAT USE IS SUCH EATING AND DRINKING?

A: It is shown us by these words: "Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins"; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

Q: HOW CAN BODILY EATING AND DRINKING DO SUCH GREAT THINGS?

A: It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does it, but the words which stand here: "Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins." These words which accompany the bodily eating and drinking, are the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words, has what they declare and mean,

namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Q: WHO THEN RECEIVES THIS SACRAMENT WORTHILY?

A: Fasting and bodily preparation are indeed a good<sup>2</sup> outward discipline; but he is truly worthy and well-prepared, who has faith in these words: “Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins.” But he who believes not these words, or doubts,<sup>3</sup> is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, FOR YOU, require truly believing hearts.

How the head of the family should teach his household to pray, morning and evening.

## Morning Prayer.

In the morning, when thou risest, thou shalt sign thyself with the holy cross, and say:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed, and the Lord’s Prayer.

Then mayest thou also say this prayer:

I GIVE thanks unto Thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast protected me through the night from all danger and harm; and I beseech Thee to preserve and keep me, this day also, from all sin and evil: that in all my thoughts, words, and deeds, I may serve and please Thee. Into Thy hands I commend my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let Thy holy angel have charge concerning me, that the wicked one have no power over me. *Amen.*

Then after a hymn, or the Ten Commandments, or whatever thy devotion may suggest, go joyfully to thy work.

## Evening Prayer.

In the evening, when thou goest to bed, thou shalt sign thyself with the holy cross, and say:

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, thou shalt say the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.

Then mayest thou say this Prayer:

I GIVE thanks unto Thee, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ Thy dear Son, that Thou hast this day so graciously protected me, and I beseech Thee to forgive me all my sins, and the wrong which I have done, and by thy great mercy defend me from all the perils and dangers of this night. Into Thy hands I

commend my body and soul, and all that is mine. Let Thy holy angel have charge concerning me, that the wicked one have no power over me. *Amen.*

Then lie down in peace and sleep.

How the head of a family should teach his household to ask a blessing and return thanks.

## Grace before Meals.

The children and servants shall go to the table reverently, fold their hands and say:

The eyes of all wait upon Thee, O Lord; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire<sup>4</sup> of every living thing.

Then shall be said the Lord's Prayer, and after that this *Prayer*:

O Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless us and these Thy gifts, which we receive from Thy loving-kindness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## Thanks after Meals.

After meat, they shall reverently and with folded hands say:

O GIVE thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. He giveth food to all flesh: He giveth to the beast his food and to the young ravens which cry. He delighteth not in the strength of the horse, He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.

Then shall be said the *Lord's Prayer* and the following:

We thank Thee, Lord God, Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, for all Thy benefits; who livest and reignest for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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1. The four holy men who have written the life of Christ for us, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.↵
  2. Proper and becoming.↵
  3. Wavering between belief and unbelief.↵
  4. All get enough to eat. Care and avarice alike prevent satisfaction.↵

## **Table Of Duties;**

*Or, Certain Passages Of Scripture For Various Holy Orders And Estates, Whereby These Are Severally To Be Admonished Of Their Office And Duty.<sup>1</sup>*

### **To Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers.**

A bishop<sup>2</sup> must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice.<sup>3</sup> Holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. 3:2, 3, 4, 6; Tit. 1:9.

### **What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors.**

Eat and drink such things as they give; for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Luke 10:7.

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14.

Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Gal. 6:6, 7.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1 Tim. 5:17, 18.

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you, in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves, 1 Thess. 5:12, 13.

Obeys them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Heb. 13:17.

### **Of Civil Government.**



Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom. 13:1-4.

## **Of Subjects.**

Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. Matt. 22:21.

Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor. Rom. 13:5-7.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, 1 Tim. 2:1-3.

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work. Tit. 3:1.

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise for them that do well. 1 Pet. 2:13, 14.

## **To Husbands.**

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. And be not bitter against them. 1 Pet. 3:7; Col. 3:19.

## **To Wives.**

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Eph. 5:22.

Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Pet. 3:5, 6.

### **To Parents.**

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6:4.

### **To Children.**

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it maybe well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Eph. 6:1-3.

### **To Servants, Hired Men, and Laborers.**

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph. 6:5-8.

### **To Masters and Mistresses.**

And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. Eph. 6:9.

### **To the Young in General.**

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. 1 Pet. 5:5, 6.

### **To Widows.**

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplication and prayers night and day. But sh'e that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth. 1 Tim. 5:5, 6.

## **To all in Common.**

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Herein are comprehended all the commandments. Rom. 13:9.

And persevere in prayer for all men. 1 Tim. 2:1.

Let each his lesson learn with care,  
And all the household well shall fare.

Lord, open Thou my heart to hear,  
And by Thy Word to me draw near,  
Let me Thy Word still pure retain,  
Let me Thy child and heir remain.

Thy Word doth move the inmost heart,  
Thy Word doth perfect health impart,  
Thy Word my soul with joy doth bless,  
Thy Word brings peace and happiness.

Glory to God, the Father, Son,  
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!  
To Thee, O blessed Trinity,  
Be praise throughout Eternity!

John Olearius, 1671.

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1. To be hung up to be observed by every one in the house.↵
  2. In the New Testament an overseer of the congregation, i. e., a Pastor.  
Afterwards, also overseer of several pastors and congregations.↵
  3. One who has just begun to believe.↵

# Part VI. The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther.

## First Preface.

*[375] A Christian, Profitable and Necessary Preface, and Faithful, Earnest Exhortation of Dr. Martin Luther to all Christians, but especially to all Pastors and Preachers, in order that they may daily exercise themselves in the catechism, which is a short summary of the entire Holy Scriptures, and that they may always Practice the same.*

We have no slight reason for urging so constantly the Catechism, and for both desiring and beseeching others to do the same, since we see to our sorrow that many pastors and preachers are in this so very negligent, and slight not only their office, but even the doctrine itself; some from great and ambitious art, but others from pure indolence and care for their palates, being not otherwise disposed than if it were for the sake of their appetites that they are pastors and preachers, and as though they had nothing to do but to spend and consume as long as they live; as they have been accustomed to do under the Papacy.

And although they have everything that they are to preach and teach set forth now so fully, clearly, and intelligibly in so many excellent books, and *Sermones per se loquentes, Dormi secure, Paratos et Thesauros*<sup>1</sup>, as in former times they were called; yet they are not so godly and honest as to buy these books, or even if they have them, they do not look at them or read them. Alas! they are shameful gluttons and ministers of their appetites, who would much more properly be swineherds and dog-fanciers than pastors and Gospel ministers.

[376] And now that they are delivered from the unprofitable and burdensome bubbling concerning the Seven Canonical Hours, oh that, instead thereof, they would only, morning, noon and night, read a page or two in the Catechism, the Prayer Book, the New Testament, or elsewhere in the Bible, and pray the Lord's Prayer once for themselves and their parishioners, so that they might render honor and return thanks to the Gospel, by which they have been delivered from burdens and troubles so manifold, and might have some little shame because like

brutes they retain no more of the Gospel than such corrupt, pernicious, shameful, carnal liberty! For, alas! the common people regard the Gospel altogether too lightly; so that even though we use all diligence, we accomplish no great results. What will be the consequence if we be careless and indolent, as we were under the Papacy?

To this there is added this shameful vice and secret infection of security and satiety, viz. that many regard the Catechism as a plain, unimportant statement of doctrine which they can read over once, and then throw the book into a corner, and be ashamed to read in it again.

Yea, even among the nobility there are some rude and niggardly fellows, who declare that, from now on, there is need neither of pastors nor preachers; that we have everything in books, and every one can learn it for himself; and in this confidence they allow the parishes to fall into decay and desolation, and cause pastors and preachers to suffer hunger and extreme distress. Such conduct is to be expected from crazy Germans. For we Germans have such disgraceful people, and must endure them.

[377] But this I say for myself. I am also a doctor and a preacher, yea, as learned and experienced as all who have such presumption and security. Yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning and whenever I have time I read and say, word for word, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. And I must still read and study daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain, and that too gladly, a child and pupil of the Catechism. And yet these delicate, fastidious fellows pretend with one reading to be doctors above all doctors, and to know everything and be in need of nothing. And this is indeed a sure sign that o they despise both their office and the souls of the people, yea even God and his Word. They need not be afraid of a fall, since they are already fallen all too horribly; but they need become children, and begin to learn their alphabet, which they imagine that they have long since outgrown.

Therefore I beg such indolent epicures or presumptuous saints, for God's sake, to believe and be persuaded that they are by no means so learned or such great doctors as they imagine; and never to presume that they have thoroughly learned this [all the parts of the Catechism], or know enough of everything, even though they think that they know it ever so well. For though they should know and understand it perfectly (which, however, is impossible in this life), yet if it be daily read and practiced in thought and speech, it yields much profit and fruit; for in such reading and repetition and meditation the Holy Ghost is present, and ever bestows new and more light and devoutness, so that we daily relish and appreciate it better, according as Christ promises (Matt. 18:20): "*Where two or*

*three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*

Besides, nothing is more effectual against the devil, the world and the flesh and all evil thoughts than to be occupied with the Word of God, and to speak thereof, and meditate upon it; so that the first Psalm declares those blessed who meditate upon the law of God day and night. Undoubtedly, you will never offer any incense or other savor against Satan more efficacious than employment upon God’s commandments and words, and speaking, singing, or thinking thereof. For this is indeed the truly holy water and holy sign from which he flees, and by which he is driven away.

[378] If you had no other profit and fruit therefrom, for this reason alone you ought gladly to read, speak, think of and practice these things, viz. thereby to drive away the devil and evil thoughts. For he cannot hear or endure God’s Word; and God’s Word is not like any careless talk, as that of Dietrich of Berne<sup>2</sup>, etc., but as St. Paul says (Rom. 1:16): “*The power of God.*” Yea, indeed, the power of God which gives the devil extreme pain, and strengthens, comforts and helps us beyond measure.

And what need is there of many words? If I were to recount all the profit and fruit which God’s Word produces, whence would I have enough paper and time? The devil is called the master of a thousand arts. But what shall we say of God’s Word, which drives away and brings to naught this master of a thousand arts with all his arts and power? It must of course be the master of more than a hundred thousand arts. And shall we frivolously despise such power, profit, strength and fruit – we, especially, who wish to be pastors and preachers? If so, we should not only have nothing given us to eat, but be driven out with the dogs, and be cast away with refuse, because we not only daily need this all, as we do our daily bread, but must also daily use it against the daily and incessant attacks and stratagems of the devil with his thousand arts.

And if this were not sufficient to admonish us to read the Catechism daily, yet God’s command even alone ought to constrain us, which in Deut. 6:6 sqq. he solemnly enjoins, that we should always meditate upon his precepts, when we sit down, and when we walk forth, and when we lie down, and when we rise up, and should have them before our eyes and in our hands as a constant mark and sign. Doubtless he did not so solemnly require and enjoin this without a purpose; but because he knew our danger and need, as well as the constant and furious assaults and temptations of devils, he wishes to warn, equip and preserve us against them, as with a good armor against their fiery darts and with good medicine against their poisonous drafts.

[379] Oh, what mad, senseless fools are we, that while we must ever live and dwell among such mighty enemies as devils, we nevertheless despise our armor

and defense, and are too indolent to look for, or think of them! And what else are such supercilious, presumptuous saints, who are unwilling to read and study the Catechism daily, doing, but esteeming themselves much more learned than God himself with all his saints, angels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all Christians? For inasmuch as God himself is not ashamed to teach the same daily, since he knows nothing better to teach, and always keeps teaching the same thing, and does not take up anything new or different, and all the saints know nothing better to learn, or different, and cannot learn this perfectly, are we not wonderful men to imagine, if we have once read or heard it, that we know it all, and have no farther need to read and learn, but can learn perfectly in one hour what God himself cannot finish teaching, since he continues teaching it from the beginning to the end of the world, and all prophets, together with all saints, have been occupied with learning it but in part, and are still pupils, and must remain such?

For it is certain that whoever knows the Ten Commandments perfectly must know all the Scriptures, so that, in all circumstances and events, he can advise, help, comfort, judge and decide both spiritual and temporal matters, and is qualified to sit in judgment upon all doctrines, estates, spirits, laws, and whatever else is in the world. And what indeed is the entire Psalter but thoughts and exercises upon the First Commandment? But now I know of a truth that such indolent epicures and presumptuous spirits do not understand a single psalm, much less the entire Scriptures; and yet they pretend that they know and despise the Catechism, which is a compend and brief summary of all the Holy Scriptures.

[380] Therefore I again implore all Christians, especially pastors and preachers, not to be doctors too soon, and imagine that they know everything (for imagination and stretched cloth fall far short of the measure), but that they daily exercise themselves in these studies and constantly apply them to practice. Let them guard with all care and diligence against the poisonous on a infection of such security and presumption, and persevere in reading, teaching, learning, thinking, meditating, not ceasing until they have learned by experience and are sure that, by this teaching, they have killed Satan, and have become more learned than God himself and all his saints.

If they manifest such diligence, then I will agree with them, and they will perceive what fruit they will have, and what excellent men God will make of them; so that in due time they themselves will acknowledge that the longer and the more they have studied the Catechism, the less they know of it, and the more they find yet to learn; and then only, as hungry and thirsty ones, will they truly appreciate that which now, because of great abundance and satiety, they cannot

endure. To this end may God grant his grace! Amen.

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1. Titles of collections of Postils.↩
2. The reference is to verses commemorating the exploits of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths.↩



## Short Preface Of Dr. Martin Luther.

This little work has been planned and undertaken in order to furnish a course of instruction for children and the simpleminded. Hence of old such works received in Greek the name Catechism, i.e. instruction for children. This of necessity every Christian should know; so that he who does not know this should not be reckoned among Christians nor be admitted to the sacrament, just as a mechanic who does not understand the rules and customs of his trade is rejected and regarded incapable. Therefore the young should be thoroughly instructed in the parts which belong to the Catechism or instruction for children, and should diligently exercise themselves therein.

[381-383] Therefore it is the duty of every father of a family at least once a week to examine his children and servants, and to ascertain what they know of it, or have learned, and, if they be not familiar with it, to keep them faithfully at it. For I well remember the time – and it may even now be daily seen – when there were adults and even aged persons so uncultivated as to know nothing of these things, and who, nevertheless, went to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and used everything belonging to Christians, notwithstanding the fact that those who come to the Lord's Supper ought to know more and have a fuller understanding of all Christian doctrine than children and new scholars. However, for the common people, we would be satisfied with the three parts, which have been in Christendom from of old, but have been little taught and employed, until they are generally and diligently practiced, and have become familiar to all, both young and old, who wish to be and to be called Christians. These are the following:

### *I. The Ten Commandments.*

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.
4. Honor thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

[383]

*II. The Chief Articles Of Our Faith.*

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
2. And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
3. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*III. The Lord's Prayer.<sup>1</sup>*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
1 Hallowed be thy name,  
2 Thy kingdom come,  
3 Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven:  
4 Give us this day our daily bread,  
5 And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
6 And lead us not into temptation,  
7 But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

[384] These are the most necessary parts which every Christian should first learn to repeat word for word, and which our children should be accustomed to recite daily when they arise in the morning, when they sit down to their meals, and when they retire at night; and until they repeat them they should be given neither food nor drink. The same duty is also incumbent upon every head of a household with respect to his man-servants and maid-servants, if they do not

know these things and are unwilling to learn them. For a person who is so heathenish as to be unwilling to learn these things is not to be tolerated; for in these three parts everything contained in the Scriptures is comprehended in short, general and simple terms. For the holy Fathers or apostles (whoever they were) have thus embraced in a summary the doctrine, life, wisdom and art of Christians, of which they speak and treat, and with which they are occupied.

When these three parts are apprehended, we ought to know how to speak concerning our sacraments, which Christ himself instituted, viz. Baptism, and the holy body and blood of Christ, according to the text which Matthew (28:19 sqq.) and Mark (16:15 sq.) record at the close of their Gospels as to how Christ gave his last instructions to his disciples and sent them forth.

#### *IV. Of Baptism.*

*Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

So much is sufficient for a plain person to know from the Scriptures concerning Baptism. In like manner, also, concerning the other sacrament, in short, simple words, according to the text of St. Paul. 1 Cor. 11:23 sq.

#### *V. Of The Lord's Supper.*

*Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you: this do, in remembrance of me.*

*After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink, ye all of it: this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you, for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

[385] Thus there are in all five parts of the entire Christian doctrine which should be constantly practiced and required [of children], and heard recited word for word. For you must not depend upon that which the young people may learn and retain from the sermon alone. When these parts have been well learned, you may assign besides some psalms or hymns, based thereupon, in order to enforce the same, and thus to lead the youth into the Scriptures, and accustom them to make daily progress therein.

Yet it is not enough for them alone to comprehend and recite these parts verbatim. Let the young people also attend the preaching, especially during the time which is devoted to the Catechism, that they may hear it explained, and may learn to understand what every part contains, and, in their turn, be able to explain what they have heard, and when asked may give a correct answer, so that the preaching may not be without profit and fruit. For the reason that we exercise such diligence in preaching so often upon the Catechism in order that its truths may be inculcated on our youth, not in an ambitious and acute manner, but briefly and with the greatest simplicity, so as to enter the mind readily and be fixed in the memory.

Therefore we propose to take up the above-mentioned articles in regular order, and treat of them as plainly as possible and as fully as necessity demands.

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1. Lit.: The Prayer, or “Our Father,” which Christ taught.↩

## Part First. The Ten Commandments.

### The First Commandment.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

[386] That is: Thou shalt have [and worship] me alone as thy God.

WHAT IS THE FORCE OF THIS, AND HOW IS IT TO BE UNDERSTOOD? WHAT IS IT TO HAVE A GOD? OR, WHAT IS GOD?

Answer: A god is that whereto we are to look for all good and to take refuge in all distress; so that to have a god is to trust and believe him from the whole heart; as I have often said that the confidence and faith of the heart alone make both God and an idol. If your faith and trust be right, then is your god also true. And, on the other hand, if your trust be false and wrong, then you have not the true God; for these two belong together, viz. faith and God. That now, I say, upon which you set your heart and put your trust is properly your god. Therefore it is the intent of this commandment to require such true faith and trust of the heart as regards the only true God, and rest in him alone. That is as much as to say: “See to it that you let me be your God, and you never seek another,” i.e. “Whatever you lack in good, seek it of me, and look to me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, lay hold of me and cling fast to me. I verily will give you enough and help you out of every necessity; only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.”

[387] This I must unfold somewhat more plainly, that it may be understood and perceived by ordinary examples of the contrary, Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions, in which he trusts and boasts so arrogantly as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e. money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the most common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is as joyful and undismayed as though he were in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent, as though he knew of no God. For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon. This [care and desire for money] adheres and clings to our nature, even to the grave.

So too, whoever trusts and boasts in the possession of great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship and honor has also a god, but not the only true God. This appears again when you notice how presumptuous, secure and proud people are because of such possessions, and how despondent when without them or deprived of them. Therefore I repeat that the true explanation of this point is that to have a god is to have something upon which the heart entirely trusts.

Besides, consider what, in our blindness, we have hitherto been doing under the Papacy. If any one had toothache, he fasted and honored St. Apollonia [macerated his flesh by voluntary fasting to the honor of St. Apollonia]; if he were afraid of fire, he sought St. Laurence as his deliverer; if he dreaded pestilence, he made a vow to St. Sebastian or Rachio, and a countless number of such abominations, where every one selected his own saint whom he worshiped and invoked in distress. Here belong those also whose idolatry is most gross, and who make a covenant with the devil, in order that he may give them plenty of money or help them in love-affairs, preserve their cattle, restore to them lost possessions, etc., as e. g. sorcerers and necromancers. For all these place their heart and trust elsewhere than in the true God, and neither look to him for any good nor seek anything from him.

[388] Thus you can easily understand what and how much this commandment requires, viz. that man's entire heart and all his confidence be placed in God alone, and in no one else. For to have God, you can easily perceive, is not to lay hold of him with our hands or to put him in a bag [as money], or to lock him in a chest [as silver vessels]. But he is said to be apprehended when the heart lays hold of him and depends upon him. But to depend upon him with the heart is nothing else than to trust in him entirely. For this reason he wishes to withdraw us from everything else, and to attract us to himself, viz. because he is the only eternal good. As though he would say: Whatever you have heretofore sought of the saints, or for which you have trusted in Mammon, as well as all else, expect of me, and regard me as the one who will help you and endow you richly with all good things.

Lo, you have here the true honor and service of God, which pleases God, and which he commands under penalty of eternal wrath, viz. that the heart know no other trust or confidence than in him, and do not suffer itself to be torn from him, but, for him, risk and disregard everything upon earth. On the other hand, you can easily see and judge how the world practices only false worship and idolatry. For no people has ever been so godless as not to institute and observe some sort of divine service. Thus every one has set up as his own god whatever he looked to for blessings, help and comfort.

[389] When, for example, the heathen who aimed at power and dominion

elevated Jupiter as the supreme god, the others, who were bent upon riches, happiness, or pleasure and a life of ease, venerated Hercules, Mercury, Venus, or others. Women with child worshiped Diana or Lucina. Thus every one makes that to which his heart is inclined his god. So that even in the mind of the heathen to have a god is nothing but to trust and believe. But their error is this, that their trust is false and wrong; for it is not placed in the only God, beside whom there is truly no other in heaven or upon earth. Wherefore the heathen really form their self-invented notions and dreams of God into an idol, and put their trust in that which is altogether nothing. Thus is it with all idolatry; for it consists not merely in erecting an image and worshiping it, but rather in the heart, which is intent on something else, and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints or devils, and neither accepts God, nor looks to him for good to such an extent as to believe that he is willing to help; neither believes that whatever good it experiences comes from God.

Besides, there is also a false divine service and extreme idolatry, which we have hitherto practiced, and is still prevalent in the world, upon which also all ecclesiastical orders are founded, and which alone concerns the conscience, that seeks in its own works help, consolation and salvation, presumes to wrest heaven from God, and reckons how many institutions it has founded, how often it has fasted, attended Mass, etc. Upon such things it depends, and of them boasts, as though unwilling to receive anything from God gratuitously, but desires itself to earn them or merit them superabundantly, as though he were in our service and debt, and we his lord. What is this but reducing God to an idol, yea, a mere Pomona<sup>1</sup>, and elevating and regarding ourselves as God? But this is slightly too subtle, and cannot be comprehended by young pupils.

[390] But let this be said to the simpler, in order that they may well note the meaning of this commandment and retain it in memory, viz. that we are to trust in God alone, and look to him and expect from him all good, as from one who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace and all necessities of both temporal and eternal things; who also preserves us from misfortune, and if any evil befall us delivers and aids us, so that it is God alone (as has been sufficiently said) from whom we receive all good, and by whom we are delivered from all evil. Hence also, I think, we Germans from ancient times designate God (more elegantly and appropriately than in any other language) by that name from the word *Good*, since he is an eternal fountain which gushes forth and overflows with pure good, and from which emanates all that is and is called good.

For even though otherwise we experience much good from men, we are still to consider whatever we receive by his command or arrangement as received

from God. For our parents, and all rulers, and every one besides, with respect to his neighbor, have received from God the command that they should do us all manner of good; so that we receive these blessings not from them, but, through them, from God. For creatures are only the hand, channels and means whereby God gives all things, as he gives to the mother breasts and milk to support her child, and corn and all manner of produce spring from the earth for nourishment, none of which could be produced by any creature of himself.

Therefore no man should presume to take or give anything except as God has commanded; in order that thereby it may be acknowledged as God's gift, and thanks may be rendered him for it. On this account also these means of receiving good gifts through creatures are not to be rejected, neither should we in presumption seek other ways and means than God has commanded. For that would not be receiving from God, but seeking of ourselves.

[391] Let every one, then, see to it that he esteem this commandment great and high above all things, and do not deride it. Ask and examine your heart diligently, and you will find whether it cleave to God alone or not. If you have a heart that can expect of him nothing but what is good, and this too especially in want and distress, and that renounces and forsakes everything that is not God, then you have the only true God. If, on the contrary, it cleave to anything else, of which it expects more good and help than of God, and do not find refuge in him, but in adversity flee from him, then you have an idol, another god.

In order that it may be seen that God will not have this commandment disregarded, but will most strictly enforce it, he has attached to it first a terrible threat, and then a beautiful consolatory promise which it is important to learn and to impress upon young people, that they may take it to heart and retain it:

## **Exposition of the Appendix to the First Commandment.**

*For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*

Although these words pertain to all the commandments (as we shall hereafter learn), yet they are joined to this as the chief commandment, to indicate that it is of first importance that men have a right head; for where the head is right, the whole life must be right, and *vice versa*. Learn, therefore, from these words how angry God is with those who trust in anything but him, and again how good and



gracious he is to those who trust and believe in him alone with the whole heart; so that his anger does not cease until the fourth generation, while, on the other hand, his blessing and goodness extend to many thousands. Learn this, that you may not live in such security and commit yourself to chance, as men of brutal heart, who think that it makes no great difference how they live. He is a God who, if men turn from him, will not leave it unavenged, and will not cease to be angry until the fourth generation, even until they are utterly exterminated. Therefore he is to be feared, and not to be despised.

[392] This also he has demonstrated in all history, as the Scriptures fully show and daily experience can well teach. For, from the beginning, he has utterly extirpated all idolatry, and, on account of it, both heathen and Jews; even as at the present day he overthrows all false worship, so that all who remain therein must finally perish. Therefore, although proud, powerful and rich worldlings are now to be found, who boast defiantly of their Mammon, notwithstanding that God is angry or laughs at them, in the confidence that they can endure his wrath; yet, before they are aware, they shall be wrecked, with all in which they trusted; as all others have perished who have thought themselves more secure or powerful.

And just because of such hardened men who imagine, because God connives and allows them to rest in security, that he either is entirely ignorant or cares nothing about such matters, he must deal thus severely and inflict punishment, not forgetting them unto children's children; so that every one may see that this is not a matter of sport to him. For they are those whom he means when he says: "Who hate me," i.e. those who persist in their defiance and pride; who will not hear what is preached or said to them; who, if they be reproved, in order that before punishment begin they may learn to know themselves and amend, are so mad and foolish that they clearly merit wrath; as we see now daily in bishops and princes.

[393] But terrible as are these threatenings, so much the more powerful is the consolation of the promise, that those who trust in God alone should be sure that he will show them mercy, i.e. that he will show them pure goodness and blessing, not only for themselves, but also to their children and children's children, even to the thousandth generation. This ought certainly to move and impel us, if we wish all temporal and eternal good, to stay our hearts with all confidence upon God; since the Supreme Majesty makes such gracious offers and such rich promises.

Therefore let every one give the most earnest heed that it be not regarded as though this were spoken by a man. For to you it is a question either of eternal blessing, happiness and salvation, or of eternal wrath, misery and woe. What

more would you have or desire than that which he so kindly promises, viz. to be yours with every blessing, and to protect and help you in all need?

But this, alas! is the great calamity, that the world believes nothing of this, and regards it not as God's Word, because it sees that those who trust in God, and not in Mammon, suffer care and want, and the devil opposes and resists them; that they have neither money, favor nor honor, and besides can scarcely support life; while, on the other hand, those who serve Mammon have power, favor, honor, possessions and every comfort in the eyes of the world. For this reason, against such appearances, these words must be grasped; and we must remember that they do not lie or deceive, but must prove true.

Reflect for yourself or make inquiry and tell me: Do all they who have employed all their care and diligence to accumulate great possessions and wealth finally attain them? You will find that they have labored and toiled in vain, or even though [with much toil] they have amassed great treasures, they have been dispersed and scattered, so that they themselves have never found happiness in their wealth, and it never reached the third generation.

[394] In all histories, as well as in the experience of aged people, you will find enough examples. See that you only regard and ponder them.

Saul was a great king, chosen of God, and a godly man; but when he was established in his throne, he let his heart decline from God, put his trust in his crown and power, and perished with all that he had; so that none of his children remained.

David, on the other hand, was a poor, despised man, hunted down and chased, so that he nowhere felt secure of his life; yet he was to be preferred to Saul, and become king. For these words must abide and prove true, since God cannot lie or deceive. Only let not the devil and the world deceive you by appearances, which indeed remain for a time, but finally are nothing.

Let us then learn well the First Commandment, that we may see how God will allow no presumption nor any trust in any other object, and how he requires nothing higher of us than confidence from the heart for everything good; so that we may proceed straight forward and employ all the blessings which God gives no farther than as a shoemaker uses his needle, awl and thread for work, and then lays them aside, or as a traveler uses an inn, and food and his bed, only for temporal necessity, each one in his station, according to God's order, and without allowing any of these things to be our lord or idol. Let this suffice with respect to the First Commandment, which we have had to explain at length, since it is of chief importance, because, as before said, where the heart is rightly disposed toward God and this commandment is observed, all the rest follow.

## The Second Commandment.

*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.*

[395] As the First Commandment has instructed the heart and taught it faith, so this commandment leads us forth and directs the mouth and tongue to God. For the first objects that, springing from the heart, manifest themselves are words. Therefore as I have taught above what it is to have a god, so it is necessary to comprehend simply the meaning of this and all the commandments, and to answer accordingly.

If, then, it be asked: How do you understand the Second Commandment, and what is meant by taking God's name in vain? we answer briefly: It is taking God's name in vain if we call upon the Lord God in any way in support of falsehood or wrong of any kind. Therefore this commandment forbids the mention of God's name, or taking it upon the lips, when the heart knows or should know differently, as among those who take oaths in courts of justice, where one side falsifies against the other. For God's name cannot be more abused than when used to support falsehood and deceit. Let this be considered the plain and most simple meaning of this commandment.

From this every one can readily infer when and in how many ways God's name is taken in vain, although it is impossible to enumerate all its abuses. Yet, in a few words, all abuse of God's name occurs first in worldly business and in matters which concern money, possessions, honor, whether it be publicly before courts of justice, in the market or elsewhere, where men make false oaths in God's name, or take the responsibility of the matter upon their souls. And this is especially prevalent in marriage affairs, where two secretly betroth themselves to one another, and afterward abjure.

But, the greatest abuse occurs in spiritual matters, which pertain to the conscience, when false preachers rise up and offer their lying vanities as God's Word.

[396] Behold, all this is decorating one's self with God's name, or wishing to be fair and maintain our cause, whether it occur in gross, worldly business or in sublime, subtle matters of faith and doctrine. And among liars belong also blasphemers, not alone those who are very gross, well known to every one, who, without fear, disgrace God's name (they belong not to our school, but to that of the hangman); but also those who publicly traduce<sup>2</sup> the truth and God's Word, and refer it to the devil. Of this there is no need to speak further.

Here, then, let us learn and thoroughly understand the importance of this

commandment, that we diligently be on our guard against every abuse of the holy name, as the greatest sin that can be outwardly committed. For to lie and deceive is in itself a great sin, but is greatly aggravated by attempting a justification, and where, to confirm it, the name of God is invoked and is used as a cloak for shame, so that from a single lie a double lie, nay manifold lies, result.

Therefore, to this commandment God has added also a solemn threat, viz.: *“For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”* That is: It shall in nowise be overlooked or pass unpunished in any one. For just as he will not leave it unavenged if any one turn his heart from him, so too will he not suffer his name to be employed to support a lie. Now, alas! it is a common calamity in all the world that there are so few who are not guilty of using the name of God in falsehood and all wickedness. They are as few as those who in their heart trust alone in God.

[397] For by nature we all have within us this beautiful virtue, viz. that every one who has committed a wrong would like to cover up and adorn his disgrace, so that no one may see it or know it; and no one is so bold as to boast to all the world of the wickedness he has perpetrated, but wishes everything to be done secretly, and without any one being aware of it. Then if any one be arraigned, the name of God must suffer for it, and change the villainy into godliness, and the shame into honor. This is the common course of the world, which, like a great deluge, has inundated all lands. Hence we have also as our reward that which we seek and merit, pestilences, wars, famines, conflagrations, floods, faithless wives, spoiled children, faithless servants, and trouble of every kind. Whence else should we have so much misery? It is still a great mercy that the earth bears and supports us.

Therefore, above all things, the attention of our young people should be directed to this commandment, and they should be accustomed to hold this and the First Commandment in high regard; and in case they transgress, resort must at once be had to the rod, and the commandment must be held before them, and be constantly inculcated, so that they may be brought up not only with punishment, but also in the reverence and fear of God.

Thus you now understand what it is to take God’s name in vain, viz. (to recapitulate briefly) either simply in falsehood, to present, in God’s name, anything untrue, or to curse, swear, conjure and, in short, to practice wickedness in any way.

[398] But besides this you must also know how to use the name of God aright. For by the words: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” he gives us plainly to understand that it is to be used properly. For it has been revealed and given to us for the very purpose that it may be of constant use

and profit. Therefore, since the use of this holy name for falsehood or wickedness is here forbidden, it necessarily follows that we are, on the other hand, commanded to employ it for truth and for all good, as where one swears truly where there is need and it is demanded. So also when it is rightly taught, and when the name is invoked in trouble or praised and thanked in prosperity, etc.; all of which is comprehended summarily and commanded in the passage (Ps. 50:15): “*Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*” For all this is bringing it into the service of truth, and using it in a blessed way, and thus his name is hallowed, as we pray in the Lord’s Prayer.

Thus you have an explanation of the sum of the entire commandment. And with this understanding the question with which many teachers have troubled themselves is solved, viz. Why, in the Gospel, swearing is prohibited,<sup>3</sup> and yet Christ, St. Paul and other saints often swore? The explanation is briefly this: We are not to swear in support of evil, i.e. in falsehood; and where there is no need or use, but for the support of good and the advantage of our neighbor. For it is truly a good work whereby God is praised, truth and justice are established, falsehood is refuted, peace is made among men, obedience is enforced, and contentions are suppressed. For thus God himself interposes and decides between right and wrong, good and bad. If the one side swear falsely, they have their sentence that they shall not escape punishment, and though it be deferred a long time, they shall not succeed; so that all that they may gain thereby will slip out of their hands, and they never will enjoy it; as I have seen in the case of many who repudiated their marriage-vows, that they have never had a good hour or a healthful day, and thus perished miserably in body, soul and possessions.

[399] Therefore I again and again advise and exhort, that by means of warning and terror, restraint and punishment, they be accustomed to shun falsehood, and especially to avoid the use of God’s name in its support. For where they are allowed to do thus, no good will result, as it is even now evident that the world is worse than it has ever been, and that there is no government, no obedience, no fidelity, no faith, but only presumptuous, licentious men, whom no teaching or reproof helps; all of which is only God’s wrath and punishment for such flagrant contempt of this commandment.

On the other hand, they should be constantly urged and incited to honor God’s name, and to have it always upon their lips in everything that may happen to them or come to their notice. For to give true honor to his name is to look to it and implore it for all consolation; so that (as we have heard above) first the heart, by faith, gives God the honor due him, and afterwards the lips, by confession.

This habit is not only blessed and useful, but especially powerful against the

devil, who is ever about us, and lies in wait to bring us into sin and shame, calamity and trouble, but who is always offended to hear God's name, and cannot remain long where it is mentioned and called upon from the heart. And, indeed, many a terrible and shocking calamity would befall us if, by our calling upon his name, God did not preserve us. I have myself tried it, and learned by experience that often sudden great calamity was immediately averted and removed during such invocation. To vex the devil, I say, we should always have this holy name in our mouth, so that he may not be able to injure us as he would wish.

[400] For this end it is also of service that we be in the habit of daily commending ourselves to God, with soul and body, wife, child, servants and all that we have, against all necessities that may occur; whence also the blessing and thanksgiving at meals, and other prayers morning and evening, have originated and remain in use. Likewise also the practice of children to cross themselves and exclaim, when any thing monstrous or terrible is seen or heard: "Lord God, protect us!" "Help, dear Lord Jesus!" etc. Thus too, if any one experience unexpected good, however trivial, that he say: "God be praised and thanked for bestowing this on me!" As formerly the children were accustomed to fast and pray to St. Nicholas and other saints. This would be more pleasing and acceptable to God than all monasticism and Carthusian sanctity.

So we might thus train our youth, in a childlike way and in the midst of their plays, in God's fear and honor, so that the First and Second Commandments might be familiar and in constant practice. Then some good might adhere, spring up and bear fruit, and men grow up in whom an entire land might rejoice and be glad. This would be the true way to bring up children; since, by means of kindness, and with delight, they can be become accustomed to it. For what must only be forced with rods and blows will have no good result, and at farthest, under such treatment, they will remain godly no longer than the rod descends upon their backs.

But this manner of training so spreads its roots in the heart that they fear God more than rods and clubs. This I say with such simplicity, for the sake of the young, that it may penetrate their minds. For since we are preaching to children, we must also prattle with them. Thus have we prevented the abuse, and have taught the right use of the divine name, which should consist not only in words, but also in practice and life; so that we may know that God is well pleased with this, and will as richly reward it as he will terribly punish its abuse.

## **The Third Commandment.**

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

[401] The word Sabbath (*Feiertag*) is derived from the Hebrew word which properly signifies to rest (*feiren*), i.e. to abstain from labor. Hence we are accustomed to say, in German, *Feierabend machen*, i.e. to cease working, or give a holy evening [sanctify the Sabbath]. Now, in the Old Testament, God separated the seventh day, and appointed it for rest, and commanded that it should be regarded holy above all others. According to this external observance, this commandment was given to the Jews alone, that they should abstain from toilsome work, and rest, so that both man and beast might recuperate, and might not be debilitated by unremitting labor. Although they afterwards interpreted this too strictly,<sup>4</sup> and grossly abused it, so that they traduced and could not endure in Christ those works which they themselves were accustomed to do thereon, as we read in the Gospel; just as though the commandment were fulfilled in this, viz. that no external [manual] work whatever be performed, which was not, the meaning, but, as we shall hear, that they sanctify the Sabbath or Day of Rest.

This commandment, therefore, according to its gross sense, does not pertain to us Christians; for it is altogether an external matter, like the other ordinances of the Old Testament, which were bound to particular customs, persons, times and places, and all of which have now been made free through Christ.

But to derive hence Christian instruction for the simple as to what, in this commandment, God requires, let it be observed that we keep the festal days, not for the sake of intelligent and learned Christians (for they have no need of this observance), but first of all for bodily causes and necessities, which nature teaches and requires; and for the common people, man-servants and maid-servants, who are occupied the whole week with their work and trade, that for a day they may forbear, in order to rest and be refreshed.

Secondly, and most especially, that on such day of rest (since otherwise it cannot be accomplished) time and opportunity be taken to attend divine service, so that we meet to hear and treat of God's Word, and afterwards to praise God in singing and prayer.

[402] But this, I say, is not so limited to any time, as with the Jews, that it must be just on this or that day; for in itself no one day is better than another, and this should indeed occur daily; but since the mass of people cannot give such attendance, there must be at least one day in the week set apart. But since from of old Sunday [the Lord's Day] has been appointed for this purpose, we also should continue the same, that everything be done in harmonious order, and no one, by unnecessary innovation, create disorder.

Therefore the simple meaning of the commandment is this, viz. since holidays are observed, such observance be devoted to hearing God's Word; so that the special employment of this day be the ministry of the Word for the young and the mass of poor people; yet that the observance of rest be not so strictly interpreted as to forbid any other incidental and necessary work.

When, then, it is asked:

Q: WHAT IS MEANT BY THE COMMANDMENT: '*REMEMBER THE SABBATH-DAY TO SANCTIFY IT*'?"

Answer: To sanctify the Sabbath is the same as "to keep it holy." But what is meant by "keeping it holy"? Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works and life. For the day needs no sanctification for itself; for in itself it has been created holy [from the beginning of the creation it was sanctified by its Creator]. But God desires it to be holy to thee. Therefore it becomes holy or unholy on thy account, according as thou art occupied on the same with things that are holy or unholy.

How then does such sanctification occur? Not that [with folded hands] we sit behind the stove and do no rough [external] work, or deck ourselves with a garland and put on our best clothes, but (as has been said) that we occupy ourselves with God's Word, and exercise ourselves therein.

And indeed we Christians ought always to keep such a Sabbath, and to be occupied with nothing but holy things, i.e. daily to meditate upon God's Word, and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But because (as has been said) we do not all have leisure, we must devote several hours a week to the young, or at least a day to the mass of people, in order that we may be concerned about this alone, and especially urge the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being according to God's Word. The Sabbath is truly kept whenever time is devoted to earnest attention to this, and the practice of it; but that cannot be called a true Christian Sabbath where this is not done. For they who are not Christians can keep holiday and be idle just as well as the entire swarm of our ecclesiastics, who stand daily in the churches, singing, and ringing bells, but who keep no Sabbath day holy, because they neither preach nor practice God's Word, but teach and live contrary to it.

[403] For the Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints, or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, they would not avail us anything; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God's Word is the treasury which sanctifies everything whereby even all the



saints themselves were sanctified. Whatever be the hour when God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read or meditated upon, person, day and work are then sanctified thereby, not because of the external work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all. Therefore I constantly say that all our life and work must be guided by God's Word, if it is to be pleasing to God or holy. Where this occurs, this commandment exerts its power and is fulfilled.

On the contrary, any matter or work that is without God's Word is unholy before God, no matter how brilliant it may appear, even though it be covered with relics, such as the fictitious spiritual orders, which know nothing of God's Word and seek holiness in their own works.

[404] Notice, therefore that the power and efficacy of this commandment consist not in the resting, but in the sanctifying, so that to this day belongs a special holy exercise. For other works and occupations are not properly holy exercises, unless the man himself be first holy. But here a work is to be done whereby man is himself made holy, which occurs (as we have heard) alone through God's Word. For this, then, fixed places, times, persons, and the entire external order of divine service have been created and appointed, so that it may be publicly and constantly exercised.

Since, therefore, so much depends upon God's Word that without it no Sabbath can be kept holy, we ought to know that God will insist upon a strict observance of this commandment, and will punish all who despise his Word and are not willing to hear and learn it, especially at the time appointed for the purpose.

Therefore this commandment is violated not only by those who grossly abuse and desecrate the Sabbath, as those who, on account of their avarice or frivolity, cease to hear God's Word, or lie in taverns, and are dead drunk, like swine; but also by that other great crowd, who listen to God's Word as though it were a trifle, and attend upon preaching only from custom, and at the end of the year know as little of it as at the beginning. For hitherto the opinion has been prevalent that it is properly hallowed when on Sunday a Mass or the Gospel is heard; but no one has asked about God's Word, as also no one taught it. Yet now, even since we have God's Word, we nevertheless do not correct the abuse; but while constantly attending upon preaching and exhortation, we hear it without care and seriousness.

Know, therefore, that it is not only to be heard, but to be learned and retained in memory, and do not regard it as an optional matter or one of no great importance, but as God's commandment, who will require of you how you have heard, learnt and honored his Word.

[405] Likewise those fastidious spirits are to be reproved who when they

have heard a sermon or two, find it tedious and dull, thinking that they know all that well enough, and need no more instruction. For just that is the sin which has been hitherto reckoned among mortal sins, and is called *αχνοια* i.e. torpor or satiety, a malignant, dangerous plague which the devil infuses into the hearts of many, that he may surprise us and secretly withdraw God's Word from us.

For let me tell you this, even though you know it perfectly and be already master of all things, you are still daily in the dominion of the devil, who ceases neither day nor night to steal unawares upon you, so that he may kindle in your heart unbelief and wicked thoughts against the foregoing as well as against all the commandments. Therefore you must always have God's Word in your heart, upon your lips and in your ears. But where the heart is idle, and the Word does not sound, he breaks in and does the damage before we are aware. On the other hand, such is the efficacy of the Word wherever seriously contemplated, heard and used, that it never departs without fruit, but always awakens new understanding, pleasure and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts. For these words are not inoperative or dead, but creative, living words. And even though no other interest or necessity impel us, yet this ought to influence every one, since thereby the devil is put to flight and driven away, and, besides, this commandment is fulfilled, which is more pleasing to God than any work of hypocrisy, however brilliant.

## **The Fourth Commandment.**

Thus far we have learned the first three commandments, viz those which relate to God. First, that with our whole heart and throughout all our life we trust in him and fear and love him. Secondly, that we abuse not his holy name in the support of falsehood or any bad work, but employ it to the praise of God and the profit and salvation of our neighbor and ourselves. Thirdly, that in the observance of the Sabbath and of rest we diligently use and employ God's Word, so that all our actions and our entire life be directed by it. Now follow the other seven, which relate to our neighbor, among which the first and greatest is:

*Honor thy father and thy mother.*

[406] The parental estate God has especially honored above all estates that are beneath him, so that he not only commands us to love our parents, but to honor them. For with respect to brothers, sisters and our neighbors in general he commands nothing higher than that we love them; so that he separates and

distinguishes father and mother above all other persons upon earth, and places them next to himself. For to honor is far higher than to love, inasmuch as it comprehends not only love, but also modesty, humility and deference as though to a majesty there hidden, and requires not only that they be addressed kindly and with reverence, but most of all that both in heart and with the body we so act as to show that we esteem them very highly, and that, next to God, we regard them the very highest. For one whom we honor from the heart we must truly regard as high and great.

We must, therefore, impress it upon the young that they should regard their parents in God's stead, and remember that however lowly, poor, frail and queer they may be, nevertheless they are father and mother given them by God. And they are not to be deprived of their honor because of their mode of life or their failings. Therefore we are not to regard their persons, how they may be, but the will of God who has thus appointed and ordained. In other respects we are, indeed, all alike in the eyes of God; but among us there must necessarily be such inequality and distinction with respect to order, and therefore God commands that you be careful to obey me as your father, and that I have the precedence.

Learn, therefore, first, what is the honor towards parents required by this commandment, viz. first, that they be held in honor and esteemed above all things, as the most precious treasure on earth. Secondly, that in our words to them we observe modesty, and do not speak roughly, haughtily and defiantly; but yield to them in silence, even though they go too far. Thirdly, also, with respect to works, that we show them such in honor, with body and possessions, as to serve them, help them, and provide for them when old, sick, infirm, or poor, and all that not only gladly, but with humility and reverence, as doing it before God. For he who knows how to regard them in his heart will not allow them to suffer hunger or want, but will place them above and near him, and will share with them whatever he has and can obtain.

[407] Secondly, notice how great, good and holy a work is here assigned children, which is, alas! so much neglected and disregarded, and no one perceives that God has commanded it or that it is a holy, divine Word and doctrine. For if it had been regarded as such, every one could have perceived that it required holy men to live according to these words, and there would have been no need of inventing monasticism and spiritual orders, but every child would have abided by this commandment, and could have directed his conscience to God, and said: "If I am to do a good and holy work, I know of none better than to render all honor and obedience to my parents, because God has himself commanded it. For what God has commanded must be much and far nobler than everything that we may ourselves devise; and because there is no higher or better

teacher to be found than God, there can be no better doctrine than he imparts. Now he teaches fully what we should do if we wish to perform truly good works; and in that he commands them, he shows that they please him. If, then, it is God who makes this command, and who knows not how to appoint anything better, I will never improve upon it.”

In this manner we would have had godly children properly taught and reared in true blessedness, who would have remained at home in the service of their parents and in obedience to them, causing them much pleasure and joy. And yet God’s commandment was not thus honored, but was neglected and allowed to pass out of sight, so that a child could not lay it to heart, and meanwhile gaped in ignorant astonishment at our devices, and never acknowledged God’s authority.

[408] Let us therefore, at length, learn, for God’s sake, that placing all other things out of sight, our youths look first to this commandment, if they wish to serve God with truly good works, viz. that they do what is pleasing to their fathers and mothers, or to those to whom they may be subject in their stead. For every child that knows and does this has, in the first place, this great consolation in his heart, that he can joyfully exult and say (in spite of and against all who are occupied with works of their own device): “Behold this work is well pleasing to my God in heaven, that I know for certain.” Let them all come together with their many great, distressing and difficult works and make their boast; we will see whether they can show one that is greater and nobler than obedience to parents, to whom God has appointed and commanded obedience next to his own majesty; so that if God’s Word and will are accomplished, nothing shall be esteemed higher than the will and word of parents; yet see that we abide in obedience to God and violate not the former commandments.

Therefore you should be heartily glad and thank God that he has chosen you and made you worthy to do a work so precious and acceptable to him. Only see that you esteem it great and precious, although it be regarded as the most humble and despised, not on account of our worthiness, but because it is comprehended and established in the jewel and sanctuary, namely the Word and commandment of God. Oh how gladly might all Carthusians, monks and nuns pay a high price for this jewel, if in all their ecclesiastical establishments and institutions they could bring a single work into God’s presence done by virtue of his commandment, and be able before his face to say with joyful heart: “Now I know that this work is well pleasing to thee.” What will become of these poor wretched persons when, in the sight of God and all the world, contrasted with a little child who has lived according to this commandment, they shall blush with shame, and shall be obliged to confess that with their whole life they are not worthy to give it a drink of water? But it serves them right in return for their

Satanic perversion in treading God's commandment under foot, that they torment themselves with works of their own device, and in addition have scorn and loss for their reward.

[409] Should not the heart therefore leap and melt for joy if it may go to work and do what is commanded, so that it can say: Lo, this is better than all holiness of the Carthusians, even though they kill themselves fasting and praying without ceasing, upon their knees? For you have a sure test and a divine testimony that he has commanded this, but concerning the other not a word. But this is the calamity and sad blindness of the world, viz. that no one believes it, since the devil has so deceived us with false holiness and the outward speciousness of our own works.

Therefore I would be very glad (I say again) if men would open their eyes and ears, and take this to heart, in order that we may not be again led astray from the pure Word of God to the lying vanities of the devil. Thus also matters would be in a good condition; so that parents would have more joy, love, friendship and concord in their houses; thus the children could captivate their parents' hearts. When they are obstinate, on the other hand, and will not do what they ought until a rod is laid upon their back, they offend both God and their parents, so that they deprive themselves of this treasure and joy of conscience, and lay up for themselves only misfortune. Therefore, as every one complains, the course of the world now is such that both young and old are altogether dissolute and beyond control, have no modesty nor sense of honor, do nothing good except as they are driven to it by blows, and perpetrate what wrong and detraction they can behind each other's back; therefore God also punishes them, that they sink into all kind of indecency and misery. Thus the parents commonly are themselves stupid and ignorant; one fool begets [teaches] another, and as they have lived, so live their children after them.

[410] This now should be the first and most important consideration (I say) to urge us to the observance of this commandment; on which account, even if we had no father and mother, we ought to wish that God would set up wood and stone before us, that we might call them father and mother. How much more, since he has given us living parents, should we rejoice to show them honor and obedience, because we know it is so highly pleasing to the Divine Majesty and to all angels, and vexes all devils, and is besides the highest work which we can do, after the sublime divine worship comprehended in the previous commandments; so that giving of alms and every other good work toward our neighbor are not equal to this! For God has assigned this estate the highest place, yea in his own stead, upon earth. This will and pleasure of God ought to be sufficient to cause and induce us to do what we can with good will and pleasure.

Besides this, it is our duty before the world to be grateful for benefits and every good which we have of parents. But in this again the devil rules in the world, so that the children forget their parents, as we all forget God, and no one considers how God nourishes, protects and defends us, and bestows so great good on body and soul: especially if an evil hour come we are offended and murmur with impatience, and all good which we have all our life received is as if it never had been. Just so also we do with our parents, and there is no child that understands and considers this, except it be enlightened and led thereto by the Holy Ghost.

God knows very well this perverseness of the world; therefore he admonishes and urges by commandments that every one consider what parents have done for him, and he will find that he owes to them body and life, as well as sustenance, support and rearing, since otherwise he would have perished a hundred times in his own filth. Therefore it is a true and good saying of old and wise men: *Deo, parentibus et magistris non potest satis gratiae rependi*, that is, to God, to parents and to teachers we can never render sufficient gratitude and compensation. He that regards and considers this will indeed without compulsion do all honor to his parents, and cherish them as those through whom God has done him all good.

[411] Besides all this, it should be a great inducement to influence us the more to obedience to this commandment, that God adds to the same a temporal promise and says: “*That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*”

Here we can see how much God is in earnest in respect to this commandment, inasmuch as he not only declares that it is well pleasing to him, and how much joy and delight he has therein; but also that it shall be for our prosperity and promote our highest good; so that we may have a pleasant and agreeable life, furnished with every good thing. Therefore also St. Paul indicates the same and highly rejoices in it, when he says (Eph. 6:2, 3): This “*is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.*” For although the rest also include their promises, yet in none is it so plainly and explicitly stated.

Here then thou hast the fruit and the reward, viz. that whoever observes this commandment shall have good days, happiness and prosperity; and on the other hand, also, the punishment, that whoever is disobedient shall the sooner perish, and never enjoy life. For to have long life in the sense of the Scriptures is not only to become old, but to have everything which belongs to long life, as, namely, health, wife and child, support, peace, good government, etc., without which this life can neither be enjoyed in cheerfulness nor long endure. If,

therefore, thou wilt not obey father and mother and submit to discipline, then obey the inquisitor; if thou wilt not obey him, then submit to the executioner, i.e. death [death the all-subduer, the teacher of wicked children]. For in regard to this God is determined: Either if you obey him, rendering love and service, he will grant you exceeding great recompense with all good, or if you offend him he will send upon you death and the torturer.

Whence come so many criminals that must daily be hanged, beheaded, broken upon the wheel, but from disobedience [to parents], because they will not submit to discipline in good part? and the result is [since they are unwilling to hear the reproof of parents given in kindness and love] that, by the punishment of God, they bring upon themselves misfortune and grief. For it seldom happens that such wicked people die a natural or timely death.

[412] But the godly and obedient have this blessing, that they live long in quietness, and see their children's children (as said above<sup>5</sup>) to the third and fourth generation.

As experience also teaches that where there are honorable, old families who stand well and have many children, they have their origin in this fact, viz. that some of them were well brought up and were regardful of their parents. So on the other hand it is written of the wicked (Ps. 109:13): "*Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.*" Therefore consider well how great a thing in God's sight obedience is, since he so highly esteems it, is so highly pleased with it, and rewards it so richly, and besides is so rigid in punishing those who transgress with respect to it.

All this I say, that it may be well impressed upon the young. For no one believes how necessary this commandment is, since it has not been thus esteemed and taught hitherto under the papacy. Every one thinks they are insignificant and easy words which he has always known, therefore men pass this lightly by, are eagerly intent upon other matters, and do not see or believe that God is so greatly offended if this be disregarded, or that he esteems it a work so well pleasing and precious if it be observed.

[413] In connection with this commandment it is proper to speak further of all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents. For where a father is unable alone to educate his [rebellious and irritable] child, he employs a schoolmaster<sup>6</sup> that he may instruct it; if he be too weak, he obtains the assistance of his friends and neighbors; if he depart, he confers and delegates his authority and government to others who are appointed for the purpose.

Likewise he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under him for the management of the household, so that all whom we call masters are

in the place of parents and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also they are all called fathers in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of the office of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. As also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household *patres et matres familiae*, that is house-fathers and house-mothers. So also they called their national rulers and chiefs *patres patriae*, that is fathers of the country, for a great shame to us who would be Christians that we do not call them so, or, at least, do not esteem and honor them as such. What a child owes to father and mother the same owe all who are embraced in the household. Therefore man-servants and maid-servants should be careful not only to be obedient to their masters and mistresses, but also to honor them as their own fathers and mothers, and to do everything which they know is expected of them, not from compulsion and with reluctance, but with pleasure and joy for the cause just mentioned, namely, that it is God's command and is pleasing to him above all other works. Therefore they ought rather to pay wages in addition and be glad that they may obtain masters and mistresses, to have such joyful consciences and to know how they may do truly golden works; a matter which has hitherto been neglected, and despised, when instead everybody ran, in the devil's name, into convents or pilgrimages and for indulgences, with loss [of time and money] and with an evil conscience.

[414] If indeed this truth could be impressed upon the poor people, a servant-girl would leap and thank and praise God, and with her menial work for which she receives support and wages she would acquire such a treasure as all that are esteemed the greatest saints have not obtained. Is it not an excellent boast to know and say this, that if you perform your daily domestic task it is better than all the ascetic life and sanctity of monks? And if you have the promise in addition that you shall fare well and prosper in all good, how can you be more blessed or lead a holier life in regard to works? For in the sight of God faith alone can render holy and serve him, but the works are for the service of man. Then you have all good protection and defense in the Lord, a joyful conscience and a gracious God besides, who will reward you a hundredfold, so that you are even a nobleman if you be only pious and obedient. But if not, you have in the first place only the wrath and displeasure of God, no peace of heart, and afterwards all manner of plagues and misfortunes.

Whoever will not be influenced by this and inclined to piety we leave to the hangman and to death. Therefore let every one who allows himself to be advised remember that God is not making sport, and know that it is God who speaks with you and demands obedience. If you obey him you are his dear child, but if you



despise this commandment, then take shame, calamity and grief for your reward.

The same also is to be said of obedience to civil government, which (as we have said) is embraced in the estate of fatherhood and extends farthest of all relations. For here the father is not one of a single family, but of as many people as he has tenants, citizens or subjects. For God through them, as through our parents, gives to us support, estate, protection and security. Therefore since they bear such name and title with all honor as their highest dignity, it is our duty to honor them and to esteem them great as the greatest treasure and the most precious jewel upon earth.

He, now, who is obedient here, is willing and ready to serve, and cheerfully does all that pertains to honor, knows that he is pleasing God and will receive joy and happiness for his reward. If he will not do it in love, but despises and resists authority or rebels, let him know on the other hand also that he shall have no favor or blessing, and where he thinks to gain a florin thereby, he will elsewhere lose ten times as much, or become a victim to the hangman, perish by war, pestilence and famine, or experience no good in his children, and be obliged to suffer injury, injustice and violence at the hands of his servants, neighbors or strangers and tyrants; so that what we seek and deserve comes upon us as our reward.

[415] If we would only once give it fair consideration that such works are pleasing to God and have so rich a reward, we would be established in possession of purely superabundant good and would have what our heart desires. But because the word and command of God are so lightly esteemed, as though some vagabond had spoken it, let us see therefore whether you are the man to oppose him. How difficult it will be for him to recompense you! Therefore it is better for you to live thus with the divine favor, peace and happiness than with displeasure and misfortune. Why, think you, is the world now so full of unfaithfulness, disgrace, calamity and murder, but that every one desires to be his own master and subject to no authority, to care nothing for any one, and do what pleases him? Therefore God punishes one knave by means of another, so that when you defraud and despise your master, another comes and deals the same with you, yea in your household you must suffer ten times more from wife, child or servants.

We feel indeed our misfortune, we murmur and complain of unfaithfulness, violence and injustice, but are unwilling to see that we ourselves are knaves who have truly deserved this punishment, and yet are not thereby reformed. We do not really desire the divine favor and happiness, therefore it is but fair that we have misfortune without mercy. There must somewhere upon earth be still some godly people that God yet allows us so much good! On our own account we

should have neither a farthing in the house nor a stalk of straw in the field. All this I have been obliged to urge with so many words, in hope that some one may take it to heart, that we may be relieved of the blindness and misery in which we have lain so long, and may truly understand the Word and will of God. and earnestly accept it. For therein we would learn how we could have joy, happiness, and salvation, both temporal and eternal, in abundance.

[416] Thus we have two kinds of fathers presented in this commandment, fathers in blood and fathers in office, or those to whom belongs the care of the family, and those to whom belongs the care of the nation. Besides these they are yet spiritual fathers; not like those in the Papacy, who have indeed caused themselves be so designated, but have not performed the functions of the paternal office. For those only are to be called spiritual fathers who govern and guide us by the Word of God. Of this name St. Paul boasts (1 Cor. 4:15), where he says: "*In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.*" Because they are fathers indeed they are entitled to honor above all others. But they are regarded of the least importance: for the only honor the world has to confer upon them is to drive them out of the country and to grudge them a piece of bread, and in short they must be (as says St. Paul, 1 Cor. 4:13) "as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things."

Yet there is need that this also be urged upon the populace, that those who would be Christians are under obligation in the sight of God to esteem them worthy of double honor who minister to their souls, that they deal well with them and provide for them. For that, God wishes to give you additional blessing and will not let you come to want. But in this every one withholds and makes objections, and all are afraid that they will perish from bodily want, and therefore cannot now support a respectable preacher, where formerly they filled ten gormandizers. In this we also deserve that God deprive us of his Word and blessing, and again allow preachers of lies to arise to lead us to the devil, and in addition to drain our sweat and blood.

[417] But those who keep in sight God's will and commandment have the promise that everything which they bestow upon temporal and spiritual fathers, and whatever they do to honor them, shall be richly recompensed to them, so that they shall have not only bread, clothing and money for a year or two, but long life, support and peace, and shall be eternally rich and blessed. Therefore only do what is your duty, and let God take care how he shall support you and provide you with abundance. Since he has promised it, and has never yet lied, he will not be found lying to you in this.

This ought indeed to encourage us, and give us hearts that would melt in pleasure and love toward those to whom we owe this honor, so that we would

raise our hands and joyfully thank God who has given us such promises, induced by which we ought to run to the ends of the world [to the remotest parts of India]. For although the whole world should combine, it could not add an hour to our life or give us a single grain from the earth. But God wishes to give you all exceeding abundantly according to your heart's desire. He who despises and regards this is not worthy ever to hear a word of God. This is indeed superfluous to say to those who come under the instruction of this commandment.

In addition, it would not be amiss to preach to the parents, and such as bear their office, as to how they should deport themselves toward those who are committed to them for their government. For although this is not expressed in the Ten Commandments, it is nevertheless abundantly enjoined in many places in the Scriptures. And God desires to have it embraced in this commandment when he speaks of father and mother. For he does not wish to have in this office and government knaves and tyrants; nor does he assign to them this honor, viz. power and authority to govern, and to allow themselves to be worshiped; but they should consider that they are under obligations of obedience to God; and that first of all they are earnestly and faithfully to discharge the duties of their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially to train them to the honor and praise of God. Therefore do not think that this is appointed for thy pleasure and arbitrary will; but that it is a strict command and institution of God, to whom also thou must give account of the matter.

[418] But this is again a sad evil, that no one perceives or heeds this, and all live on as though God gave us children for our pleasure or amusement, and servants that we should employ them like a cow or ass, only for work, or as though all we had to do with our subjects were only to gratify our wantonness, without any concern on our part as to what they learn or how they live; and no one is willing to see that this is the command of the Supreme Majesty, who will most strictly call us to an account and punish for it; not that there is so great need to be so intensely anxious about the young. For if we wish to have proper and excellent persons both for civil and ecclesiastical government, we must spare no diligence, time or cost in teaching and educating our children, that they may serve God and the world, and we must not think only how we may amass money and possessions for them. For God can indeed without us support and make them rich, as he daily does. But for this purpose he has given us children, and has commanded us to train and govern them according to his will, else he would have no need of father and mother. Let every one know, therefore, that above all things it is his duty, or otherwise he will lose the divine favor, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God; and, if they have talents, to give

them also opportunity to learn and study, that they may be able to avail themselves of that for which there is need [to have them instructed and trained in a liberal education, that men may be able to have their aid in government and in whatever is necessary].

If that were done God would also richly bless us and give us grace, that there would be men trained by whom land and people would be reformed, and likewise well-educated citizens, chaste and domestic wives, who afterwards would continue to rear godly children and servants. Here think what deadly injury you are doing if you be negligent and fail to bring up your child to usefulness and piety, and how you bring upon yourself all sin and wrath, meriting hell even in your dealings with your own children, even though you be otherwise ever so pious and holy. And because this is disregarded, God so fearfully punishes the world that there is no discipline, government or peace, of which we all complain, but do not see that it is our fault, for as we train them we have spoiled and disobedient children and subjects. Let this be sufficient exhortation; for to amplify this belongs to another time.

## **The Fifth Commandment.**

*Thou shall not kill.*

[419] We have now completed the discussion of both spiritual and temporal government, that is, divine and paternal authority and obedience, But here we go forth from our own house to our neighbor's, to learn how we should live with respect to one another, every one for himself toward his neighbor. Therefore God and government are not included in this commandment, nor the power which they have to kill. For God has delegated his authority to governments to punish evil-doers instead of parents, who aforetime (as we read in Moses) were required to bring their children to judgment and sentence them to death. Therefore this prohibition pertains to individuals and not to government.

This commandment is now easy enough, and is often treated, because we hear it annually in the Gospel of St. Matthew (5:21 sqq), where Christ himself explains and sums it up – namely, that we must not kill, either with hand, heart, mouth, signs, gestures, help or counsel. Therefore it is forbidden to every one to be angry, except those (as we said) who are in the place of God, that is, parents and government. For it is proper for God, and for every one who stands in his stead, to be angry, to reprove and punish, even on account of those who transgress this and the other commandments.

But the cause and need of this commandment is that God well knows that the world is evil, and that this life has much unhappiness; therefore he has placed this and the other commandments between the good and the wicked. As now there are many temptations against all the commandments, so the temptation in respect to this is that we must live among many people who do us wrong, that we have cause to be hostile to them.

As when your neighbor sees that you have better possessions from property, and more happiness [a larger family and more fertile fields] from God, than he, he is offended, envies you, and speaks no good of you.

[420] Thus by the devil's incitement you will have many enemies who cannot bear to see you have any good, either bodily or spiritual. When we see them it is natural for our hearts in their turn to rage and bleed and take vengeance. Thus there arise cursing and blows, from which follow finally misery and murder. Therefore God like a kind father anticipates, interposes and wishes to have all quarrels settled, that no misfortune come of them, nor one destroy another. And in fine he would hereby defend, liberate and keep in peace every one against all the crime and violence of every one else; and has, as it were, placed this commandment as a wall, fortress and refuge about our neighbor, that we do him no bodily harm or injury.

Thus this commandment insists upon it that no one offend his neighbor on account of any injury, even though he have fully deserved it. For where murder is forbidden, all cause also is forbidden whence murder may originate. For many a one, although he does not kill, yet curses and makes imprecations, which if fulfilled with respect to any one, he would not live long. Since this inheres in every one by nature, and is a matter of ordinary experience, that no one is willing to suffer at the hands of another, God wishes to remove the root and source by which the heart is embittered against our neighbor, and to accustom us ever to keep in view this commandment, always as in a mirror to contemplate ourselves in it, to regard the will of God, and with hearty confidence and invocation of his name to commend to him the wrong which we suffer; and thus let our enemies rage and be angry, doing what they can. Thus we may learn to calm our wrath, and to have a patient, gentle heart, especially toward those who give us cause to be angry, i.e. our enemies.

[421] Therefore the entire sum of this commandment is to be impressed upon the simple-minded most explicitly, viz. What is the meaning of *not to kill*? In the first place, that we hurt no one with our hand or deed. Then that we do not employ our tongue to instigate or counsel thereto. Further, that we neither use nor assent to any kind of means or methods whereby any one may be injured. And finally that the heart be not ill-disposed toward any one, nor from anger and

hatred wish him ill, so that body and soul may be innocent in respect to every one, but especially in respect to those who wish you evil or actually commit such against you. For to do evil to one who wishes and does you good is not human, but diabolical.

Secondly, it is to be observed that not only he who does evil to his neighbor is guilty of violating this commandment, but he also who can do him good, anticipate, prevent, defend and save him, so that no bodily evil or harm happen to him, and yet does it not. If, therefore, you send away one that is naked when you could clothe him, you have caused him to freeze; if you see one suffer hunger and do not give him food, you have caused him to starve. So also if you see any one innocently sentenced to death or in like distress, and do not save him, although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him. And it will not avail to make the pretext that you did not afford any help, counsel or aid thereto, for you have withheld your love from him and deprived him of the benefit whereby his life would have been saved.

Therefore God also properly calls all those murderers who do not afford counsel and help in distress and danger of body and life, and will pass a most terrible sentence upon them in the last day, as Christ himself has announced, as he shall say (Matt. 25:42 sq.): *“I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.”* That is: You would have suffered me and mine to die of hunger, thirst and cold, would have suffered the wild beasts to tear us to pieces or left us to decay in prison or perish in distress. What else is that but to reproach them as murderers and bloodhounds? For although you have not actually done all this, you have nevertheless, so far as you were concerned, suffered him to perish in misfortune.

[422] It is just as if I saw some one struggling in deep water or one fallen in the fire, and could extend to him the hand to save him and pull him out, and yet refused to do it. Would I not appear even in the eyes of the world a murderer and a criminal? Therefore it is God’s ultimate purpose that we suffer harm to befall no man, but show to every one love and all good; and (as we have said) this has especial reference to our enemies. For to do good to our friends is but a miserable heathen virtue, as Christ declares it (Matt. 5:46).

Thus we again have the Word of God whereby he would encourage and urge us to truly noble and sublime works, as gentleness, patience, and, in short, love and kindness to our enemies, and would ever remind us to reflect upon the First Commandment, that he is our God, i.e. that he will help, assist and protect us, that thus he may extinguish the desire of revenge in us.

This we ought to practice and inculcate, and we would have an abundance of

good works to do. But this would not be preaching to the benefit of the monks; it would be greatly to the detriment of the ecclesiastical estate, and an infringement upon the sanctity of Carthusians, and would even forbid their good works and clear the convents. For in this wise the state of common Christians would be considered as high, and even higher, and everybody would see how they mock and delude the world with a false, hypocritical appearance of holiness, because they disregard this commandment like the others, and esteem them unnecessary, as though they were not commandments, but mere advice; and besides, they have shamelessly proclaimed and boasted of their hypocritical estate and works as the most perfect life; for, in order that they might lead a pleasant, easy life, without the cross and without patience, they also have resorted to their cloisters, so that they might not be obliged to suffer wrong from any one or to do him any good.

But know now that these are the truly holy and godly works, in which, with all the angels, he rejoices, in comparison with which all human holiness is but filth and stench, and deserves only wrath and damnation.

## **The Sixth Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

[423] The commandments that follow are easily understood from the explanation of the preceding; for they are all to the effect that we be careful to avoid doing any kind of injury to our neighbor. But they are arranged in very precise order. In the first place, they treat of his person. Then we proceed to the person nearest him, or the possession nearest his body, namely his wife, who is one flesh and blood with him; so that we cannot inflict a higher injury upon our neighbor in any good that is his. Therefore it is explicitly forbidden here to bring any disgrace upon him in respect to his wife. He expressly mentions adultery, because among the Jews it was a command and appointment that every one must be married. Therefore also the young were early married, so that the state of celibacy was held in small esteem, neither were public prostitution and lewdness tolerated as now. Therefore adultery was the most common form of unchastity among them.

But because there is among us such a shameful mixture and the very dregs of all kinds of vice and lewdness, this commandment is also directed against all manner of impurity, whatever it may be called; and not only is the external act forbidden, but every kind of cause, incitement and means, so that the heart, the

lips and the whole body may be chaste and afford no opportunity, help, or persuasion for impurity. And not only this, but that we also defend, protect and rescue wherever there is danger and need; and give help and counsel, so as to maintain our neighbor's honor. For wherever you allow such a thing when you could prevent it, or connive at it as if it did not concern you, you are as truly guilty as the one perpetrating the deed. Thus it is required, in short, that every one both live chastely himself and help his neighbor do the same. Thus God by this commandment wishes to surround and protect as if with bars every wife and husband, that no one injure, harm or touch them.

[424] But since this commandment is directed to the state of matrimony and gives occasion to speak of the same, you may well mark and understand, first, how highly God honors and extols this estate, inasmuch as by his commandment he both sanctions and guards it. He has already sanctioned it above in the Fourth Commandment: "*Honor thy father and thy mother;*" but here he has (as we said) guarded and protected it. Therefore he also wishes us to honor it, and to maintain and use it as a truly divine and blessed estate; because in the first place he has instituted it above all others, and therefore created man and woman (as is evident) not for lewdness, but to live in the married relation, be faithful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the glory of God.

Therefore God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others; and in addition has applied and appropriated everything in the world to it, that this estate may indeed be richly provided for. Married life is therefore no subject for jest or idle inquisitiveness; but it is an excellent thing, and one concerning which the earnestness of God is occupied. For it is of the highest importance to him that to fight against wickedness and the devil men be raised up who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of himself, godly living and all virtues.

Therefore I have always taught that this estate be not despised nor held in disrepute, as is done by the blind world and our false spiritual guides; but that it be regarded according to God's Word, by which it is adorned and sanctified, so that it is not only placed on an equality with other conditions in life, but that it transcends them all, whether they be that of emperor, prince, bishop or whatever they will. For both ecclesiastical and civil estates must humble themselves, and all must be found in this estate, as we shall hear. Therefore it is not a particular estate, but at the same time the most common and the most noble which pervades all Christendom, yea which even extends through all the world.

[425] In the second place, you must know that it is not only an honorable but also a necessary state, solemnly commanded by God; so that, in general, in all conditions, man and woman, who have been created for it, shall be found in this estate; yet with some exceptions (although few) whom God has especially



exempted, because they are not fit for the married estate, or who by high supernatural gifts can maintain chastity without this estate. For where nature has its course, as it is implanted by God, it is not possible to maintain chastity without marriage. For flesh and blood remain flesh and blood, and the natural inclination and excitement have their course without let or hindrance, as the observation and experience of all testify. That, therefore, it may be the more easy in some degree to avoid unchastity, God has commanded the estate of matrimony, that every one may have his proper portion, and be satisfied therewith; although God's grace is yet necessary that the heart also may be pure.

From this you see how the popish crew, priests, monks and nuns, resist God's order and commandment, inasmuch as they despise and forbid matrimony, and presume and vow to maintain perpetual chastity, and besides deceive the simple-minded with lying words and appearances. For no one has so little love and inclination to chastity as just those who because of great sanctity avoid marriage, and either indulge in open and shameless prostitution or secretly do even worse, viz. that which is too bad to mention, as has, alas! been learned too fully. And in short, even though they abstain from the act, their hearts are so full of impure thoughts and evil desires that there is a continual burning and secret suffering which can be avoided in the married life. Therefore are all vows of chastity out of the married state condemned by this commandment; and free permission is granted, yea even the command is given, to all poor constrained consciences which have been deceived by their monastic vows, to abandon the condition of unchastity and enter the married life, considering that even if the monastic life had divine sanction, it were nevertheless out of their power to maintain chastity, and if they remain in that condition they must only sin more and more against this commandment.

[426] I speak of this now in order that the young may be so instructed as to be induced to marry, and to know that it is a blessed estate and well pleasing to God. For in this way it might in the course of time again receive its proper honor, and we should have less of the pernicious, horrible, disorderly life which now runs riot in open prostitution and other shameful vices which are the result of the disregard of married life. Therefore it is the duty of both parents and government to see to our youth, that they be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity to have them married honorably and in the fear of God; and he will not fail to add his blessing and grace, that men may have joy and happiness from the same.

From all this it can now be concluded that this commandment not only demands that every one live chastely in thought, word and deed in his condition, that is, especially in the estate of matrimony, but also that every one love and

esteem his wife or her husband as a gift of God. For where marital chastity is to be maintained, man and wife must by all means live together in love and harmony, that one may cherish the other from the heart and with entire fidelity. For that is one of the principal points which enkindle the love and desire of purity; so that where this is found, chastity will follow as a matter of course without any command. Therefore also St. Paul so diligently exhorts husband and wife to love and honor one another. Here you have again a precious, yea many and great good works, of which you can joyfully boast, against all ecclesiastical estates, chosen without God's Word and commandment.

## **The Seventh Commandment.**

*Thou shalt not steal.*

[427] After our person and wife or husband, temporal property is the nearest good. That also God wishes to have secure, and has commanded that no one shall damage or injure his neighbor in his possessions. For to steal is nothing else than to get another's property wrongfully into our possession. This comprehends all kinds of advantage in all kinds of trade to the disadvantage of our neighbor. This is indeed such a widespread and common crime, but so little regarded and observed, that it exceeds all measure, so that if all thieves – who nevertheless do not wish to be considered such – were to be hanged to the gallows, the world would soon be desolate and would be without both executioners and gallows. For as we have just said to steal is not only to rob our neighbors' coffer and pockets, but to be too far-reaching in the market, in all stores and shops, wine and beer-cellars, workshops, and in short whenever we trade or take or give money, goods or work.

As, for instance, to explain this somewhat roughly for the common mass of people, so that it may be seen how godly we are: When a man-servant or maid-servant does not serve faithfully, and does damage, or at least allows it to occur when it could be prevented, or otherwise from indolence, idleness or malice neglects the goods entrusted to him, to the spite and vexation of master and mistress. And when this is done purposely (for I do not speak of unavoidable casualties), you can dispose of thirty, forty dollars a year, which if another had taken secretly he would be hung by the rope. But you even bid defiance and make your boast of it, and no one dare call you a thief!

The same I say of mechanics, workmen and day-laborers, who all follow their own will, and know not in how many ways to take advantage of people, and yet

are careless and unfaithful in their work. All these are far worse than secret thieves, against whom we can guard with lock and bolt, or who, if apprehended, are treated in such a manner that they will not do the same again. But against these no one can guard. No one dare even look awry at them or accuse them of theft, so that one would ten times rather lose from his purse. For here are my neighbors, good friends, my own servants, to whom I look for fidelity, who defraud me first of all.

[428] Likewise also in the market and in common trade this course prevails to the greatest extent, where one openly defrauds another with defective goods, false measures, weights, coins, and by taking advantage by expert arts and uncommon transactions or dexterous inventions, in short by getting the best of the bargain and wantonly oppressing and distressing him. And who indeed can even recount or imagine it all? This is in short the most general trade and the largest guild on earth, and if we regard the world through all conditions of life it appears to be only a vast, wide stall, full of great thieves.

Therefore they also are called judicial robbers, despoilers of land and commerce, not pickpockets and sneak-thieves who steal the ready cash, but who sit upon the bench and are styled great noblemen, and honorable, pious citizens, and yet rob and steal upon a good pretext.

Yes, here we might be silent about the insignificant individual thieves if we would attack the great, powerful arch-thieves that are in the company of lords and princes, who daily plunder not only a city or two, but all Germany. Yea what would become of the head and supreme protector of all thieves, the holy chair at Rome, with all its retinue, which has appropriated the wealth of all the world, and has it in possession to this day?

This is, in short, the course of the world: that whoever can steal and rob openly goes in freedom and security unmolested by any one, and is yet to be honored. But the small, secret thieves who have once reached too far must bear the shame and punishment to keep the former in positions of honor and piety. But let them know that in the sight of God they are the greatest thieves, who also will punish them as they deserve and are worthy.

[429] Because this commandment is so far-reaching and comprehensive, as just indicated, it is necessary to present the same with emphasis to the common people, to let them know that these things cannot be done with impunity, but always to keep before their eyes the wrath of God, and inculcate the same. For this we have to preach not to Christians, but chiefly to knaves and scoundrels, to whom it would be more fitting for judges, jailers, and executioners to preach. Therefore let every one know that it is his duty, at the risk of God's displeasure, not only to do no injury to his neighbor, nor to deprive him of gain, nor to

perpetrate any act of unfaithfulness or malice in any bargain or transaction of trade, but faithfully to preserve his property for him, to secure and promote his advantage; and this especially applies to every one who takes money, wages and support for such service.

He now who wantonly despises this may indeed go his way and escape the hangman, but he shall not escape the wrath and punishment of God; and when he has long practiced his defiance and arrogance, he shall yet remain a tramp and beggar, and in addition have all plagues and misfortune. Now, when you ought to preserve the property of your master and mistress, for which service you have your support, you go your own way, take your wages like a thief, expect to be honored as a nobleman, of whom there are many that are insolent towards their masters and mistresses, and are unwilling to do them a favor or service by which to protect them from loss.

But beware, and consider what you will gain, that when you have your own household (to which God will help with all misfortunes) it will be recompensed to you, and you will find that where you have done injury or defrauded to the value of one mite, you will have to pay thirty again.

Such shall be the lot of mechanics and laborers of whom we hear and from whom we are obliged to suffer such intolerable maliciousness, as though they were noblemen in another's possessions, and every one were obliged to give them what they demand. Only let them continue practicing their exactions as long as they can; but God will not forget his commandment; and he will reward them according as they have served, and will hang them, not upon a green gallows, but upon a dry one; so that in all their life they shall neither prosper nor accumulate anything. And indeed if there were a well-ordered government in the land such wantonness might be checked and prevented, as was the case in ancient times among the Romans, when such characters were suddenly visited in a way that others took warning.

[430] No more shall others prosper who change the open, free market into a carrion-pit of extortion and a den of robbery, where the poor are daily oppressed, and who cause new impositions and famine, every one using the market according to his caprice in proud defiance, as though it were his right and privilege to sell his property for as high a price as he please, and no one had a right to say a word about it. These we will indeed allow to pass, and let them practice their exactions, extortions and avarice, but we will trust in God, who nevertheless will so arrange it that when you have completed your extortion he will pronounce his curse, and your grain in the storehouse, your beer in the cellar, your cattle in the stalls shall all perish, and verily where you have defrauded any one to the amount of a florin, your entire pile shall be consumed

with rust, so that you shall in no wise enjoy it.

And indeed we see this being fulfilled daily before our eyes, that no stolen or dishonestly acquired possession brings prosperity. How many there are who rake and scrape day and night, and yet grow not a farthing richer! And men, though they gather much, are subject to so many plagues and misfortunes that they cannot enjoy it or transmit it to their children. But because no one takes notice of it, and we go on as though it did not concern us, God must visit us in a different manner and teach us the mode of his government, so that he imposes one taxation after another, or billets a troop of soldiers upon us, who in one hour empty our coffers and purses, and do not desist as long as we have a farthing left; and in addition, by way of thanks, burn and devastate house and home, and outrage and kill wife and children.

[431] And, in short, if you steal much, depend upon it that twice as much will be stolen from you; and he who with violence and wrong robs and acquires will find one who shall deal after the same fashion with him. For God is master of this art, that since every one robs and steals of another, he punishes one thief by means of another. Where else should we find enough gallows and ropes?

Whoever is willing to be instructed can be sure that this is the commandment of God, and that it must not be treated as a jest. For although you despise us, defraud, steal and rob, we will indeed submit, suffer and endure your haughtiness, and according to the Lord's Prayer forgive and show pity; for we know that the godly shall have enough, and you injure yourself more than another.

But of this beware: When the poor man comes to you (of whom there are so many now) who must buy with the penny of his daily wages, and live upon it, and you are harsh to him, as though every one lived by your favor, and you extort and exact to the utmost amount, and besides with pride and haughtiness turn him off whom you ought to help with a gift, he will go away wretched and sorrowful; and because he can complain to no one he will cry and call to heaven, – then beware (I say again) as of the devil himself. For such groaning and calling will be no jest, but will have a weight and emphasis that will prove too heavy for you and all the world. For it will reach Him who takes care of the poor sorrowful hearts, and will not allow this injury done them to escape his vengeance. But if you despise that cry and defy Him who hears it, then remember whom you have brought upon you. If you are successful and prosperous you may, before all the world, call God and me a liar.

[432] Now we have exhorted, warned and protested enough; he who will not heed or believe it may go on until he learn this by experience. Yet it is important to impress this upon the young, that they may be careful not to follow the old

lawless crowd, but keep their eyes fixed upon God's commandment, lest his wrath and punishment come upon them. Nothing further belongs to us, except to instruct and reprove with God's Word; but to check such open wantonness there is need of government and princes who have eyes and voice, by which to establish and maintain order in all manner of trade and commerce, so that the poor be not burdened and oppressed or burden themselves with others' sins.

Let this suffice concerning the explanation of what is stealing, that it be not taken too narrowly, but extend as far as we have to do with our neighbors. And briefly, in a summary, like the former commandments, it is herewith forbidden in the first place to do our neighbor any injury or wrong (of whatever sort supposable in curtailing his possessions and property, or preventing or hindering his enjoyment of them), or even to consent or allow such a thing, but to interpose and prevent it. And, on the other hand, it is commanded that we improve his possessions and promote all his interests; and, in case he suffer want, that we help, communicate and lend both to friends and foes.

Whoever now seeks and desires good works will find here in abundance such as are heartily acceptable and pleasing to God, and in addition are favored and crowned with most excellent blessings, that we can be sure of a rich compensation for all that we do for our neighbor's good and from true friendship; as King Solomon also teaches (Prov. 19:17): "*He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*" Here then thou hast a rich Lord who is certainly sufficient for thee, and who will not suffer thee to want or to come short in anything; thus thou canst with a joyful conscience enjoy a hundred times more than thou couldst acquire by extortion in unfaithfulness and wrong. But whoever does not desire the blessing will find wrath and misfortune enough.

## **The Eighth Commandment.**

*Thou shall not bear false witness.*

[433] Besides body, wife or husband, and temporal possessions, we have yet another treasure, namely, personal honor and good report, with which we cannot dispense. For it is intolerable to live among men in open shame and general contempt. Therefore God wishes the reputation, character and honor of our neighbor to be assailed or diminished as little as his money and possessions, that every one may stand in his integrity before wife, child, servants and neighbors. And in the first place we take the most manifest meaning of this commandment

according to the words (*Thou shalt not bear false witness*), as pertaining to courts of justice, where a poor innocent man is accused and oppressed by false witnesses in order to be punished in his body, property or honor.

This appears indeed little to concern us now, but with the Jews it was a common and ordinary matter. For the people were organized under an excellent and regular government; and where such a government is, it is not administered without cases of this sin. The cause of it is, that where judges, magistrates, princes or others in authority sit in judgment, it cannot in the course of the world be otherwise but that men will be unwilling to give offence, will flatter and speak with regard to favor, money, hope or friendship; and in consequence a poor man and his cause must be oppressed and be subject to wrong and punishment. And it is a common calamity in the world that those who sit in judgment are seldom godly men.

For a judge ought necessarily to be above all things a godly man, and not only godly, but also wise, modest, yea, a brave and fearless man. So also ought a witness to be fearless, but especially a godly man. For he who would judge all matters rightly and decide them by his verdict will often offend good friends, relatives, neighbors and the rich and powerful who can greatly serve or injure him. Therefore he must be quite blind, closing eyes and ears, neither seeing nor hearing, but going straight forward in everything that comes before him, and deciding accordingly.

[434] Therefore this commandment is given first of all that every one shall help his neighbor to secure his rights, and not allow them to be hindered or violence to be done them, but to strictly maintain and promote them as God may grant, whether he be judge or witness, and let it affect what it will. And especially is a goal set up here for our jurists that they use all diligence in dealing truly and uprightly with every case, allowing right to be right, and neither perverting nor glossing it over or keeping silent concerning it, irrespective of money, possession, honor or power. This is one part and the most immediate sense of this commandment respecting all that takes place in court.

Afterwards, however, it extends much further, if we apply it to spiritual jurisdiction or administration; here it is a fact that every one bears false witness against his neighbor. For wherever there are godly preachers and Christians, they must bear the judgment of the world, and be called heretics, apostates, yea seditious and desperately wicked miscreants. And besides the Word of God must be subjected to the most shameful and virulent persecutions, blasphemies, contradictions, perversions and false explanations and applications. But that we will let pass; for it is the way of the blind world that she condemns and persecutes the truth and the children of God, and yet esteems it no sin.

In the third place, what concerns us all, this commandment forbids all sins of the tongue whereby we can injure or molest our neighbor. For to bear false witness is nothing else but a work of the tongue. Whatever therefore is done with the tongue against a fellow-man is hereby forbidden by God; whether it be false preachers with their doctrine and blasphemy, false judges and witnesses with their unjust verdicts, or outside of court by lying and evil-speaking. Here belongs particularly the detestable vice of gossip and slander, with which the devil instigates us, and of which there is much to be said. For it is a common evil plague that every one prefers hearing evil to hearing good of his neighbor; and although we ourselves are ever so bad, we cannot suffer that any one should say anything bad about us, but every one would much rather that all the world should speak of him in terms of gold; and yet we cannot bear that only the best be said of others.

[435] Therefore, to avoid this vice we should consider that no one is allowed publicly to judge and reprove his neighbor, although he may see him sin, unless he have a command to judge and to reprove. For there is a great difference between these two things, viz. judging sin and knowing it. You may indeed know it, but you are not to judge it. I can indeed see and hear that my neighbor sins, but I have no command to report it to others. If therefore I rush on, judging and passing sentence, I fall into a sin which is greater than his. But if you know it, change your ears into a grave and cover it, until you are appointed as judge and to punish by virtue of your office.

Those are called slanderers who are not content with knowing a thing, but proceed to exercise judgment, and when they know a slight offence of another, carry it into every corner, and are gratified that they can stir up another's baseness, as swine roll themselves in the dirt and root in it with the snout. It is nothing else than meddling with the office and judgment of God, and pronouncing sentence and punishment with the most severe verdict. For no judge can punish to a higher degree nor go further than to say: "He is a thief, a murderer, a traitor," etc. Therefore, whoever presumes to say the same of his neighbor goes just as far as the emperor and all governments. For although you do not wield the sword, you employ your poisonous tongue to the shame and hurt of your neighbor.

[436] God therefore forbids that any one speak evil of another although he be guilty, and the former know it right well; much less if he do not know it, and have it only from hearsay. But you answer: Shall I not say it if it be the truth? Answer: Why do you not make accusation to a regular judge? Yes. But I cannot prove it publicly, and thus I might be silenced and turned away in a harsh manner [incur the penalty of a false accusation]. Ah! here's the rub.<sup>7</sup> If you do



not venture to stand before the proper authorities with your charges, then hold your tongue. But if you know it, know it for yourself and not for another. For if you repeat it, although it be true, you will appear as a liar, because you cannot prove it, and you are besides acting wickedly. For we ought never to deprive any one of his honor or good name unless he be publicly condemned.

Everything, therefore, which cannot be properly proved is false witness.

Therefore what is not made public by sufficient proof no one shall make public or declare for truth: and in short, whatever is secret should be kept secret or secretly reprov'd, as we shall hear. Therefore, if you encounter an evil tongue which betrays and slanders another, contradict such a one to his face, that he may blush; thus many a one will keep silence who else would bring some poor man into bad repute, from which he would not easily extricate himself. For honor and a good name are easily tarnished, but not easily restored.

[437] Thus you see, in short, it is forbidden to speak any evil of our neighbor, and yet the civil government, preachers, father and mother are excepted, that this commandment may be so understood that evil be not unreprieved. Just therefore as, according to the Fifth Commandment, no one is to be injured in body, and yet the executioner is excepted, who, by virtue of his office, does his neighbor no good, but only evil and harm, and nevertheless does not sin against God's commandment, because God has, on his own account instituted that office; for he has reserved punishment for his own good pleasure, as he has threatened in the First Commandment, – just so also, although no one has a right in his own person to judge and condemn another, yet if they to whose office it belongs refuse to do it, they sin as well as he who should do so without such office. For here necessity requires one to speak of the evil, to make accusation, to investigate and testify; and it is not different from the case of a physician who is sometimes compelled to handle and examine a patient in parts otherwise not to be examined. Just so governments, father and mother, brothers and sisters, and other good friends, are under obligation to each other to reprove evil wherever it is needful and profitable.

But the true way in this matter would be to observe the order according to the Gospel (St. Matt. 18:15), where Christ says: *“If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone”* Here you have a precious and excellent doctrine whereby to govern well the tongue, which is to be carefully observed against this abuse. Let this, then, be your rule, that you do not too readily speak evil of your neighbor to others; but admonish him privately that he may amend. Likewise, also, if some one report to you what this or that one has done, teach him also, if he have seen it himself, to go and admonish him; but if not, let him keep silent.

The same you can learn also from the daily government of the household. For when the master of the house sees that the servant does not do what he ought, he himself takes him to account. But if he were so foolish as to let the servant sit at home, and went on the streets to complain of him to his neighbors, he would no doubt be told: “You fool! what does that concern us? go and tell him himself.” See, that would be acting quite brotherly, so that the evil would be stayed, and your neighbor’s honor would be maintained. As Christ also says in the same place: *“If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”* Then you have done a good work; for do you think it is a little matter to gain a brother? Let all monks and holy orders step forth, with all their works melted together into one mass, and see if they can boast that they have “gained a brother.”

[438] Further, Christ teaches: \_“But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established\_.” So he whom it concerns is always to be treated with personally, and not to be spoken of without his knowledge. But if that do not avail, then bring it before the public, whether before the civil or the ecclesiastical tribunal. For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence of punishment. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person. But if we only gossip about another in all corners, and stir up his baseness, no one will be reformed, and afterwards when we are to stand up and bear witness we deny having said so. Therefore it would be well for such tongues that their delight in thus talking were severely punished, so that others would profit by the example. If you were acting for your neighbor’s reformation or from love of the truth, you would not act in an underhanded way and shun the day and the light.

All this refers to secret sins. But where the sin is public, so that the judge and everybody know it, you can, without any sin, avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself to shame, and also you may publicly testify against him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slander or false judgment or witness. As we now reprove the Pope with his doctrine, which is publicly set forth in books and proclaimed in all the world. For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it.

[439] Thus we have now the sum and general understanding of this commandment, viz. that no one do any injury with the tongue to his neighbor, whether friend or foe; nor speak evil of him, whether it be true or false, unless it be done by commandment or for his reformation; but that every one employ his tongue to say the best of every one else, to cover his neighbor’s sins and

infirmities, excusing him, apologizing for him and adorning him with due honor. The chief consideration is what Christ indicates in the Gospel, in which he comprehends all commandments respecting our neighbor (Matt. 7:12):

*“Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”*

Even nature teaches the same thing in our own bodies, as St. Paul says (1 Cor. 12:22): *“Much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary: and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”* No one covers face, eyes, nose and mouth. For they, as in themselves the most honorable members which we have, do not require it. But the most infirm members, of which we are ashamed, we cover with all diligence, yea, hands, eyes and the whole body must help to cover and conceal them. Thus also should we among ourselves adorn to the best of our ability whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor, and serve and help him to promote his honor; and on the other hand prevent whatever may be discreditable to him. And it is especially an excellent and noble virtue for one always to put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor (if it be not a public crime), and present it in a favorable light against the poisonous tongues that are busy wherever they can pry out and discover something to blame in a neighbor, and that pervert it in the worst way; as is especially now done with the precious Word of God and its preachers.

There are comprehended, therefore, in this commandment very many good works which please God most highly, and bring abundant good and blessing, if only the blind world and the false saints could recognize them as such. For there is nothing on or in the entire man which can do both greater and more extensive good or harm in spiritual and in temporal matters than the tongue, though it is the least and feeblest member.

## **The Ninth and Tenth Commandments.**

*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*

[440] These two commandments are given especially to the Jews, although in part they also concern us. For they do not interpret them as referring to unchastity or theft, because these are forbidden above. They also thought that they had kept all those when they had done or not done the external act.

Therefore God has added these two commandments in order that it be esteemed as sin and be forbidden to desire or in any way to aim at getting our neighbor's wife or possessions; and especially because under the Jewish government manservants and maid-servants were not free, as now, to serve for wages as long as they pleased, but were their master's property, with their body and all they had, as cattle and other possessions. So, too, every man had power over his wife to put her away publicly by giving her a bill of divorce, and to take another.

Therefore they were in constant danger among each other that if one took a fancy to another's wife he might take occasion both to dismiss his own wife and to estrange the other's wife from him, that he might obtain her under pretext of right. That was not considered a sin nor disgrace with them; as little as now with hired help, when a proprietor dismisses his manservant or maid-servant, or takes another's servants from him in any way.

Therefore (I say) they thus interpreted, as is right also (although it goes farther and higher) that no one think or purpose to obtain another's wife, servants, house and estate, land, meadows, cattle, even with appearance of right or by seemingly proper means, yet with injury to his neighbor. For above, in the Seventh Commandment, the vice is forbidden, where one appropriates to himself the possessions of others or keeps them from his neighbor without right. But here it is also forbidden to take anything from your neighbor, even though you could do so honorably in the eyes of the world, so that no one could accuse or blame you as though you had obtained it by fraud.

[441] For we are so inclined by nature that no one desires to see another have as much as himself, and each one acquires as much as he can, without regard to how another may fare. And yet we all pretend to be godly, adorn ourselves most finely and conceal our rascality, resort to and invent adroit devices and deceitful artifices (such as now are daily most ingeniously contrived) as though they were derived from justice; yea, we even dare to impertinently refer to it, and boast of it, and do not wish to have it called rascality, but shrewdness and caution. In this jurists and counselors assist, who twist and stretch the law as it will help their cause, irrespective of equity or their neighbor's necessity. And, in short, whoever is the most expert and cunning finds most help in law, as they themselves say: The laws favor the watchful (*Vigilantibus jura subveniunt*).

This last commandment therefore is given not for rogues in the eyes of the world, but just for the most pious, who wish to be praised and be called honest, upright people who have not offended against the former commandments, as especially the Jews claimed to be; and even now for many great noblemen, gentlemen and princes. For the other common masses belong yet farther down, under the Seventh Commandment, as those who do not ask how they may

acquire their possessions with honor and right.

[442] This occurs principally in litigations, where it is the purpose to get something from our neighbor and to eject him from his possessions. As (to give examples) when people quarrel and wrangle for a large inheritance, real estate, etc., they avail themselves of, and resort to, whatever has the appearance of right, so dressing and adorning everything that the law must favor their side, and they keep possession of the property with such title that no one can make complaint or lay claim thereto. In like manner, if any one desire to have a castle, city, duchy, or any other great thing, he practices so much financiering through relationships and by any means he can that another is deprived of it, and it is judicially declared to be his, and confirmed with deed and seal as acquired honestly and by princely title.

Likewise also in common trade where one dexterously slips something out of another's hand so that he must look after it, or surprises and defrauds him in what he regards as his advantage and benefit, so that the latter cannot regain or redeem it without injury, debt or perhaps distress; and the former gains the half or even more; and yet this must not be considered as acquired by fraud or stolen, but honestly bought. Here they say: The first is the best, and every one must look to his own interest, let another get what he can. And who can be so wise as to think of all that one can get into his possession by such specious pretexts? This the world does not consider wrong, and will not see that the neighbor is thereby put to a disadvantage and must sacrifice what he cannot spare without injury. Yet there is no one who wishes this to be done him; from which they can easily perceive that such device and appearance are false.

Thus was the case formerly also with respect to wives. They were skilled in such devices that if one were pleased with another woman, he himself or through others (as there were many ways and means to be thought of) caused her husband to conceive some displeasure toward her, or had her resist him and so conduct herself that he was obliged to dismiss her. That sort of thing undoubtedly prevailed much under the Law, as also we read in the Gospel, of king Herod, that he took his brother's wife while he was yet living, and yet wished to be thought an honorable, pious man, as St. Mark also testifies of him. But such an example I trust will not be found among us, because in the New Testament those who are married are forbidden to be divorced – except in case where one shrewdly by some stratagem takes away a rich bride from another. But it is not a rare thing with us that one estranges or entices away another's man-servant or maid-servant, or allures them by flattering words.

[443] In whatever way such things happen we must know that God does not wish that you deprive your neighbor of anything that belongs to him, that he

suffer the loss and you gratify your avarice with it, even if you could claim it honorably before the world; for it is a secret and dastardly imposition practiced under a disguise that it may not be known. For although you go your way as if you had done no one any wrong, you have nevertheless injured your neighbor. And if it be not stealing and cheating, it yet is desiring your neighbor's property; that is, aiming at possession of it, enticing it away from him without his will, and being unwilling to see him enjoy what God has granted him. And although the judge and every one must leave you in possession of it, yet God will not leave you therein. For he sees the deceitful heart and the malice of the world, who wherever ye yield to her a finger's breadth, is sure to take an ell in addition, and at length public wrong and violence follow.

Therefore we abide by the common sense of these commandments, that in the first place we do not desire our neighbor harm, nor even assist nor give occasion for it, but gladly leave and see him in the enjoyment of his own, and besides advance and preserve for him what may be for his profit and service, as we should wish to be treated. Thus these commandments are especially given against envy and miserable avarice, that God may remove all causes and sources whence arises everything by which we do injury to our neighbor, and therefore he expresses it in plain words: Thou shalt not covet, etc. For he would especially have the heart pure, although we shall never attain to that as long as we live here: so that this commandment, like all the rest, will constantly accuse us and show how ungodly we are in the sight of God.

## **Conclusion of the Ten Commandments.**

[444] Thus we have the Ten Commandments, a compend of divine doctrine, as to what we shall do, that our whole life may be pleasing to God, and the true fountain and channel from and in which everything must flow that is to be considered a good work, so that outside of these Ten Commandments no work or thing can be good or pleasing to God, however great or precious it be in the eyes of the world. Let us see now what our great saints can boast of their spirtual orders and their great and grievous works which they have invented and set up, with the omission of those of the commandments as though they were of far too little consequence or were long ago perfectly fulfilled.

I am of opinion that here any one will find his hands full, and will have enough to do to observe these, viz.: meekness, patience and love to enemies, chastity, kindness, etc., and what such virtues imply. But such works are not of value and make no display in the eyes of the world; for they are not unusual and ambitious and restricted to particular times, places, customs and postures, but are

common, everyday domestic works which one neighbor can practice toward another, and therefore they are not of high esteem.

But the other works claim the astonished attention of men, being aided by their great display, expense and magnificent buildings, and these they so adorn that everything shines and glitters; they waft incense, they sing and ring bells, they light tapers and candles, so that nothing else can be seen or heard. For it is regarded a most precious work which no one can sufficiently praise if a priest stand there in a surplice embroidered with gilt, or a layman continue all day upon his knees in church. But if a poor girl tend a little child, and faithfully do what she is told, that is nothing; for else what should monks and nuns seek in their cloisters?

[445] But see, is not that a shocking presumption of those desperate saints, who dare to invent a higher and better life and condition than the Ten Commandments teach, pretending (as we have said) that this is a plain life for the common man, but that theirs is for saints and perfect ones? Neither do the miserable blind people see that no man can it achieve so much as to observe one of the Ten Commandments as it should be, but both the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer must help us (as we shall hear), by which we must strive after that attainment [power and strength to keep the commandments], and pray for it and receive it continually. Therefore all their boasting amounts to as much as though I boasted that I had not a penny, but that I would confidently undertake to pay ten florins.

All this I say and urge, to do away with the sad abuse which has taken so deep root, and still cleaves to everybody, and that men accustom themselves in all conditions upon earth to look only here, and to be concerned with this law. For it will be a long time before they will invent a doctrine or state equal to these Ten Commandments; because they are so high that no one, by mere human power, can attain to them. And whoever attains to them will be a heavenly, angelic man, far above all holiness in the world. Only occupy yourself with them, and try your best, apply all power and ability, and you will find so much to do that you will neither seek nor esteem any other work or holiness. This is sufficient for the first part of the common Christian doctrine, both for teaching and exhortation. Yet in conclusion we must repeat the text which belongs to these commandments, of which we have treated already in connection with the First Commandment, that we may learn how strenuously God insists upon it that we learn, teach and practice the Ten Commandments:

*“For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of*

*the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them, that love me and keep my commandments.”*

[446] Although (as we have heard above) this appendix was primarily attached to the First Commandment, it was nevertheless laid down for the sake of all the commandments, as all of them together are here referred to, and should be thereby enforced. Therefore I have said that this should be presented to and inculcated upon the young, that they may learn and remember it; that they may see what is to urge and move us to keep these Ten Commandments. And it is to be regarded as though this declaration were specially added to each, and inhered in and pervaded them all.

Now there is comprehended in these words (as said before) both a threatening of wrath and a friendly promise, so as not only to terrify and warn us, but also to induce and encourage us to receive and highly esteem his Word as a matter of divine earnestness, because he himself declares how much he is in earnest and how rigidly he will enforce it, namely, that he will severely and terribly punish all who despise and transgress his commandments; and again how richly he will reward, bless and do all good to those who hold them in high esteem, and are glad to act and live according to them. Thereby he demands that they all proceed from a heart which fears God alone and regards him, and from such fear avoids everything against his will, lest it should move him to wrath; and on the other hand also trusts in him alone, and from love to him does all he wishes, because he expresses himself as friendly as a father, and offers us all grace and every good.

[447] Just this is also the import and true interpretation of the first and chief commandment, from which all the others must flow and proceed. This word: *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”* therefore means nothing more or less than to demand in the simplest way, Thou shalt fear, love and trust in me as thine only true God. For where the heart is thus towards God, it has fulfilled this and all the other commandments. And, on the other hand, whoever fears and loves anything else in heaven and upon earth will keep neither this nor any other commandment. Therefore the entire Scriptures have everywhere preached and inculcated this commandment as consisting in these two things: Fear of, and trust in God. And especially the prophet David in all his Psalms, as when he says (Ps. 147:11): *“The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy”* As if the entire commandment were explained in one verse, as much as to say: The Lord taketh pleasure in those who have no other gods.



Thus the First Commandment is to shine and impart its splendor to all the others. Therefore must this declaration run through all the commandments, like a hoop in a wreath, to join and hold together the end and the beginning; that it be continually repeated and not forgotten; as, namely, in the Second Commandment, that, moved by love and confidence derived according to the First Commandment, we fear God and do not take his name in vain to curse, lie, deceive, and for other modes of seduction and rascality; but make proper and good use of it, calling upon him in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. In like manner shall such fear, love and trust urge and impel us not to despise his Word, but to gladly hear, learn and honor it, and esteem it holy.

So afterwards, through all the following commandments of our duties towards our neighbor, everything must proceed from the power and in virtue of the First Commandment, viz. that we honor father and mother, masters and all in authority, and be subject and obedient to them, not on their own account, but for God's sake. For you are not to regard or fear father or mother, or from love of them to do or omit anything. But see to that which God would have you do, and what he will quite confidently demand of you; if you omit that, you have an angry judge, but in the contrary case a gracious father.

[448] Likewise, that you do your neighbor no harm, injury or violence, nor in any wise molest him, whether it respect his body, wife, property, honor or rights, as all these things are commanded in their order, even though you have opportunity and cause to do so, and no man could reprove you; but that you do good to all men, help them, and promote their interest wherever and whenever you can, purely from love of God and in order to please him, in the confidence that he will abundantly reward you for everything. Thus you see how the First Commandment is the chief source and fountain-head whence all the rest proceed; and again they all return to that and depend upon it, so that beginning and end run into each other and are bound together.

This (I say) is necessary and profitable to teach, admonish and remind the young people, that they may be brought up in the fear and reverence of God, and not with blows and compulsion. For where it is considered and laid to heart that they are not human trifles, but the commandments of the Divine Majesty, who insists upon them with such earnestness, is angry with those who despise them, and will assuredly punish them, but, on the other hand, will abundantly reward those who keep them, there will be a spontaneous impulse and a desire gladly to do the will of God. Therefore it is not in vain that it is commanded in the Old Testament to write the Ten Commandments on all walls and corners, yes, even on the garments, not for an idle show, as did the Jews; but that we might have our eyes constantly fixed upon them, and have them always in our memory, and

keep them in all our actions and ways; and that every one make them his daily practice in all cases, in every business and bargain, as though they were written in every place wherever he would look, yea, wherever he goes or stays. Thus there would be occasion enough, both at home in our own house and abroad with our neighbors, to practice the Ten Commandments, that no one need run far for them.

From this it again appears how far these Ten Commandments are to be exalted and extolled above all orders, commandments and works which are taught and practiced aside from them. For here we can challenge all the wise and all saints to step forth and say, Let us see whether they can produce any work like these commandments, upon which God insists with such earnestness, and which he enjoins with his greatest wrath and punishment, and besides adds such glorious promises of an outpouring of all good things and blessings upon us. Therefore they should be taught above all others, and be esteemed sacred and precious, as the highest treasure given by God.

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1. Pomona: In Roman mythology, the goddess who fostered fruit-trees and promoted their culture. – Century Dictionary (1889).↵
  2. Traduce: To misrepresent; hold up or expose to ridicule or calumny; defame; calumniate; vilify. – Century Dictionary (1889).↵
  3. See Matt. 5:34 sqq.; James 5:12.↵
  4. Literally: “Stretched this too tightly.”↵
  5. See above, §§ 39, 40, p.392.↵
  6. The *magistratum* of Müller’s Latin is probably a typographical error Pfaff, Hase, Francke have *magistrum*.↵
  7. Lit.: “Ah, indeed do you smell the roast?” Latin quotes from *Terrence, Andria: Hincillae lacrymae*.↵

## Part Second. Of The Creed.

[449] Thus far we have heard the first part of Christian doctrine, in which we have seen all that God wishes us to do or to leave undone. The Creed, therefore, properly follows, which teaches us everything that we must expect and receive from God; and, to speak most explicitly, teaches us to know him fully. This is intended to help us do that which according to the Ten Commandments we ought to do. For (as said above) they are set so high that all human ability is far too feeble and weak to jk[attain to or] keep them. Therefore it is as necessary to learn this part in order to know how to attain thereto, and whence and whereby to obtain such power. For if we could, of our own power, keep the Ten Commandments as they are to be kept, we would need nothing further, neither Creed nor Lord's Prayer. But before such advantage and necessity of the Creed are explained, it is sufficient at first for the simple-minded that they learn to comprehend and understand the Creed itself.

In the first place, the Creed has hitherto been divided into twelve articles. Although if all points which are written in the Scriptures and which belong to the Creed were to be distinctly set forth, there would be far more articles nor could they be clearly expressed in so few words. But that it may be most easily and clearly understood, as it is to be taught to children, we will briefly sum up the entire Creed in three articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead to whom everything that we believe pertains; so that the first article, Of God the Father, explains Creation, the second article, Of God the Son, explains Redemption, and the third, Of God the Holy Ghost, explains Sanctification. As though the Creed were briefly comprehended in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons, therefore also three articles or confessions. Let us thus briefly run over the words.

### Article I.

*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.*

This represents and sets forth most briefly the essence, will, action and work of God the Father. Since the Ten Commandments have taught that we are to have

no other gods, it is natural to ask the question: What kind of a being is God? What does he do? How shall we praise, represent or describe him, that he may be known? That is taught in this and the following article. So that the Creed is nothing else than the answer and confession of Christians, arranged with respect to the First Commandment. As if you were to ask a little child: My dear, what sort of a God have you? what do you know of him? He could say: First, indeed, my God is God the Father, who has created heaven and earth; besides him I believe in nothing else as God; for there is no one else who could create heaven and earth.

[451] But for the learned, and those who have acquired some scriptural knowledge, these three articles may be extended and divided into as many parts as there are words. But now for young scholars let it suffice to indicate the most necessary points, namely, as we have said, that this article refers to the Creation: that we emphasize the words: CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. But what is the force of this or what do you mean by these words: "*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker, etc.*" Answer: I believe and mean to say that I am a creature of God; that is, that he has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul and life, members great and small, all my senses, reason and understanding, food and drink, shelter and support, wife and child, domestics, house and possessions, etc. Besides, he causes all creatures to serve for the necessities and uses of life – sun, moon and stars in the firmament, day and night, air, fire, water, earth and whatever it bears and produces, bird and fish, beasts, grain and all kinds of produce, and whatever else there is of bodily and temporal goods, good government, peace, security. So that we learn in this article that none of us has his life of himself, or anything that is here enumerated or can be enumerated, neither can he of himself preserve them, however small and unimportant a thing it might be, for all is comprehended in the word: CREATOR.

Besides this we also confess that God the Father has not only given us all that we have and see before our eyes, but daily preserves and defends against all evil and misfortune, averts all sort of danger and calamity; and that he does all without our merit of pure love and goodness, as a friendly father, who cares for us that no evil befall us. But to speak more of this pertains to the other two parts of this article, where we say: "*Father Almighty*"

Hence we must infer and conclude, since everything which we have and are, and whatever is in heaven and upon the earth, are daily given and preserved to us by God, that it is our duty to love, praise and thank him without ceasing; and in short to serve him with all these things, as he has enjoined in the Ten Commandments.

Here we could say much if we would attempt to show how few there are that

believe this article. For we all pass over it, hear it, and say it, but neither see nor consider what the words teach us. For if we believed it with the heart, we would also act accordingly, and not stalk about proudly, bid defiance and boast as though we had life, riches, power and honor, etc. all of ourselves, so that others must fear and serve us, as is the practice of the unhappy, perverted world, which is immured in darkness, and abuses all the good things and gifts of God only for its own pride, avarice, lust and luxury, and never once regards God, so as to thank him or acknowledge him as Lord and Creator,

[452] Therefore, if we only believed it, this article must humble and terrify us all. For we sin daily with eyes, ears, hands, body and soul, money and possessions, and with everything we have, as especially do those who even fight against the Word of God. Yet Christians have this advantage, that they acknowledge themselves in duty bound to serve God for all these things, and to be obedient to him [which the world knows not how to do].

We ought, therefore, daily to practice this article, to remember and consider in all that we see, and in all good that falls to our lot, and wherever we escape from calamity or danger, that it is God who gives and does all these things; that therein we perceive and see his paternal heart and his transcendent love toward us. Thereby the heart would be aroused and kindled to be thankful for all such good things, and to employ them to the honor and praise of God. Thus we have most briefly presented the meaning of this article, as much as is at first necessary for the most simple to learn, both as to what we have and receive from God, and what we owe in return, which is a most excellent object of knowledge, but a far greater treasure. For here we see how the Father has given himself to us, together with all creatures, and has most richly provided for us in this life, besides that he has overwhelmed us with unspeakable, eternal treasures in his Son and the Holy Ghost, as we shall hear.

## **Article II.**

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the rigid hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

[453] Here we learn to know the second person of the Godhead, so that we see what we have from God over and above those temporal goods already spoken of; namely, how completely he has poured forth his riches and withheld nothing. This article is therefore very rich and broad; but that we may briefly treat of it in a childlike way, we will take up one word and comprehend in that the entire sum of the article, namely (as we have said), that we may learn how we are redeemed. This is taught in the words: “*In Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

If now you are asked, What do you believe in the second article, Of Jesus Christ? answer briefly: I believe that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, has become my Lord. But what is it “to become Lord”? It is that he has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death and all evil. For before I had no Lord or King, but was captive under the power of the devil, condemned to death, bound in sin and blindness.

For when we had been created by God the Father, and had received from him all manner of good, the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil, so that we fell under his wrath and displeasure and were doomed to eternal damnation, as we had merited and deserved. There was no counsel, help or comfort until this only-begotten and eternal Son of God in his unfathomable goodness had compassion upon our misery and wretchedness, and came from heaven to help us. Thus therefore the tyrants and jailers are all expelled, and in their stead stands Jesus Christ, Lord of life, righteousness, salvation and of all good, and who delivered us poor lost mortals from the jaws of hell, has redeemed us and made us free, and brought us again into the favor and grace of the Father, and has taken us as his own property under his shelter and protection, that he may govern us by his righteousness, wisdom, power, life and blessedness.

[454] Let it then be considered the sum of this article that the little word *Lord* signifies simply as much as Redeemer, i.e. He who has brought us from Satan to God, from death to life, from sin to righteousness, and who preserves us in the same. But all the points which follow in order in this article only serve to express and explain this redemption; that is, how and whereby it was accomplished, how much he suffered and what he paid and risked, that he might redeem us and bring us under his dominion, namely, that he became man, conceived and born without [any stain of] sin, of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, that he might be Lord over sin; that he suffered, died and was buried, that he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owe, not with silver nor gold, but with his own precious blood. And all that in order to become my Lord. For he did none of these for himself, nor had he any need of it. And after that he rose again from the dead, destroyed and swallowed up death, and finally ascended into

heaven and assumed the government at the Father's right hand; so that the devil and all principalities and powers must be subject to him and lie at his feet, until finally at the last day he will part and separate us from the wicked world, from the devil, death, sin, etc.

But to explain all these single points especially belongs not to brief sermons for children, but rather to the ampler sermons that extend over the entire year, especially at those times which are appointed for the purpose, to treat at length of each article – of the birth, sufferings, resurrection, ascension of Christ, etc.

Ay, the entire Gospel which we preach consists in this, viz. that we properly understand this article as that upon which our salvation and all our happiness depend, and which is so rich and comprehensive that we never can learn it fully.

### **Article III.**

*I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

[455] This article I cannot explain better than (as I have said) that it treats of Sanctification, viz. that thereby the Holy Ghost, with his office, is declared and set forth, namely, that he makes holy.

Therefore we must establish ourselves upon the word Holy Ghost, because it is so precise and comprehensive that we cannot use another like it. For there are besides many kinds of spirits mentioned in the Holy Scriptures – the spirit of man, heavenly spirits and evil spirits. But the Spirit of God alone is called the Holy Ghost, that is, He which has sanctified and still sanctifies us. For as the Father is called Creator, the Son Redeemer, so the Holy Ghost, from his work, must be called Sanctifier, or one that makes holy. But what is the process of such sanctification? Answer: Just as the Son obtains dominion, whereby he redeems us, by his birth, death, resurrection, etc., so also the Holy Ghost effects our sanctification, as follows, namely, by the communion of saints or Christian Church, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body and eternal life; that is, he first leads us into his holy congregation, and places us in the bosom, of the Church, whereby he preaches to us and brings us to Christ.

For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on him and have him for our Lord, except as it is offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the Gospel. The work is finished and accomplished; for Christ, by his suffering, death, resurrection, etc., has acquired

and gained the treasure for us. But if the work remained concealed, so that no one knew of it, then it were in vain and lost. That this treasure therefore might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which he gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and apply it to us. Therefore sanctification is nothing else but bringing us to Christ to receive this good, to which, of ourselves, we could not attain.

[456] Learn then to understand this article most clearly. If you are asked: What do you mean by the words: “*I believe in the Holy Ghost*”? you can answer: I believe that the Holy Ghost makes me holy, as his name implies. But whereby does he accomplish this? or what are his means and method to this end? Answer: The Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. For in the first place he has a peculiar congregation in the world, which is the mother that bears every Christian through the Word of God, which he reveals and preaches, and through which he illumines and enkindles hearts, that they understand and accept it, cling to it and persevere in it.

For where he does not cause it to be preached and made alive in the heart, so as to be understood, it is lost, as was the case under the Papacy, where faith was entirely put under a bushel, and no one recognized Christ as his Lord or the Holy Ghost as his Sanctifier, i.e. no one believed that Christ is our Lord in the sense that he has acquired this treasure for us, and, without our works and merit, made us acceptable to the Father. And what indeed was the cause? This, verily, that Holy Ghost was not there to reveal it, and caused it to be preached; but men and evil spirits were there, who taught us to obtain grace and be saved by our works. Therefore it is no Christian Church; for where Christ is not preached there is no Holy Ghost who makes, calls and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one can come to Christ the Lord. Let this suffice concerning the sum of this article. But because the different points, which are here enumerated, are not quite clear to the simple, we will run over them.

The holy Christian Church the Creed denominates a communion of saints, for both expressions are taken together as one idea. But formerly the one point was not there, as it is also unintelligible in the translation. If it is to be given very plainly, it must be expressed quite differently. For the word *ecclesia* is properly an assembly. But we are accustomed to the word *church* which the simple do not refer to an assembled multitude, but to the consecrated house or building. Although the house ought not to be called church, except for the reason that the multitude assembles there. For we who assemble constitute and occupy a particular space, and give a name to the house according to the assembly.

[457] Therefore the word “church” (*Kirche*) means really nothing else than a common assembly, and is not German, but Greek (as is also the word *ecclesia*);



for in their own language they call it *kyria*, as in Latin it is called *curia*. Therefore in our mother-tongue, in genuine German, it ought to be a Christian congregation or assembly (*eine Christliche Gemeinde oder Sammlung*), or, best of all and most clearly, a holy Christian people (*eine Heilige Christenheit*).

So also the word communion, which is added, ought not to be communion (*Gemeinschaft*), but congregation (*Gemeine*). And it is nothing else than an interpretation or explanation whereby some one meant to explain what the Christian Church is. This those of us who understood neither Latin nor German have rendered *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen*, although no one would speak so in German, nor is it understood. But, to speak correct German, it ought to be *eine Gemeinde der Heiligen*, a congregation of saints, that is, a congregation made up purely of saints, or, to speak yet more plainly, *ein Heilige Gemeinde*, a holy congregation. I make this explanation in order that the words *Gemeinschaft der Heiligen* may be understood, because the expression has become so established by custom that it cannot well be eradicated, and it is treated almost as heresy if one should attempt to change a word.

[458] But this is the meaning and substance of this addition: I believe that there is upon earth a holy assembly and congregation of pure saints, under one head, even Christ, called together by the Holy Ghost in one faith, one mind and understanding, with manifold gifts, yet one in love, without sects or schisms. And I also am a part and member of the same, a participant and joint owner of all the good it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost, in that I have heard and continue to hear the Word of God, which is the means of entrance. For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christian people. By means of this congregation he brings us to Christ and teaches and preaches to us the Word, whereby he works and promotes sanctification, causing [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces.

We further believe that in this Christian Church we have forgiveness of sin, which is wrought through the holy sacraments and absolution, and through all manner of consolatory promises of the entire Gospel. Therefore whatever is to be preached concerning the sacraments belongs here, and in short the whole Gospel and all the duties of Christianity, which also must be preached and taught without ceasing. For although the grace of God is secured through Christ, and sanctification is wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Word of God in the unity of the Christian Church, yet on account of our flesh which we bear about with us we are never without sin.

Everything therefore in the Christian Church is so ordered that we shall daily obtain free and full forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here. Thus, although we have sin, the Holy Ghost does not allow it to injure us, because we are in the Christian Church, where there is full forgiveness of sin, both in that God forgives us, and in that we forgive, bear with and help each other.

But outside of this Christian Church, where the Gospel is not, there is no forgiveness, as also there can be no sanctification. Therefore all who do not seek sanctification through the Gospel and forgiveness of sin, but expect to merit it by their works, have expelled and severed themselves from this Christian Church.

[459] Yet meanwhile, since sanctification has begun and is growing daily, we expect that our flesh will be destroyed and buried with all its uncleanness, and will come forth gloriously, and arise to entire and perfect holiness in a new eternal life. For now we are only half pure and holy, so that the Holy Ghost has ever to continue his work in us through the Word, and daily to dispense forgiveness, until we attain to that life where there will be no more forgiveness, but only perfectly pure and holy people, full of godliness and righteousness, delivered and free from sin, from death and from all evil, in a new, immortal and glorified body.

[460] Behold, all this is to be the office and work of the Holy Ghost, viz. that he begin and daily increase holiness upon the earth by means of two things, namely, the Christian Church and the forgiveness of sin. But in our dissolution he will accomplish and perfect it in an instant, and will forever preserve us therein by the last two things confessed in the Creed.

But the term *Afuerstehung des Fleisches* (Resurrection of the flesh) here employed is not according to good German idiom. For when we Germans hear the word *Fleisch* (flesh), we think no farther than the shambles. But in good German idiom we would say *Auferstehung des Leibs*, or *Leishnams* (Resurrection of the body). Yet it is not a matter of much moment if we only understand the words in their true sense.

This is the force of this article, which must ever continue in operation. For creation is accomplished and redemption is finished. But the Holy Ghost carries on his work without ceasing to the last day. And for that purpose he has appointed a congregation upon the earth, by which he speaks and does everything. For he has not yet brought together all his Christian people nor completed the distribution of forgiveness. Therefore we believe in Him who through the Word daily brings us into the fellowship of this Christian people, and through the same Word and the forgiveness of sins bestows, increases and strengthens faith, in order that when he has accomplished it all and we abide

therein, and die to the world and to all evil, he may finally make us perfectly and for ever holy; which now we expect in faith through the Word.

Behold, here you have the entire divine essence, will and work depicted most exquisitely in quite short and yet rich words, wherein consists all our wisdom, which surpasses the wisdom, mind and reason of all men. For although the whole world with all diligence has endeavored to ascertain the nature, mind and work of God, yet has she never been able to determine anything whatever of it. But here we have everything in richest measure; for here in all three articles he has revealed himself, and opened the deepest recesses of his paternal heart and of his pure unutterable love. For he has created us for this very object, viz. that he might redeem and sanctify us; and in addition he has given and imparted to us everything in heaven and upon earth, and has given to us even his Son and the Holy Ghost, by whom to bring us to himself. For (as explained above) we could never attain to the knowledge of the grace and favor of the Father except through the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the paternal heart, outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge. But of Christ we could know nothing except by the revelation of the Holy Ghost.

These articles of the Creed, therefore, separate and distinguish us Christians from all other people upon earth. For all outside of Christianity, whether heathen, Turks, Jews or false Christians and hypocrites, although they believe in and worship only one true God, yet know not what his mind towards them is, and cannot confide in his love or expect any good from him; therefore they abide in eternal wrath and damnation. For they have not the Lord Christ, and besides are not illumined and favored by the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

[461] From this you perceive that the Creed contains quite a different doctrine from the Ten Commandments. For the latter teaches indeed what we ought to do, but the former tells what God has done for and gives to us. The Ten Commandments also are written in the hearts of all men, but the Creed no human wisdom can comprehend, but it must be taught by the Holy Ghost. The Law, therefore, can make no Christian, for the wrath and displeasure of God abide upon us for ever, as long as we cannot keep it and do what God demands of us; but the faith of the Creed brings pure grace, and makes us godly and acceptable to God. For by the knowledge of this we love and delight in all the commandments of God; because we see that God, with all that he has, gives himself to us – the Father, with all creatures; the Son, with his entire work; and the Holy Ghost, with all his gifts – to assist and enable us to keep the Ten Commandments.

Let this suffice concerning the Creed to lay a foundation for the simple, that they may not be burdened; so that if they understand the substance of it they may

afterwards strive to acquire more, and to refer whatever they learn in the Scriptures to these parts, and ever to grow and increase in richer understanding. For as long as we live here we shall daily have enough of this to preach and to learn.

## Part Third. Of Prayer – The Lord's Prayer.

[462] We have now heard what we must do and believe, and i wherein consists the best and happiest life. Now follows the third part, i.e. how we ought to pray. For since we are so situated that no man can perfectly keep the Ten Commandments, even though he have begun to believe, and since the devil with all his power, together with the world and our own flesh, resists our endeavors to keep them, nothing is so necessary as that we should resort to the ear of God and call upon him and pray to him, that he would give, preserve and increase in us faith and the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments, and that he would remove everything that is in our way and opposes us therein. But that we might know what and how to pray, our Lord Christ has himself taught us both the mode and the words, as we shall see.

But before we enter upon the explanation of the Lord's Prayer, it is most necessary to exhort and incite people to prayer, as both Christ and the apostles have done. And the first consideration is, that it is our duty to pray because of God's commandment. For this we learned in the Second Commandment: "*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,*" which requires that we praise that holy name, and call upon it in every time of need, or pray. For to call upon the name of God is nothing else than to pray. Prayer is therefore as rigidly and earnestly and sacredly commanded as to have no other God, not to kill, not to steal, etc. Let no one think, therefore, that it is the same whether he pray or not, as careless people who go about in such delusion, and ask: "Why should I pray? Who knows whether God will hear my prayer, or pay any attention thereto? If I do not pray, some one else will." And thus they fall into the habit of never praying; and even console themselves, because we condemn false and hypocritical prayers, as though we taught that there is no duty or need of prayer.

[463] But this is ever true, viz. that services which have been practiced hitherto in the churches by repetitions and intonations were no prayers. For such external matters, when they are properly observed, may be a good exercise for young children, scholars and simple persons, and may be called singing or reading, but are not really praying. But praying, as the Second Commandment teaches, is to call upon God in every time of need. This he requires of us, and has not left it to our choice. But it is our duty and obligation to pray if we would be Christians, as much as are our duty and obligation to obey our parents and the government; for in prayer and by calling upon it the name of God is truly honored and rightly employed. This we must therefore mark, above all things,

that thereby we silence and repel such thoughts as would deter and keep us from prayer. Just as it would be idle for a son to say to his father, “Of what advantage is my obedience? I will go and do what I can; it is all the same;” but there stands the commandment, Thou shalt and must do it. So also here it is not left to my will to do or to leave undone, but I shall and must pray [at the risk of God’s wrath and displeasure].<sup>1</sup>

[464] This is therefore to be considered and noticed before everything else, that thereby we may silence and repel the thoughts which would keep and deter us from praying – as though it were not of much consequence whether we pray or not, or it were commanded those only who are holier and in better favor with God than we – as indeed the human heart is by nature ever despairing, so that it always flees from God, in the thought that he does not wish or desire our prayer, because we are sinners and have merited nothing but his wrath. Against such thoughts (I say) we should regard this commandment and turn to God, that we may not by such disobedience excite his anger still more. For by this commandment he gives us plainly to understand that he will not reject us or cast us oft\* although we are sinners, but that he would rather draw us to himself, so that we might humble ourselves before him, acknowledge our misery and ruin, and pray for grace and help. Therefore we read in the Scriptures that he is angry also with those who did not return to him, and by their prayers assuage his wrath and seek his grace when they were smitten for their sins.]

From this you are to conclude and think, because it is so solemnly commanded to pray, that you should by no means despise your prayer, but rather set great store by it, and always seek an illustration from the other commandments. A child should by no means despise obedience to father and mother, but should always think: The work is a work of obedience, and what I do, I do with no other intention but because I walk in the obedience and commandment of God, in which I can establish myself and stand firm, and I esteem it a great thing, not on account of any worthiness of mine, but on account of the commandment. So here also what and for what we pray we should regard as demanded by God, and we should do it in obedience to him, thinking: On my account it would amount to nothing; but it shall avail, for the reason that God has commanded it. Therefore whatever be any one’s necessity or desire, he should always come before God in prayer in obedience to this commandment.

We pray, therefore, and exhort most diligently every one to take this to heart and by no means to despise our prayer. For hitherto it has been taught in the name of Satan in such a manner that no one esteemed it, and men supposed it to be enough to do the work, whether God would hear it or not. But that is staking prayer on a risk, and murmuring it on a venture; and therefore it is a lost prayer.

For we allow such thoughts as these to deter us and lead us astray: "I am not holy or worthy enough; if I were as godly and holy as St. Peter or St. Paul, then I would pray." But put such thoughts far away, for just the same commandment which applied to St. Paul applies also to me; and the Second Commandment is given as much on my account as on his account, so that he can boast of no better or holier commandment.

[465] Therefore thou shouldst say: "My prayer is as precious, holy and pleasing to God as that of St. Paul or of the most holy saints." And this is the reason: "For I will gladly grant that he is holier in his person, but not on account of the commandment; since God does not regard prayer on account of the person, but on account of his word and obedience thereto. Yet the reason is this: I rest my prayer upon the same commandment with those of all the saints, and besides I pray for the same thing and for the same reason for which they pray and ever have prayed; and therefore it is as precious to me, as well as much more needful, as to those great saints."

This is the first and most important point, that all our prayers are based and rest upon obedience to God, irrespective of our person, whether we be sinners or saints, worthy or unworthy. And we must know that God will not have it treated as a jest, but that he is angry, and will punish all who do not pray as surely as he punishes all other disobedience; besides, that he will not suffer our prayers to be in vain or lost. For if he had not purposed to answer your prayer, he would not bid you pray and give so solemn a commandment for that purpose.

In the second place, we should be the more urged and incited to pray because God has also made the promise, and declared that it shall surely be to us as we pray, as he says (Ps. 50:15): "*Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.*" And Christ, in the Gospel of St. Matthew (7:7): "*Ask and it shall be given you;*" "*For every one that asketh receiveth.*" Such promises ought certainly to encourage and animate our hearts to take pleasure and delight in prayer, since he testifies in his Word that our prayer is heartily pleasing to him, and shall assuredly be heard and granted, that we may not despise it or think lightly of it, and pray upon an uncertainty.

This you can hold up to him and say: "Here I come, dear Father, and pray, not of my own purpose or upon my own worthiness, but according to thy commandment and promise, which cannot fail or deceive me." Whoever, therefore, does not believe this promise, must know again that he excites God to anger by most highly dishonoring him and reproaching him with falsehood.

[466] Besides this, we should be allured and induced to pray because, in addition to this commandment and promise, God anticipates us, and himself arranges the words and form of prayer for us, and places them upon our lips, as

to how and what we should pray, that we may see how heartily he pities us in our distress, and may never doubt that such prayer is truly pleasing to him, and shall certainly be answered. This gives indeed a great advantage to this [the Lord's Prayer] over all prayers that we might ourselves compose. For in them the conscience would ever be in doubt, and might say: I have prayed, but who knows how it pleases him, or whether I have adopted the right form and proportions? Hence there is no nobler prayer to be found upon earth than the Lord's Prayer which we daily pray, because it has this excellent testimony, that God loves to hear it, which we ought not to surrender for all the riches of the world.

And therefore also is it prescribed that we should see and consider the distress which ought to urge and compel us to pray without ceasing. For whoever would pray must have something to present, state and name which he desires; if not, it cannot be called a prayer.

Therefore we have rightly rejected the prayers of monks and priests, who howl and growl in a hostile manner day and night, but none of them think of praying for a hair's breadth of anything. And if we would collect all the churches, together with all ecclesiastics, they would be obliged to confess that they have never from the heart prayed for even a drop of wine. For none of them has ever purposed to pray from obedience to God and faith in his promise, nor has any one regarded any distress, but they only thought (when they had done their best) that they had done a good work, whereby they paid God for his benefits as men unwilling to take anything from him, but wishing only to give him something of their own.

[467] But where there is to be a true prayer there must be earnestness. Men must feel their distress, and such distress as presses them and compels them to call and cry out; then prayer will be made spontaneously, as it ought to be, and men will require no teaching how to prepare themselves and to attain to the proper devotion. But the distress which ought to concern us most, both for ourselves and for every one, you will find abundantly set forth in the Lord's Prayer. Therefore it is to serve also to remind us of the same, that we contemplate it and lay it to heart that we may not become remiss in prayer. For we all have necessities and wants enough, but the great want is that we do not feel and realize them. Therefore God also requires that we lament and plead our necessities and wants, not because he does not know them, but that we may kindle our hearts to stronger and greater desires, and open wide our arms to receive so much the more.

It is well, therefore, for every one to accustom himself from his youth daily to pray for all his wants, whenever he is sensible of anything affecting his interests



or that of other people, among whom he may be, as for preachers, government, neighbors, domestics; and always (as we have said) to hold up to God his commandment and promise, knowing that he will not have them disregarded. This I say, because I would like to see people brought again to pray truly and earnestly, and not have them go about coldly and indifferently, whereby they become daily more unable to pray; which is just what the devil desires, and for what he works with all his powers. For he is well aware what damage and harm it does his cause if men exercise themselves rightly in prayer.

[468] For this we must know, that all our shelter and protection rest in prayer alone. For we are far too feeble to cope with the devil and all his powers and adherents that set themselves against us, and they might easily crush us under their feet. Therefore we must consider and have recourse to those weapons with which Christians must be armed in order to stand against the devil. For what do you think has hitherto accomplished so much in defending us and frustrating the counsels and purposes of our enemies, as well as restraining the murder and insurrection whereby the devil thought to crush us, together with the Gospel, except that the prayer of a few godly men intervened like a wall of iron on our side? We should indeed have been spectators of a far different play, viz. how the devil would have destroyed all Germany in its own blood. Now they may confidently deride it and make a mock of it. But by prayer alone, if we shall only persevere and not become slack we will yet be a match both for them and the devil. For, whenever a godly Christian prays: “Dear Father, let thy will be done,” God speaks from on high and says: “Yes, dear child, it shall be so, in spite of the devil and of all the world.”

Let this be said as an exhortation, that men may learn, first of all, to esteem prayer as something great and precious, and to make a proper distinction between “vain repetitions” and praying for something. For we by no means reject prayer, but the bare, useless howling and murmuring we reject, as Christ himself also rejects and prohibits “vain repetitions.” Now we will most briefly and clearly treat of the Lord’s Prayer. Here we find all needs and distresses comprehended in seven successive articles or petitions, which never cease to pertain to us, and each so great that it ought to constrain us to pray and plead the same all our lives.

## **The First Petition.**

*Hallowed be thy name.*

This is indeed somewhat obscure, and not in good German idiom. For in our mother-tongue we would say: "Heavenly Father, help that thy name may by all means be holy." But what is it to pray that his name may be holy? Is it not holy already? Answer: Yes it is always holy in its nature, but not in our use. For God's name is given to us because we have been baptized and have become Christians, so that we are called children of God, and have the sacraments, whereby he so unites us with himself that everything which is his must serve for our use.

[469] But here a great necessity rests upon us, for which we ought to be most concerned, that this name have its proper honor, be esteemed holy and sacred, as our greatest treasure and sanctuary; and that as godly children we pray that the name of God, which is holy in heaven, may also be and remain holy with us upon earth and in all the world.

But how does it become holy among us? Answer, as plainly as it can be said: When both our doctrine and life are godly and Christian. For since in this prayer we call God our Father, it is our duty always to deport and demean ourselves as godly children, that we may not live to his shame, but to his honor and praise.

Now the name of God can be profaned by us either in words or in works. (For whatever we do upon the earth must be either words or works, speech or act.) In the first place, it is profaned if men preach, teach and speak error and delusion in the name of God, so that this name must serve to adorn and to find market for falsehood. Such is indeed the greatest profanation and dishonor of the divine name. In the next place also, where men make use of the holy name as a cloak for their shame by swearing, cursing, conjuring, etc. In the third place, by an openly wicked life and works, when those who are called Christians and people of God are adulterers, drunkards, avaricious, gourmands, envious and slanderers. Here also must the name of God come to shame and be profaned because of us. For just as it is a shame and disgrace to a natural father to have a bad, ruined child that opposes him in words and deeds, so that on its account he suffers reproach and contempt; so also it brings dishonor upon God if we who are called by his name and have all manner of goods from him teach, speak and live in any other manner except as godly and heavenly children, that he must hear it said of us that we cannot be the children of God, but must rather be the children of the devil.

[470] Thus you perceive that in this petition we pray just for that which God has enjoined in the Second Commandment; namely, that his name be not taken in vain to swear, curse, lie, deceive, etc., but be rightly employed to the praise and honor of God. For whoever employs the name of God for any sort of wrong profanes and desecrates this holy name, as aforetime a church was considered desecrated when a murder or any other crime had been perpetrated therein, or

when a pyx or altar was desecrated, as though holy in themselves, yet becoming unholy in use. Thus this point is easy and clear as soon as the language is understood, viz. that to hallow is the same as in our idiom to praise, magnify and honor both in word and deed.

Here learn of how great need such prayer is. For because we see how full the world is of sects and false teachers, who all wear the holy name as a cover and sham for the doctrines of devils, we ought by all means to pray without ceasing, and to cry and call upon God against all such as preach and believe falsely and whatever opposes and persecutes our Gospel's pure doctrine, and would suppress it, as bishops, tyrants, fanatics, etc. Likewise also for ourselves who have the Word of God, but are not thankful for it, nor live as you ought according to the same. If now you pray for this with your heart, you can be sure that it pleases God. For he will not hear anything more dear to him than that his honor and praise be considered above everything else, and his Word be taught in its purity and be esteemed precious and holy.

## **The Second Petition.**

*Thy kingdom come.*

As in the First Petition we prayed that, as respects the honor and name of God, he would prevent the world from adorning its lies and wickedness therewith, but cause it to be esteemed high and holy both in doctrine and life, that he may be praised and magnified in us; so here we pray that his kingdom may come. But just as the name of God is in itself holy, and we pray nevertheless that it be holy among us, so also his kingdom comes of its own power without our prayer, yet we pray nevertheless that it may come to us; that is, that it prevail among us and with us, so that we may be a part of those among whom his name is hallowed and his kingdom prospers.

[471] But what is the kingdom of God? Answer: Nothing else than what we learned in the Creed, that God sent his Son Jesus Christ our Lord into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, and to bring us to himself, and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life and salvation against sin, death and an evil conscience. And besides he has given us his Holy Ghost, to apply the same to us by his holy Word, and to illumine and strengthen us by his power in the faith.

Therefore we pray here in the first place that this may become effective with us, and that the name of God be so praised through his holy Word and a

Christian life that we who have accepted it may abide and daily grow therein, and that it may gain approbation and adherence among other people, proceed with power throughout the world, that many may find entrance into the kingdom of grace, be made partakers of redemption, and be so led by the Holy Ghost that we shall for ever remain altogether in a kingdom now begun.

For God's kingdom comes to us in two ways; first, here temporarily through the Word and faith; and secondly, in eternity for ever through revelation. We therefore pray for both, viz. that it may come to us who are not yet therein, and to us who have received the same, by daily increase, and hereafter in eternal life. All that is but as much as to say: Dear Father, we pray, give first thy Word, that the Gospel be preached effectively throughout the world; and secondly, that it be received in faith, and work and live in us, so that through the Word and the power of the Holy Ghost thy kingdom may prevail among us, and the kingdom of the devil be overcome, that it may have no right or power over us, until at last it shall be utterly destroyed, and sin, death and hell shall be exterminated, that we may live for ever in perfect righteousness and blessedness.

[472] From this you perceive that we pray here not for a crust of bread or a temporal, perishable good; but for an eternal, ineffable treasure and everything that God himself can effect; which is far too great for any human heart to think of desiring if he had not himself commanded us to pray for the same.

But because he is God he claims the honor of giving much more and more richly than any one can comprehend – like an eternal, unfailing fountain, which the more it pours forth and overflows, the more it continues to give – and he desires nothing more earnestly of us than that we ask much and great things of him, and again is angry if we do not ask and pray confidently.

For just as if the richest and most mighty emperor would bid a poor beggar ask whatever he might desire, and were prepared to give great imperial presents, and the fool would beg only for a dish of gruel; he would be rightly considered a rogue and a scoundrel, who was despising and making a monk of the invitation of his imperial majesty, and who would not be worthy of coming into his presence. So also it is a great reproach and dishonor to God if we to whom he offers and pledges such great and unspeakable treasures despise the same, and do not have sufficient confidence to receive them, but scarcely venture to pray for a piece of bread.

That is all the fault of the shameful unbelief which does not look to God for as much good as will satisfy the stomach; much less expects without doubt such eternal treasures of God. Therefore we must strengthen ourselves against it, and let this be our first prayer. Then indeed will all else be richly bestowed upon us, as Christ teaches (Matt. 6:33): “*Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his*

*righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* For how could he allow as to suffer want in temporal things when he promises that which is eternal and imperishable?

### **The Third Petition.**

*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*

[473] Thus far we have prayed that God’s name be honored by us, and that his kingdom prevail among us; in which two points is comprehended all that pertains to the honor of God and to our salvation, that we come into the ownership of God and all his possessions. But the great need is, that we cling firmly to them, and do not suffer ourselves to be torn therefrom. For as in a good government it is not only necessary that there be those who build and govern well, but also those who make defense, afford protection and maintain it in security; so here also, although we have prayed for the things of the greatest need, viz. for the Gospel, faith and the Holy Ghost, that he may govern us and redeem us from the power of the devil, we must also pray that his will be done. For if we are to abide therein, there will be quite wonderful encounters, so that, on account of them, we must suffer many thrusts and blows from everything that ventures to oppose and prevent the fulfillment of the two petitions that precede.

For no one believes how the devil opposes and exerts all his powers against them, and cannot suffer that any one teach or believe aright. And it hurts him beyond measure to suffer his lies and abominations, that have been honored under the most specious pretexts of the divine Name, to be exposed, and that he be disgraced, and besides be driven out of the heart, and suffer such a breach to be made in his kingdom. Therefore, with all his power and might he chafes and rages as a fierce enemy, and marshals all his subjects, and enlists the world and our own flesh as his allies. For our flesh is in itself indolent and inclined to evil, even though we have accepted and believe the Word of God. The world, too, is perverse and wicked; this he incites against us in various ways, and kindles and adds fuel, that he may hinder and drive us back, cause us to fall and again bring us under his power. That is all his will, mind and thought, for which he strives day and night, and never rests a moment, but employs all arts, malicious devices, ways and means which he can invent.

[474] We therefore who would be Christians must surely reckon upon having the devil with all his angels, together with the world, as our enemies, who will bring every possible misfortune and grief upon us. For where the Word of God is

preached, accepted or believed, and produces fruit, there the holy cross cannot be wanting. And let no one think that he shall have peace; but he must risk whatever he has upon earth – possessions, honor, house and estate, wife and child, body and life. That hurts indeed our flesh and the old Adam. For the test is to be steadfast and to suffer with patience whatever afflictions befall us, and to yield whatever is taken from us.

Therefore there is just as much need, as in everything else, that we pray without ceasing: “Dear Father, thy will be done, not the will of the devil and of our enemies, nor of anything that would persecute and destroy thy holy Word, or hinder thy kingdom; and grant that we may bear with patience and may overcome in whatever it be our lot to suffer on account of this thy will, so that our poor flesh may not yield or fall away from weakness or indolence.”

In these three petitions we find expressed in the simplest manner the need which pertains to God himself, yet all for our sakes. For whatever we pray concerns only us, namely, as we have said, that the will of God, which must be done without us, may also be done in us. For as his name must be hallowed and his kingdom come without our prayer, so also his will must be done and succeed, although the devil with all his adherents raise a tumult and rage in fury, and undertake to utterly exterminate the Gospel. But for our own sake we must pray that, even against their fury, his will be also done without hindrance in us, that they may accomplish nothing, and we remain firm against all violence and persecution, and submit to the will of God.

[475] Such prayer must indeed be our protection and defense now, to repel and overcome all that the devil, Pope, bishops, tyrants and heretics can do against our Gospel. Let them rage all together and attempt their utmost, and deliberate and resolve how they may destroy and exterminate us, that their will and counsel may prevail. One or two Christians with this petition alone shall be our wall against them, upon which they shall dash themselves to pieces. This consolation and confidence we have, that the will and purpose of the devil and of all our enemies must fail and come to naught, however proud, secure and powerful they know themselves to be. For if their will were not broken and frustrated, the kingdom of God could not abide upon the earth or his name be hallowed.

## **The Fourth Petition.**

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

Here we are mindful of the poor bread-basket, namely, of our body and the necessities of the temporal life. It is a brief and simple word, but it is also very broad and comprehensive. For if you speak of, and pray for, daily bread, you pray for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy the same, and also against everything which interferes with it. Therefore you must enlarge your thoughts and extend them afar, not only to the oven or the flour-barrel, but to the distant field and the entire land, which bears and brings to us daily bread and every sort of sustenance. For if God did not cause it to grow, and bless and preserve it in the field, we could never take bread from the oven or have any to set upon the table.

[476] To speak briefly, this petition includes everything that belongs to our entire life in the world. For on that account alone do we need daily bread. But to our life it is not only necessary that our body have food and covering and other necessities, but also that we live in peace and quiet with those among whom we live and have our intercourse in daily business and conversation and in every manner possible; in short, whatever pertains to the interests of family, of neighbors and of government. For where these things do not prosper as they ought, the necessities of life also must fail, and life cannot be maintained.

There is, besides, the greatest need to pray for temporal authority and government, as that by which, most of all, God preserves to us our daily bread and all the comforts of this life. For though we had received of God all good things in abundance, we should not be able to retain any of them, or use them in security and happiness, if he did not give us a permanent and peaceful government. For where there are dissension, strife and war, there the daily bread is already taken away, or at least diminished.

Therefore it would be very proper to place in the coat-of-arms of every pious prince the figure of a loaf of bread, instead of that of a lion or of a wreath of rue, or to stamp it upon the coin, to remind both them and their subjects that by their office we have protection and peace, and that without them we could not eat and retain our daily bread. Wherefore also they are worthy of all honor, so that we should give to them for their office what we ought and can, as to those through whom we enjoy in peace and quietness what we have, inasmuch as otherwise we could not retain a farthing; and that in addition we shall also pray for them that through them God may bestow on us still more blessing and good.

[477] Thus we have very briefly indicated how far this petition extends through all interests upon earth. Of this any one might indeed make a long prayer, and with many words enumerate all the things that are included therein, as that we pray God to give to us food and drink, garments, house and estate, and health of body, also that he cause the grain and fruits of the field to grow and

produce richly. And that afterwards he help us in our families, giving and preserving to us a godly wife, pious children and servants; cause our work, handicraft, or whatever we have to do to prosper and succeed, and favor us with faithful neighbors and good friends, etc. Also to give to emperors, kings and all ranks, and especially to our rulers and all counselors, magistrates and officers, wisdom, strength and success for good government and victory over the Turks and all our enemies; to give to subjects and the common people obedience, peace and harmony in their life with one another; and that he would preserve us from all sorts of calamity to body and support, as lightning, hail, fire, flood, poison, pestilence, cattle-plague, war and bloodshed, famine, destructive beasts and wicked men, etc. All this it is important to impress upon the simple, viz. that these things come from God and must be prayed for by us.

But this petition is especially directed against our chief enemy, the devil. For all his thought and desire is occupied with depriving us of all that we have from God and hindering us in its enjoyment; and he is not satisfied to obstruct and destroy spiritual government in order that he may lead souls astray by his lies and bring them under his power, but he also seeks to prevent the stability of all government and honorable peaceable relations upon earth. Thus he causes so much contention, murder, sedition and war, also lightning and hail, destruction of grain and cattle, poisoning the air, etc.; in short, he is sorry that any one has a morsel of bread from God and eats the same in peace; and if it were in his power, and our prayer (next to God) did not prevent him, he would not allow a stalk in the field or a farthing in the house, yea, not even an hour of life, to those especially who have the Word of God and endeavor to be Christians.

[478] Thus God also wishes to indicate to us how he cares for us in all our need and faithfully provides also for our daily maintenance. And although he grants and preserves the same even to the wicked and knaves, yet he wishes that we pray to him for it; so that we may recognize that we receive it from his hand, and may feel his paternal goodness toward us therein. For when he withdraws his hand nothing can prosper or be maintained to the end, as is daily seen and experienced. How much trouble there is now in the world only on account of bad coin, yea on account of daily oppression and imposition in common trade, bargaining and labor on the part of those who wantonly oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread! This indeed we must allow them to do; but let them take care that they do not omit the common prayer, and that this petition in the Lord's Prayer be not against them.

## **The Fifth Petition.**



*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

This point now pertains to our poor miserable life, which, although we have and believe the Word of God, and do and suffer his will, and are supported by his gifts and blessings, is nevertheless not without sin. For we stumble daily and transgress because we live in the world, among men who do us great wrong and give cause for impatience, anger, revenge, etc. And besides we have Satan at our back, who attacks us on every side, and fights (as we have heard) against all the foregoing petitions, so that it is not possible to stand always firm in such a persistent conflict.

Therefore there is here again great need to call upon God and to pray: “Dear Father, forgive us our trespasses.” Not as though he did not without, and even before, our prayer forgive sin (for he has given us the Gospel, in which is pure forgiveness) before we prayed or ever thought about it. But this is to the intent that we may recognize and accept such forgiveness. For since the flesh in which we daily live is of such a nature that it neither believes nor trusts God, and is ever active in evil lusts and devices, that we sin daily in word and deed, in sins of omission and commission, by which peace of conscience is destroyed, so that it is afraid of the wrath and displeasure of God, and thus loses the comfort and consolation of the Gospel, it is an unceasing necessity that we have recourse to this petition, and obtain therein consolation wherewith to again comfort the conscience.

[479] But this should serve to break our pride and keep us humble. For he has reserved this prerogative to himself, that if any one boast of his godliness and despise others, he may regard himself in the light of this prayer, and thus he will find that he is no better than others, and that in the presence of God all must lower their plumes, and be glad merely that they can attain forgiveness. And let no one think that as long as we live here he can reach such position that he will not need such forgiveness. In short, if God do not forgive without intermission we are lost.

It is therefore the intent of this petition that God would not regard our sins and bring in account against us what we daily deserve; but would deal graciously with us, and forgive, as he has promised, and thus grant us a joyful and confident conscience to stand before him in prayer. For where the heart is not in right relation towards God, nor can take such confidence, it will never more venture to pray. But such confident and joyful heart is impossible except in the assurance of the forgiveness of sin.

But there is a necessary yet consolatory addition attached: "*As we forgive.*"

[480] He has promised that we shall be sure that everything is forgiven and pardoned, yet in so far as we also forgive our neighbor. For just as we daily sin much against God – and yet he forgives us all through grace – so we must ever forgive our neighbor who does us injury, violence and wrong, and shows malice toward us, etc. If, therefore, you do not forgive, then do not think that God forgives you; but if you forgive, you have this consolation and assurance, that you have forgiveness in heaven. This is not on account of your forgiving, for God forgives freely and without condition, out of pure grace, because he has so promised as the Gospel teaches. But he has rather appointed this as a token for our confirmation and assurance in addition to the promise (which accords also with this prayer), (Luke 6:37): "*Forgive and ye shall be forgiven*" Therefore Christ also repeats it after the Lord's Prayer, and says (Matt. 6:14): "*For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*"

This sign is therefore annexed to this petition, that when we pray we remember the promise and think: "Dear Father, for this reason I come and pray thee to forgive me; not that I can make satisfaction, or can merit anything by my works, but because thou hast promised and attached the seal thereto, that I should be as sure as though I had absolution pronounced by thyself." For as great effects as Baptism and the Lord's Supper produce, which are appointed as external signs, this sign can also produce to confirm our consciences and cause them to rejoice. And it is especially given for this purpose, viz. that we might practice and make use of it every hour, as that which we have with us at all times.

## **The Sixth Petition.**

*And lead us not into temptation.*

We have now heard enough of the struggle and toil required to preserve all that for which we pray, and to persevere therein, which, nevertheless, is not achieved without infirmities and stumbling. Besides, although we have received forgiveness and a good conscience and are entirely acquitted, yet is our life of such a nature that one stands today, and to-morrow falls. Therefore, even though we be godly and stand before God with a good conscience, yet we must ever pray that he would not suffer us to relapse and yield to trials and temptations.

[481] But this temptation, or (as our old Saxons used to say) *Bekocrunge*, is of three kinds, namely, of the flesh, of the world and of the devil. For we all

dwell in the flesh and carry the old Adam on our shoulders; he exerts himself and daily incites us to wantonness, indolence, excess in eating and drinking, avarice and deception, to defraud our neighbor and to impose upon him, and, in short, to all manner of evil lusts which cleave to us by nature, and to which we are incited by the society and example of other people, and by what we hear and see, which often irritate and corrupt even a guiltless heart.

Then comes the world, which offends us in word and deed, and impels us to anger and impatience. In short, there is nothing but hatred and envy, enmity, violence and wrong, unfaithfulness, vengeance, cursing, raillery, slander, pride and haughtiness, with superfluous ornament, honor, fame and power, where no one is willing to be the least, but every one desires to sit at the head and to be seen before all.

Then comes the devil, inciting and provoking in all directions, but especially exerting himself in spiritual matters and such as pertain to the conscience, namely, to induce us to despise and disregard the works and Word of God, to tear us from our faith, from hope and from love, and bring us into a perverted faith or unbelief, false security and obduracy; or, on the other hand, to despair, denial of God, blasphemy and innumerable other shocking things. These are indeed snares and nets – yea, real fiery darts which the devil shoots most venomously into the heart, and not flesh and blood.

Great and grievous indeed are these dangers and temptations which every Christian must bear, even though each one were alone by himself. So that every hour that we are in this vile life, where we are attacked on all sides, chased and hunted down, we are moved to cry out and to pray that God would not suffer us to become weary and faint and to relapse into sin, shame and unbelief; for otherwise it would be impossible to overcome even the least temptation.

This, then, is “*not leading us into temptation*” viz. when he gives us power and strength to resist, even when the temptation be not taken away. or removed. For since we live in the flesh and have the devil about us, no one can escape temptation and allurements; and it cannot be otherwise than that we must endure trials – yea, even be entangled in them; but for this we pray, viz. that we may not fall and be drowned therein.

[482] To feel temptation is therefore a far different thing from consenting or yielding to it. We must all feel it, although not all in the same manner, but some in a greater degree and more severely than others; as youth suffer especially from the flesh, afterwards they that attain to middle life and old age, from the world, but others who are occupied with spiritual matters – that is, strong Christians – from the devil. But such feeling, as long as it is against our will and we prefer to be rid of it, can harm no one. For if we did not feel it, it could not be

called a temptation. But to consent thereto is when we give it loose reins and do not resist or pray against it.

Therefore we Christians must be armed and daily expect to be incessantly attacked, so that no one go on in security and heedlessly, as though the devil were far from us, but at all times expect and return his blows. For though I now am chaste, patient, kind and in firm faith, the devil will yet this hour send such an arrow into my heart that I can scarcely stand. For he is an enemy that never desists nor becomes tired, so that when one temptation ceases, others always arise anew.

Therefore there is no help or comfort, except to run hither and to take hold of the “Lord’s Prayer” and thus address God from the heart: “Dear Father, thou hast taught me to pray. Let me not relapse because of temptations.” Thus you shall see that they must desist, and finally yield. Else if you venture to help yourself by your own thoughts and counsel, you will only make the matter worse and give the devil more space. For he has a serpent’s head, which if it gain an opening into which he can pry, the whole body will follow without detention. But prayer can prevent him and drive him back.

## **The Seventh and Last Petition.**

*But deliver us from evil. Amen.*

[483] In the Greek text this petition says: “*Deliver or preserve us from the evil one, or the malicious one;*” and looks as if it were speaking of the devil, as though he would comprehend everything in one, that the entire substance of all our prayer should be directed against our chief enemy. For it is he who prevents and destroys everything among us that we pray for: the name or honor of God, God’s kingdom and will, our daily bread, a cheerful good conscience, etc.

Therefore we finally sum it all up and say: “Dear Father, pray help that we be rid of all these calamities.”, But there is nevertheless also included whatever may happen to us under the devil’s kingdom – poverty, shame, death, and, in short, all misery and sorrow which is so without limit upon the earth. For since the devil is not only a liar, but also a murderer, he constantly seeks our life, and wreaks his anger whenever he can affect our bodies with misfortune and harm. Hence it comes that he often breaks men’s necks or drives them to insanity, drowns some, and induces many to commit suicide, and to many other terrible calamities. Therefore we have nothing left upon earth to do but to pray against this arch-enemy without ceasing. For unless God preserved us we would not be secure

against him for even an hour.

Hence you see again how God wishes us to pray to him for everything also which affects our bodily interests, that we seek and expect help nowhere else except in him alone. But this point he put last. For if we are to be preserved and delivered from all evil, the name of God must be sanctified in us, his kingdom must be with us and his will be done among us. After that he will preserve us from sin and shame, and besides from everything that might harm or injure us.

[484] Thus God has briefly placed before us all the necessities which may ever concern us, so that we might have no excuse for not praying. But all depends upon this, that we learn to say “Amen” that is, that we do not doubt that our prayer will surely be heard, and that what we pray shall be done. For this is nothing else than the word of undoubting faith, not of one praying at a venture, but of one who knows that God does not lie to him, since he has promised to grant it. Where, therefore, there is no such faith, there also can be no true prayer. It is, therefore, a pernicious delusion of those who thus pray that they cannot from the heart say “Amen” thereto, and positively conclude that God will answer their prayer, but that they remain in doubt and say, “How should I be so bold as to boast that God will answer my prayer? Since I am nothing but a poor sinner,” etc.

The reason for this is, they regard not the promise of God, but their own work and worthiness, whereby they despise God and reproach him with lying, and therefore they receive nothing. As St. James says (1:6): *“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”* Only consider the importance that God attaches to our being, sure that we do not pray in vain, and to our avoidance of a light estimation of prayer.

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1. The part enclosed in brackets, which ends with paragraph 11, is wanting in the Ed. Pr. of the Large Catechism, but found in the editions from 1530 on. It was not inserted in the first German edition of the Book of Concord but was adopted by the Latin edition.↩

## Part Fourth. Of Baptism.

[485] We have now finished the three chief parts of common Christian doctrine. Besides these we have yet to speak of our two sacraments instituted by Christ, of which also every Christian ought to have at least some short elementary instruction, because without them there can be no Christian; although, alas! hitherto no instruction concerning them has been given. But a in the first place we take up baptism, by which we are first received into the Christian Church. That it may be readily understood, we will carefully treat of it, and keep only to that which it is necessary to know. For how it is to be maintained and defended against heretics and sects we will commend to the learned.

In the first place, it is important above all things to know well the words upon which baptism is founded, and to which everything pertains that is to be said on the subject, namely, where the Lord Christ speaks (Matt. 28:19): *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”*

Likewise in St. Mark, the last chapter (v. 16): *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”*

[486] In these words we must notice, in the first place, that here stands God’s commandment and institution that we shall not doubt that baptism is divine, and not devised and invented by men. For as truly as I can say no man has spun the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer out of his head, but they are revealed and given by God himself, so also I can boast that baptism is no human trifle, but that it is instituted by God himself, and that it is most solemnly and rigidly commanded that we must be baptized or we cannot be saved. It is not, then, to be regarded a trifling matter, like the putting on of a new coat. For it is of the greatest importance that we esteem baptism excellent, glorious and exalted, for which we chiefly contend and fight, because the world is now so full of sects exclaiming that baptism is a merely external thing, and that external things are of no use. But let it be ever so much an external thing, here stand God’s Word and commandment which have instituted, established and confirmed baptism. But what God has instituted and commanded cannot be a vain, useless thing, but must be most precious, though in external appearance it be of less value than a straw. If hitherto, when the Pope with his letters and bulls dispensed indulgences and consecrated altars and churches, solely because it has been considered a great thing of the letters and seals; we ought to esteem baptism much more highly and more precious, because God has commanded it,

and it is performed in his name. For these are the words. *Go . . . baptize* – but not in your name, but in the name of God.

For to be baptized in the name of God is to be baptized not by men, but by God himself. Therefore, although it is performed by human hands, it is nevertheless God's own work. From this fact every one may himself readily infer that it is a far higher work than the work of any man or saint. For what greater work can we do than the work of God?

[487] But here the devil makes his great efforts to delude us with false appearances, and lead us away from the work of God to our own works. For the appearance is much more splendid when a Carthusian does many great and difficult works; and we all think much more of that which we do and merit ourselves. But the Scriptures teach thus: Even though we collect in one mass the works of all the monks, however splendidly they may shine, they would not be as noble and good as if God should pick up a straw. Why? Because the person is nobler and better. And here we must not estimate the person according to the works, but the works according to the person, from whom they most derive their worth. But insane reason does not regard this, and because baptism does not present the attractive appearance of the works which we do, it is to be esteemed as nothing.

From this now derive a proper understanding of the subject, and when asked what baptism is, answer, that it is not simply water, but water comprehended in God's Word and commandment, and sanctified thereby, so that it is nothing else than a divine water; not that the water in itself is better than other water, but that God's Word and commandment are added.

Therefore it is pure wickedness and blasphemy of the devil that now our new spirits mock at baptism, separate it from God's Word and institution, and regard nothing but the water which is taken from the well; and then they prate and say: How is a handful of water to save souls? Yes indeed, my friend, who does not know as much as that, that if they be separated from one another water is water? But how dare you thus interfere with God's order, and tear out the most precious jewel with which God has connected it and set it, and which he will not have separated? For the germ in the water is God's Word and commandment and the name of God, which is a treasure greater and nobler than heaven and earth.

Thus we now comprehend the difference, that baptism is quite another thing from all other water; not on account of the natural water, but because something more noble is here added. For God himself stakes his honor, his power and might thereon. Therefore it is not simply natural water, but a divine, heavenly, holy and blessed water, and in whatever other terms we can praise it, – all on account of the Word, which is a heavenly, holy Word, that no one can sufficiently extol, for

it has and is able to do all that God is and can do [since it has all the virtue and power of God comprised in it]. Hence also it derives its character as a sacrament, as St. Augustine also taught: “*Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum.*” That is, when the Word is joined to the element or natural substance it becomes a sacrament, that is, something holy and divine, and a holy and divine sign.

[488] Therefore we always teach that the sacraments and all external things which God has ordained and instituted should not be regarded according to the coarse, external mask, as we regard the shell of a nut, but as the Word of God is included therein. For thus we also speak of the parental estate and of civil government. If we would regard the persons in such estate according to their noses, eyes, skin, and hair, flesh and bones, we should find them to look like Turks and heathen. And you might well proceed to say: Why should I esteem them more than others? But because the commandment of God is added: “*Honor thy father and thy mother*” I see quite another man, adorned and clothed with the majesty and glory of God. The commandment (I say) is the chain of gold about his neck, yea, the crown upon his head, which shows to me how and why I shall honor this flesh and blood.

Thus, and much more even, we must honor baptism, and esteem it glorious, on account of the Word, as being honored both in word and deed by God himself, and confirmed with miracles from heaven. For do you think it was a jest that when Christ was baptized the heavens opened and the Holy Ghost descended visibly, and there was nothing present but divine glory and majesty?

Therefore I exhort again that these two, the water and the Word, be by no means separated. For if the Word be taken away, the water is the same as that with which the servant cooks, and may indeed be called a bathkeeper’s baptism. But when the Word is added, as God has ordained, it is a sacrament, and is called Christian baptism. This is the first part of the essence and dignity of the holy sacrament.

[489] Since we know now what baptism is, and how it is to be administered, we must, in the second place, also learn why and for what purpose it is instituted; that is, what it avails, gives and produces. And this also we cannot discern better than from the words of Christ above quoted: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.*” Therefore we state it most simply thus, that the power, work, profit, fruit and end of baptism is this, viz. to save. For no one is baptized in order that he may become a prince, but, as the words declare, that he be saved. But to be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death and the devil, and to enter into the kingdom of Christ, and to live with him for ever.



Here you see again how highly and precious we should esteem baptism, because in it we obtain such an unspeakable treasure, which also indicates sufficiently that it cannot be simply water. For water alone could not do such a thing, but the Word does it, and (as said above) the name of God is comprehended therein. But where the name of God is, there also must be life and salvation, that it may indeed be called a divine, blessed, fruitful and gracious water; for by the Word such power is imparted to baptism that it is a laver of regeneration, as St. Paul also calls it (Tit. 3:5).

But as our would-be wise, new spirits declare that faith alone saves, and that works and everything external avail nothing, we answer: It is true, nothing in us is in any way effectual but faith, as we shall hear still further. But these blind guides are unwilling to see, viz. that faith must have something which it is to believe, something of which it may take hold, and upon which it can stand and rest. Thus faith clings to the water, and believes that in baptism is pure salvation and life; not in the water (as we have said plainly enough), but in the Word and institution of God incorporated therein, and the name of God which inheres in it. If I believe this, what else is that but believing in God as in him who has given and set his Word in this ordinance, and proposes to us this external element wherein we may apprehend such a treasure.

[490] We therefore say that it is madness to separate faith, and that wherein faith adheres and to which it is bound, though it be something external. Yea, it must be something external, that it may be apprehended by the senses, comprehended, and thereby be brought into the heart, as indeed the entire Gospel is an external, verbal proclamation. In short, what God does and works in us he proposes to work through such external institutions. Wherever, therefore, he speaks, yea, whereby or whereinsoever he speaks, there faith must look, and to that it must hold. Now here we have the words: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* To what else do they refer but to baptism, i.e. the water comprehended in God’s institution? Hence it follows that whoever rejects baptism rejects the Word of God, faith and Christ, who directs us to baptism and binds us thereto.

In the third place, since we have learned the great benefit and power of baptism, let us see further who is the person that receives these benefits and gifts of baptism. That also is again most clearly and beautifully expressed in the words: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”* That is, faith alone makes the person worthy to receive profitably the saving, divine water. Because these blessings are here promised and presented in the words in and with the water, they cannot be received, except we believe it with the heart. Although it is in itself a transcendent divine treasure, it is of no avail without faith. Therefore is

the effect of this single word, “*He that believeth*” – so great that it excludes and rejects all work which we can do in the opinion thereby to merit and obtain salvation. For it is determined that whatever is not of faith avails nothing and receives nothing.

But if they say, as they are accustomed, Baptism also is itself a work, and you say works are of no avail for salvation, what then would remain of faith?

Answer: Yes, our works avail nothing for salvation, but baptism is not our work, but the work of God (for you must make a great distinction between the baptism of Christ and a bathkeeper’s baptism). God’s works are saving and necessary for salvation, and do not exclude faith, but demand it; for without faith they cannot be apprehended. For in this, that you suffer the water to be poured upon you, you have not so received baptism that it becomes a blessing to you; but it will be a blessing to you if you have yourself baptized with the purpose, according to God’s command and institution, and besides in God’s name, to receive in the water the promised salvation. This the hand cannot do, nor the body; but the heart must believe it.

[491] Thus we see plainly that this is no work of our doing, but a treasure which he gives us, and which faith apprehends; just as the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross is not a work, but a treasure comprehended in the Word, and offered to us and received by faith. Therefore they do us wrong in exclaiming against us that we preach against faith; since we alone insist upon it as of such necessity that without it nothing can be received or enjoyed.

Thus we have these three parts which it is necessary to know concerning this sacrament, especially that the institution of God is to be held in all honor, which alone would be sufficient, though it be an entirely external thing. Just as the command “*Honor thy father and thy mother*” refers to bodily flesh and blood, wherein we are to regard not the mere flesh and blood, but the commandment of God in which they are comprehended, and on account of which the flesh is called father and mother; so also, though we had no more than these words, \_“Go ye and baptize\_” etc., it would be necessary for us to accept and do it as the institution of God. Yet now we have not only God’s commandment and injunction, but also the promise, on account of which it is still far more glorious than whatever else God has commanded and ordained, and is in short so full of consolation and grace that heaven and earth cannot comprehend it. But it requires a special art to believe this, for there is no want of treasure, but there is a want of faith to apprehend it and hold it firmly.

[492] Therefore every Christian has enough in baptism to learn and to practice all his life. For he has always enough to do to believe firmly what baptism promises and brings, viz. victory over death and the devil, forgiveness

of sin, the grace of God, the entire Christ and the Holy Ghost with his gifts. In short, it is so transcendent that if timid nature consider it, it might well doubt whether it could be true. For only consider, if I here were somewhere a physician who understood the art of saving men from dying, or, if they died, of restoring them to life, so that they would live for ever, how the world would pour in money like snow and rain, so that because of the throng of the rich no one could find access! But here in baptism there is brought free to every one's door such a treasure and such medicine as utterly destroys death and preserves all men alive.

We must so regard baptism and avail ourselves of its blessings, that when our sins and conscience oppress us we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say: I am baptized, and if baptized it is promised me that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body. For for this reason two things are done in baptism, viz. the body which can apprehend nothing but the water is sprinkled, and the word is spoken for the soul to apprehend.

But because water and the Word are united in baptism, therefore body and soul must be saved and live for ever; the soul through the Lord which it believes; but the body because it is united with the soul, and also apprehends baptism as it is able to apprehend it. We have, therefore, no greater jewel in body and soul, for thereby we are made holy and are saved, which otherwise no kind of life, no work upon earth, could attain.

This must suffice respecting the nature, blessing and use of baptism, for it answers the present purpose.

## **Of Infant Baptism.**

Here we are brought to a question by which the devil, through his sects, confuses the world, namely – Of Infant Baptism. Whether children also believe, and it be right to baptize them? Concerning this, we say briefly: Let the simple and unlearned dismiss this question from their minds, and refer it to the learned. But if you will answer, then answer thus:

[493] That the baptism of infants is pleasing to Christ is sufficiently proved from his own work, namely, that God sanctifies many of them who have been thus baptized, and has given them the Holy Ghost; and that there are yet many even today in both whose life and doctrine we perceive that they have the Holy Ghost; as it is also given to us by the grace of God that we can explain the Scriptures and come to the knowledge of Christ, which is impossible without the Holy Ghost.

But if God did not accept the baptism of infants, he would not give the Holy Ghost nor any part thereof to any of them; therefore during this long time unto

this day no man upon earth could have been a Christian. But since God confirms baptism by the gift of his Holy Ghost, as is plainly perceptible in some of the Church Fathers, as St. Bernard, Gerson, John Huss and others, who were baptized in infancy, and since the holy Christian Church cannot perish until the end of the world, they must acknowledge that such infant baptism is pleasing to God. For he can never be opposed to himself, or support falsehood and wickedness, or for its promotion impart his grace and Spirit. This is indeed the best and strongest proof for the simple-minded and unlearned. For they shall not take from us or overthrow this article: *“I believe in a holy Christian Church, the communion of saints.”*

Further, we say that we are not so much concerned to know whether the person baptized believe or not; for on that account baptism does not become spurious; but everything depends upon the Word and commandment of God. This now is perhaps somewhat acute, but it rests entirely upon what I have said, that baptism is nothing else but water and the Word of God in and with each other, i.e. when the Word is added to the water, baptism is genuine, even though faith be wanting. For my faith does not make baptism, but receives it; and baptism does not therefore become spurious if it be wrongly received or employed, as it is not bound (as said) to our faith, but to the Word.

For even though a Jew should today come with evil purpose and wickedness, and we should baptize him in all good faith, we must say that his baptism is nevertheless genuine. For here is the water together with the Word of God, even though he do not receive it as he should, just as those who unworthily partake of the Lord's Supper receive the true sacrament, even though they do not believe.

[494] Thus you see that the objection of the sectarians is vain. For (as we have said) even though infants did not believe, which, however, is not the case (as we shall now prove), yet their baptism would be genuine, and no one should rebaptize them. So too the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not corrupted though some one approach it with evil purpose, and he is not to be allowed on account of his abuse to take it a second time, the selfsame hour, as though he had not received the true sacrament at first; for that would be the greatest profanation and contempt of the sacrament. How can we think it possible that God's Word and institution should therefore fail and be of no account, because we make a wrong use of it?

Therefore I say, if you have not believed, then believe now and say thus: The baptism indeed was right, but I, alas! did not receive it aright. For I myself also, and all who are baptized, must speak thus before God: “I come in my faith and in that of others, yet I cannot rest in this, viz. that I believe, and that many people pray for me; but in this I can rest, that it is thy Word and commandment. Just as I

receive the Lord's Supper, trusting not in my faith, but in the Word of Christ; whether I am strong or weak I commit myself into the hand of God. But this I know, that he bids me go eat and drink, etc., and gives me his body and blood, that will not deceive me or prove false to me."

Thus we do also in infant baptism. We bring the child in the purpose and hope that it may believe, and we pray that God may grant it faith: but we do not baptize it upon that, but solely upon the command of God. Why so? Because we know that God does not lie: I and my neighbor, and in short all men, may err and deceive, but the Word of God cannot err.

[495] Therefore they are presumptuous and likewise obtuse minds that draw such inferences and conclusions as that where there is not the true faith, there also can be no true baptism. Just as if I would draw the inference: If I do not believe, then Christ is nothing; or thus: If I am not obedient, then father, mother and government are nothing. Is it indeed a correct conclusion that where any one do not what he ought, the thing therefore in itself shall be nothing and of no value?

My dear reader, just invert the argument and draw this inference. For this very reason baptism is something and is right, because it has been wrongly received. For if it were not something right and true in itself, it could not be wrongly received nor sinned against. The saying is: "An abuse does not destroy a matter, but confirms it." For gold is not the less gold though a harlot wear it in sin and shame.

Therefore let it be decided that baptism always remains true, retains its full nature, even though a person should be baptized, and yet should not truly believe. For God's institution and Word cannot be changed or perverted by men. But these fanatics are so blinded that they do not see the Word and commandment of God; and regard baptism only as they regard water in the brook or in a vessel; and the magistrate only as they look upon another man; and because they regard neither faith nor obedience, they conclude that these institutions themselves are of no account. Here lurks a concealed seditious devil, who would like to tear the crown from the head of authority to trample it under foot, and in addition pervert and bring to naught all the works and institutions of God. Therefore we must be brave and well armed, and not allow ourselves to be turned from the Word, so as not to regard baptism a mere empty sign, as the fanatics dream.

[496] Finally, we must also know what baptism signifies, and why God has ordained just such external sign and form for the sacrament by which we are first received into the Christian Church. But the act or form is this, that we are sunk under the water, which passes over us, and afterwards are drawn out again.

These two parts, to be sunk under the water and drawn out again, signify the power and efficacy of baptism, which is nothing else than putting to death the old Adam, and after that the resurrection of the new man, both of which must take place in us all our lives. So that a truly Christian life is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever to be continued. For this must be practiced without ceasing, that we ever keep purging away whatever is of the old Adam, and that that which belongs to the new man may come forth. But what is the old man? It is that which is born in us, from Adam, malicious, hateful, envious, lascivious, avaricious, indolent, haughty, yea, unbelieving, infected with all vices, and having by nature nothing good in it. When now we are received into the kingdom of Christ, these things must daily decrease, that we daily become more gentle, more patient, more meek, and ever withdrawn more and more from unbelief, avarice, hatred, envy, haughtiness.

This is the true use of baptism among Christians, as signified by the employment of water. Where this therefore is not practiced, but the old man is left unbridled, so as to continually become stronger, that is not rightly using baptism, but striving against baptism. For those who are without Christ cannot but daily become worse, according to the proverb which expresses the truth, "Worse and worse – the longer, the worse." If a year ago one was proud and avaricious, then he is today much prouder and more avaricious; so that the vice grows and increases from youth up. A young child has no special bad habits; but if it grow up it becomes unchaste and impure, and if it reach maturity real vices begin to prevail and become daily worse.

Therefore the old man goes unrestrained in his nature if he be not checked and suppressed by the power of baptism. On the other hand, where men have become Christians, he daily decreases until he is finally destroyed. That is rightly to be buried in baptism, and to daily come forth again. Therefore the external sign is appointed not only for a powerful effect but also for an important signification. Where, therefore, faith flourishes with its fruits, there it has no empty significance, but the work [of mortifying the flesh] is added; but where faith is wanting, it remains a mere unfruitful sign.

[497] And here you perceive that baptism, both in its power and significance, comprehends also the third sacrament, which has been called repentance, as it is really nothing else than baptism. For what else is repentance but an earnest attack upon the old man [that his lusts be restrained] at the beginning of a new life? Therefore if you live in repentance, you walk in baptism, which not only signifies such a new life, but also produces, begins and exercises it. For therein are given grace, spirit and power to overcome the old man, so that the new man may come forth and become strong.

Therefore our baptism abides for ever; and even though some one should fall from it and sin, we nevertheless always have access thereto, that we may again subdue the old man. But we must not again be sprinkled with water; for though we were a hundred times put under the water, it would nevertheless be only one baptism, although the act and significance continue and remain. Repentance, therefore, is nothing else than a return and approach to baptism, that we return to and practice what had been begun and had been abandoned.

This I say, therefore, that we do not fall into the opinion in which we for a long time had been, by imagining that our baptism is something past, which we can no longer use after we have fallen again into sin. And the reason is, that it was regarded only according to the external act once performed and completed. And this arose from the fact that St. Jerome wrote that repentance is the second plank by which we must swim forth and cross over after the ship is broken, by which we climb, and on which we are carried across the deep when we come into the Christian Church. Thereby the use of baptism is so removed that it can profit us no longer. Therefore the expression is not correct, or else never rightly understood. For the ship never breaks, because (as we have said) it is the institution of God, and not a matter of ours; but it happens, indeed, that we slip and fall out of the ship. Yet if any one fall out, let him see to it that he swim up and cling to it till he again come into it and live in it, as he had formerly begun.

[498] Thus it appears how excellent a thing baptism is, which delivers us from the jaws of the devil and makes us God's own, suppresses and takes away sin, and afterwards daily strengthens the new man; and is and remains ever efficacious until we pass from this estate of misery to eternal glory.

For this reason let every one esteem his baptism as a daily dross in which he shall constantly walk, that he may ever be found in the faith and its fruits, that he suppress the old man and grow up in the new. For if we would be Christians we must practice the work whereby we are Christians. But if any one fall away therefrom, let him again come into it. For just as Christ the mercy-seat does not abolish himself or forbid us again to come to him, even though we sin, so all his treasure and gifts also remain. If, therefore, we have once in baptism received forgiveness of sin, it will remain every day, as long as we live, that is, as long as we carry the old man about with us.

## Part Fifth. Of The Sacrament Of The Altar.

[499] As we have heard of holy baptism, so we must speak also concerning the other sacrament, namely, concerning these three points: *What it is, what are its benefits, and who shall receive it.* And all these are established by the words whereby Christ has instituted it. This every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the sacrament should know. For we do not think that they who know not what they seek, or why they come, should be admitted or should have it administered to them. The words are these:

*"Our Lord Jesus Christ the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

*"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."*

[500] Here also we do not wish to enter into controversy and contend with the traducers and blasphemers of this sacrament, but we must first learn (as we did in respect of baptism) what is of the greatest importance, namely, that the chief point is the Word and institution or command of God. For it has not been invented or introduced by any man, but without any one's counsel and deliberation it has been instituted by Christ. Therefore just as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed retain their nature and worth, although you never keep the first, pray the second or believe the third; so also does this precious sacrament remain undisturbed, so that nothing can be withdrawn or taken from it, even though we employ and dispense it unworthily. Can you think indeed that God is so concerned about what we do and believe, as on that account to change his institutions? Yet in all worldly things everything remains as God has created and ordered it, no matter how we employ or use it. This must always be maintained, for thereby the prating of nearly all the



fanatical spirits can be repelled. For they regard the sacraments as something that we do without the Word of God.

QUESTION: WHAT IS THEREFORE THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR?

Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink. And as we have said of baptism that it is not simply water, so here also we say the sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine as are ordinarily served at table, but bread and wine comprehended in and connected with the Word of God.

It is the Word (I say) which makes and distinguishes this sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is and is properly called the body and blood of Christ. For it is said: *“Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum.”* “If the Word be joined to the element it becomes a sacrament.” This saying of St. Augustine is so explicitly and so well put that he has scarcely said anything better. The Word must make a sacrament of the element, else it remains a mere element. Now, it is not the word or institution of a prince or emperor, but of the Exalted Majesty, at whose feet all creatures should fall and say: “Amen, it is as he says,” and accept it with all reverence, fear and humility.

[501] With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics raise the objection, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? etc., I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in his little finger. For here stands the Word of Christ: *“Take, eat; this is my body; – Drink ye all of this, this is the new testament in my blood,”* etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves his masters, and make it different from what he has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word or regard it without the Word, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the Word be added thereto, as it must be, then in virtue of the same it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ have spoken, so it is, as he can never lie or deceive.

Hence it is easy to reply to all manner of questions about which at the present time men are anxious, as, for instance: Whether a wicked priest can administer and distribute the sacrament, and such like other points. For here conclude and say: Even though a knave take or distribute the sacrament, he receives the true sacrament, that is, the true body and blood of Christ, just as truly as he who receives or administers it in the most worthy manner. For it is not founded upon the holiness of men, but upon the Word of God. And as no saint upon earth, yea,

no angel in heaven, can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so also can no one change or alter it, even though it be abused. For the Word by which it became a sacrament and was instituted does not become false because of the person or his unbelief. For he does not say: If you believe or are worthy you will receive my body and blood, but: Take, eat and drink, this is my body and blood. Likewise: Do this (namely, what I now do, institute, give and bid you take). That is as much as to say, No matter whether you be worthy or unworthy, you have here his body and blood by virtue of these words which are added to the bread and the wine. This mark, and observe well; for upon these words rest all our foundation, protection and defense against all error and temptation that have ever come or may yet come.

[502] Thus we have briefly the first point which pertains to the essence of this sacrament. Now let us further look to the efficacy and benefits on account of which the sacrament was instituted; which is also the most necessary part therein, that we may know what we should there seek and obtain. This is plain and clear from the words just mentioned: *“This is my body and blood, given and shed for you, for the remission of sins.”* That is as much as to say briefly: We approach the sacrament in order to receive there a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins. Why so? Because the words stand here and give us the same; for on this account he bids me eat and drink, that it may be my own and may benefit me, as a sure pledge and token, yea, just the very same thing that is appointed for me against my sins, death and every calamity.

On this account indeed is it called a food of souls, which nourishes and strengthens the new man. For by baptism we are first born anew; but (as we said before) there remains besides the old vicious nature of flesh and blood in man, and there are so many hindrances and temptations of the devil and of the world that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes also stumble.

Therefore it is given for daily food and sustenance, that faith may refresh and strengthen itself so as not to retire in such a battle, but that it become ever stronger and stronger. For the new life must be so regulated that it continually increase and progress; but it must suffer much opposition. For the devil is such a furious enemy that if he sees that we oppose him and attack the old man, and that he cannot overpower us with violence, he prowls and moves about on all sides, attempts all arts, and does not desist, until he finally wearies us, so that we either renounce our faith or yield hands and feet and become careless or impatient. Therefore is this consolation here given when the heart feels that the burden is becoming too heavy, so that it may here obtain new power and refreshment.

[503] But here a willful misrepresentation is made by our wise spirits with

their great art and wisdom, crying out and protesting: How can bread and wine forgive sins or strengthen faith? Although they hear and know that we do not say this of such bread and wine as is in itself bread and wine, but of such bread and wine as is the body and blood of Christ, and is united with the words. That, we say, is the treasure, and nothing else, through which such forgiveness is obtained. Now the only way in which it is given and appropriated to us is in the words: "*Given and shed for you.*" For herein I have both truths, that it is the body and blood of Christ, and that it is mine as a treasure and gift. But the body of Christ can never be an unfruitful, vain thing, without efficacy and without benefits. Yet however great be the treasure in itself, it must be comprehended in the Word and administered to us, else we should never be able to know or seek it.

Therefore also it is vain talk when they say that the body and blood of Christ are not given and shed for us in the Lord's Supper, and therefore we cannot have forgiveness of sins in the sacrament. For although the work was accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot otherwise come to us, but through the Word. For what would we otherwise know about it, that such a thing was accomplished and is to be given us if it were not delivered to us in the preaching or administration of the oral Word? Whence will they know, or how can they lay hold of and appropriate to themselves, this forgiveness, except they hold and believe the Scriptures and the Gospel? But now the entire Gospel and the article of the Creed: "*I believe a holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin*" etc., are by the Word embodied in this sacrament and presented to us. Why should we allow this treasure to be torn from the sacrament? Since they must confess that these are the words which we hear everywhere in the Gospel, and they dare by no means say that these words in the sacrament are of no use, as little as that the entire Gospel or Word of God, apart from the sacrament, is of no use.

[504] Thus we have now the entire sacrament, both as to what it is in itself and as to what it brings and profits. Now we must also see who is the person that receives this efficacy and benefit. That is answered briefly, as we said above of baptism and often elsewhere: Whoever believes it has what the words declare and bring, For they are not spoken or proclaimed to stone and wood, but to those who bear them, to whom he says: "*Take and eat*" etc. And because he offers and promises forgiveness of sin, it cannot be received otherwise than by faith. This faith he himself demands in the Word when he says: "*Given and shed for you*" As if he had said: For this reason I give it, and bid you eat and drink, that you may partake of it and enjoy it. Whoever now receives these words, and believes that what they declare is true, has it. But whoever does not believe it has nothing, as it is offered to him in vain, and he refuses to enjoy such a saving good. The

treasure indeed is opened and placed at every one's door, yea, upon every one's table, but it is necessary that you also take of it, and confidently regard it as the words give it to you.

This now is the entire Christian preparation for receiving this sacrament worthily. For since this treasure is fully presented in the words, it can be apprehended and appropriated only by the heart. For such a gift and eternal treasure cannot be seized by the hand. Fasting and prayer, etc. may indeed be an external preparation and discipline, that the body may bear itself modestly and reverently towards the body and blood of Christ; yet that which is given in and with it cannot be seized and appropriated by the body. But this is done by the faith of the heart, which discerns this treasure and desires it. This may suffice for the general instruction respecting this sacrament; for what is further to be said of it belongs to another time.

[505] In conclusion, since we have now the true understanding and doctrine of the sacrament, there is indeed need of some exhortation and admonition, that men may not neglect so great a treasure which is daily administered and distributed among Christians – that is, that those who would be Christians often prepare themselves to receive this venerable sacrament. For we see that men are negligent and indifferent with respect to it; and there is a great multitude of such, who hear the Gospel, and who, because the nonsense of the Pope has been abolished, and we are freed from his laws and coercion, go one, two, three years or even longer without the sacrament, as though they were such strong Christians that they have no need of it; and some allow themselves to be prevented and deterred by the pretense that we have taught that no one should approach it unless he feel hunger and thirst, and which urge him to it. Some pretend that it is a matter of liberty and not necessary, and that it is sufficient to believe without it; and thus for the most part they go so far that they become quite hardened, and finally despise both the sacrament and the Word of God.

Now, it is true, as we have said, that no one should be coerced or compelled, lest we again institute an inquisition destructive to souls. But this we must know, nevertheless, that such people as so long a time deprive themselves of, and withdraw from, the sacrament, are not to be considered Christians. For Christ has not instituted it to be treated as a show; but has offered it to his Christians, that they may eat and drink it, and thereby remember him.

And those indeed who are true Christians, and esteem the sacrament precious and holy, ought to urge and impel themselves thereto. Yet that the simple-minded and the weak who also desire to be Christians be the more incited to consider the cause and need which ought to impel them, we will treat somewhat of this point. For as in other matters pertaining to faith, love and patience, it is not enough to

teach and instruct, but there is need also of daily exhortation, so here also is there need of importunity in preaching, that men may not become indifferent and be offended, since we know and feel how the devil always opposes this and everything Christian, and drives and deters therefrom as much as he can.

[506] And we have, in the first place, the clear text in the very words of Christ: "*Do this in remembrance of me.*" These are words bidding and commanding us, by which all who would be Christians are enjoined to partake of this sacrament. Therefore whoever would be a disciple of Christ, with whom he here speaks, must consider and observe this, not from compulsion, as being forced by men, but in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to please him. But if one say: It is written in immediate connection, "*as oft as ye do it*" from which it appears that he compels no one, but leaves it to our free choice, answer: That is true, yet it is not written that we should never do so. Yea, just because he uses the words, "*as oft as ye do it*" it is implied that we shall often do it; and therefore it is added that he wishes to have the sacrament free, not limited to special times, like the Passover of the Jews, which they were obliged to eat only once a year, and just upon the fourteenth day of the first full moon in the evening, and which must not vary a day. As if he would say thereby: I institute a Passover or Supper for you which you shall enjoy not only once a year, just upon this evening, but often, when and where you will, according to every one's opportunity and necessity, bound to no place or appointed time, although the Pope afterwards perverted it, and again made a Jewish feast of it.

Thus, you perceive, it is not left free in such a sense that we may despise it. For that I call despising it if one allow so long a time to elapse and with nothing to hinder him, but yet never feels desire for it. If you wish such liberty you may as well have so much more, and be no Christian, that you may neither believe nor pray. For the one is just as much the command of Christ as the other. But if you wish to be a Christian, you must from time to time render satisfaction and obedience to this commandment. For this commandment ought ever to move you to examine yourself and to think: See, what sort of a Christian I am! If I were truly one, I would sometimes have some little longing for that which my Lord has commanded me to do.

[507] And, indeed, because we are so much estranged from it we perceive what sort of Christians we were under the Papacy, that we went from mere compulsion and fear of human commandments, without inclination and love, and never regarded the commandment of Christ. But we neither urge nor compel any one; nor need any one do it as a favor or service to us. But you should be induced and constrained of your own accord, by this, viz. that he desires it and that it is pleasing to him. You must not be influenced by men to faith or to any

good work. We, on our part, do no more than to say and exhort you as to what you ought to do – not for our sake, but for your own sake. He invites and allures you; and if you despise it, you must yourself answer for it.

This is the first point, especially for those who are cold and indifferent, that they may come to reflection and be awakened. For this is certainly true, as I have found in my own experience, and as every one will find, that if a person thus withdraw from this sacrament, he will daily become more and more hardened and cold, and will at last altogether disregard it. Otherwise we must, from time to time, examine heart and conscience, and assume the position of those who desire to be right with God. And the more this is done, the more will the heart be warmed and enkindled, that it may not become entirely cold.

But if you say: How if I feel that I am not prepared? Answer: The same is also my temptation, especially from the old way under the Pope, in which we were compelled to self-torture in order to be so perfectly pure that God could not find the least blemish in us. On this account we became so timid that every one was instantly thrown into consternation and said to himself: Alas! thou art unworthy! For then nature and reason begin to reckon our unworthiness in comparison with the great and precious good; and then it appears like a dark lantern in contrast with the bright sun, or as filth in comparison with precious stones. Because nature and reason see this they refuse to approach, and would wait until they are prepared, so long that one week brings another, and one half year the other. But if you are to regard how good and pure you are, and labor that nothing burden the conscience, you must never approach.

[508] We must, therefore, make a distinction here among men. For those who are shameless and dissolute must be told to stay away. For they are not prepared to receive forgiveness of sin. For they do not desire it, and do not wish to be godly. But the others, who are not so hardened and wicked, and desire to be godly, must not absent themselves, even though they be feeble and full of infirmities: as St. Hilary also says: *“If any one have not committed sin in such a way as to be properly put out of the congregation and to be esteemed as no Christian, he ought not to absent himself from the sacrament, that he may not deprive himself of life.”* For no one will reach such a position that he will not retain many daily infirmities in flesh and blood.

Therefore such people must learn that it is the highest art to know that our sacrament does not depend upon our worthiness. For we are not baptized because we are worthy and holy, nor do we go to confession because we are pure and without sin, but the contrary, as poor miserable men, and just because we are unworthy; unless it be some one who neither desires grace or absolution nor intends to reform.

But whoever earnestly desires grace and consolation should feel impelled of his own accord, and should allow no one to deter him, but say: I, indeed, desire to be worthy; but I come not upon any worthiness, but upon thy Word, because thou hast commanded it, and I desire to be thy disciple, no matter what becomes of my worthiness. But this is difficult. For we always have this obstacle and hindrance to encounter, viz. that we look more upon ourselves than upon the Word and lips of Christ. For nature desires so to act that it can stand and rest in itself, and where it cannot do so it declines to take a step. Let this suffice concerning the first point.

[509] In the second place, there is besides this commandment also a promise, as we heard above, which ought most strongly to incite and encourage us. For here stand the kind and precious words: *“This is my body, given for you. This is my blood, shed for you, for the remission of sins.”* These words, I have said, are not preached to wood and stone, but to thee and me. Else he might as well be silent and not institute a sacrament. Therefore consider, and bring thyself into this *YOU*, that his speaking with thee be not in vain.

For in this he offers to us the entire treasure which he has brought for us from heaven, and to which he so invites us in other places with the greatest kindness, as in St. Matt. 11:28: *“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* Now it is indeed a sin and a shame that he so cordially and faithfully summons and exhorts us to our highest and greatest good, and we act so distantly with regard to it, and permit so long a time to pass [without partaking of the sacrament] that we grow quite cold and hardened, and have no inclination or love for it. We must never regard the sacrament as something injurious from which we had better flee, but as a remedy imparting only salvation and comfort, which will cure us and give us life, both in soul and body. For where the soul has recovered the body also is relieved. How then is it that we regard it as if it were a poison, the eating of which would bring death?

It is indeed true that those who despise it and live in an unchristian manner receive it to their hurt and judgment, for nothing shall be good or saving to them, just as with a sick person who from caprice eats and drinks what is forbidden him by the physician. But those who are sensible of their weakness, desire to be rid of it and long for help, should regard and use it only as a precious antidote against the poison which is in them. For here in the sacrament you shall receive, from the lips of Christ, forgiveness of sin, which contains and brings with it the grace and Spirit of God, with all his gifts, protection, shelter and power against death and Satan and all misfortune.

[510] Thus you have, on the part of God, both the commandment and the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides this, on your part, your own distress

which oppresses you, and because of which this commandment, invitation and promise are given, ought to impel you. For he himself says: “*They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick;*” that is, those who are weary and heavy-laden with their sins, with the fear of death, temptations of the flesh and of the devil. If, therefore, you are heavy-laden and feel your weakness, then go joyfully to this sacrament and obtain refreshment, consolation and strength. For if you would wait until you are rid of such burdens, that you might approach worthily and with entire purity to the sacrament, you must for ever stay away. For in that case he pronounces sentence and says: If you are pure and godly you have no need of me, and I have no need of thee. Therefore they alone are to be called unworthy who neither feel their infirmities nor wish to be considered sinners.

But if you say: What shall I do if I cannot feel such distress or experience hunger and thirst for the sacrament? Answer: For those who are so minded that they do not realize their condition I know no better counsel than that they explore deeply their own heart to ascertain whether they also have flesh and blood. And if you find that to be the case, then go, for your good, to St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, and hear what is the nature of the fruits of your flesh: “*Now the works of the flesh*” (he says c. 5:19 sqq.) “*are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like.*”

[511] Therefore if you cannot feel it, only believe the Scriptures. They will not lie to you, and they know your flesh better than you yourself. Yea, St. Paul further concludes (Rom. 7:18): “*I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing*” If St. Paul, therefore, speaks thus of his flesh, we had better not pretend to be more holy. But that we do not feel it is so much the worse; for it is a sign that there is a leprous flesh which feels nothing, and yet rages and consumes. Yet, as we have said, even if you be quite dead to all sensibility, only believe the Scriptures, which pronounce sentence upon you. And, in short, the less you feel your sins and infirmities, the more reason have you to go to the sacrament to seek help and a remedy.

In the second place, look about you and see whether you are also in the world. Or if you do not know it, ask your neighbors. And if you are in the world, do not think that there will be lack of sins and misery. For only begin to deport yourself as though you would be godly and adhere to the Gospel, and see whether no one will become your enemy, and do you harm, wrong and violence, and likewise give you cause for sin and crime. If you have not experienced it, then learn it from the Scriptures, which everywhere give this praise and



testimony to the world.

Besides this, you will also have the devil about you, whom you will not entirely tread under foot, because our Lord Christ himself could not entirely avoid him. Now, what is the devil? Altogether, as the Scriptures call him, a liar and murderer. A liar to lead the heart astray from the Word of God, and to blind it, that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. A murderer, who cannot bear one single hour to see you live. If you could see how many knives, darts and arrows are every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the sacrament as often as possible. But there is no reason why men walk so securely and heedlessly, except that they neither think nor believe that they are in the flesh, and in this wicked world or in the kingdom of the devil.

[512] Therefore only try this and practice it well, and examine yourself, or look about you a little, and only keep to the Scriptures. If even then you still feel nothing, you have so much the more need to lament both to God and to your brother. Then take counsel and seek others' prayers, and do not desist until the stone be removed from your heart. Then, indeed, the distress will not fail to be manifest, and you will find that you have sunk twice as deep as any other poor sinner, and are much more in need of the sacrament against the misery which unfortunately you do not feel, so that God may give his grace, and you may feel it more and hunger the more for the sacrament. This, too, especially since the devil plies his forces against you, and lies in wait for you without ceasing, to seize and destroy you, soul and body, so that you are not secure against him one hour. How soon might he have suddenly brought you into misery and distress when you least expected it!

Let this then be said for exhortation, not only for those of us who are adults and aged, but also for the young people, who ought to be brought up in the understanding of Christian doctrine. For thereby the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer might be more easily inculcated to our youth, and they would learn it with zest and pleasure, and thus would accustom themselves to it and practice it from their youth. For the old are well nigh defunct, so that these and other things cannot be attained, unless we train the people who are to follow and succeed us in our office and work, that they also bring up their children in good fruits, that the Word of God and the Christian Church may be preserved. Therefore let every father of a family know that it is his duty, by the injunction and command of God, to teach these things to his children, or have them learn what they ought to know. For since they are baptized and received into the Christian Church, they should also enjoy this communion of the sacrament, so that they may serve us and be useful to us; for they must all indeed help us in believing, loving, praying and fighting against the devil.

## **Part VII. The Formula Of Concord.**

# Part First. Epitome

*Of the Articles in Controversy among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession, Set forth and Reconciled in a Christian Way, according to God's Word, in the Following Recapitulation.*

## Introduction.

*Of the comprehensive summary rule and standard according to which all dogmas should be judged, and the controversies that have occurred should, in a Christian way, be decided and set forth.*

*Parallel Passages. — Sol. Dec., 568; Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art ii:15.*

- I. [517] We believe, teach and confess that the only rule and standard according to which at once all dogmas and teachers should be esteemed and judged are nothing else than the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament, as it is written (Ps. 119:105): “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” And St. Paul (Gal. 1:8): “Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed.”  
Other writings, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever reputation they may have, should not be regarded as of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures, but should altogether be subordinated to them, and should not be received other or further than as witnesses, in what manner and at what places, since the time of the apostles, the [purer] doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved.
- II. And because directly after the times of the apostles, and even in their lives, false teachers and heretics arose, and against them, in the early Church, symbols, i. e. brief, plain confessions, were composed, which were regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith, and confession of the orthodox and true Church, namely, THE APOSTLES' CREED, THE NICENE CREED, and THE ATHANASIAN CREED; we confess them as binding upon us, and hereby reject all heresies and dogmas which, contrary to them, have been introduced into the Church of God.
- III. [518] Moreover as to the schism in matters of faith which has occurred in our time, we regard the unanimous consensus and declaration of our Christian faith and confession, especially against the Papacy and its false<sup>1</sup>

worship, idolatry, superstition, and against other sects, as the symbol of our time, viz. THE FIRST UNALTERED AUGSBURG CONFESSION, delivered to the Emperor Charles V. at Augsburg in the year 1530, in the great Diet, together with its APOLOGY, and the Articles composed at Smalcald in the year 1537, and subscribed by the chief theologians of that time.

And because such matters pertain also to the laity and the salvation of their souls, we confessionally acknowledge the SMALL AND LARGE CATECHISMS of Dr. Luther, as they are included in Luther's works, as the Bible of the laity, wherein everything is comprised which is treated at greater length in Holy Scripture, and is necessary that a Christian man know for his salvation.

In accordance with this direction, as above announced, all doctrines should be adjusted, and that which is contrary thereto should be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith.

In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved, and the Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard, according to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas should and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they be good or evil, right or wrong.

But the other symbols and writings cited are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a witness<sup>2</sup> and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those who then lived, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned [by what arguments the dogmas conflicting with the Holy Scripture were rejected and condemned].

## Chapter I. Of Original Sin.

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, Art. ii.; Apology, Art. ii Smalcald Articles, Part. III., Art. i.; Sol. Dec. 573 sqq.*

### Statement of the Controversy.

[519] Whether Original Sin be properly and without any distinction man's corrupt nature, substance and essence, or indeed the principal and best part of his essence [substance], namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers? Or whether, even since the fall, there be a distinction between man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and Original Sin, so that the nature is one

thing, and Original Sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, is another?

### **Affirmative.**

The pure doctrine, faith and confession according to the above standard and comprehensive declaration:

1. We believe, teach and confess that there is a distinction between man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God, pure and holy, and without sin, but also as we have it [that nature] now, since the fall, namely, between the nature itself, which ever since the fall is and remains a creature of God, and Original Sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.
2. We believe, teach and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because the dogma that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith, concerning Creation, Redemption, Sanctification and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.

For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall, but also our bodies and souls since the fall, notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as his work, as it is written (Job 10; 8): "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about." Deut. 32:18; Isa. 45:9 sqq.; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Job 10:8; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Eccl. 12:1.

[520] This human nature, nevertheless without sin, and, therefore, not of other's but our own flesh, the Son of God has assumed into the unity of his person, and according to it become our true brother. Heb. 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same." Again, v. 16; 4:15: "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren," "yet without sin." Therefore Christ has redeemed it, as his work, sanctifies it as his work, raises it from the dead and gloriously adorns it as his work. But Original Sin he has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; he also will not raise it, or with the elect adorn or save it, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the; corruption

which infects the nature, and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.

3. But, on the other hand, we believe, teach and confess that Original Sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature, that nothing healthy or uncorrupt in man's body or soul, in inner or outward powers, remains, but, as the Church sings:

“Through Adam's fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human.”

This unspeakable injury cannot be discerned by the reason, but only from God's Word.<sup>3</sup> And [we affirm] that the nature and this corruption of nature no one but God alone can ever separate from one another; and yet this fully comes to pass, through death, in the resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally, without original sin, and separated and sundered from it, as it is written (Job 19:26): “I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold.”

## Negative.

Rejection of the false opposite dogmas.

1. Therefore we reject and condemn the dogma that Original Sin is only a *reatus* or debt, on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature.<sup>4</sup>
2. [521] Also that evil lusts are not sin, but concreated, essential properties of the nature, as though the above-mentioned defect and evil were not true sin, because of which man without Christ [not ingrafted into Christ] is to be a child of wrath.<sup>5</sup>
3. We likewise reject the error of the Pelagians, by which it is alleged that man's nature, even since the fall, is incorrupt, and, especially with respect to spiritual things, *in naturalibus*, i. e. in its natural powers, it has remained entirely good and pure.<sup>6</sup>
4. Also that Original Sin is only external, a slight, insignificant spot, sprinkle, or stain dashed upon the nature, beneath which [nevertheless] the nature has retained its powers unimpaired even in spiritual things.<sup>7</sup>
5. Also that Original Sin is only an external impediment to unimpaired spiritual powers, and not a despoliation or want of the same, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice its natural power is not thereby removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily washed away, as a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.<sup>8</sup>

6. Also, that in man the human nature and essence are not entirely corrupt, but that man still has something good in him, even in spiritual things, namely, piety, skill, aptness or ability in spiritual things to begin to work, or to co-work for something [good].<sup>9</sup>
7. On the other hand, we also reject the false dogma of the Manichaeans, when it is taught that Original Sin, as something essential and self-subsisting, has been infused by Satan into the nature, and intermingled with it, as poison and wine are mixed.
8. Also that not the natural man, but something else and extraneous to man, sins, and, on this account, not the nature, but only Original Sin in the nature, is accused.<sup>10</sup>
9. [522] We reject and condemn also as a Manichaean error the doctrine that Original Sin is properly, and without any distinction, the substance, nature and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that no distinction between the corrupt nature, considered by itself, since the fall, and Original Sin, can be conceived of, nor can they be distinguished from one another even in thought.<sup>11</sup>
10. Moreover this Original Sin is called by Dr. Luther natural sin, personal sin, essential sin (*Natursünde, Personsünde, Wesentlichle Sünde*); not that the nature, person or essence of the man is, without any distinction, itself Original Sin, but that, by such words, the distinction might be indicated between Original Sin which inheres in human nature, and other sins which are called actual sins.
11. For Original Sin is not a sin which is committed, but it inheres in the nature, substance and essence of man, so that though no wicked thought ever should arise in the heart of corrupt man, nor idle word be spoken, nor wicked deed be done, yet the nature is nevertheless corrupt through Original Sin, which is born in us by reason of the sinful seed, and is a fountain-head of all other actual sins, as wicked thoughts, words and works, as it is written (Matt. 15:19): "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Also (Gen. 6:5; 8:21): "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."
12. Thus it is also well to note the diverse signification of the word "nature," whereby the Manichaeans cover their error and lead astray many simple men. For sometimes it means the essence [the very substance] of man, as when it is said: God created human nature. But at other times it means the disposition and the vicious quality [disposition, condition, defect or vice] of a thing, which inheres in the nature or essence, as when it is said: The nature of the serpent is to bite, and the nature and disposition of man is to sin, and is sin; here the word nature does not mean the substance of man,

but something that inheres in the nature or substance.

13. [523] But as to the Latin terms “substance” and “accident,” because they are not words of Holy Scripture, and besides unknown to the ordinary man, they should not be used in sermons before ordinary, uninstructed people, but simple people should be excused from this [in this matter regard should rightly be had to the simple and uneducated]. But in the schools, among the learned, these words are rightly retained in disputations concerning Original Sin, because they are well known and used without any misunderstanding, to distinguish exactly between the essence of a thing and what is attached to it in an accidental way.

For the distinction between God’s work and that of the devil is thereby designated in the clearest way, because the devil can create no substance, but can only, in an accidental way, from God’s decree [God permitting] corrupt a substance created by God.

## **Chapter II. Of the Free Will.**

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, xviii.; Apology, xviii.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. i.; Sol. Dec., ii.*

### **Statement of the Controversy.**

Since the will of man is found in four dissimilar states, namely: 1. Before the fall; 2. Since the fall; 3. After regeneration; 4. After resurrection of the body, the chief question is only concerning the will and ability of man in the second state, namely, what powers, in spiritual things, he has, from himself, since the fall of our first parents, and before regeneration, and whether, from his own powers, before he has been born again by God’s Spirit, he be able to dispose and prepare himself for God’s grace, and to accept [and apprehend] or not, the grace offered through the Holy Ghost in the Word and holy [divinely-instituted] sacraments.

### **Affirmative.**

The pure doctrine concerning this article according to God’s Word.

1. Concerning this subject, our doctrine, faith and confession is, that, in spiritual things, the understanding and reason of man are [altogether] blind, and, from their own powers, understand nothing, as it is written (1 Cor. 2:14): “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for



- they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because he is examined concerning spiritual things.”
2. [524] Likewise we believe, teach and confess that the will of unregenerate man is not only turned away from God, but also has become an enemy of God, so that it has inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written (Gen. 8:21): “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” Also (Rom. 8:7): “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.” Yea, as unable as a dead body is to quicken and restore itself to bodily, earthly life, just so unable is man, who by sin is spiritually dead, to raise himself to spiritual life, as it is written (Eph. 2:5): “Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ;” (2 Cor. 3:5): “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything good, as of ourselves, but that we are sufficient is of God.”
  3. Yet God the Holy Ghost effects conversion, not without means; but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God’s Word,<sup>12</sup> as it is written (Rom. 1:16): “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Also (Rom. 10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing of the Word of God.” And it is God’s will that his Word should be heard, and that man’s ears should not be closed.<sup>13</sup> With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia, in Acts 16, are attentive to it, and are thus converted through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose work alone the conversion of man is. For, without his grace, and if he do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says (John 15:5): “Without me, ye can do nothing.” In these short words he denies to the free will all power, and ascribes everything to God’s grace, in order that no one may boast before God: 1 Cor. 1:29 [2 Cor. 12:5; Jer. 9:23].

## Negative.

Contrary false doctrine.

We therefore reject and condemn all the following errors, as contrary to the standard of God’s Word:

1. [525] The host [insane dogma] of philosophers who are called Stoics, as also of the Manichaeans, who taught that everything that happens must have happened so, and could not have happened otherwise, and that everything that man does, even in outward things, he does by necessity, and

that he is coerced to evil works and deeds, as in chastity, robbery, murder, theft and the like.<sup>14</sup>

2. We reject also the gross error of the Pelagians, who taught that man by his own powers, without the grace of the Holy Ghost, can turn himself to God, believe the Gospel, be obedient in heart to God's Law, and thus merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
3. We reject also the error of the Semi-Pelagians,<sup>15</sup> who teach that man, by his own powers, can make a beginning of his conversion, but without the grace of the Holy Ghost cannot complete it.
4. Also when it is taught<sup>16</sup> that, although man by his free will before regeneration, is too weak to make a beginning, and, by his own powers, to turn himself to God, and in heart to be obedient to God; yet, if the Holy Ghost, by the preaching of the Word, have made a beginning, and offered therein his grace, then the will of man, from its own natural powers, to a certain extent, although feebly, can add, help and co-operate therewith,<sup>17</sup> can qualify and prepare itself for grace,<sup>18</sup> and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel.
5. Also that man, after he has been born again, can perfectly observe and completely fulfill God's Law, and that this fulfilling is our righteousness before God, by which we merit eternal life.<sup>19</sup>
6. Also that we condemn the error of the Enthusiasts, who imagine that God, without means, without the hearing of God's Word, also without the use of the holy sacraments, draws men to himself, and enlightens, justifies and saves them.<sup>20</sup>

[Note: Enthusiasts are those who expect the illumination of the Spirit [celestial revelation] without the preaching of God's Word. -ed]

7. Also that in conversion and regeneration God entirely exterminates the substance and essence of the old Adam, and especially the rational soul, and, in this conversion and regeneration, creates a new soul out of nothing.<sup>21</sup>
8. [526] Also, when the following expressions are employed without explanation, viz. that the will of man, before, in, and after conversion, resists the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him intentionally and persistently; "for," as Augustine says, "in conversion God changes the unwilling into willing, and dwells in the willing."

As to the expressions of ancient and modern church teachers, when it is said: *Deus trahit, sed volentem trahit*, i. e. "God draws, but he draws the

willing,” and *Hominis voluntas in conversione non est otiosa sed agit aliquid*, i. e. “In conversion the will of man is not idle, but effects something,”<sup>22</sup> we maintain that, inasmuch as these expressions have been introduced for confirming the false opinion concerning the powers of the natural free will in man’s conversion, against the doctrine concerning God’s grace, they are not in harmony with the form of sound doctrine, and therefore, when we speak of conversion to God, should be avoided.

But, on the other hand, it is correctly said that, in conversion God, through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men, and that after such conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also co-operates in all the deeds of the Holy Ghost, which he works through us.

9. Also what Dr. Luther has written, viz. that man’s will is in his conversion purely passive,<sup>23</sup> i. e. it does nothing whatever, is to be understood in respect of divine grace in kindling new motions, i. e. when God’s Spirit, through the heard Word or the use of the holy sacrament, lays hold upon man’s will, and works [in man] the new birth and conversion. For if [after] the Holy Ghost has wrought and accomplished this, and man’s will has been changed and renewed alone by his divine power and working, then the new will of man is an instrument and organ of God the Holy Ghost, so that he not only accepts grace, but also, in the works which follow, co-operates with the Holy Ghost.

[527] Therefore, before the conversion of man, there are only two efficient causes,<sup>24</sup> namely, the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, as the instrument of the Holy Ghost, whereby he works conversion. To this Word man ought to listen, nevertheless it is not from his own powers, but only through the grace and working of the Holy Ghost, that he can believe and accept it.

### **Chapter III. Of the Righteousness of Faith before God.**

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, iv., vi., xii., xx.; *Apology Chap. ii.*; *Smalcald Articles*, Part II., Art. i.; Part III., Art. xiii.; *Formula of Concord*, Sol. Dec, iii.

#### **Statement of the Controversy.**

Since it is unanimously confessed in our churches, upon the authority of God’s Word and according to the sense of the Augsburg Confession, that we poor sinners are justified before God, and saved alone by faith in Christ, and thus

Christ alone is our righteousness, who is true God and man, because in him the divine and human natures are personally united with one another (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21), the question has arisen: “According to which nature is Christ our righteousness?” and thus two contrary errors have arisen in some churches.

For the one side<sup>25</sup> has held that Christ alone, according to his divinity, is our righteousness, if he dwell in us by faith; contrasted with which divinity, dwelling in men by faith, all the sins of men should be regarded as a drop of water to the great ocean. On the contrary, others<sup>26</sup> have held that Christ is our righteousness before God, alone according to the human nature.

### **Affirmative.**

*Pure Doctrine of the Christian Churches against both errors just mentioned.*

1. [528] Against both the errors just recounted, we unanimously believe, teach and confess that Christ is our righteousness, neither according to the divine nature alone, nor according to the human nature alone, but the entire Christ according to both natures, alone in his obedience, which as God and man he rendered the Father even to death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: “As by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).
2. Therefore we believe, teach and confess that our righteousness before God is, that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit or worthiness of ours preceding, attending or following, for he presents and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ’s obedience, on account of which righteousness we are received into grace by God, and regarded righteous.
3. We believe, teach and confess that faith alone is the means and instrument whereby we lay hold of Christ, and thus in Christ of that righteousness which avails before God, for the sake of which this faith is imputed to us for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).
4. We believe, teach and confess that this faith is not a bare knowledge of the history of Christ, but such a great gift of God that thereby we come to the right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in him that alone for the sake of his obedience, out of grace, we have the forgiveness of sins, and are regarded holy and righteous before God the Father, and eternally saved.

5. We believe, teach and confess that, according to the usage of Holy Scripture, the word justify means in this article, “to absolve,” that is, to declare free from sins. Prov. 17:15: “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are abomination to the Lord.” Also (Rom. 8:33): “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

And when in place of this, the words regeneration and vivification are employed, as in the Apology,<sup>27</sup> this is done in the same sense; for by these terms, in other places, the renewal of man is understood, and [which] is distinguished from justification by faith.

6. [529] We believe, teach and confess also that although many weaknesses and defects cling to the rightly believing and truly regenerate, even to the grave, yet they have reason to doubt neither of the righteousness which is imputed to them by faith, nor of the salvation of their souls, but should regard it certain that for Christ’s sake, according to the promise and [immovable] Word of the holy Gospel, they have a gracious God.
7. We believe, teach and confess that, for the maintenance of the pure doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith before God, it is necessary that the exclusive particles, i. e., the following words of the holy apostle Paul, whereby the merit of Christ is entirely separated from our works, and the honor given to Christ alone, be retained with especial care, as when the holy apostle Paul writes: “Of grace,” “without merit,” “without law,” “without works,” “not of works.” All these words, taken together, mean that “we are justified and saved alone by faith in Christ” (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; 3:24; 4:3 sqq.; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 11).
8. We believe, teach and confess that although the contrition that precedes, and the good works that follow, do not belong to the article of justification before God, yet such a faith should not be imagined as can coexist with a wicked intention to sin and to act against conscience. But after man is justified by faith, then a true living faith worketh by love (Gal. 5:6). Thus good works always follow justifying faith, and are surely found with it, if it be true and living; for it never is alone, but always has with it love and hope.

### **Antithesis or Negative.**

#### **Contrary Doctrine Rejected.**

Therefore we reject and condemn all the following errors:

1. That Christ is our righteousness alone according to his divine nature.<sup>28</sup>
2. That Christ is our righteousness alone according to his human nature.<sup>29</sup>
3. That in the expressions of the prophets and apostles, when the righteousness of faith is spoken of, the words “justify” and “be justified” do not signify to declare or be declared free from sins, and obtain the forgiveness of sins, but actually to be made righteous before God, because of love infused by the Holy Ghost, virtues and the works following them.<sup>30</sup>
4. [530] That faith looks not only to the obedience of Christ, but to his divine nature, as it dwells and works in us, and that by this indwelling our sins are covered.<sup>31</sup>
5. That faith is such a trust in the obedience of Christ as can exist and remain in a man who has no genuine repentance, in whom also no love follows, but he persists in sins against conscience.<sup>32</sup>
6. That not God himself, but only the gifts of God, dwell in the believer.<sup>33</sup>
7. That faith saves, on this account, viz. because by faith the renewal, which consists in love to God and one’s neighbor, is begun in us.<sup>34</sup>
8. That faith has the first place in justification, although also renewal and love belong to our righteousness before God, in such a manner that they [renewal and love] are not the chief cause of our righteousness, but, nevertheless, our righteousness before God is, without this love and renewal, not entire or complete.
9. That believers are justified before God, and saved partly by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and by the beginning of new obedience, or in part by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, but in part also by the beginning of new obedience.
10. That the promise of grace is imputed to us by faith in the heart, and by the confession which is made with the mouth, and by other virtues.
11. That faith without good works does not justify, and therefore that good works are necessarily required for righteousness, and without their presence man cannot be justified.

## Chapter IV. Of Good Works.

*Parallel Passages.*— *Augsburg Confession*, vi., xx.; *Apology* (III.); xx.: *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. xiii.; *Cf. Art. ii.*; *Formula of Concord*, Sol Dec, iv.

## Statement of the Controversy.

Concerning the doctrine of good works two divisions have arisen in some churches:

1. [531] First, some theologians have differed with reference to the following expressions, where the one side wrote:<sup>35</sup> “Good works are necessary for salvation.” “It is impossible to be saved without good works.” Also: “No one has ever been saved without good works.” But the other side,<sup>36</sup> on the contrary, wrote: “Good works are injurious to salvation.”
2. Afterwards a schism arose also between some theologians with respect to the two words, “necessary” and “free,” since the one side<sup>37</sup> contended that the word “necessary” should not be employed concerning the new obedience, which does not proceed from necessity and coercion, but from the free will. The other side has retained the word “necessary,” because this obedience is not at our option, but regenerate men are bound to render this obedience.

From this disputation concerning the terms a controversy concerning the subject itself afterwards occurred. For the one side contended that among Christians the law should not at all be urged,<sup>38</sup> but men should be exhorted to good works alone from the Holy Gospel. The other side contradicted this.

### **Affirmative.**

Pure Doctrine of the Christian Churches concerning this Controversy.

For the thorough statement and decision of this controversy, our doctrine, faith and confession is:

1. That good works certainly and without doubt follow true faith, if it be not a dead, but a living faith, as the fruit of a good tree.
2. We believe, teach and confess also that good works should be entirely excluded, as well when the question at issue is concerning salvation, as in the article of justification before God,<sup>39</sup> the apostle testifies with clear words, where it is written: “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, .... Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,” etc. (Rom. 4:6 sqq.). And elsewhere: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).
3. [532] We believe, teach and confess also that all men, but those especially who are born again and renewed by the Holy Ghost, are bound to do good



works.

4. In this sense the words “necessary,” “should” and “must” are employed correctly and in a Christian manner, also with respect to the regenerate, and in no way are contrary to the form and language of sound words.
5. Nevertheless by the words mentioned, “necessity” and “necessary,” if they be employed concerning the regenerate, not coercion, but only due obedience is understood, which the truly believing, so far as they are regenerate, render not from coercion or the impulse of the Law, but from the free will; because they are no more under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14; 7:6; 8:14).
6. Therefore we also believe, teach and confess that when it is said: The regenerate do good works from the free will; this should not be understood as though it were at the option of the regenerate man to do or to forbear doing good when he wished, and nevertheless could retain faith when he intentionally persevered in sins.
7. Yet this should not be understood otherwise than as the Lord Christ and his apostles themselves declare, namely, that the liberated spirit does not do this from fear of punishment, as a slave, but from love of righteousness, as children (Rom. 8:15).
8. Although this free will in the elect children of God is not complete, but is burdened with great weakness, as St. Paul complains concerning himself (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:17).
9. Nevertheless, for the sake of the Lord Christ, the Lord does not impute this weakness to his elect, as it is written: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).
10. We believe, teach and confess also, that not works,<sup>40</sup> but alone the Spirit of God, through faith, maintains faith and salvation in us, of whose presence and indwelling good works are evidences.<sup>41</sup>

## **Negative.**

### **False Contrary Doctrine**

1. [533] We reject and condemn the following modes of speaking, viz. when it is taught and written that good works are necessary to salvation. Also, that no one ever has been saved without good works. Also, that it is impossible without good works to be saved.
2. We reject and condemn the unqualified expression: Good works are injurious to salvation,<sup>42</sup> as offensive and detrimental to Christian discipline.



For, especially in these last times, it is no less needful to admonish men to Christian discipline [to the way of living aright and godly] and good works, and instruct them how necessary it is that they exercise themselves in good works as a declaration of their faith and gratitude to God, than that the works be not mingled in the article of justification; because men may be damned by an epicurean delusion concerning faith,<sup>43</sup> as well as by Papistic and Pharisaic confidence in their own works and merits.

3. We also reject and condemn the dogma that faith and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost are not lost by willful sin, but that the saints and elect retain the Holy Ghost, even though they fall into adultery and other sins, and persist therein.<sup>44</sup>

## **Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel.**

### **Statement of the Controversy.**

Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel be properly not only a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance<sup>45</sup> and censure, rebuking unbelief, which is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.

### **Affirmative.**

Pure Doctrine of God's Word.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Apology*, iv., 5 sqq.; 62 sqq.; (III.), 65 sqq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. ii., iv.; *Sol. Dec.*, v.

1. [534] We believe, teach and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church as an especially brilliant light, whereby, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God may be rightly divided.
2. We believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God's will.
3. Therefore everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the preaching of the Law.
4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz.

that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner intervening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

5. But since the term Gospel is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach and confess that if by the term Gospel the entire doctrine of Christ be understood, which he proposed in his ministry, as also did his apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.
6. But if the Law and the Gospel be contrasted with one another, as Moses himself is called a teacher of the Law, and Christ a preacher of the Gospel, we believe, teach and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but against the terrors of the Law consoles consciences, points alone to the merit of Christ, and again comforts them by the precious preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.
7. [535] As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright, but either become presumptuous hypocrites [who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness] as the Pharisees, or despair as did Judas; Christ takes the Law into his hands, and explains it spiritually (Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14). And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners (Rom. 1:18), how great it is; by this means are instructed in the Law, and then from it first learn to know aright their sins — a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them.

Therefore, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God,<sup>46</sup> is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are for the first time led aright to the Law, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in his Law requires of us, nothing of which we can observe, and therefore should seek all our righteousness in Christ —

8. Yet as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a "strange work"<sup>47</sup> of Christ, whereby he attains his proper office, i. e. to preach grace,

console and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

## Negative.

Contrary Doctrine which is Rejected.

1. Therefore we reject and regard incorrect and injurious the dogma that the Gospel is properly a preaching of repentance or reproof, and not alone a preaching of grace.<sup>48</sup> For thereby the Gospel is again converted into a law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures obscured, Christians robbed of true consolation, and the door opened again to [the errors and superstitions of] the Papacy.

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1. Cf. Preface to Book of Concord, § 3.↩
  2. Cf. § 2.↩
  3. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. i., § 3.↩
  4. This error is ascribed especially to Albertus Pighius. Köllner's Symbolik of Catholic Church, 285, 290.↩
  5. Taught by Pelagians, both ancient and modern; cf. Council of Trent, Sess. V. (p. 6 Tauchnitz edition).↩
  6. Almost the very words of Vict. Strigel in the disputation with Flacius at Weimar in 1560. Cf. Carpzov, 1179.↩
  7. Almost the general opinion of the Scholastics; for they contended that since the fall men were destitute only of the *donum supernaturale*, Cf Kollner, p. 284.↩
  8. Ascribed to D'Andrada, a Romish opponent of Chemnitz, who thus wrote in his *Defensio Trid. fidei Cathol.*, lib. v., p. 451 sqq.↩
  9. Also taught by Strigel in his declaration, written 1562.↩
  10. Ascribed by Augustine to the Manichaeans. Cf. Sol. Dec.↩
  11. The doctrine of Flacius and his adherents.↩
  12. Cf. Augsburg Confession, v.: 4.↩
  13. Ps. 95 . 7, 8; Heb. 3:7. Apology, xiii., 13; xxiv., 70; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii., § 3 sqq.; Sol. Dec., 597.↩
  14. Of the Stoics, Chrysippus especially taught this doctrine of necessity. Cf. *Cicero de fato*, c. 17 sq. The Manichaeans are erroneously said to have denied all moral liberty. See Epistle of Secundus the Manichaean to Augustine, § 2.↩

15. Massilians.↵
16. By Synergists. Cf. Sol. Dec.↵
17. Asserted by Strigel in Weimar Disputation.↵
18. Formula of Erasmus, employed by Melanchthon in Loci Theol. Ed. 1548.↵
19. Doctrine of Papists and monks (of. Sol. Dec. ii.: 79); also of Schwenkfeldians, Sol. Dec, xii.: 33.↵
20. The error of the Anabaptists and Schwenkfeldians. Cf. Augsburg Confession, Art. V.: 4; Formula of Concord, Ep. xii.: 22 sqq.; Sol. Dec, xii.: 30 sqq.↵
21. Error of the Flacians.↵
22. Expressions of Chrysostom, the Scholastics and Melanchthon.↵
23. Cf. Sol. Dec, ii.: 89.↵
24. Melanchthon had added a third cause: "A will assenting to and not resisting God's Word." See *Examen Ordinandorum*, p. 36 (edition of 1556) Cf. Sol. Dec, ii.: 90.↵
25. Andrew Osiander († 1554) and his followers.↵
26. Francis Stancar († 1574) and his followers.↵
27. Art. iv.: 65 sq.; xii.: 46.↵
28. Error of Osiander.↵
29. Error of Stancar, following Peter Lombard.↵
30. Error of Osiander; also of the Papists. Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. vi.. Cap. 10.↵
31. Error of Osiander.↵
32. Osiander charged the Lutherans with this error. It is that of the Antinomians. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. iii., § 42 sqq.↵
33. Perhaps taught by Stancar, who, according to Planck, iv.: 467 sq., taught that the Holy Ghost is sent not according to his essence, but according to his effect, operation and manifestation.↵
34. Errors 6-11 were taught by George Major († 1574).↵
35. George Major, Justus Menius and others, based on expressions of Melanchthon. See Frank's Theology of the Formula of Concord, ii.: 149 sqq.↵
36. Nicolaus Amsdorf († 1565).↵
37. Antinomians. Cf. Epitome, vi.↵
38. Opinion of John Agricola († 1666).↵
39. Major had made a distinction between eternal salvation and justification.↵
40. Major and Menius to the contrary.↵
41. Cf. Apology (III.): 63.↵
42. Amsdorf.↵

- 43. Cf. SoL Dec, iv.: 87.↵
- 44. Antinomians (see above, iii.: 17).↵
- 45. Insisted on by Agricola. Cf. Apology (III.): 66; xii.: 29.↵
- 46. Agricola maintained that this was sufficient for exciting repentance.↵
- 47. Cf. Sol. Dec, in loco.↵
- 48. Ascribed not only to Agricola, but to Anton, Otto, Paul Crell and Christopher Pezel.↵

## Chapter VI. Of the Third Use of the Law.

*Parallel Passages.*— *Sol. Dec.*, vi.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art, iii.: 40; *Formula of Concord*, *Sol. Dec.*, ii: 65 sqq.

### Statement of the Controversy.

[536] Since the Law was given to men for three reasons: *first*, that thereby outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient men [and that wild and intractable men might be restrained, as though by certain bars]; *secondly*, that men thereby may be led to the knowledge of their sins; *thirdly*, that after they are regenerate and [much of] the flesh notwithstanding cleaves to them, they may have, on this account, a fixed rule, according to which they should regulate and direct their whole life; a dissension has occurred between some few theologians, concerning the third use of the Law, viz. whether it is to be urged or not upon regenerate Christians. The one side has said, Yea;<sup>1</sup> the other, Nay.<sup>2</sup>

### Affirmative.

The true Christian Doctrine Concerning this Controversy.

1. We believe, teach and confess that although men rightly believing [in Christ] and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law, they nevertheless are not on this account without Law, but have been redeemed by the Son of God, in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night [that they should meditate upon God's Law day and night, and constantly exercise themselves in its observance (Ps. 1:2)], (Ps. 119). For even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law, which Law of God was also written upon their hearts, because they were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26 sq.; 2:16 sqq.; 3:3).
2. We believe, teach and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be urged with diligence, not only upon the unbelieving and impenitent, but also upon the rightly believing, truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.
3. [537] For although they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, yet, in the present life, this regeneration and renewal are not complete, but are only begun, and believers are, in the spirit of their mind,

in a constant struggle against the flesh, i. e, against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death. On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, will and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine upon the way before him, in order that he may do nothing from self-imposed human devotion [that he may frame nothing in a matter of religion from the desire of private devotion, and may not choose divine services not instituted by God's Word]; likewise, that the old Adam also may not employ his own will, but may be subdued against his will, not only by the admonition and threatening of the Law, but also by punishments and blows, so that he may follow and surrender himself captive to the Spirit (1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 6:12; Gal. 6:14; Ps. 119:1 sqq.; Heb. 13:21 [Heb. 12:1]).

4. Then as to the distinction between the works of the Law and the fruits of the Spirit, we believe, teach and confess that the works which are done according to the Law, as long as they are and are called works of the Law, are only extorted from man by the force of punishment and the threatening of God's wrath.
5. But the fruits of the Spirit are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and are done by believers so far as they are regenerate [spontaneously and freely], as though they knew of no command, threat or reward; for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, a manner which St. Paul, in his Epistles, calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind [Rom. 7:25; 8:7 (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2)].
6. Thus the Law is and remains both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate men, one and the same Law, namely, the immutable will of God; and the distinction, so far as it concerns obedience, is alone in the men, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does what is required him by the Law out of constraint and unwillingly (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the believer, so far as he is regenerate, without constraint and with a willing spirit, does that which no threatening [however severe] of the Law could ever extort from him.

## **Negative.**

### **False Contrary Doctrine.**

[538] Therefore we reject as a dogma and error injurious and conflicting with Christian discipline and true piety that the Law in the above-mentioned way and degree should not be urged upon Christians and those truly believing, but only

upon unbelievers and those not Christian, and upon the impenitent.

## Chapter VII. Of the Lord's Supper.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, x.; *Apology*, x.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. vi.; *Small Catechism*, 365; *Large Catechism*, 499; *Formula of Concord*, Sol. Dec, vii.

Although the Zwinglian teachers are not to be reckoned among the theologians who acknowledge and profess the Augsburg Confession, as they separated from them when this Confession was presented,<sup>3</sup> nevertheless since they are intruding themselves [with their assembly], and are attempting, under the name of this Christian Confession, to introduce their error,<sup>4</sup> we have wished also to make such a report as is needful [we have judged that the Church of Christ should be instructed also] concerning this controversy.

### Statement of the Controversy.

Chief Controversy between our Doctrine and that of the Sacramentarians upon this article.

Whether in the Holy Supper the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly and essentially present, are distributed with the bread and wine, and received with the mouth by all those who use this sacrament, whether they be worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving; by the believing, for consolation and life; by the unbelieving, for judgment [so that the believing receive from the Lord's Supper consolation and life, but the unbelieving take it for their judgment]? The Sacramentarians say, No; we say, Yea.

[539] For the explanation of this controversy it is to be noted in the beginning that there are two kinds of Sacramentarians. Some are gross Sacramentarians, who declare in clear [deutschen] words what they believe in their hearts, viz. that in the Holy Supper nothing but bread and wine is present, and distributed and received with the mouth.<sup>5</sup> Others, however, are subtle Sacramentarians, and the most injurious of all, who partly speak very speciously in our own words, and assert that they also believe in a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, yet that this occurs spiritually through faith.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless beneath these specious words, precisely the former gross opinion is contained, viz. that in the Holy Supper nothing is present and received with the mouth except bread and wine. For with them the word spiritually means nothing else than the Spirit of Christ, or the power of the absent body of Christ,



and his merit, which are present; but the body of Christ is in no mode or way present, except only above in the highest heaven, to which in heaven we should elevate ourselves by the thoughts of our faith, and there, and not at all in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, should seek this body and blood [of Christ].

### **Affirmative.**

Confession of the Pure Doctrine concerning the Holy Supper against the Sacramentarians.

1. We believe, teach and confess that, in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, and are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.
2. We believe, teach and confess that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood otherwise than as they sound, according to the letters; so that the bread does not signify the absent body, and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that, on account of the sacramental union, they [the bread and wine] are truly the body and blood of Christ.<sup>7</sup>
3. As to the consecration, we believe, teach and confess that no work of man or declaration of the minister [of the church] produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this should be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. [540] But at the same time we also unanimously believe, teach and confess that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of the institution of Christ should in no way be omitted, but should be publicly recited, as it is written (1 Cor. 10:16): “The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” etc. This blessing occurs through the recitation of the Word of Christ.
5. Moreover the foundations upon which we stand against the Sacramentarians in this matter are those which Dr. Luther has laid down in his Large Confession concerning the Lord’s Supper.<sup>8</sup>

The first is this article of our Christian faith: Jesus Christ is true, essential, natural, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

The second: That God’s right hand is everywhere; at which Christ is in deed and in truth placed according to his human nature, [and therefore] being present rules, and has in his hands and beneath his feet everything that is in heaven and on earth [as Scripture says (Eph. 1:22)]: There [at this right hand of God] no man else, or angel, but only the Son of Mary, is

placed; whence he can effect this [those things which we have said].

The third: That God's Word is not false, and does not deceive.

The fourth: That God has and knows of many modes of being in a place, and not only the one [is not bound to the one] which philosophers call local [or circumscribed].<sup>9</sup>

6. We believe, teach and confess that the body and blood of Christ are received with the bread and wine, not only spiritually by faith, but also orally; yet not in a Capernaïtic,<sup>10</sup> but in a supernatural, heavenly mode, because of the sacramental union; as the words of Christ clearly show, where Christ directs to take, eat and drink, as was then done by the apostles, for it is written (Mark 14:23): "And they all drank of it." St. Paul likewise says (1 Cor. 10:16): "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" i. e. he who eats this bread, eats the body of Christ, which also the chief ancient teachers of the Church, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I., Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, unanimously testify.
7. [541] We believe, teach and confess that not only the truly believing [in Christ] and worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelieving, receive the true body and blood of Christ; yet not for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent (1 Cor. 11:27,29).

For although they repel Christ from themselves as a Saviour, yet they must admit him even against their will as a strict Judge, who is present also to exercise and render judgment upon impenitent guests, as well as to work life and consolation in the hearts of the truly believing and worthy.

8. We believe, teach and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests, viz. those who do not believe; concerning whom it is written (John 3:18): "He that believeth not is condemned already." By the unworthy use of the Holy Supper this judgment is augmented, increased, and aggravated (1 Cor. 11:29).
9. We believe, teach and confess that no true believer, as long as he retain living faith, however weak he may be, receives the Holy Supper to his judgment, which was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, and yet penitent, for the consolation and strengthening of their weak faith (Matt. 9:12; 11:5, 28).
10. We believe, teach and confess that all the worthiness of the guests of this heavenly feast is and consists alone in the most holy obedience and absolute merit of Christ, which we appropriate to ourselves by true faith, and of it [this merit] we are assured by the sacrament. This worthiness does not at all depend upon our virtues or inner and outward preparations.<sup>11</sup>

## Negative.

Contrary condemned Doctrines of the Sacramentarians.

On the other hand, we unanimously reject and condemn all the following erroneous articles, which are opposed and contrary to the above-presented doctrine, simple [simplicity of] faith, and the [pure] confession concerning the Lord's Supper:

1. [542] The Papistic transubstantiation, where it is taught in the Papacy that in the Holy Supper the bread and wine lose their substance and natural essence, and are thus annihilated; that they are changed into the body of Christ, and the outward form alone remains.
2. The Papistic sacrifice of the mass for the sins of the living and the dead.
3. That [the sacrilege whereby] to laymen only one form of the sacrament is given, and the cup is withheld from them, against the plain words of the testament of Christ, and they are [thus] deprived of his blood.
4. When it is taught that the words of the testament of Christ should not be understood or believed simply as they sound, but that they are obscure expressions, whose meaning must be sought first in other passages of Scripture.<sup>12</sup>
5. That in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is not received orally with the bread; but that with the mouth only bread and wine are received, and the body of Christ only spiritually by faith.<sup>13</sup>
6. That the bread and wine in the Holy Supper are nothing more than [symbols or] tokens, whereby Christians recognize one another.<sup>14</sup>
7. That the bread and wine are only figures, similitudes and representations of the far, absent body of Christ.<sup>15</sup>
8. That the bread and wine are no more than a memorial,<sup>16</sup> seal and pledge, through which we are assured, when faith elevates itself to heaven, that it there becomes participant of the body and blood of Christ as truly as, in the Supper, we eat bread and drink wine.<sup>17</sup>
9. That the assurance and confirmation of our faith [concerning salvation] occur in the Holy Supper alone through the external signs of bread and wine, and not through the truly present true body and blood of Christ.
10. That in the Holy Supper only the power, efficacy and merit of the far absent body and blood of Christ are distributed.<sup>18</sup>
11. That the body of Christ is so enclosed in heaven that it can in no way be at one and the same time in many or all places upon earth where his Holy Supper is celebrated.<sup>19</sup>

12. [543] That Christ has not promised, neither can afford, the essential presence of his body and blood in the Holy Supper, because the nature and property of his assumed human nature cannot suffer or permit it.
13. That God, according to [even by] his omnipotence (which is dreadful to hear), is not able to render his body essentially present in more than one place at one time.<sup>20</sup>
14. That not the omnipotent Word of Christ's testament, but faith, produces and makes [is the cause of] the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper.
15. That believers should not seek the body [and blood] of Christ in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, but from the bread should raise their eyes to heaven, and there seek the body of Christ.<sup>21</sup>
16. That unbelieving, impenitent Christians in the Holy Supper do not receive the true body and blood of Christ, but only bread and wine.<sup>22</sup>
17. That the worthiness of the guests in this heavenly meal consists not alone in true faith in Christ, but also in the external preparation of men.<sup>23</sup>
18. That even the truly believing, who have and retain a true, living, pure faith in Christ, can receive this sacrament to their judgment, because they are still imperfect in their outward life.<sup>24</sup>
19. That the external visible elements in the Holy Sacrament should be adored.<sup>25</sup>
20. Likewise, we consign also to the just judgment of God all presumptuous, ironical, blasphemous questions (which out of regard to decency are not to be mentioned), and other expressions, which very blasphemously and with great offence [to the Church] are proposed by the Sacramentarians in a gross, carnal, Capernaitic way concerning the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this sacrament.
21. [544] As, then, we hereby utterly [reject and] condemn the Capernaitic eating [manducation] of the body of Christ, which the Sacramentarians, against the testimony of their conscience, after all our frequent protests, willfully force upon us, and in this way make our doctrine odious to their hearers, as though [we taught that] his flesh were rent with the teeth, and digested as other food; on the contrary, we maintain and believe, according to the simple words of the testament of Christ, in the true, yet supernatural eating of the body of Christ, as also in the drinking of his blood, a doctrine which man's sense and reason does not comprehend, but, as in all other articles of faith, our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and this mystery is not embraced otherwise than by faith alone, and is not revealed elsewhere than in the Word alone.

## Chapter VIII. Of the Person of Christ.

From the controversy concerning the Holy Supper a disagreement has arisen between the pure theologians of the Augsburg Confession and the Calvinists, who also have confused some other theologians, concerning the person of Christ and the two natures in Christ and their properties.

### Statement of the Controversy.

Chief Controversy in this Dissension.

The chief question, however, has been whether, because of the personal union, the divine and human natures, as also their properties, have really, that is, in deed and truth, a communion with one another in the person of Christ, and how far this communion extends?

The Sacramentarians have asserted that the divine and human natures in Christ are united personally in such a way that neither has really, that is, in deed and truth, in common with the other that which is peculiar to either nature, but that they have in common nothing more than the names alone. For “union,” they plainly say,<sup>26</sup> “makes common names,” i. e. the personal union makes nothing more than the names common, namely, that God is called man, and man God, yet in such a way that God has nothing really, that is, in deed and truth, in common with humanity, and humanity nothing in common with divinity, as to its majesty and properties. Dr. Luther, and those who hold with him, have, against the Sacramentarians, contended for the contrary.

### Affirmative.

Pure Doctrine of the Christian Church concerning the Person of Christ.

*Parallel Passages.— Ecumenical Creeds: Augsburg Confession, III.; Apology, III.; Smalcald Articles, Part I.; Small Catechism, Creed, Art. ii.; Large Catechism, ib.; Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec, viii. Cf. Martin Chemnitz, De duabus naturis.*

[545] To explain this controversy, and settle it according to the guidance [analogy] of our Christian faith, our doctrine, faith and confession is as follows:

1. That the divine and human natures in Christ are personally united, so that there are not two Christs, one the Son of God, the other the Son of man, but that one and the same is the Son of God and Son of man (Luke 1:35; Rom.

- 9:5).
2. We believe, teach and confess that the divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor the one changed into the other, but each retains its own essential properties, which can never become the properties of the other nature.
  3. The properties of the divine nature are: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, to be, of itself, everywhere present, to know everything, etc.; which never become properties of the human nature.
  4. The properties of the human nature are: to be a corporeal creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and circumscribed, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like; which never become properties of the divine nature.
  5. As the two natures are united personally, i. e. in one person, we believe, teach and confess that this union is not such a combination and connection that neither nature should have anything in common with the other, personally, i. e. because of the personal union, as when two boards are glued together, where neither gives anything to the other, or takes anything from the other.<sup>27</sup> But here is the highest communion, which God has truly with [assumed] man, from which personal union and the highest and ineffable communion that follows therefrom, all results that is said and believed of the human concerning God, and of the divine concerning the man Christ; as the ancient teachers of the Church explained this union and communion of the natures by the illustration of iron glowing with fire, and also by the union of body and soul in man.<sup>28</sup>
  6. [546] Hence we believe, teach and confess that God is man and man is God, which could not be if the divine and human natures had, in deed and truth, absolutely no communion with one another.

For how could a man, the son of Mary, in truth be called or be God, the Son of the Highest, if his humanity were not personally united with the Son of God, and he thus had really, i. e. in deed and truth, nothing in common with him, except only the name of God?

7. Hence we believe, teach and confess that Mary conceived and bore not a mere man, and no more, but the true Son of God; therefore she is also rightly called and is the mother of God.
8. Hence we also believe, teach and confess that it was not a mere man who, for us, suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to the majesty and almighty power of God, but a man whose human nature has such a profound, ineffable union

and communion with the Son of God that it is [was made] one person with him.

9. Therefore the Son of God truly suffered for us, nevertheless according to the property of the human nature, which he assumed into the unity of his divine person, and made it his own, so that he might suffer and be our high priest for our reconciliation with God, as it is written (1 Cor. 2:8): “They have crucified the Lord of glory.” And (Acts 20:28): “We are purchased with God’s blood.”
10. Hence we believe, teach and confess that the Son of man is really, that is, in deed and truth, exalted, according to his human nature, to the right hand of the almighty majesty and power of God, because he [that man] was assumed into God when he was conceived of the Holy Ghost in his mother’s womb, and his human nature was personally united with the Son of the Highest.
11. This majesty, according to the personal union, he [Christ] always had, and yet, in the state of his humiliation, he abstained from it, and, on this account, truly grew in all wisdom and favor with God and men;<sup>29</sup> therefore he exercised this majesty, not always, but when [as often as] it pleased him, until, after his resurrection, he entirely laid aside the form of a servant, and not the nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation and declaration of the divine majesty, and thus entered into his glory (Phil. 2:6 sqq.), so that now not only as God, but also as man, he knows all things, can do all things, is present with all creatures, and has, under his feet and in his hands, everything that is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, as he himself testifies (Matt. 28:18; John 13:3): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And St. Paul says (Eph. 4:10): “He ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” Everywhere present, he can exercise this his power, and to him everything is possible and everything known.
12. [548] Hence, being present, he also is able, and to him it is very easy, to impart his true body and blood in the Holy Supper, not according to the mode or property of the human nature, but according to the mode and property of the right hand of God, as Dr. Luther says in our Christian Faith for Children [according to the analogy of our Christian faith comprised in his Catechism]; which presence [of Christ in the Holy Supper] is not [physical or] earthly, or Capernaitic; nevertheless it is true and substantial, as the words of his testament sound: “This is, is, is my body,” etc.

By this our doctrine, faith and confession the person of Christ is not divided,



as it was by Nestorius, who denied the *communicatio idiomatum*, i. e. the true communion of the properties of both natures in Christ, and thus separated the person, as Luther has explained in his book concerning the Councils. Neither are the natures, together with their properties, confounded with one another [or mingled] into one essence, as Eutyches erred; neither is the human nature in the person of Christ denied, or extinguished, nor is either creature changed into the other;<sup>30</sup> but Christ is and remains, for all eternity, God and man in one undivided person, which, next to the Holy Trinity, is the highest mystery, as the Apostle testifies (1 Tim. 3:16), upon which our only consolation, life and salvation depend.

## Negative.

Contrary False Doctrines concerning the Person of Christ.

[549] Therefore we reject and condemn, as contrary to God's Word and our simple [pure] Christian faith, all the following erroneous articles, when it is taught:

1. That God and man in Christ are not one person, but that the one is the Son of God, and the other the Son of man, as Nestorius raved.
2. That the divine and human natures have been mingled with one another into one essence, and the human nature has been changed into Deity, as Eutyches fanatically asserted.
3. That Christ is not true, natural and eternal God, as Arius held [blasphemed].
4. That Christ did not have a true human nature [consisting] of body and soul, as Marcion imagined.
5. That the personal union renders only the names and titles common.<sup>31</sup>
6. That it is only a phrase and mode of speaking<sup>32</sup> when it is said: God is man, man is God; for that the divinity has nothing in common with the humanity, as also the humanity has nothing really, that is, in deed and truth, common with the divinity [Deity].
7. That the communication is only verbal when it is said: "The Son of God died for the sins of the world;" "The Son of man has become almighty."
8. That<sup>33</sup> the human nature in Christ has become an infinite essence in the same manner as the divinity, and from this, essential power and property, imparted and effused upon the human nature, and separated from God, is everywhere present in the same manner as the divine nature.
9. That the human nature has become equal to, and like the divine nature, in its substance and essence, or in its essential properties.



10. That the human nature of Christ is locally extended in all places of heaven and earth, which should not be ascribed even to the divine nature.
11. That, because of the property of his human nature, it is impossible for Christ to be able to be at the same time in more than one place, much less to be everywhere with his body.<sup>34</sup>
12. That only the mere humanity has suffered for us and redeemed us, and that the Son of God in suffering had actually no participation with the humanity, as though it did not pertain to him.<sup>35</sup>
13. That Christ is present with us on earth in the Word, the sacraments and all our troubles, only according to his divinity, and this presence does not at all pertain to his human nature, according to which he has also nothing more whatever to do with us even upon earth, since he redeemed us by his suffering and death.<sup>36</sup>
14. That the Son of God, who assumed human nature, since he has laid aside the form of a servant does not perform all the works of his omnipotence in, through and with his human nature, but only some, and those too only in the place<sup>37</sup> where his human nature is locally.
15. That, according to his human nature, he is not at all capable<sup>38</sup> of omnipotence and other attributes of the divine nature against the express declaration of Christ (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And [they contradict] St. Paul [who says] (Col. 2:9): “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
16. That to him [to Christ according to his humanity] great power is given in heaven and upon earth, namely, greater and more than to all angels and other creatures, but that he has no participation in the omnipotence of God, and that this also has not been given him. Hence they devise an intermediate power, that is, such power between the almighty power of God and the power of other creatures, given to Christ, according to his humanity, by the exaltation, as is less than God’s almighty power, and greater than that of other creatures.<sup>39</sup>
17. [550] That Christ, according to his human spirit, has a certain limit as to how much he should know, and that he knows no more than is becoming and needful for him to know for [the execution of] his office as judge.
18. That not even yet does Christ have a perfect knowledge of God and all his works; of whom, nevertheless, it is written (Col. 2:3): “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
19. That it is impossible for Christ, according to his human mind, to know what has been from eternity, what at the present time is everywhere occurring, and will be yet to [all] eternity.

20. When it is taught, and the passage (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me,” etc., is thus interpreted and blasphemously perverted, viz. that Christ according to the divine nature, at the resurrection and his ascension to heaven, was restored, i. e, delivered again all power in heaven and on earth; as though, in his state of humiliation, he had also, according to his divinity,<sup>40</sup> divested himself of this and abandoned it. By this doctrine, not only are the words of the testament of Christ perverted, but also the way is prepared for the accursed Arian heresy, so that finally the eternal divinity of Christ is denied, and thus Christ, and with him our salvation, are entirely lost where this false doctrine is not [constantly] contradicted from the firm foundation of God’s Word and our simple Christian [Catholic] faith.

## Chapter IX. Of the Descent of Christ to Hell.

*Parallel Passages. — Ecumenical Creeds; Augsburg Confession, iii.; Small Catechism, 357; Large Catechism, 452 sqq.; Formula of Concord, Sol Dec, ix.*

### Statement of the Controversy.

Chief Controversy concerning this Article.

[522] There has also been a controversy among some theologians, who have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession concerning the following article: When, and in what manner, the Lord Christ, according to our simple Christian faith, descended to hell, whether this was done before or after his death? Also, whether it occurred according to the soul alone, or according to the divinity alone, or in body and soul, spiritually or bodily? Also, whether this article belongs to the passion or to the glorious victory and triumph of Christ?

But since this article, as also the preceding, cannot be comprehended by the senses or by the reason, but must be grasped alone by faith, it is our unanimous advice that there should be no disputation concerning it, but that it should be believed and taught only in the simplest manner; according as Dr. Luther of blessed memory, in his sermon at Torgau in the year 1633,<sup>41</sup> has, in a very Christian manner, explained this article, separated from it all useless, unnecessary questions, and admonished all godly Christians to Christian simplicity of faith.

For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended to hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation [and even] from the jaws of hell. But how this

occurred, we should [not curiously investigate, but] reserve until the other world, where not only this point [mystery], but also still others, will be revealed which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason.

## **Chapter X. Of Church Rites which are [commonly] called Adiaphora or Matters of Indifference.**

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, xv., xxvi.; Apology, vii.:30 sqq.; xv.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xv.; Formula of Concord, Sol Dec, x.*

Concerning ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been introduced into the Church for the sake of good order and propriety, a dissension has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession.

### **Statement of the Controversy.**

[552] The chief question has been, whether, in time of persecution and in case of confession, even if the enemies of the Gospel do not agree with us in doctrine, yet some abrogated ceremonies, which in themselves are matters of indifference and are neither commanded nor forbidden by God, may without violence to conscience be re-established in compliance with the pressure and demand of the adversaries, and thus in such ceremonies and adiaphora we may [rightly] have conformity with them? The one side<sup>42</sup> says. Yea; the other<sup>43</sup> says, Nay, thereto.

### **Affirmative.**

The Pure and True Doctrine and Confession concerning this Article.

1. For settling also this controversy we unanimously believe, teach and confess that the ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no service, nor are even a part of the service of God. Matt. 15:9: "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."
2. We believe, teach and confess that the Church of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies, in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the Church of God.

3. Nevertheless, that herein all inconsiderateness and offence should be avoided, and especial care should be taken to exercise forbearance to the weak in faith (1 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 14:13).
4. We believe, teach and confess that in time of persecution, when a bold [and steadfast] confession is required of us, we should not yield to the enemies in regard to such adiaphora, as the apostle has written (Gal. 5:1): “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.” Also (2 Cor. 6:14): “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” etc. “For what concord hath light with darkness?” Also (Gal. 2:5): “To whom we gave place, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you.” For in such a case it is no longer a question concerning adiaphora, but concerning the truth of the Gospel, concerning [preserving] Christian liberty, and concerning sanctioning open idolatry, as also concerning the prevention of offence to the weak in the faith [how care should be taken lest idolatry be openly sanctioned and the weak in faith be offended]; in which we have nothing to concede, but should boldly confess and suffer what God sends, and what he allows the enemies of his Word to inflict upon us.
5. [553] We believe, teach and confess also that no Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine and all its articles, as also in the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying: “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith.”<sup>44</sup>

## Negative.

False Doctrines concerning this Article,

Therefore we reject and condemn as wrong, and contrary to God’s Word, when it is taught:

1. That human ordinances and institutions should be regarded in the churches as in themselves a service or part of the service of God.<sup>45</sup>
2. When such ceremonies, ordinances and institutions are violently forced upon the Church of God, contrary to the Christian liberty which it has in external things.<sup>46</sup>
3. Also, that in the time of persecution<sup>47</sup> and public confession [when a clear confession is required] we may comply with the enemies of the Gospel in the observance of such adiaphora and ceremonies, or may come to an

- agreement with them, — which causes injury to the truth.<sup>48</sup>
4. Also, when these external ceremonies and adiaphora are abrogated in such a manner as though it were not free to the Church of God to employ one or more<sup>49</sup> [this or that] in Christian liberty, according to its circumstances, as may be most useful at any time to the Church [for edification].

## **Chapter XI. Of God's Eternal Foreknowledge [Predestination] and Election.**

*Parallel Passages. — Formula of Concord, xi.*

[554] Concerning this article no public dissension has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>50</sup> But since it is a consolatory article, if treated properly, and by this means the introduction in the future of a controversy likely to cause offence may be avoided, it is also explained in this writing.

### **Affirmative.**

The Pure and True Doctrine concerning this Article.

1. First of all, the distinction between foreknowledge and preJestination, that is, between God's foreknowledge and his eternal election, ought to be accurately observed.
2. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written (Dan. 2:28): "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."
3. This foreknowledge is occupied alike with the godly and the wicked; but it is not the cause of evil or of sin, so that men do what is wrong (which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man); nor the cause of their ruin [that men perish], for which they themselves are responsible [which they ought to ascribe to themselves]; but only regulates it, and fixes to it a limit [how far it should progress and] how long it should last, and that everything, notwithstanding that in itself it is evil, should serve his elect for their salvation.
4. The predestination or eternal election of God, however, is occupied only with the godly, beloved children of God, and this is a cause of their salvation, which he also provides as well as disposes what belongs thereto.

- Upon this [predestination of God] our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it (John 10:28; Matt. 16:18).
5. This is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.
  6. But the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life,<sup>51</sup> in whom all are written and elected that are to be saved, as it is written (Eph. 1:4): "He hath chosen us in him"[Christ]" before the foundation of the world."
  7. [555] Thus Christ calls to himself all sinners, and promises them rest, and he is anxious that all men should come to him and permit him to help them. To them he offers himself in his Word, and wishes them to hear it, and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. He promises besides the power and efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].
  8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which would lead either into a dissipated, dissolute epicurean life, or into despair, and would excite in the heart of men pernicious thoughts (and such thoughts cannot be effectually guarded against as long as they follow their own reason), so that they think to themselves: "If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, although I do whatever I will." And again: "If I am not elected to eternal life, it matters not what good I do; for my efforts are nevertheless all in vain."
  9. But the true judgment concerning predestination must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," and that "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (Rom. 11:32; Ez. 18:23; 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2).
  10. To him, therefore, who is really concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, this doctrine [concerning God's predestination] is useful and consolatory.
  11. That, however, "many are called, few are chosen," does not mean that God is unwilling that all should be saved, but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but willfully despise it, close their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that he cannot effect his work in them, or, when it is heard,

they consider it of no account, and do not heed it. For this [that they perish] not God or his election, but their wickedness, is responsible (2 Pet. 2:1 sqq.; Luke 11:49, 52; Heb. 12:25sq.).

12. [556] Moreover, a Christian should apply himself [in meditation] to the article concerning the eternal election of God, so far as it has been revealed in God's Word, which presents Christ to us as the Book of Life, which, by the preaching of the holy Gospel, he opens and spreads out to us, as it is written (Rom. 8:30): "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." In him, therefore, we should seek the eternal election of the Father, who, in his eternal divine counsel, determined that he would save no one except those who acknowledge his Son, Christ, and truly believe on him. Other thoughts are to be entirely banished [from the minds of the godly], as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of Satan, whereby he attempts to weaken or to entirely remove from us the glorious consolation which we have in this salutary doctrine, viz. that we know [assuredly] that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life, and that no one can pluck us out of his hand; as he has promised this gracious election not only with mere words, but has also certified it with an oath, and sealed it with the holy sacraments, which we can [ought to] call to mind in our most severe temptations, and from them comfort ourselves, and thereby quench the fiery darts of the devil.
13. Besides, we should endeavor with the greatest pains to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes (2 Ep. 1:10), "make our calling sure," and especially adhere to [not recede a finger's breadth from] the revealed Word, that can and will not fail us.
14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God his glory is entirely and fully given to God, that alone, out of pure mercy, without all merit of ours, he saves us, according to the purpose of his will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or an abandoned, dissolute life [no opportunity is afforded either for those more severe agitations of mind and faintheartedness or for epicureanism].

### **Antithesis or Negative.**

False Doctrine concerning this Article.

[557] Therefore we believe and hold: When the doctrine concerning the gracious election of God to eternal life is so presented that troubled Christians cannot comfort themselves therewith, but thereby despondency or despair is occasioned, or the impenitent are strengthened in their wantonness, that such



doctrine is treated [wickedly and erroneously] not according to the Word and will of God, but according to reason and the instigation of Satan. “For,” as the apostle testifies (Rom. 15:4), “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” Therefore we reject the following errors:

1. As when it is taught that God is unwilling that all men repent and believe the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>
2. Also, that when God calls us to himself he is not in earnest that all men should come to him.<sup>53</sup>
3. Also, that God does not wish every one to be saved, but, without regard to their sins, alone from the counsel, purpose and will of God, some are appointed to condemnation, so that they cannot be saved.<sup>54</sup>
4. Also, that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us is a cause of God’s election, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life.<sup>55</sup>

All these erroneous doctrines are blasphemous and dreadful, whereby there is removed from Christians all the comfort which they have in the holy Gospel and the use of the holy sacraments, and therefore should not be tolerated in the Church of God.

This is a brief and simple explanation of the controverted articles, which for a time have been discussed and taught with conflicting opinions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. Hence every simple Christian, according to the guidance of God’s Word and his simple Catechism, can distinguish what is right or wrong, where not only the pure doctrine is stated, but also the erroneous contrary doctrine is repudiated and rejected, and thus the controversies, full of causes of offence, that have occurred, are thoroughly settled and decided.

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, grant the grace of his Holy Ghost, that we all may be one in him, and constantly abide in this Christian unity, which is well pleasing to him! Amen.

## **Chapter XII. Of Other Factions [Heretics] and Sects, which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession.**

*Parallel Passages.* — Sol. Dec. xii. Cf. Augsburg Confession, i.: 6, 6 V. 4; ix.: 3; xii.: 7 sqq.; xiv.; xvi.: 3; xvii.: 2, 3; Apology, ix., xvi.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii.: 3 sqq.; Large Catechism, 492, | 47 sqq. Formula of Concord, Ep. ii.: 13.



In order that such [heresies and sects] may not silently be ascribed to us, because, in the preceding explanation, no mention of them has been made, we wish at the end [of this writing] simply to enumerate the mere articles wherein they [the heretics of our time] err and teach what is contrary to our Christian faith and confession above presented.

## **Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists.**

The Anabaptists are divided into many sects,[^bjo] as one contends for more, another for less error; nevertheless, they all in common propound [profess] such doctrine as is neither to be tolerated nor allowed in the Church, the commonwealth and worldly government or domestic life.

### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in the Church.**

1. That Christ did not assume his body and blood of the Virgin Mary, but brought them with him from heaven.<sup>56</sup>
2. That Christ is not true God, but only [is superior to other saints, because he] has more gifts of the Holy Ghost than any other holy man.<sup>57</sup>
3. That our righteousness before God consists not only in the sole merit of Christ, but in renewal, and thus in our own godliness [uprightness] in which we walk.<sup>58</sup> This is based in great part upon one's own special, self-chosen [and humanly-devised] spirituality [holiness], and in fact is nothing else than a new sort of monkery.
4. That<sup>59</sup> children who are not baptized are not sinners before God, but righteous and innocent, who, in their innocency, because they have not yet attained their reason [the use of reason], will be saved without baptism (which, according to their assertion, they do not need). Therefore they reject the entire doctrine concerning original sin, and what belongs to it.
5. [559] That children should not be baptized until they have attained their reason [the use of reason], and can themselves confess their faith.
6. That the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and the children of God, even without and before baptism. For this reason also they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children, nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of God's promise, which pertains only to those *who keep God's covenant and do not despise it* (Gen. 17:7 sqq.).
7. That<sup>60</sup> that is no true Christian congregation [church] wherein sinners are still found.
8. That no sermon should be heard or attended in those churches in which the

Papal masses have previously been observed and said.

9. That no one [godly man] should have anything to do with those ministers of the Church who preach the Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession, and censure the sermons and errors of the Anabaptists; also, that no one should serve or in any way labor for them, but should flee from and shun them as perverters of God's Word.

#### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in the Government.**

1. That,<sup>61</sup> under the New Testament, the magistracy is not an estate pleasing to God.
2. That a Christian cannot, with a good, inviolate conscience, hold or exercise the office of magistrate.
3. That a Christian cannot, without injury to conscience, use the office of the magistracy against the wicked in matters as they occur [matters so requiring], nor may subjects invoke for their protection and screening the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God.
4. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, take an oath, neither can he by an oath do homage [promise fidelity] to his prince or sovereign.
5. That, under the New Testament, magistrates cannot, without injury to conscience, inflict capital punishment upon transgressors.

#### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in Domestic Life**

1. That a Christian cannot [with an inviolate conscience] hold or possess property, but is in duty bound to devote it to the church.
2. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, be a landlord, merchant, or cutler [maker of arms].<sup>62</sup>
3. That on account of diverse faith married persons may be divorced and abandon one another, and be married to another person of the same faith.<sup>63</sup>

#### **Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians.**

1. That all who regard Christ according to the flesh as a creature have no true knowledge of Christ as reigning King of heaven.
2. That, by his exaltation, the flesh of Christ has so assumed all divine properties that Christ as man is in might, power, majesty and glory equal to the Father and to the Word, everywhere as to degree and condition of essence, so that now there is only one essence, property, will and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of

the Holy Trinity.

3. That the Church service [ministry of the Word], the Word preached and heard, is not a means whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith and new obedience.
4. That the water of baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals adoption and works regeneration.
5. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means through and by which Christ distributes his body and blood.
6. That a Christian who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can, in this life, observe and fulfill the Law of God perfectly.
7. That there is no true Christian congregation [church] where no public excommunication [and some formal mode of excommunication] or no regular process of the ban [as it is commonly called] is observed.
8. [561] That the minister of the church who is not on his part truly renewed, regenerate, righteous and godly cannot teach other men with profit or distribute true sacraments.

### **Error of the New Arians.**

That Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal, divine essence with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, but is only adorned with divine majesty beneath and beside God the Father [is so adorned with divine majesty, with the Father, that he is inferior to the Father].

### **Error of the Anti-Trinitarians.**

This is an entirely new sect, not heard of before in Christendom, composed of those who believe, teach and confess that there is not only one, eternal, divine essence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but as God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons, so each person has its essence distinct and separate from the other persons of the Godhead; and nevertheless [some of them think] that all three, just as in another respect three men distinct and separate from one another are of equal power, wisdom, majesty and glory, or [others think that these three persons and essences] are unequal with one another in essence and properties, so that the Father alone is properly and truly God.

These and like errors, one and all, with whatever other errors depend upon and follow from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and

Apology, the Smalcald Articles and Luther's Catechisms, against which all godly Christians, of both high and low station, should be on their guard as they love the welfare and salvation of their souls.

That this is the doctrine, faith and confession of us all, for which we will answer, at the last day, before the just Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that against this we will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write, but that we intend, by the grace of God, to persevere therein, we have, after mature deliberation, testified, in the true fear of God and invocation of his name, by signing with our own hands this Epitome.

Bergen May 29th, 1577.

[^bjo] Among those of the sixteenth century were the Münzerites, Münsterites, Hoffmanites, Mennonites.

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1. Luther against Agricola, 1538 and 1539; Erlangen, Ed. 32:1, 64; De Wette's Luther's Letters, v.: 147.↵
  2. Called Modern Antinomians. See "New Confession of the Antinomians" Schlüsselberg:, Catalog. Haeretic, iv.: 45↵
  3. For they offered the "Tetrapolitan Confession," and Zwingli his own "Fidei Rationis."↵
  4. Preface to Book of Concord, p. 12, 15.↵
  5. Carlstadt, Zwingli, OEcalampadius.↵
  6. Bucer, Peter Martyr, Calvin and the Crypto-Calvinistic theologians of Leipsic and Wittenberg.↵
  7. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. vi; Large Catechism, 601:14. The meaning of this expression is explained by Sol. Dec, vii.: 14: "With the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, offered and received."↵
  8. Wittenberg, 1528, Erlangen Ed., 30:151.↵
  9. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 98 sqq.↵
  10. The word is derived from John 6:26, 52: "As though his flesh were rent with the teeth and digested like other food," § 42.↵
  11. Cf. § 38.↵
  12. Zwingli, OEcalampadius, Calvin. John vi. especially was appealed to.↵
  13. See Consensus Tigurinus, Art. ix.↵
  14. Zwingli, De vera et falsa religione (Opp. iii., p. 145 sq.).↵
  15. Opinion of Zwingli, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger. See Planck, iv.; 21, 63.↵
  16. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 115 sqq.↵

17. Calvin, e. g. Comment on 1 Cor. 11:23.↵
18. See Calvin's *Institutes*, iv., chap. xxii., § 18.↵
19. See Consensus Tigurinus, xxi.; Niemyer, xxiv., p. 196. Cf. Sol. Dec. vii:119.↵
20. Beza used almost these words: Oreophagia, p. 152 sq.↵
21. Consensus Tigurinus, xxi.↵
22. All the Sacramentarians.↵
23. Doctrine of the papists; Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., chaps. 7 and 11.↵
24. Id.↵
25. With worship, *latría*; see Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., chaps. 5 and 6.↵
26. See below, § 24-28. Borrowed by Sacramentarians from Theodore.↵
27. Cf. Sol. Dec. viii.: 14, 15.↵
28. So Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, John Damascenus. See Catalogue of Testimonies,↵
29. See Luke 2:52.↵
30. Error of Monophysites, Schwenkfeldians. See below, xii.: 29.↵
31. See above, § 3. Cf. § 26.↵
32. Zwingli termed it *alloeosis*, Cf. Sol. Dec, viii., § 89 sqq.↵
33. Charged by Bullinger, Beza, Peter Martyr against the Wittenberg theologians. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii., § 63.↵
34. "Let them no longer ascribe to the glorified body of Christ the property of being in many places at once." — Calvin's *Institutes*, iv.: 17, 29. "The body of Christ, since its resurrection, is limited, and received into heaven till the last day." — Ib. 26.↵
35. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 40 sqq.↵
36. Calvin. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 78 sqq.; 87 sqq.↵
37. I. e. in heaven. Cf. above, vii.: 32. Also note to vii.: 14.↵
38. Beza in Mompelgard Colloquy: "The finite is not capable or participant of the infinite."↵
39. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 54, 55. Errors 16-19 were held by some of the Calvinists.↵
40. The Crypto-Calvinists taught that Christ was exalted according to both natures.↵
41. Erlangen Edition, 20:165 sqq.↵
42. The authors of the Leipsic Formula: Melanchthon, Paul Eber († 1569), Bugenhagen († 1558), George Major († 1574), John Pfeffinger († 1573).↵
43. Especially Flacius, Nicol. Gallus († 1570), John Wigand († 1587), Amsdorf, Joach. Westphal († 1574).↵
44. Irenaeus in Ep. to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in Eusebius's Church History,

- V.: 24. Cf. Augsburg Confession, xxvi.: 44.↵
45. Opinion of the Papists. See Confutation, I., Art. xv; II., Art. v. Cf. Apology, XV.: 40.↵
  46. Cf. Apology, xv.: 37.↵
  47. As when the Augsburg Interim was introduced by force.↵
  48. See extracts from Leipsic Interim, Walch's Introduction, p. 865; 01 text of Interim, Gieseler's Church History, iv.: 201-203.↵
  49. Sol. Dec, X.: 30. An error of the Papists, who affirmed that in ecclesiastical rites nothing ought to be changed without the consent of the Pope. Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. xxv., p. 85 (Tauchn. Ed.)↵
  50. But between them and the Reformed. A controversy on this subject arose at Strasburg in 1561 between Jerome Zanchi and John Marbach.↵
  51. Phil. 4:3; Rev. 17:8.↵
  52. For defense of this error see Calvin's Institutes, iii.: xxi. sqq.↵
  53. Cf. Calvin's Institutes, iii.; xxiv.↵
  54. "They are abandoned to this depravity, because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgment of God to display his glory in their condemnation." — Calvin's Institutes, xxiv.: 14.↵
  55. Charged by the Calvinists against the Lutherans; more justly attributed to Arminians. Cf. above, § 13. Faith can never be a cause "*on account of which*," God elects, since it is never a cause "on account of which," we are justified. See the *propter Christum per fidem* of Art. IV. of the Augsburg Confession. Cf. above, § 13.↵
  56. In order to avoid the taint of Adam. Melchior Hoffman and Simon Menno taught thus.↵
  57. This error is referred to Ludwig Hetzer, David George or Joris, and Trechsel.↵
  58. Münzer, Hoffman and others insisted upon good works for justification.↵
  59. Errors 4-6 held by Anabaptists generally.↵
  60. In errors 7-9 the Anabaptists have followed the Donatists.↵
  61. Errors 1-4. See Confession of Mennonites, 37, 38; Gieseler's Church History, iv.: 874.↵
  62. For they thought that these occupations conflicted with mutual love. Cf. §§ 16, 17.↵
  63. Confession of Mennonites, 39. The Münsterites defended polygamy.↵

## **Part Second. Solid Declaration.**

Solid, Plain and Clear Repetition and Declaration.

Of Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession, concerning which, for some time, there has been controversy among some theologians who subscribe thereto, Stated and Settled according to the Analogy of God's Word and the Summary Contents of our Christian Doctrine.

### **Preface.**

[565] By the inestimable goodness and mercy of the Almighty, the doctrine concerning the chief articles of our Christian religion, which under the Papacy was horribly obscured by human opinions and traditions, has been again explained and corrected, in accordance with God's Word, by Dr. Martin Luther of holy and blessed memory, and the Papistic errors, abuses and idolatry have been rebuked. This pure reformation, however, has been regarded by its opponents as introducing new doctrine; it has been violently and falsely charged with being directly contrary to God's Word and Christian ordinances, and has to bear the burden of numberless other calumnies and accusations. On this account the electors, princes and estates that have embraced the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, and have reformed their churches in a Christian manner according to God's Word, at the great Diet of Augsburg in the year 1530 had a Christian Confession prepared from God's Word, which they delivered to the Emperor Charles V. In this they clearly and plainly made a Christian Confession as to what was held and taught in the Christian evangelical churches concerning the chief articles, and those especially in controversy between them and the Papists. This Confession was received by their opponents with disfavor, but, thank God, remains to this day without refutation or invalidation. From our inmost hearts we herewith once again confess this Christian Augsburg Confession, which is so thoroughly grounded in God's Word.

[566] We abide by the simple, clear and plain meaning of the same that its words convey, and regard it in all respects as a Christian symbol, which at the present time true Christians should receive next to God's Word; just as in former times, when great controversies arose in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were composed, which pure teachers and hearers confessed with heart and mouth. We intend also, by the grace of the Almighty, to faithfully abide until our end by this Christian Confession, as it was delivered in the year

1530 to the Emperor Charles V.; and it is our purpose, neither in this nor in any other writing, to recede in the least from that Confession or to compose another or new confession.

Although the Christian doctrine of this Confession has, in great part, remained unchallenged, save among the Papists, yet it cannot be denied that some theologians have departed from some of its principal and most important articles, and that they either have not learned the true meaning of these articles, or have not continued steadfastly therein, but that some have even undertaken to attach to it an extraneous meaning, while at the same time professing to adhere to the Augsburg Confession, and availing themselves of this boast as a pretext. From this, grievous and injurious dissensions have arisen in the pure evangelical churches; just as during the lives of the holy apostles, among those who wished to be called Christians and boasted of Christ's doctrine, horrible error arose. For some sought to be justified and saved by the Law (Acts 15:1-29); others denied the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12); and still others did not believe that Christ was true and eternal God. These the holy apostles in their sermons and writings earnestly opposed, although such pernicious errors and severe controversy could not occur without offence, both to believers and to those weak in the faith; just as at present our opponents, the Papists, rejoice at the dissensions among us, in the unchristian and vain hope that these discords will finally cause the suppression of the pure doctrine. Because of them, those that are weak in faith are also greatly offended, and some doubt whether, amid such dissensions, the pure doctrine be with us, while others know not with whom to side with respect to the articles in controversy.

[567] For these controversies are not mere misunderstandings or disputes concerning words, as are apt to occur where one side has not sufficiently understood the meaning of the other, and thus the dispute is confined to a few words, whereon nothing of much moment depends. But here the subjects of controversy are great and important, and of such a nature that the opinion of the party in error cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused or defended.

Necessity, therefore, requires us to explain these controverted articles according to God's Word and approved writings; so that every one who has Christian understanding can notice what opinion concerning the matters in controversy accords with God's Word, and what disagrees therewith. Thus the errors and corruptions that have arisen may be shunned and avoided by sincere Christians who prize the truth aright.



[568] Of the Comprehensive Summary, Foundation, Rule and Standard whereby, according to God's Word, all Dogmas should be Judged, and the Controversies that have occurred should, in a Christian manner, be explained and decided.

Because, for thorough, permanent unity in the Church, it is before all things necessary that we have a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form, wherein are brought together from God's Word the common doctrines, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion acknowledge as confessional (just as the ancient Church always had for this use its fixed symbols); and this a authority should not be attached to private writings, but to such books as have been composed, approved and received in the name of the churches which confessionally bind themselves to one doctrine and religion; we have declared to one another, with heart and mouth, that we will neither make nor receive any separate or new<sup>1</sup> confession of our faith, but acknowledge as confessional the public common writings which always and everywhere were received in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession, as such symbols or public confessions, before the dissensions arose among those who accept the Augsburg Confession, and as long as, in all articles, there was, on all sides, a unanimous adherence to, and maintenance and use of, the pure doctrine of God's Word, as the late Dr. Luther explained it.

1. [569] First, we receive and embrace the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountains of Israel, which are the only true standard whereby to judge all teachers and doctrines.
2. And because, of old, the true Christian doctrine, in pure, sound sense, was collected from God's Word into brief articles or sections against the corruption of heretics, we accept as confessional the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian, as glorious confessions of the faith, brief, devout and founded upon God's Word, wherein all the heresies which at that time had arisen in the Christian Church are clearly and unanswerably refuted.
3. Thirdly, Because, in these last times, God, out of especial grace, from the darkness of the Papacy has brought his truth again to light, through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther, and against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects has collected the same doctrine, from and according to God's Word, into the articles and sections of the Augsburg Confession; we confessionally accept also the first unaltered Augsburg Confession (not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been derived from God's Word, and is founded firmly and well therein, precisely in the form in which it was

committed to writing in the year 1530, and presented to the Emperor Charles V. by some electors, princes and deputies of the Roman Empire as a common confession of the reformed churches at Augsburg) as the symbol of our time, whereby our Reformed churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies, after the custom and usage of the early Church, whereby succeeding councils, Christian bishops and teachers appealed to the Nicene Creed, and confessed it [publicly declared that they embraced it].

4. [570] Fourthly, in order that the proper and true sense of the often-quoted Augsburg Confession might be more fully set forth and guarded against the Papists, and that under the name of the Augsburg Confession condemned errors might not steal into the Church of God after the Confession was delivered, a fuller Apology was composed, and published in the year 1531. We unanimously accept this also as confessional, because in it the said Augsburg Confession is not only sufficiently elucidated and guarded, but also confirmed by clear, irrefutable testimonies of Holy Scripture.
5. Fifthly, the Articles composed, approved and received at; Smalcald in the large assembly of theologians in the year 1537 we confessionally accept, in the form in which they were first framed and printed in order to be delivered in the council at Mantua, or wherever it would be held, in the name of the electors, princes and deputies, as an explanation of the above mentioned Augsburg Confession, wherein by God's grace they determined to abide. In them the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, and some articles are stated at greater length from God's Word, and besides the cause and foundation why we have abandoned the papistical errors and idolatries, and can have no fellowship with them, and also why we have not determined or even thought of coming to any agreement with the Pope concerning them, are sufficiently indicated.
6. Lastly, because these highly important matters belong also to the common people and laity, who, for their salvation, must distinguish between pure and false doctrine, we accept as confessional also the Large and the Small Catechisms of Dr. Luther,<sup>2</sup> as they were written by him and incorporated in his works, because they have been unanimously approved and received by all churches adhering to the Augsburg Confession, and publicly used in churches, schools and [privately in] families, and because also in them the Christian doctrine from God's Word is comprised in the most correct and simple way, and, in like manner, is sufficiently explained for simple laymen.

[571] These public common writings have been always regarded in the pure churches and schools as the sum and type of the doctrine which the late Dr. Luther has admirably deduced against the Papacy and other sects from God's Word, and firmly established; to whose full explanations in his doctrinal and polemical writings we appeal in the manner and to the extent indicated by Dr. Luther himself in the necessary and Christian admonition concerning his writings, made in the Latin preface to his published works, wherein he has expressly drawn this distinction, viz. that God's Word alone is and should remain the only standard and rule, to which the writings of no man should be regarded equal, but to it everything should be subordinated.

But hereby other good, useful, pure books, expositions of it the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, explanations of doctrinal articles (which, as far as consistent with the above-mentioned type of doctrine, are regarded as useful expositions and explanations, and can be used with advantage) are not rejected. But by what has thus far been said concerning the summary of our Christian doctrine we have only meant that we have a unanimously received, definite, common form of doctrine, which our Evangelical churches together and in common confess; from and according to which, because it has been derived from God's Word, all other writings should be judged and adjusted as to how far they are to be approved and accepted.

For that we have embodied the above-mentioned writings, viz. the Augsburg Confession, Apology, Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, as the sum of our Christian doctrine, has occurred for the reason that these have been always and everywhere regarded as containing the common, unanimously received understanding of our churches, since the chief and most enlightened theologians of that time subscribed them, and all evangelical churches and schools have cordially received them. As they also, as before mentioned, were all written and sent forth before the divisions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession arose, and then because they were held as impartial, and neither can nor should be rejected by any part of those who have entered into controversy, and no one who is true to the Augsburg Confession will complain of these writings, but will cheerfully accept and tolerate them as witnesses [of the truth]; no one, therefore, can blame us that we derive from them an explanation and decision of the articles in controversy, and that, as we lay God's Word, the eternal truth, as the foundation, so also we introduce and quote these writings as a witness of the truth, and a presentation of the unanimously received correct understanding of our predecessors who have steadfastly held to the pure doctrine.

Of the Articles in Controversy with respect to the Antithesis, or opposite

doctrine.

[572] For the maintenance of pure doctrine, and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church, it is necessary not only that pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reproved (1 Tim. 3 [2 Tim. 3:16]; Tit. 1:9). For faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, viz. feed or nourish the lambs and defend from the wolves, so that they may flee from strange voices (John 10:12) and may separate the precious from the vile (Jer. 15:19).

Therefore concerning this, we have thoroughly and clearly declared to one another as follows: that a distinction in every way should and must be observed between, on the one hand, unnecessary and useless wrangling, whereby, since it scatters more than it builds up, the Church ought not to be disturbed, and, on the other hand, necessary controversy, as when such a controversy occurs as involves the articles of faith or the chief heads of the Christian doctrine, where for the defense of the truth the false opposite doctrine must be reproved.

Although the aforesaid writings afford the Christian reader who has pleasure and love for the divine truth, a clear and correct answer concerning each and every controverted article of our Christian religion, as to what, according to God's Word of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, he should regard and receive as right and true, and what he should reject, shun and avoid as false and wrong; yet, in order that the truth may be preserved the more distinctly and clearly, and be separated from all errors, and be not hidden and concealed under rather general words, we have clearly and expressly made a declaration to one another concerning the chief and highly important articles, taken one by one, which at the present time have come into controversy; so that there might be a public, definite testimony, not only for those now living, but also for our posterity, as to what is and should remain the unanimously received understanding and judgment of our churches in reference to the articles in controversy, namely:

1. First, that we reject and condemn all heresies and errors which, in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church, were rejected and condemned, upon the true, firm ground of the holy divine Scriptures.
2. [573] Secondly, we reject and condemn all sects and heresies which are rejected in the writings, just mentioned, of the comprehensive summary of the Confession of our churches.
3. Thirdly, because within thirty years, on account of the Interim<sup>3</sup> and otherwise, some divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession, we have wished plainly, distinctly and clearly to state and

declare our faith and confession concerning each and every one of these taken in thesis and antithesis, i. e. the true doctrine and its opposite, for the purpose in all articles of rendering the foundation of divine truth manifest, and censuring all unlawful, doubtful, suspicious and condemned doctrines (wherever and in whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them or even now may be disposed to defend them); so that every one may be faithfully warned to avoid the errors, diffused on all sides, in the writings of some theologians, and no one be misled herein by the reputation of any man. If the Christian reader will carefully examine this declaration in every emergency, and compare it with the writings enumerated above, he will find that what was in the beginning confessed concerning every article in the comprehensive summary of our religion and faith, and what was afterward restated at various times, and is repeated by us in this document, is in no way contradictory, but the simple, immutable, permanent truth, and that we, therefore, do not change from one doctrine to another, as our adversaries falsely assert, but earnestly desire to retain the once-delivered Augsburg Confession, and its unanimously received Christian sense, and through God's grace to abide thereby firmly and constantly, in opposition to all corruptions which have entered.

## Chapter 1. Of Original Sin.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, Art. ii.; *Apology*, Art ii.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part. III., Art. i.; *Epitome*, I.

[574] First, a controversy concerning Original Sin has occurred i tmM among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession with respect to what it properly is. For one side<sup>4</sup> contended that, because, through the fall of Adam, man's nature and essence are entirely corrupt now since the fall, the nature, substance and essence of the corrupt man, or indeed the principal, highest part of his being, namely, the rational soul in its highest state and principal powers is Original Sin itself. This is called "natural" or "personal sin," for the reason that it is not a thought, word or work, but the nature itself, whence, as from a root, all other sins proceed, and on this account there is now since the fall, because the nature is corrupt through sin, no distinction whatever between the nature and essence of man and Original Sin.

But the other side taught, in opposition, that Original Sin is not properly the nature, substance or essence of man, i. e. man's body or soul, which even now

since the fall are and remain the creatures and works of God in us, but it is something in the nature, body and soul of man, and in all his powers, namely, a horrible, deep, inexpressible corruption of the same, so that man is destitute of the righteousness wherein he was originally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good and perverted to all evil; and that, because of this corruption and inborn sin, which inheres in the nature, all actual sins flow forth from the heart; and that a distinction must, therefore, be observed between, on the one hand, the nature and essence of the corrupt man, or his body and soul, which as the creatures of God pertain to us even since the fall, and Original Sin, on the other, which is a work of the devil, whereby the nature has become corrupt.

[575] Now this controversy concerning Original Sin is not unnecessary wrangling, but if this doctrine be rightly presented from and according to God's Word, and be separated from all Pelagian and Manichaeian errors, then (as the Apology<sup>5</sup>) says, the benefits of Christ and his precious merit, and the gracious efficacy of the Holy Ghost, will be the better known and the more extolled; the honor which belongs to him will also be ascribed to God, if his work and creation in men be rightly distinguished from the work of the devil, whereby the nature has been corrupted. In order, therefore, to explain this controversy in the Christian way and according to God's Word, and to maintain the correct, pure doctrine, we will collect from the above-mentioned writings the thesis and antithesis, that is, the correct doctrine and its opposite, into brief paragraphs:

1. And first it is true that Christians should not only regard and recognize as sins the actual transgression of God's commands; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady whereby the entire nature is corrupted, should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountain-head of all actual sins. This is called by Luther a "natural" or "personal sin," in order to declare that even though man would think, speak or do nothing evil (which, nevertheless, since the fall of our first parents, is impossible in this life), yet that his nature and person are sinful, i. e. by Original Sin, as a spiritual leprosy, he is thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God; and on account of this corruption, and because of the fall of the first man, the nature or person is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death and damnation, unless delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ.
2. It is also clear and true, as the Nineteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession teaches, that God is not a creator, author or cause of sin, but from the instigation of the devil, through one man, sin (which is a work of

the devil) has entered the world (Rom. 6:12; 1 John 3; 7). And even at the present day, in this connection of sin and nature [in this corruption of nature], God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men, Original Sin is propagated from sinful seed,<sup>6</sup> through carnal conception and birth of father and mother.

3. [576] Thirdly, what [and how great] this hereditary evil is, no reason knows and understands, but, as the Smalcald Articles<sup>7</sup> say, it must be learned and believed from the revelation contained in Scripture. And in the Apology this is briefly comprehended in the following paragraphs:
4. That this hereditary evil is the cause of our all being, by reason of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, in God's displeasure, and by nature children of wrath, as the apostle shows (Rom. 5:12 sqq.; Eph. 2:3).
5. Secondly, that there is an entire want or lack of the concreated original righteousness, or of God's image, according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness and righteousness; and likewise an inability and unfitness for all the things of God, or, as the Latin words read: *Descriptio peccati originalis detrahit naturae non renovatae, et dona, et vim, seu facultatem et actus inchoandi et efficiendi spiritualia*. That is: 'The definition of original sin takes away from the unrenewed nature the gifts, the power, and all activity for beginning and effecting anything in spiritual things.'<sup>8</sup>
3. That Original Sin (in human nature) is not only such an entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that it is at the same time also, instead of the lost image of God in man, a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in understanding, heart and will; that now, since the fall, man receives by inheritance *an inborn wicked disposition, an inward impurity of heart, wicked lusts and propensities*; that we all have by nature inherited from Adam such a heart, feeling and thoughts as, according to their highest powers and the light of reason, are naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and his chief commands, yea, they are at enmity with God, especially as to what concerns divine and spiritual things. For, in other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to the reason, man still has, to a certain degree, understanding, power and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, nevertheless, has been so infected and contaminated by Original Sin that before God it is of no use.



4. [577] The penalties of Original Sin, which God has imposed upon the children of Adam and upon Original Sin, are death, eternal damnation, and also other bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal miseries, and the tyranny and dominion of the devil, so that human nature is subject to the kingdom of the devil, and has been surrendered to the power of the devil, and is held captive under his sway, who stupefies [fascinates] and leads astray many great, learned men in the world by means of dreadful error, heresy and other blindness, and otherwise delivers men to all sorts of crime. [^bjF]
5. Fifthly, this hereditary evil is so great and horrible that it can be covered and forgiven before God only for Christ's sake, and in the baptized and believing. Human nature also, which is deranged and corrupted thereby, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which, nevertheless, is only begun in this life, but will at length be fully completed in the life to come.<sup>9</sup>

These points, which have been quoted here only in a summary way, are set forth more fully in the above-mentioned writings of the common confession of our Christian doctrine.<sup>10</sup>

But this doctrine must now be so maintained and guarded that it may not incline either to the Pelagian or the Manichaeian side. Therefore the contrary doctrine concerning this article, which is censured and rejected in our churches, should also be briefly reported.

1. And first, in opposition to the old and the new Pelagians, the following false opinions and dogmas are censured and rejected, namely, that Original Sin is only a *reatus* or debt, on account of what has been committed by another without any corruption of our nature.
2. Also that sinful, evil lusts are not sins, but conditions, or concreated and essential properties of the nature.<sup>11</sup>
3. Or as though the above-mentioned defect and evil were not before God properly and truly sin, on account of which man without Christ [unless he be grafted into Christ and be delivered through him] must be a child of wrath and damnation, and also be beneath the power and in the kingdom of Satan.
4. [578] The following Pelagian errors and the like are also censured and rejected, namely: that nature, ever since the fall, is incorrupt, and that especially with respect to spiritual things it is entirely good and pure, and *in naturalibus*, i. e., in its natural powers, it is perfect.



5. Or that Original Sin is only external, a slight, insignificant spot sprinkled or stain dashed upon the nature of man, or *corruptio tantum accidentium aut qualitatum*, i. e. a corruption only of some accidental things, along with and beneath which the nature, nevertheless, possesses and retains its integrity and power even in spiritual things.
6. Or that Original Sin is not a despoliation or deficiency, but only an external impediment to these spiritual good powers, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, whereby its natural power is not removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily washed away, as a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.<sup>12</sup>
7. They likewise are rebuked and rejected who teach that the nature has indeed been greatly weakened and corrupted through the fall, but that, nevertheless, it has not entirely lost all good with respect to divine, spiritual things, and that what is sung in our churches,  
 “Through Adam’s fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human,”

is not true, but from natural birth we still have something good (small, little and inconsiderable though it be), namely: capacity, skill, aptness or ability in spiritual things to begin to work or co-work for something. For concerning external, temporal, worldly things and transactions, which are subject to reason, there will be an explanation in the succeeding article.

These and doctrines of like kind, contrary to the truth, are censured and rejected for the reason that God’s Word teaches that the corrupt nature, of and by itself, has no power for anything good in spiritual things, not even for the least, as good thoughts, but that, of and by itself, it can do nothing but sin. Gen. 6:5; 8:21.

[579] Therefore [But] this doctrine must also be guarded, on the other side, from Manichaeian errors. Accordingly, the following erroneous doctrines and the like are rejected, namely: that now, since the fall, human nature is in the beginning created pure and good, and that afterwards Original Sin from without is infused and mingled by Satan (as something essential) in the nature, as poison is mingled with wine [that in the beginning human nature was created by God pure and good, but that now, since the fall. Original Sin, etc.].<sup>13</sup>

For although in Adam and Eve the nature was originally created pure, good and holy, nevertheless sin has not entered nature through the fall in the way fanatically taught by the Manichaeians, as though Satan had created or made something essentially evil, and mingled it with their nature. But since, from the seduction of Satan, through the fall, according to God’s judgment and sentence, man, as a punishment, has lost his concreated original righteousness, human

nature, as has been said above,<sup>14</sup> is perverted and corrupt by this deprivation or deficiency, want and injury, which has been caused by Satan; so that at present the nature of all men, who in a natural way are conceived and born, is transmitted by inheritance with the same want and corruption. For since the fall human nature is not at first created pure and good, and only afterward corrupted by Original Sin, but in the first moment of our conception the seed whence man is formed is sinful and corrupt. Thus also Original Sin is not something existing of itself in or apart from the nature of the corrupt man, as it is also not the peculiar essence, body or soul of the corrupt man, or the man himself.

Original Sin, and the nature of man corrupted thereby, cannot and should not, therefore, be so distinguished, as though the nature before God were pure, good, holy, but Original Sin alone which dwells therein were evil.

[580] Also, as Augustine writes of the Manichaeans, as though it were not the corrupt man himself who sins by reason of inborn Original Sin, but something different and foreign in man, and therefore that God, by the Law, accuses and condemns not the nature as corrupt by sin, but only the Original Sin therein. For, as stated above in the thesis,<sup>15</sup> i. e. the explanation of the pure doctrine concerning Original Sin, the entire nature of man, which is born in the natural way of father and mother, is entirely and to the farthest extent corrupted and perverted by Original Sin, in body and soul, in all its powers that pertain and belong to the goodness, truth, holiness and righteousness concreated with it in Paradise. Nevertheless, the nature is not entirely exterminated or changed into another substance [diverse in genus or species], which, according to its essence, is not like our nature, and therefore cannot be one essence with us.

Because of this corruption the entire corrupt nature of man would be accused and condemned by the Law, if sin were not, for Christ's sake, forgiven.

But the Law accuses and condemns nature, not because we have been created men by God, but because we are sinful and wicked; not because and so far as nature and its essence, ever since the fall, is a work and creature of God in us, but because and so far as it has been poisoned and corrupted by sin.

But although Original Sin, like a spiritual poison or leprosy (as Luther says), has poisoned and corrupted all human nature, so that we cannot clearly show and point out the nature apart by itself, and Original Sin apart by itself; nevertheless, the corrupt nature, or essence of the corrupt man, body and soul, or the man himself whom God has created (and within whom dwells the Original Sin that also corrupts the nature, essence or the entire man), and Original Sin, which dwells in man's nature or essence, and corrupts it, are not one thing; as also in external leprosy the body which is leprous, and the leprosy on or in the body, are not, properly speaking, one thing. A distinction must be observed also between

our nature, as created and preserved by God, and Original Sin, which dwells in the nature. These two must and also can be considered, taught and believed with their distinctions according to Holy Scripture.

The chief articles also of our Christian faith urge and compel us to preserve this distinction.<sup>16</sup>

[581] For, *first*, in the article of Creation, Scripture shows that not only has God before the fall created human nature, but also that, since the fall, it is a creature and work of God (Deut 32:6; Isa. 45:11; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:25; Rev. 4:11)

“Thine hands,” says Job (10:8-12), “have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me as cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.”

“I will praise thee,” says David (Ps. 139:14-16), “for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

In the Ecclesiastes of Solomon it is written [12:7]: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it.”

[582] These passages clearly testify that God ever since the fall is the Creator of man, and creates his body and soul. Therefore the corrupt man cannot be, without any distinction, sin itself, for otherwise God would be a creator of sins; as also our Small Catechism, in the explanation of the First Article, confesses: ‘I believe that God has created me with all that exists, that he has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, with all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind.’ Likewise in the Large Catechism<sup>17</sup> it is thus written: “I believe and mean to say that I am a creature of God, i. e. that he has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul and life, members great and small, and all my senses.” Although the same creature and work of God is lamentably corrupted by sin; for the mass (*massa*), from which God now forms and makes man was in Adam corrupted and perverted, and is thus transmitted by inheritance to us.

And here pious Christian hearts ought to consider the unspeakable goodness of God that God did not immediately cast from himself into hell-fire this corrupt, perverted, sinful mass, but from it forms and makes human nature of the present

day, which is lamentably corrupted by sin, in order that by his dear Son he may cleanse it from all sin, sanctify and save it.

From this article now the distinction is indisputable and clear. For Original Sin does not originate with God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Original Sin also is not a creature or work of God, but a work of the devil.

If, now, there would be no difference whatever between the nature or essence of our body and soul, which is corrupted by Original Sin, and Original Sin, by which the nature is corrupted, it would follow either that God, because he is the creator of this our nature, also created and made Original Sin, which would also be his work and creature; or, because sin is a work of the devil, that Satan would be the creator of this our nature, soul and body, which must also be a work or creation of Satan if, without any distinction, our corrupt nature should be regarded as sin itself; both of which are contrary to the article of our Christian faith. Wherefore, in order that God's creation and work in man may be distinguished from the work of the devil, we say that it is God's creation that man has body and soul. Also that it is God's work that man can think, speak, do and work anything; for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." But that the nature is corrupt, that its thoughts, words and works are wicked, is originally a work of Satan, who, through sin, thus corrupted God's work in Adam, which from him is transmitted by inheritance to us.

[583] *Secondly*, in the article of Redemption, the Scriptures testify forcibly that God's Son assumed our human nature without sin, so that he was, in all things, sin excepted, made like us, his brethren, Heb. 2:14. Hence all the old orthodox teachers have maintained that Christ, according to his assumed humanity, is of one essence with us, his brethren; for he has assumed a human nature, which in all respects (sin alone excepted) is like our human nature in its essence and all essential attributes, and they have condemned the contrary doctrine as manifest heresy.

If, now, there were no distinction between the nature or essence of corrupt man and Original Sin, it must follow that either Christ did not assume our nature, because he did not assume sin; or that because he assumed our nature he also assumed sin; both of which are contrary to the Scriptures. But inasmuch as the Son of God assumed our nature, and not Original Sin, it is hence clear that human nature, ever since the fall, and Original Sin, are not one thing, but must be distinguished.

*Thirdly*, in the article of Sanctification, Scripture testifies that God cleanses, washes and sanctifies men from sin (1 John 1:7), and that Christ saves his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Sin, therefore, cannot be man himself; for God, for Christ's sake, receives man into grace, but he remains hostile to sin to eternity.

Wherefore that Original Sin is baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, sanctified and saved,<sup>18</sup> and other such expressions, whereby we will not offend simple-minded people, that are found in the writings of the recent Manichaeans, are unchristian and dreadful to hear.

*Fourthly*, in the article of the Resurrection, Scripture testifies<sup>46</sup> that it is precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, which will rise again, and that in eternal life we will have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin.

[584] If, now, there were no difference whatever between our corrupt body and soul, and Original Sin, it would follow, contrary to this article of the Christian faith, that either this our flesh will not rise again at the last day, and that in eternal life we will not have body and soul of the present essence, but another substance (or another soul), because then we will be without sin, or that [at the last day] sin also will rise again, and, in eternal life, will be and remain in the elect.

Hence it is clear that we must reject this doctrine [of the Manichaeans] (with all that depends upon it and follows from it), which asserts and teaches that Original Sin is the nature, substance, essence, body or soul itself of corrupt man, so that between our corrupt nature, substance and essence, and Original Sin, there is no distinction whatever. For the chief articles of our Christian faith forcibly and emphatically testify why a distinction should and must be maintained between man's nature or substance, which is corrupted by sin, and sin, whereby man is corrupted. For a simple statement of the doctrine and its opposite, with respect to the main point involved in this controversy, this is sufficient in this place, where the subject is not argued at length, but only the principal points are treated, article by article.

But with respect to terms and expressions, it is best and surest to use and retain the form of sound words employed concerning this article in the Holy Scriptures and the above mentioned books.

Also to avoid strife about words, equivocal terms,<sup>19</sup> i. e., words and expressions, which may be understood and used in several senses, should be carefully and distinctly explained, as when it is said: God creates the nature of men, where by the term "nature" the essence, body and soul of men are understood. But often the disposition or vicious quality is called its nature, as: "It is the nature of the serpent to bite and poison." Thus Luther says<sup>20</sup> that sin and to sin are the disposition and nature of the corrupt man.

[585] Therefore Original Sin properly signifies the deep corruption of our nature, as it is described in the Smalcald Articles.<sup>21</sup> But sometimes we thereby understand the concrete or the subject, i. e., man himself with body and soul,

wherein sin is and inheres, on account of which man is corrupted, infected with poison and sinful, as when Luther says:<sup>22</sup> “Thy birth, thy nature, thy entire essence is sin,” i. e. sinful and unclean.

Luther himself declares that by “natural sin,” “personal sin,” “essential sin,”<sup>23</sup> he means that not only words, thoughts and works are sin, but that the entire nature, person and essence of man is entirely corrupted [and is altogether depraved] by Original Sin.

Moreover, as to the Latin terms “substance” and “accident,” we are of the opinion that, in sermons to congregations of plain people, they should be avoided, because such terms are unknown to ordinary men. But when learned men, in treating this subject, employ them among themselves or with others to whom this word is not unknown, as Eusebius, Ambrose and especially Augustine, and also still other eminent church-teachers, from the necessity of explaining this doctrine in opposition to the heretics, they regard them as constituting an “immediate division,” i. e. a division between which there is no mean, so that everything which there is must be either “substance,” i. e. an independent essence, or “accident,” i. e. an incidental matter which does not exist by itself essentially, but in another independent essence, and can be distinguished therefrom; which division Cyril and Basil also use.

[586] And because, among others, it is also an indubitable, indisputable axiom in theology that every substance or self-existing essence, so far as it is a substance, is either God himself or a work and creation of God; Augustine, in many writings against the Manichaeans, in common with all true teachers, has, after due consideration and with earnestness, rejected and condemned the expression: *Peccatum originis est substantia vel natura*, i. e. Original Sin is man’s nature or substance. In conformity with him, all the learned and intelligent also have always maintained that what does not exist by itself, neither is a part of another self-existing essence, but exists, subject to change, in another thing, is not a substance, i. e. something self-existing, but an accident, i. e. something incidental. Thus Augustine is accustomed to speak constantly in this way: Original Sin is not the nature itself, but an *accidens vitium in natura*, i. e. an incidental defect and damage in the nature. In this way also, in our schools and churches, previous to this controversy, [learned] men spoke, according to the rules of logic, freely and without any suspicion [of heresy], and, on this account, were never censured either by Dr. Luther or any orthodox teacher of our pure, evangelical Church.

For since it is the indisputable truth that everything that there is, is either a substance or an accident, i. e. either a self-existing essence or something incidental in it, as has been just shown and proved by the testimony of the

church teachers, and no truly intelligent man has ever doubted concerning this; if the question be asked whether Original Sin be a substance, i. e. such a thing as exists of itself, and not in another, or an accident, i. e. such a thing as does not exist by itself, but in another, and cannot exist or be by itself, necessity constrains us, and no one can evade it, to confess directly and candidly that Original Sin is no substance, but an accident.

Hence also the permanent peace of the Church of God with respect to this controversy will never be promoted, but the dissension will rather be strengthened and maintained, if the ministers of the Church remain in doubt as to whether Original Sin be a substance or accident, and whether it be thus rightly and properly named.

Hence if the churches and schools are to be relieved of this scandalous and very mischievous controversy, it is necessary that each and every one be properly instructed concerning this matter.

[587] But if it be further asked as to what kind of an accident Original Sin is, it is another question, and one to which no philosopher, no Papist, no sophist, yea, no human reason, however acute it may be, can give the right explanation, but all understanding and every explanation of it must be derived solely from the Holy Scriptures, which testify that Original Sin is an unspeakable evil, and such an entire corruption of human nature that in it and all its internal and external powers nothing pure or good remains, but everything is entirely corrupt, so that, on account of Original Sin, man is in God's sight truly, spiritually dead, and, with all his powers, has died to that which is good.<sup>24</sup>

In this way, then, by the word "accident," Original Sin is not extenuated [namely] when it is explained according to [the analogy of] God's Word, after the manner in which Dr. Luther, in his Latin exposition of the third chapter of Genesis, has written with great earnestness against the extenuation of Original Sin; but this word is employed only to designate the distinction between the work of God (which is our nature, notwithstanding that it is corrupt) and the work of the devil (which is sin), that inheres in God's work, and is a most profound and indescribable corruption of it.

Therefore Luther also has employed in his treatment of this subject the term "accident," as also the term "quality," and has not rejected them; but likewise, with especial earnestness and great zeal, he has taken the greatest pains to explain and to represent to each and every one what a horrible quality and accident it is, whereby human nature is not merely polluted, but is so deeply corrupted that nothing pure or uncorrupt remains in it, as his words on Ps. 90 run: *Sive igitur peccatum originis qualitatem sive morbum vocaverimus, profecto extremum malum est non solum pati seternam iram et mortem, sed ne agnoscere*



*quidem, quae pateris.* That is: Whether we call Original Sin a *quality* or a *disease*, it is indeed the utmost evil not only to suffer the eternal wrath of God and eternal death, but also not to understand what we suffer. And again on Gen. 3: *Qui isto veneno peccati originis a planta pedis usque ad verticem infecti sumus, siquidem in natura adhuc integra accidere.* That is: We are infected by the poison of Original Sin from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, inasmuch as this happened to us in a nature still perfect.

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1. Cf § 20.↩
2. Cf. Epitome, Introduction, § 5.↩
3. The Augsburg Interim of 1548.↩
4. Matthias Flacius Illyricus and his adherents.↩
5. ii.: e3, 50.↩
6. Cf. §§ 11, 28, 38.↩
7. Part III., Art. i.: 68.↩
8. Cf. Apology, 11.: 3.↩
9. Cf. Apology, ii.: 49.↩
10. Cf. Epitome, i.: 10; Apology, ii.: 35.↩
11. Cf. Apology, ii.: 5.↩
12. Cf. Epitome, i. 15, note.↩
13. Francke (iii.: 89) directs attention to the fact that the translator of the Latin version has here missed the sense of the original. Cf. § 28.↩
14. § 7.↩
15. § 5 sq., 11.↩
16. Cf. Epitome, i.: 3 sqq.↩
17. 450:13.↩
18. Christopher Irenaeus and other followers of Flacius taught thus. See Carpzov's Isagoge, 1170.↩
19. Cf. Epitome, i.: 22.↩
20. Works, Walch's Ed., v.: 776; xi.: 396 sq.↩
21. Part III., Art. i.: 3.↩
22. See above, § 51.↩
23. Works, Walch's Ed., xi.: 396. Cf. v.: 685 sq.↩
24. Cf. §§ 10, 11.↩



## Chapter II. Of the Free Will, or Human Powers.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, xviii., xx.; *Apology*, xviii; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. i.; *Epitome*, ii.

[588] Since a dissent has occurred not only between the Papists and us, but also even among some theologians of the Augsburg can Confession, concerning the free will, we will first of all exactly show the points of the controversy.

For since man, with respect to his free will, can be found and considered in four distinct, dissimilar states, the question at present is not concerning his condition with regard to the same *before the fall*, or his ability *since the fall*, and before his conversion, *in external things* which pertain to this temporal life; also not concerning his ability in spiritual things after he has been *regenerated* and is controlled by God's Spirit; or the sort of a free will he will have when he rises *from the dead*. But the principal question is only and alone as to the ability of the understanding and will of the *unregenerate* man in his conversion and regeneration from his own *powers surviving* since the fall: Whether when the Word of God is preached, and the grace of God is offered, he can prepare himself for grace, accept the same, and assent thereto? This is the question upon which now for quite a number of years there has been a controversy among some theologians in the churches of the Augsburg Confession.

For the one side<sup>1</sup> has held and taught that although man, from his own powers, cannot fulfill God's command, or truly trust, fear and love God, without the grace of the Holy Ghost; nevertheless, before regeneration sufficient natural powers survive for him to prepare himself to a certain extent for grace, and to assent, although feebly; yet, if the grace of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, he could by this accomplish nothing, but must be vanquished in the struggle.

On the other side, the ancient and modern enthusiasts<sup>2</sup> have taught that God, through his Spirit, converts men and leads them to the saving knowledge of Christ, without any means and instrument of the creature, i. e. without the external preaching and hearing of God's Word.

[589] Against both these parties the pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession have taught and contended that by the fall of our first parents man was so corrupted that, in divine things pertaining to our conversion and the salvation of our souls, he is by nature blind when the Word of God is preached, and neither does nor can understand it, but regards it foolishness, and also does

not of himself draw nigh to God, but is and remains an enemy of God, until by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the preached and heard Word, out of pure grace, without any co-operation of his own, he is converted, made believing [presented with faith], regenerated and renewed.

In order to explain this controversy in a Christian manner, according to the guidance of God's Word, and by his grace to decide it, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

Namely, that in spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart and will of the unregenerate man cannot, in any way, by their own natural powers, understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work or concur in working anything, but they are entirely dead to good, and corrupt; so that in man's nature, since the fall, there is, before regeneration, not the least spark of spiritual power remaining still present, by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace, or accept the offered grace, or, for and of himself, be capable of it, or apply or accommodate himself thereto, or, by his own powers, be able of himself, as of himself, to aid, do, work or concur in working anything for his conversion, either entirely, or in half, or in even the least or most inconsiderable part, but he is the servant [and slave] of sin (John 8:34; Eph. 2:2,2 Tim. 2:26). Hence the natural free will, according to its perverted disposition and nature, is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God.

This declaration and general reply to the chief question and statement of the controversy presented in the introduction to this article, the following arguments from God's Word confirm and strengthen, and although they are contrary to proud reason and philosophy, yet we know that the wisdom of this perverted world is only foolishness before God, and that articles of faith should be judged only from God's Word.

[590] For, first, although man's reason or natural understanding has still indeed a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also (Rom. 1:19 sqq.) of the doctrine of the Law; yet it is so ignorant, blind and perverted that when even the most able and learned men upon earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot, from their own powers, perceive, apprehend, understand or believe and regard it true, but the more diligence and earnestness they employ in order to comprehend, with their reason, these spiritual things, the less they understand or believe, and, before they become enlightened or taught of the Holy Ghost, they regard all this only as foolishness or fictions. (1 Cor. 2:14): "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him." (1 Cor. 1:21): "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." (Eph. 4:17 sq.):

“They” (i. e. those not born again of God’s Spirit) “walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (Matt. 13:11 sqq. [Luke 8:18]): “They seeing, see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand; but it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” (Rom. 3:11, 12): “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

So, too, the Scriptures expressly call natural men, in spiritual and divine things, darkness. (Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:18; John 1:5): “The light shineth in darkness” (i. e. in the dark, blind world, which does not know or regard God), “and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” Also the Scriptures teach that man in sins is not only weak and sick, but also entirely dead (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13).

As now a man who is physically dead cannot, of his own powers, prepare or adapt himself to obtain again temporal life; so the man who is spiritually dead in sins cannot, of his own strength, adapt or apply himself to the acquisition of spiritual and heavenly righteousness and life, unless he be delivered and quickened by the Son of God from the death of sin.<sup>3</sup>

[591] Therefore the Scriptures deny to the understanding, heart, and will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity and ability in spiritual things, to think, to understand, begin, will, undertake, do, work or concur in working anything good and right, as of himself. (2 Cor. 3:5): “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.” (Rom. 3:12): “They are altogether unprofitable.” (John 8:37): “My Word hath no place in you.” (John 1:5): “The darkness comprehendeth” (or receiveth) “not the light.” (1 Cor. 2:14): “The natural man perceiveth not” (or, as the Greek word properly signifies, taketh not, comprehendeth not, receiveth not) “the things of the Spirit,” i. e. he is not capable of spiritual things; “for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them.” Much less can he truly believe the Gospel, or assent thereto and regard it as truth. (Rom. 8:7): “The carnal mind,” or that of the natural man, “is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.” And, in a word, that remains eternally true which the Son of God says (John 15:5): “Without me ye can do nothing.” And Paul (Phil. 2:13): “It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” This precious passage is very comforting to all godly Christians, who feel and experience in their hearts a small spark or earnest longing for divine grace and eternal salvation; for they know that God has kindled in their hearts this beginning of true godliness, and that he will further strengthen and help them in their great weakness to persevere in true faith unto the end.

To this also all the prayers of the saints relate, in which they pray that they may be taught, enlightened and sanctified of God, and thereby declare that those things which they ask of God they cannot have from their own natural powers; as in Ps. 119, alone, David prays more than ten times that God may impart to him understanding, that he may rightly receive and learn the divine doctrine. [Very many] similar prayers are in the writings of Paul (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9; Phil. 1:9). These prayers and the testimonies concerning our ignorance and inability have been written, not for the purpose of rendering us idle and remiss in reading, hearing and meditating upon God's Word, but first that from the heart we should thank God that, through his Son, he has delivered us from the darkness of ignorance and the captivity of sin and death, and, through baptism and the Holy Ghost, has regenerated and illumined us.

[592] And after God, through the Holy Ghost in baptism, has kindled and made a beginning of the true knowledge of God and faith, we should pray him without intermission that, through the same Spirit and his grace, by means of the daily exercise of reading, and applying to practice, God's Word, he may preserve in us faith and his heavenly gifts, strengthen us from day to day, and support us to the end. For unless God himself be our school-teacher, we can study and learn nothing that is acceptable to him and that is salutary to ourselves and others.

Secondly, God's Word testifies that the understanding, heart and will of the natural, unregenerate man in divine things are not only turned entirely from God, but also turned and perverted against God to every evil. Also, that he is not only weak, feeble, impotent and dead to good, but also through Original Sin is so lamentably perverted, infected and corrupted that, by his disposition and nature, he is entirely evil, perverse and hostile to God, and that, with respect to everything that is displeasing and contrary to God, he is strong, alive and active. (Gen. 8:22): "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Jer. 17:9): "The heart of man is defiant and despairing," or perverted and full of misery, "so that it is unfathomable." This passage St. Paul explains (Rom. 8): "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Gal. 5:17): "The flesh lusteth against the spirit; . . . and these are contrary the one to the other." (Rom. 7:14): "We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." And soon afterward (18,23): "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man," which, through the Holy Ghost, is regenerate; "but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin."

[593] If, now, in St. Paul and in other regenerate men the natural or carnal free will, even after regeneration, strives against God's Law, much more perverse and hostile to God's Law and will, will it be before regeneration. Hence

it is manifest (as in the article concerning Original Sin it is further declared, to which, for the sake of brevity, we now refer) that the free will, from its own natural powers, not only cannot work or co-work as to anything for its own conversion, righteousness and salvation, or follow, believe or assent to the Holy Ghost, who through the Gospel offers him grace and salvation, but rather from its innate, wicked, perverse nature it hostilely resists God and his will, unless it be enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit.

On this account, also, the Holy Scriptures compare the heart of the unregenerate man to a hard stone, which does not yield to the one who touches it, but resists, and to a rough block, and to a wild, unmanageable beast; not that man, since the fall, is no longer a rational creature, or is converted to God without hearing and meditating upon God's Word, or in external, worldly things cannot understand, or do or abstain from doing, anything of his free will, good or evil.

[594] For, as Doctor Luther says upon Ps. 90: "In worldly and external affairs, which pertain to the livelihood and maintenance of the body, man is intelligent, reasonable and very active, but in spiritual and divine things, which pertain to the salvation of the soul, man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. For man neither sees nor perceives the fierce and terrible wrath of God on account of sin and death [resulting from it], but he continues even knowingly and willingly in his security, and thereby falls into a thousand dangers, and finally into eternal death and damnation; and no prayers, no supplications, no admonitions, yea, also no threats, no reprimands are of any avail; yea, all teaching and preaching are lost upon him, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. For this [renewal of the Holy Ghost] no stone or block, but man alone, was created. And although God, according to his just, strict sentence, eternally casts away the fallen evil spirits, he has nevertheless, out of pure mercy, willed that poor fallen human nature might again become capable and participant of conversion, the grace of God and eternal life; not from its own natural [active or] effective skill, aptness or capacity (for the nature of man is perverse enmity against God), but from pure grace, through the gracious efficacious working of the Holy Ghost." And this Dr. Luther calls capacity (not active, but passive) which he thus explains: *Quando patres liberum arbitrium defendunt, capacitatem libertatis ejus prsedicant, quod scilicet verti potest ad bonum per gratiam Dei et fieri revera liberum, ad quod creatum est.* That is: When the Fathers defend the free will, they say of it that it is capable of freedom in so far that, through God's grace, it can be turned to good, and become truly free, for which it was created. Tom. 1,

p. 236.<sup>4</sup>

But before man is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed and led by the Holy Ghost, he can of himself and of his own natural powers begin, work or co-operate as to anything in spiritual things, and in his own conversion or regeneration, as little as a stone or a block or clay.<sup>5</sup> For although he can control the outward members and hear the Gospel, and to a certain extent meditate upon it and discourse concerning it, as is to be seen in the Pharisees and hypocrites; nevertheless he regards it foolishness, and cannot believe it, and also in this case he is worse than a block, in that he is rebellious and hostile to God's will, if the Holy Ghost be not efficacious in him, and do not kindle and work in him faith and other virtues pleasing to God, and obedience.

Thirdly, for the Holy Scriptures, besides, refer conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and all that belongs to their efficacious beginning and completion, not to the human powers of the natural free will, either entirely, or half, or the least or most inconsiderable part; but ascribe them *in solidum*, i. e. entirely, alone to the divine working and the Holy Ghost, as also the Apology teaches.<sup>6</sup>

[595] The reason and free will have the power, to a certain extent, to live an outwardly decent life; but to be born anew, and to obtain inwardly another heart, sense and disposition, this only the Holy Ghost effects. He opens the understanding and heart to understand the Scriptures and to give heed to the Word, as it is written (Luke 24:45): "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Also (Acts 16:14); "Lydia heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." "He worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). He gives repentance (Acts 5:31; 2 Tim. 2:25). He works faith (Phil. 1:29): "For unto you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him." (Eph. 2:8): "It is the gift of God." (John 6:29): "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." He gives an understanding heart, seeing eyes, and hearing ears (Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:15). The Holy Ghost is a spirit of regeneration and renewal (Tit. 3:5, 6). He takes away the hard heart of stone, and gives a new tender heart of flesh, that we may walk in his commands (Ez. 11:19; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 51:10). He creates us in Christ Jesus to good works (Eph 2:10), and makes us new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). And, in short, every good gift is of God (James 1:17), No one can come to Christ unless the Father draw him (John 6:44). No one knoweth the Father, save him to whom the Son will reveal him (Matt. 11:27). No one can call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3). "Without me," says Christ, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). All "our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3:5). "What hast thou which

thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7). And indeed St. Augustine writes particularly of this passage, that by it he was constrained to lay aside the former erroneous opinion which he had held concerning this subject. *De Praedestinatione*, cap. 3: *Gratiam Dei in eo tantum consistere, quod in praeconis veritatis Dei voluntas nobis revelaretur; ut autem praedicato nobis evangelio consentiremus, nostrum esse proprium, et ex nobis esse. Item erravi (inquit), cum dicerem, nostrum esse credere et velle; Dei autem, dare credentibus et volentibus facultatem operandi*. That is: “I erred in this, that I held that the grace of God consists alone in that God, in the preaching of the truth, reveals his will; but that we consent to the preached Gospel is our own work, and stands within our own powers.” For St. Augustine also writes further: “I erred when I said that it stands within our own power to believe the Gospel and to will; but it is God’s work to give to them that believe and will the power of working.”

This doctrine is founded upon God’s Word, and conformable to the Augsburg Confession and other writings above mentioned, as the following testimonies prove.

[596] In Article XX. the Confession says as follows: “Because through faith the Holy Ghost is given, the heart thus becomes qualified for the doing of good works. For before, because it is without the Holy Ghost, it is too weak, and besides is in the devil’s power, who drives poor human nature into many sins.” And a little afterward: “For without faith and Christ human nature and ability is much too weak to do good works.”

These passages clearly testify that the Augsburg Confession pronounces the will of man in spiritual things as anything else than free, but says that he is the devil’s captive; how, then, from his own powers, is he to be able to turn himself to the Gospel or Christ?

The Apology teaches of the free will thus: “We also say that reason has, to a certain extent, a free will; for in the things which are to be comprehended by the reason we have a free will.”<sup>7</sup> And a little after: “For such hearts as are without the Holy Ghost are without the fear of God, without faith, without trust towards God they do not believe that God listens to them, that he forgives their sins, and helps them in necessities; therefore they are godless. Now, ‘a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,’ and ‘without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Therefore, although we concede that it is within our ability to perform such an outward work, nevertheless, we say that, in spiritual things, the free will and reason have no ability,” etc.<sup>8</sup> Here it is clearly seen that the Apology ascribes no ability to the will of man, either for beginning good or for itself co-operating.



In the Smalcald Articles the following errors concerning the free will are also rejected: “That man has a free will to do good and omit evil, etc.”<sup>9</sup> And shortly afterward the error is also rejected: “That it is not founded upon Scripture, that, for a good work, the Holy Ghost, with his grace, is necessary.”<sup>10</sup>

[597] It is further maintained in the Smalcald Articles as follows: “And this repentance, in Christians, continues until death, because through the entire life it contends with sin remaining in the flesh, as Paul (Rom. 7:23) shows that he wars with the Law in his members, etc.; and this, not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost, that follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and purges the remaining sins, and works so as to render man pure and holy.”<sup>11</sup> These words say nothing whatever of our will, or that it also of itself works in regenerate men, but ascribe it to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which cleanses man and makes him daily more godly and holy, and thus our own powers are entirely excluded therefrom.

In the Large Catechism of Dr. Luther it is written thus: “And I also am a part and member of the same, a participant and joint owner of all the good it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost, in that I have heard and continue to hear the Word of God, which is the means of entrance. For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christian people. By means of this congregation he brings us to Christ and teaches, and preaches to us the Word, whereby he works and promotes sanctification, causing [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces.”

In these words the Catechism mentions not a word concerning our free will or co-operation, but refers everything to the Holy Ghost, viz. that, through the office of the ministry, he brings us into the Church of God, wherein he sanctifies us, and so provides that we daily grow in faith and good works.

And although the regenerate, even in this life, advance so that they will what is good, and love it, and even do good and grow in it, nevertheless this (as above quoted) is not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost, as Paul himself speaks concerning this, works “to will and to do” (Phil. 2:13). As also in Eph. 2:10 he ascribes this work to God alone, when he says: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk therein.”

[598] In the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther it is thus written: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as he



calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith," etc.

And in the explanation of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer the following words occur: "When is this effected? When our Heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and live a Godly life," etc.

These passages declare that, from our own powers, we cannot come to Christ, but God must give us his Holy Ghost, by whom we are enlightened, sanctified, and thus brought to Christ through faith, and upheld in him; and no mention is made of our will or co-operation.

To this we will add a passage in which Dr. Luther expresses himself, together with a solemn declaration added thereto, that he intends to persevere in this doctrine unto the end, in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper: "Hereby I reject and condemn, as nothing but error all dogmas which extol our free will; as they directly conflict with this help and grace of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. For since, out of Christ, death and sin are our lords, and the devil our god and prince, there can be no power or might, no wisdom or understanding, in us, whereby we can qualify ourselves for, or strive after righteousness and life; but we are evidently the blinded and imprisoned ones of sin and the devil, to do and to think what pleases him and is contrary to God and his commandments."

[599] In these words Dr. Luther of godly and holy memory ascribes no power whatever to our free will to qualify itself for righteousness or strive after it, but says that man is blinded and held captive, to do only the devil's will and that which is contrary to God the Lord. Therefore here there is no co-operation of our will in the conversion of man, and man must be drawn and be born anew of God; otherwise the thought of turning one's self to the Holy Gospel for the purpose of accepting it cannot arise in our hearts. Of this matter Dr. Luther also wrote in his book *De Servo Arbitrio*, i. e. Of the Captive Will of Man, in opposition to Erasmus, and well and thoroughly elucidated and supported this position, and afterward in his magnificent exposition of the book of Genesis, especially of chapter 26, he repeated and explained it. He has there also in the best and most careful way guarded against all misunderstanding and perversion, his opinion and understanding of some other peculiar disputations introduced incidentally by Erasmus, as Of Absolute Necessity, etc.; to which we also hereby appeal, and we recommend it to others.

On this account the doctrine is incorrect by which it is asserted that the unregenerate man has still sufficient power to desire to receive the Gospel and to be comforted by it, and that thus the natural human will co-operates in a manner in conversion. For such an erroneous opinion is contrary to the holy, divine

Scriptures, the Christian Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Large and the Small Catechisms of Luther, and other writings of this excellent highly [divinely] illumined theologian.

This doctrine concerning the inability and wickedness of our natural free will, and concerning our conversion and regeneration, viz. that it is a work of God alone and not of our powers, is impiously abused both by enthusiasts and by Epicureans; and by their speeches many persons have become disorderly and irregular, and in all the Christian exercises of prayer, reading and devout meditation have become idle and indolent, as they say that, because from their own natural powers they are unable to convert themselves to God, they will always strive with all their might against God, or wait until God violently convert them against their will; or because they can do nothing in these spiritual things, but everything is of the operation alone of God the Holy Ghost, they will neither hear nor read the Word nor use the sacrament, but wait until God, without means, infuses from heaven his gifts, so that they can truly, in themselves, feel and perceive that God has converted them.

[600] Other desponding hearts [our godly doctrine concerning the free will not being rightly understood] might perhaps fall into hard thoughts and perilous doubt as whether God have elected them, and through the Holy Ghost will work also in them his gifts, especially when they are sensible of no strong, burning faith and sincere obedience, but only weakness, fear and misery.

For this reason we will now relate still further from God's Word how man is converted to God, how and through what means (namely, through the oral Word and the holy Sacraments) the Holy Ghost is efficacious in us, and is willing to work and bestow, in our hearts, true repentance, faith and new spiritual power and ability for good, and how we should act ourselves towards these means, and [how] use them.

It is not God's will that any one should perish, but that all men should be converted to him and be saved eternally. (Ez. 33:11): "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (John 3:16): "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

[601] Therefore God, out of his immense goodness and mercy, causes his divine eternal Law and his wonderful plan concerning our redemption, namely, the holy, only saving Gospel of his dear Son, our only Saviour and Redeemer, to be publicly proclaimed; and by this [preaching] collects for himself from the human race an eternal Church, and works in the hearts of men true repentance and knowledge of sins, and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And by

this means, and in no other way, namely, through his holy Word, when it is heard as preached or is read, and the holy Sacraments when they are used according to the Word, God desires to call men to eternal salvation, to draw them to himself, and to convert, regenerate and sanctify them.<sup>12</sup> (1 Cor. 1:21): "For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." (Acts 10:5, 6): Peter "shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." (Rom. 10:17): "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (John 17:17, 20): "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth," etc. "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Therefore the eternal Father calls down from heaven, concerning his dear Son, and concerning all who, in his name, preach repentance and forgiveness of sins: "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).

This preaching [of God's Word] all who wish to be saved ought to hear. For the preaching and hearing of God's Word are instruments of the Holy Ghost, by, with and through which he desires to work efficaciously, and to convert men to God, and to work in them both to will and to do.

This Word man can externally hear and read, even though he be not yet converted to God and regenerate; for in these external things, as above said, man, even since the fall, has, to a certain extent, a free will, so that he can go to church and hear or not hear the sermon.

Through this means, namely, the preaching and hearing of his Word, God works, and breaks our hearts, and draws man, so that through the preaching of the Law he sees his sins and God's wrath, and experiences in his heart true terrors, repentance and sorrow [contrition], and, through the preaching and consideration of the holy Gospel concerning the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ, a spark of faith is kindled in him, which accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, and comforts itself with the promise of the Gospel, and thus the Holy Ghost (who works all this) is given to the heart (Gal. 4:6).

[602] Although now both, viz. the planting and watering of the preacher, and the running and willing of the hearer, would be to no purpose, and no conversion would follow, if the power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, who, through the Word preached and heard, enlightens and converts the hearts, so that men believe this Word, and assent thereto; nevertheless neither preacher nor hearer should doubt this grace and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, but should be certain, if the Word of God is preached purely and clearly, according to the command and will of God, and men listen attentively and earnestly, and meditate upon it, that God is certainly present with his grace, and grants, as has been said, what man can otherwise from his own powers neither accept nor give.

For concerning the presence, operation and gifts of the 56 Holy Ghost we

should not and cannot always judge from sense, i. e. as to how and when they are experienced in the heart; but because they are often covered and occur in great weakness, we should be certain, from and according to the promise, that preaching and hearing the Word of God is [truly] an office and work of the Holy Ghost, whereby he is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts (2 Cor. 2:14 sqq.) [3:5 sqq.].

But if a man will not hear preaching or read God's Word, but despises the Word and Church of God, and thus dies and perishes in his sins, he neither can console himself with God's eternal election nor obtain his mercy; for Christ, in whom we are chosen, offers to all men his grace in Word and holy sacraments, and wishes earnestly that the Word be heard, and has promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name, and are occupied with his holy Word, he will be in their midst.

But where such a man despises the instrument of the Holy Ghost, and will not hear, no injustice befalls him if the Holy Ghost do not enlighten him, but he be allowed to remain in the darkness of his unbelief, and to perish; for of this it is written (Matt. 23:37): "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

And in this respect it might well be said that man is not a stone or block. For a stone or block does not resist that which moves it, and does not understand and is not sensible of what is being done with it, as a man, as long as he is not converted, with his will resists God the Lord. And it is nevertheless true that a man before his conversion is still a rational creature, having an understanding and will, yet not an understanding with respect to divine things, or a will to will something good and salutary. Yet he can do nothing whatever for his conversion (as has also been said [frequently] above), and is in this respect much worse than a stone and block; for he resists the Word and will of God, until God awakens him from the death of sin, enlightens and renews him.

[603] And although God does not force man to become godly (for those who always resist the Holy Ghost and persistently oppose the known truth, as Stephen says of the hardened Jews (Acts 7:51), will not be converted), yet God the Lord draws the man whom he wishes to convert, and draws him, too, in such a way that his understanding, in place of darkened, becomes enlightened, and his will, in place of perverse, becomes obedient. And the Scriptures call this "creating a new heart" (Ps. 51:10).

For this reason it cannot be correctly said that man, before his conversion, has a certain *modus agendi*, namely, a way of working in divine things something good and salutary. For inasmuch as man, before his conversion, is dead in sins (Eph. 2:5), there can be in him no power to work anything good in divine things,

and therefore he has also no *modus agendi*, or way of working in divine things. But when a declaration is made concerning this matter as to how God works in man, God has nevertheless a *modus agendi*, or way of working in a man, as in a rational creature, quite different from his way of working in another creature that is irrational, or in a stone and block. Nevertheless to man, before his conversion, a *modus agendi*, or any way of working something good in spiritual things, cannot be ascribed.

But when man is converted, and is thus enlightened, and his will is renewed, man (so far as he is regenerate or is a new man) wills what is good, and “delights in the Law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22), and henceforth does good to such an extent and as long as he is impelled by God’s Spirit, as Paul says (Rom. 8:14): “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” And this impulse of the Holy Ghost is not a *coactio* or coercion, but the converted man does good spontaneously, as David says (Ps. 110:4): “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” And nevertheless that [the strife of the flesh and spirit] also remains in the regenerate, of which St. Paul wrote (Rom. 7:22 sq.): “For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Also (v. 25): “So then with my mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Also (Gal. 5:17): “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

[604] From this, then, it follows that as soon as the Holy Ghost, as has been said, through the Word and holy Sacraments, has begun in us this his work of regeneration and renewal, it is certain that, through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can and should co-operate, although still in great weakness. But this does not occur from our fleshly natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Ghost has begun in us in conversion, as St. Paul expressly and earnestly exhorts that “as workers together” we “receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). This, then, is nothing else, and should thus be understood, than that the converted man does good to such an extent and so long as God, by his Holy Spirit, rules, guides and leads him, and that as soon as God would withdraw from him his gracious hand, he could not continue for a moment in obedience to God. But if this would be understood thus [if any one would take the expression of St. Paul in this sense], that the converted man co-works with the Holy Ghost, in the manner that two horses together draw a wagon, this can in no way be conceded without prejudice to the divine truth.

[(2 Cor. 6:1): Σθνεργουντες παραχαλουμεν: We who are servants or co-

workers with God beseech you who are “God’s husbandry” and “God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9) to imitate our example, that the grace of God may not be among you in vain (1 Cor. 15:10), but that ye may be the temple of God, living and dwelling in you (2 Cor. 6:16)].

Therefore there is a great difference between baptized and unbaptized men. For since, according to the doctrine of St. Paul (Gal. 3:27), all who have been baptized have put on Christ, and thus are truly regenerate, they have now a liberated will, i. e. as Christ says they have been made free again (John 8:36); for this reason they afterward not only hear the Word, but also, although in great weakness, are able to assent to it and accept it.

[605] For since we, in this life, receive only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new birth is not complete, but only begun in us, combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate man, in which there is a great difference perceptible not only among Christians, in that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but also every Christian experiences in himself that at one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed: at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another cold and weak.

But when the baptized have acted against conscience, allowed sin to prevail in them, and thus have grieved and lost the Holy Ghost in them, they need not be rebaptized, but must again be converted, as has been sufficiently said before.

For it is once for all true that in genuine conversion a change, new emotion [renewal] and movement in understanding will and heart must occur, namely, that the heart perceive sin, dread God’s wrath, turn itself from sin, perceive and accept the promise of grace in Christ, have good spiritual thoughts, a Christian purpose and diligence, and strive against the flesh. For where none of these occurs or is present there is also no true conversion. But since the question is concerning the efficient cause, i. e. who works this in us, and whence man has this, and how he attains it, this doctrine is thus stated: Because the natural powers of man cannot act or help thereto (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:5), God, out of his infinite goodness and mercy, comes first to us, and causes his holy Gospel to be preached, whereby the Holy Ghost desires to work and accomplish in us this conversion and renewal, and through preaching and meditation upon his Word kindles in us faith and other divine virtues, so that they are gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost alone. This doctrine also directs us to the means whereby the Holy Ghost desires to begin and work this [which we have mentioned], instructs us how those gifts are preserved, strengthened and increased, and admonishes us that we should not receive this grace of God in vain, but diligently ponder how grievous a sin it is to hinder and resist such operations of the Holy Ghost.

[606] From this thorough explanation of the entire doctrine concerning the free will we can now judge also with respect to the last of the questions upon which, for quite a number of years, there has been controversy in the churches of the Augsburg Confession: (Whether man before, in or after his conversion resists the Holy Ghost, or does nothing whatever, but only suffers what God works in him [or is purely passive]? Whether in conversion man is like a block? Whether the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him? Whether conversion occur by coercion, so that God coerces men to conversion against their wills?), and the opposite dogmas and errors are seen, exposed, censured and rejected, namely:

1. First, the folly of the Stoics and Manichaeans, [who asserted] that everything that happens must so happen, and that man does everything from coercion, and that even in outward things the will of man has no freedom or ability to afford to a certain extent external righteousness and respectable deportment and to avoid external sins and vices, or that the will of man is coerced to external wicked deeds, in chastity, robbery and murder, etc.
2. Secondly, the gross error of the Pelagians, that the free will, from its own natural powers and without the Holy Ghost, can turn itself to God, believe the Gospel, and be obedient in heart to God's Law, and by this, its voluntary obedience, can merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
3. Thirdly, the error of the Papists and scholastics, who have presented it in a somewhat more subtle form, and have taught that man from his own natural powers can make a beginning of doing good and of his own conversion, and that then the Holy Ghost, because man is too weak to bring it to completion, comes to the aid of the good that has been begun from his own natural powers.
4. [607] Fourthly, the doctrine of the Synergists, who pretend that man is not absolutely dead to good in spiritual things, but is badly wounded and half dead. Therefore, although the free will is too weak to make a beginning, and by its own powers to convert itself to God, and to be obedient in heart to God's Law; nevertheless when the Holy Ghost makes a beginning, and calls us through the Gospel, and offers his grace, the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation, that then the free will, from its own natural powers, meets God, and to a certain extent, although feebly, can act, help and co-operate thereto, can qualify itself for, and apply itself to grace, and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel, and also, in the progress and support of this work, it can co-operate, by its own powers, with the Holy Ghost.<sup>13</sup>

But, on the contrary, it has above been shown at length that such power, namely, the *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*, i. e. to qualify one's self

from nature for grace, does not proceed from our own natural powers, but alone from the operation of the Holy Ghost.

5. Also the following doctrine of the popes and monks, that, since regeneration, man, in this life, can completely fulfill the Law of God, and through the fulfillment of the Law be righteous before God and merit eternal life.
6. On the other hand, the enthusiasts should be rebuked with great severity and zeal, and should in no way be tolerated in the Church of God, who fabricate that God, without any means, without the hearing of the divine Word, and without the use of the holy Sacraments, draws man to himself, and enlightens, justifies and saves him.<sup>14</sup>
7. Also those who fabricate that in conversion and regeneration God so creates a new heart and new man that the substance and essence of the old Adam, and especially the rational soul, are altogether annihilated, and a new essence of the soul is created out of nothing.<sup>15</sup> This error St. Augustine expressly rebukes on Psalm 25, where he quotes the passage from Paul (Eph. 4:22): “Put off the old man,” etc., and explains it in the following words: “That no one may think that some substance is to be laid aside, he has explained what it is to lay aside the old man, and to put on the new, when he says in the succeeding words: ‘Putting away lying, speak the truth.’ So that is to put off the old man and to put on the new.”
8. [608] Also if the following expressions be used without being explained, viz. that the will of man, before, in, and after conversion, resists the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him.<sup>16</sup>

For from the preceding explanation it is manifest that where no change whatever occurs through the Holy Ghost to that which is good in understanding, heart and will, and man does not at all believe the promise, and is not rendered fit by God for grace, but entirely resists the Word, there no conversion has occurred or can exist. For conversion is such a change through the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the understanding, will and heart of man, that, by this operation of the Holy Ghost, man can receive the offered grace. And indeed all those who obstinately and persistently resist the operations and movements of the Holy Ghost, which take place through the Word, do not receive, but grieve and lose the Holy Ghost.

There remains, nevertheless, also in the regenerate a refractoriness of which the Scriptures speak, namely, that “the flesh lusteth against the spirit” (Gal. 5:17), that “fleshly lusts war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11), and that “the law in the members wars against the law of the mind” (Rom. 7:23).



Therefore the man who is not regenerate wholly resists God, and is altogether a servant of sin (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16). But the regenerate delights in the Law of God after the inward man, but nevertheless sees in his members the law of sin, which wars against the law of the mind; on this account, with his mind, he serves the Law of God, but, with the flesh, the law of sin (Rom. 7:25). In this way the correct opinion can and should be thoroughly, clearly and discreetly explained and taught.

[609] As to the expressions of Chrysostom and Basil: *Trahit Deus, sed volentem trahit; tantum velis, et Deus praeoccurrit*, and also the expression of the scholastics [and Papists], *Hominis voluntas in conversione non est otiosa, sed agit aliquid*, i. e. “God draws, but he draws the willing,” and “In conversion the will of man is not idle, but effects something,” (expressions which have been introduced for confirming the natural free will in man’s conversion, against the doctrine concerning God’s grace), from the explanation heretofore presented it is manifest that they are not in harmony with the form of sound doctrine, but are contrary to it, and therefore when we speak of conversion to God should be avoided.

For the conversion of our corrupt will, which is nothing else than a resuscitation of it from spiritual death, is only and alone a work of God, just as also the resuscitation in the resurrection of the body should be ascribed to God alone, as has been above fully set forth and proved by manifest testimonies of Holy Scripture.

But how in conversion, through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, God changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men, and that after such conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also co-operates in all the deeds of the Holy Ghost, which he works through us, has already been sufficiently explained above.

So also when Luther says<sup>17</sup> that with respect to his conversion man is purely passive, i. e. does nothing whatever thereto, but only suffers what God works in him, his meaning is not that conversion occurs without the preaching and hearing of God’s Word; his meaning also is not that in conversion no new emotion is awakened in us by the Holy Ghost, and no spiritual operation begun; but he means that man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot contribute anything or help to his conversion, and that conversion is not only in part, but altogether an operation, gift and present and work of the Holy Ghost alone, who accomplishes and effects it, by his virtue and power, through the Word, in the understanding, will and heart of man, *tanquam in subjecto patiente*, i. e. where man does or works nothing, but only suffers. Not as a statue is cut in a stone or a seal impressed into wax, which knows nothing of it, and also perceives and wills

nothing of it, but in the way which is above narrated and explained.

[610] Because also the youth in the schools have been greatly perplexed by the doctrine of the three efficient causes<sup>18</sup> concurring in the conversion to God of the unregenerate man, as to the manner in which they, namely, the Word of God preached and heard, the Holy Ghost and the will of man concur; it is again manifest from the explanation above presented that conversion to God is a work of God the Holy Ghost alone, who is the true master workman that alone works this in us, for which he uses the preaching and hearing of his Holy Word as his ordinary [and lawful] means and instrument. But the understanding and will of the unregenerate man are nothing else than the *subjectum convertendum*, i. e. that which is to be converted, as the understanding and will of a spiritually dead man, in whom the Holy Ghost works conversion and renewal, for which work the will of the man who is to be converted does nothing, but only lets God work in him, until he is regenerate; and then also by the Holy Ghost he works [cooperates] in other succeeding good works that which is pleasing to God, in the way and to the extent fully set forth above.

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1. Called Philippists.↵
  2. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 13.↵
  3. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 3.↵
  4. Augustine also has written to like effect, lib. 2. Cbnira Julianum. Dr. Luther on Hosea 6; also in the Church-Postils on the Epistle for Good Friday; also on the Gospel for the third Sunday after Epiphany.↵
  5. Cf. § 59.↵
  6. Art. xviii.: 75.↵
  7. Apology, xviii.: 70.↵
  8. Ibid., xviii.: 72. 73.↵
  9. Part III., Art. i.: v.↵
  10. Ibid., § 10.↵
  11. Part III., Art. iii.: 40↵
  12. § 52; Apology, vii.: 36; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii.: 3 sqq. , Sol. Dec. xi.: 76, 77.↵
  13. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 11, 12, notes.↵
  14. Ibid.. ii.: 18.↵
  15. Epitome, ii.: 14.↵
  16. Ibid., ii.: 15.↵
  17. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 18.↵

18. Melancthon in *Loci Theologici* (1535), Pfeffinger, Strigel and others Cf. Epit., ii.: 19. [↩](#)

## Chapter III. Of the Righteousness of Faith before God.

*Parallel Passages.*— *Augsburg Confession*, iv., vi., xii., xx.; *Apology* iv.: *Smalcald Articles*, Part II., Art. i.; Part III., xiii.; *Epitome*, iii.

The third dissent has arisen among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerning the righteousness of Christ or of faith, which, out of grace, is imputed by God, through faith, to poor sinners for righteousness.

For one side has contended that the righteousness of faith, which the apostle calls the righteousness of God, is God's essential righteousness, which is Christ himself as the true, natural and essential Son of God, who, by faith, dwells in the elect and impels them to do right, and who thus is their righteousness, compared with which righteousness the sins of all men are as a drop of water compared with the great ocean.

On the contrary, others have held and taught that Christ is our righteousness, alone according to his human nature.

[611] In opposition to both these sides, it is unanimously taught by the other teachers of the Augsburg Confession that Christ is our righteousness, not alone according to his divine nature, nor also alone according to his human nature, but according to both natures, who as God and man has, through his complete obedience, redeemed, justified and saved us from our sins; that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and our acceptance as God's children on account of his obedience only of Christ, which alone through faith, out of pure grace, is imputed for righteousness to all true believers, and on account of it they are absolved from all their unrighteousness.

Besides this [controversy] there are on account of the Interim [by occasion of the formula of the Interim or of Inter-religion], and otherwise, still other disputes caused and excited concerning the article Of Justification, which will hereafter be explained in the antithesis, i. e. in the enumeration of those errors which are contrary to the pure doctrine in this article.

This article concerning Justification by Faith (as the *Apology* says<sup>1</sup>) is the chief in the entire Christian doctrine, without which no poor conscience has any firm consolation, or can know aright the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: "If only this article remain in view pure, the Christian Church also remains pure, and is harmonious and without all sects; but if it do not remain pure, it is not possible to resist any error or fanatical spirit" (Tom. 5, Jena Ed., p. 159). And; concerning this article Paul especially says that

“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Therefore, in this article he emphasizes with so much zeal and earnestness the exclusive particles, or the words whereby the works of men are excluded (namely, “without Law,” “without works,” “out of grace” [“freely,” Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Eph. 2:8, 9]), in order to indicate how highly necessary it is that in this article, by the side of the presentation of the pure doctrine, the antithesis, i. e., all contrary dogmas, by this means be separated, exposed and rejected.

Therefore, in order that this dissent may be explained in a Christian way according to God’s Word, and, by his grace, be settled, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

[612] Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we unanimously believe, teach and confess, according to the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession above presented, viz. that a poor sinful man is justified before God, i. e., absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins, and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and adopted into sonship and heirship of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own, also without all preceding, present or subsequent works, out of pure grace, alone because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Christ, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness.

[613] These treasures are offered us by the Holy Ghost in the promise of the holy Gospel; and faith alone is the only means whereby we lay hold upon, accept and apply and appropriate them to ourselves. This faith is a gift of God, whereby we apprehend aright Christ our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in him, that for the sake of his obedience alone, out of grace, we have the forgiveness of sins, and before God the Father are regarded godly and righteous, and are eternally saved. Therefore the expressions of Paul, that we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 3:28), or that “faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5), and that we are “made righteous by the obedience of one” (Rom. 5:19), or that “by the righteousness of one justification of faith came to all men,” (Rom. 5:18), are regarded and received as equivalents. For faith justifies, not because it is so good a work and so fair a virtue, but because, in the promise of the Gospel, it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ; for if we are to be justified thereby, this must be applied and appropriated by faith. Therefore the righteousness which, out of pure grace, is imputed to faith or the believer, is the obedience, suffering and resurrection of Christ, by which he has made satisfaction for us to the Law, and paid the price of our sins. For since Christ is not alone man, but God and man in one undivided person, he was as little subject to the Law, because he is the Lord of the Law, as, in his own person, to suffering and death. Therefore his obedience not only in suffering and dying, but also that he in our

stead was voluntarily subject to the Law, and fulfilled it by his obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that, on account of this complete obedience, which by deed and by suffering, in life and in death, he rendered his heavenly Father for us, God forgives our sins, regards us godly and righteous, and eternally saves us. This righteousness is offered us it by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel and in the sacraments, and is applied, appropriated and received through faith, whence believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, sonship and heirship of eternal life.

Accordingly, the word *justify* here means to declare righteous and free from sins, and, for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which is imputed by God to faith (Phil. 3:9), to absolve one from their eternal punishment. For this use and understanding of this word is common in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. (Prov. 17:15): "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." (Isa. 5:23): "Woe unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!" (Rom. 8:33): "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth," i. e. absolves from sins, and declares exempt.

But because sometimes the word "regeneration" is employed for the word "justification," it is necessary that this word be properly explained, in order that the renewal which follows the justification of faith may not be confounded with the justification of faith, but they may be properly distinguished from one another.

[614] For, in the first place, the word "regeneration" is employed as to comprise at the same time the forgiveness of sins alone for Christ's sake, and the succeeding renewal which the Holy Ghost works in those who are justified by faith. Again, it is restricted to the remission of sins and adoption as sons of God. And in this latter sense the word is much and often used in the Apology, where it is written: "Justification is regeneration,"<sup>2</sup> although St. Paul has fixed a distinction between these words (Tit. 3:5): "He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost." As also the word "vivification" has sometimes been used in a like sense.<sup>3</sup> For if a man is justified through faith (which the Holy Ghost alone works), this is truly a regeneration, because from a child of wrath he becomes a child of God, and thus is transferred from death to life, as it is written (Eph. 2; 5): "When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ." Also: "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17 [Hab. 2:4]). In this sense the word is much and often used in the Apology.

But again, it is often taken for sanctification and renewal, which succeed the righteousness of faith, as Dr. Luther has thus used it in his book concerning the

Church and the Councils, and elsewhere.

But when we teach that through the operation of the Holy Ghost we are born anew and justified, the sense is not that after regeneration no unrighteousness clings any more, in being and life, to the justified and regenerate, but that Christ, with his complete obedience, covers all their sins, which still in this life inhere in their nature. But without regard to this, through faith and for the sake of Christ's obedience (which Christ rendered the Father for us from his birth to his most ignominious death upon the cross), they are declared and regarded godly and righteous, although, on account of their corrupt nature, they are still sinners, and so remain to the grave [while they bear about this mortal body]. But, on the other hand, the meaning is not that we dare or should, without repentance, conversion and renewal, obey sins, and remain and continue in them.

[615] For true [and not feigned] contrition must precede; and to those who thus, as has been said, out of pure grace, for the sake of Christ the only Mediator, without all works and merit, are righteous before God, i. e. are received into grace, the Holy Ghost is also given, who renews and sanctifies them, and works in them love to God and to their neighbor. But since the incipient renewal is in this life imperfect, and sins still dwell in the flesh, even in the regenerate, the righteousness of faith before God consists in the gracious imputation of the righteousness of Christ, without the addition of our works, so that our sins are forgiven us, and covered and not imputed (Rom. 4:6 sqq.).

But here with especial diligence the greatest attention must afterwards be given, if the article of justification is to remain pure, that not that which precedes faith and that which succeeds it be mingled together or inserted as necessary and belonging to it, because to speak of conversion and to speak of justification are not one and the same thing.

For not everything that belongs to conversion belongs likewise to the article of justification, in and to which only the following belong and are necessary: the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which receives this in the promise of the Gospel, whereby the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, whence we receive and have forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, sonship and heirship of eternal life.

Therefore true, saving faith is not in those who are without contrition and sorrow, and who have a wicked purpose to remain and persevere in sins; but true contrition precedes, and genuine faith is in or with true repentance [justifying faith is in those who repent truly, not feignedly].

Love is also a fruit which surely and necessarily follows true faith. For that one does not love is a sure indication that he is not justified, but is still in death, or has lost again the righteousness of faith, as John says (1 John 3:14). But when

Paul says (Rom. 3:28): "We are justified by faith without works," he indicates thereby that neither the contrition that precedes nor the works that follow belong to the article or transaction of justification by faith. For good works do not precede justification, but follow it, and the person must be justified before he can do a good work.

[616] In like manner also, although the renewal or sanctification is also a benefit of Christ the Mediator and a work of the Holy Ghost, it does not belong to the article or transaction of justification before God, but follows the same, since, on account of our corrupt flesh, it is not, in this life, entirely perfect and complete, as Dr. Luther has written well concerning this in his excellent and extended exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he says as follows: " We concede indeed that instruction should be given also concerning love and good works, yet in such a way that this be done where and where it is necessary, as, namely, when we have to do with works over and beyond this matter of justification. But here the chief point with which we have to do is this, that the question is not whether we should also do and love good works, but by what means we may be justified before God, and saved. And here we answer with St. Paul: that we are justified alone by faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the Law or love. Not that we hereby entirely reject works and love, as the adversaries falsely defame and accuse us, but that we dare not allow ourselves to be led away, as Satan would desire, from the chief point with which we have here to do, to another and foreign transaction which does not belong whatever to this question. Therefore, whereas, and as long as, we have to do with this article of justification we reject and condemn works, since this article can admit of no disputation or treatment whatever of the subject of works; therefore in this matter we absolutely sever all Law and works of the Law." So far Luther.

In order, therefore, that troubled hearts may have a firm, sure consolation, and also that due honor be accorded the merit of Christ and the grace of God, the Scriptures teach that the righteousness of faith before God consists alone in the gracious [gratuitous] reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins, which is presented to us out of pure grace, for the sake of the merit alone of Christ as Mediator, and is received alone through faith in the promise of the Gospel. Therefore, in justification before God, faith relies neither upon contrition nor upon love or other virtues, but alone upon Christ, and in him upon his complete obedience, whereby for us he has fulfilled the Law, which [obedience] is imputed to believers for righteousness.

It is also neither contrition nor love or any other virtue, but faith alone, which is the sole means and instrument whereby we can receive and accept the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins, which are offered us in the



promise of the Gospel.

[617] It is also correctly said that believers who through faith in Christ are justified, in this life have first the imputed righteousness of faith, and afterwards also the incipient righteousness of the new obedience or good works. But these two must not be confounded or inserted at the same time into the article of justification by faith before God. For since this incipient righteousness or renewal is incomplete and imperfect in us in this life because of the flesh, the person cannot stand therewith and thereby before God's tribunal, but before God's tribunal only the righteousness of the obedience, suffering and death of Christ, which is imputed to faith, can stand, namely, that only for the sake of this obedience the person (even after his renewal, when he has already many good works and is in the best life) is pleasing and acceptable to God, and is received into adoption and heirship of eternal life.

Here belongs also what St. Paul writes (Rom. 4:3), that Abraham was justified before God alone through faith, for the sake of the Mediator, without the cooperation of his works, not only when he was first converted from idolatry and had no good works, but also when he was afterwards renewed by the Holy Ghost, and adorned with many excellent good works (Gen. 15:6; Heb. 11:8). And Paul puts the following question (Rom. 4:1 sqq.): In what, then, did the righteousness, for everlasting life, of Abraham before God, whereby God was gracious to him, and he was pleasing and acceptable to God, consist?

Thereupon he answers: "To him who worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" as David also (Ps. 32:1) speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works.

Therefore, even though the converted and believing have incipient renewal, sanctification, love, virtue and good works, yet these neither can nor should be introduced into or confounded with the article of justification before God, in order that that honor which belongs to him may remain with Christ the Redeemer, and since our new obedience is incomplete and imperfect, tempted consciences may have sure consolation.

[618] And this is the intention of the apostle Paul when in this article he so diligently and earnestly emphasizes the exclusive particles, i. e. the words whereby works are excluded from the article of justification: *absque operibus, sine lege, gratis, non ex operibus*, i. e. "of grace," "without merit," "without works," "not of works." These exclusive particles are all comprised in the expression: "By faith alone in Christ we are justified before God and saved." For thereby works are excluded, not in the sense that a true faith can exist without contrition, or that good works should, must and dare not follow true faith as sure

and indubitable fruits, or that believers neither dare nor must do anything good; but that good works are excluded from the article of justification before God, so that in the transaction of the justification of the poor sinner before God they should not be introduced, inserted, or intermingled as necessary or belonging thereto. The true sense of the exclusive particles in the article of justification is this, which should, with all diligence and earnestness, be urged in this article:

1. That thereby [through these particles] all our own works, merit, worth, glory and confidence in all our works in the article of justification be entirely excluded, so that our works be neither constituted nor regarded, either entirely or in half or in the least part, as the cause or merit of justification, upon which God in this article and transaction looks, or we could or should rely.
2. That this office and property abides with faith alone, that it alone, and nothing else whatever, is the means or instrument by and through which God's grace and the merit of Christ are, in the promise of the Gospel, received, apprehended, accepted, applied to us, and appropriated; and that from this office and property of such application or appropriation, love and all other virtues or works are excluded.
3. [619] That neither renewal, sanctification, virtues nor good works be constituted and appointed *tanquam forma<sup>4</sup> aut pars aut causa justificationis*, i. e. our righteousness before God, or a part or cause of our righteousness, or should otherwise be intermingled under any pretext, title or name whatever in the article of justification as necessary and belonging thereto; but that the righteousness of faith consists alone in the forgiveness of sins out of pure grace, alone for the sake of Christ's merit; which blessings are offered us in the promise of the Gospel, and are received, accepted, applied and appropriated alone by faith.

Therefore the true order between faith and good works, and also between justification and renewal or sanctification, must abide and be maintained.

For good works do not precede faith, neither does sanctification precede justification. But in conversion, first faith is kindled in us by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. It lays hold of God's grace in Christ, whereby the person is justified. Then, when the person is justified, he is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follow. This should not be understood as though justification and renewal were sundered from one another, in such a manner that a genuine faith sometimes could exist and continue for a long time, together with a wicked

intention, but hereby only the order [of causes and effects, of antecedents and consequents] is indicated, as to how one precedes or succeeds the other. For that nevertheless remains true which Luther has correctly said: "Faith and good works [well] agree and fit [are inseparably connected]; but it is faith alone, without works, which lays hold of the blessing; and yet it is never and at no time alone." This has been set forth above.<sup>5</sup>

[620] Many disputations also are usefully and well explained by means of this true distinction, of which the Apology treats in reference to the passage (James 2:20). For when the subject is concerning how faith justifies, the doctrine of St. Paul is that faith alone, without works, justifies (Rom. 3:28), since, as has been said, it applies and appropriates the merit of Christ. But if the question be: Wherein and whereby a Christian can perceive and distinguish, either in himself or in another, a true living faith from a feigned and dead faith, since many idle, secure Christians imagine for themselves a delusion in place of faith, while they nevertheless have no true faith? the Apology gives this answer: "James calls that dead faith where every kind of good works and fruits of the Spirit do not follow."<sup>6</sup> And to this effect the Latin edition of the Apology says: "James is right in denying that we are justified by such faith as is without works, i. e. which is dead."<sup>7</sup>

But James speaks, as the Apology says,<sup>8</sup> concerning the works of those who, through Christ, have already been justified, reconciled with God, and obtained forgiveness of sins. But if the question be asked. Whereby and whence faith has this, and what appertains to its justifying and saving? it is false and incorrect to say: that faith cannot justify without works; or that faith justifies or makes righteous, so far as it has love with it, for the sake of which love this is ascribed to faith [it has love with it, by which it is formed]; or that the presence of works with faith is necessary if man is to be justified thereby before God; or that the presence of good works in the article of justification, or for justification, is needful; likewise that the good works are a cause without which man cannot be justified, and that they are not excluded from the article of justification by the exclusive particles, as when St. Paul says: "Without works," etc. For faith makes righteous alone in that, as a means and instrument, it lays hold of and accepts, in the promise of the Gospel, the grace of God and the merit of Christ.

Let this suffice, according to the plan of this document, as a compendious setting forth of the doctrine of justification by faith, which is treated more at length in the above-mentioned writings. From these, the antitheses also, i. e. the false contrary dogmas, are easily understood, namely, that in addition to the errors recounted above, the following and the like, which conflict with the explanation now published, must be censured, exposed and rejected, as when it

is taught:

1. <sup>9</sup> That our love or good works are merit or cause, either entirely or even in part, of justification before God.
2. Or that by good works man must render himself worthy and fit that the merit of Christ be imparted to him.
3. [621] Or that our formal righteousness before God is our inherent newness or love, i. e. that our real righteousness before God is the love or renewal which the Holy Ghost works in us, and is in us.
4. Or that the righteousness of faith before God consists of two parts, namely, the gracious forgiveness of sins, and then, secondly, also renewal or sanctification.
5. That faith justifies only initially, or partially, or primarily, and that our newness or love justifies even before God, either completely or secondarily.
6. Also<sup>10</sup> that believers are justified before God, or are righteous before God, at the same time both by imputation and by beginning, or partly by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and partly by the beginning of new obedience.
7. Also that the application of the promise of grace occurs both by faith of the heart and confession of the mouth, and by other virtues. That is: Faith alone makes righteous, for the reason that righteousness by faith is begun in us, or that in justification faith has the preeminence; nevertheless, the renewal and love belong also to our righteousness before God, yet in such a way that it is not the chief cause of our righteousness, but that our righteousness before God is not entire and complete without such love and renewal. Also that believers are justified and righteous before God, at the same time, by the imputed righteousness of Christ and the incipient new obedience, or in part by the imputation of Christ's righteousness and in part by the incipient new obedience. Also that the promise of grace is appropriated by us, by faith in the heart, and confession which is made with the mouth, and by other virtues.

It is also incorrect to teach that man must be saved in some other way, or through something else, than as he is justified before God; so that while we are justified before God by faith alone, without works, yet without works it is impossible to be saved or obtain salvation.<sup>11</sup>

[622] This is false, for the reason that it is directly contrary to the declaration of Paul (Rom. 4:6); "The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth

righteousness without works.” And the basis of Paul’s argument is that we obtain salvation just in the same way as righteousness; yea, that precisely by this means, when we are justified by faith, we receive adoption and heirship of eternal life and salvation; and, on this account, Paul employs and emphasizes the exclusive particles, i. e. those words whereby works and our own merits are entirely excluded, namely, “out of grace,” “without works,” as forcibly in the article concerning salvation as in the article concerning righteousness.

Likewise also the disputation<sup>12</sup> concerning the indwelling in us of the essential righteousness of God must be correctly explained. For although, by faith, in the elect, who are justified by Christ and reconciled with God, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who is eternal and essential righteousness, dwells (for all Christians are temples of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who also impels them to do right); yet this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith, of which St. Paul treats and which he calls the righteousness of God, for the sake of which we are declared righteous before God; but it follows the preceding righteousness of faith, which is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins and the gracious acceptance of the poor sinner, alone for the sake of Christ’s obedience and merit.

Therefore, since in our churches it is acknowledged [established beyond controversy] among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession that all our righteousness is to be sought outside of ourselves and the merits, works, virtues and worthiness of all men, and rests alone upon Christ the Lord; yet it is well to consider in what respect Christ is called, in this matter of justification, our righteousness, namely, that our righteousness rests not upon one or the other nature, but upon the entire person of Christ, who as God and man is our righteousness in his sole, entire and complete obedience.

For even though Christ had been conceived without sin by the Holy Ghost, and thus been born, and in his human nature alone would have fulfilled all righteousness, and yet would have not been true and eternal God, this obedience and suffering of his human nature could not have been imputed to us for righteousness. As also, if the Son of God had not become man the divine nature alone could not have been our righteousness. Therefore we believe, teach and confess that the entire obedience of the entire person of Christ, which he has rendered the Father for us, even to his most ignominious death upon the cross, is imputed for righteousness. For the human nature alone, without the divine, could neither by obedience nor suffering render satisfaction to eternal almighty God for the sins of all the world; and the divinity alone without the humanity could not mediate between God and us.

[623] But because, as above mentioned, the obedience is [not only of one

nature, but] of the entire person, it is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, whereby the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, is satisfied, and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel, and upon which faith before God relies, which God imputes to faith, as it is written (Rom. 5:19): “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (1 John 1:7): “The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sins.” Also: “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4 [Rom. 1:17]).

Thus neither the divine nor the human nature of Christ is of itself imputed for righteousness, but only the obedience of the person who is at the same time God and man. And faith thus regards the person of Christ, who was made subject to the Law for us, bore our sins, and in his going to the Father offered to his Heavenly Father for us poor sinners his entire, complete obedience, from his holy birth even unto death, and who has thereby covered all our disobedience which inheres in our nature, and its thoughts, words and works, so that it is not imputed to us for condemnation, but out of pure grace, alone for Christ’s sake, is pardoned and forgiven.

Therefore we reject and unanimously condemn, besides the above-mentioned, also the following and all similar errors, as contrary to God’s Word, the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, and our Christian faith:

1. When<sup>13</sup> it is taught that Christ is our righteousness before God, alone according to his divine nature.
2. That Christ is our righteousness, alone according to his human nature.
3. That in the expressions of the prophets and apostles, when the righteousness of faith is spoken of, the words “justify” and “be justified” do not signify to declare free from sins and obtain the forgiveness of sins, but in deed and truth to be made righteous, because of love infused by the Holy Ghost, virtues and the works following thence.
4. [624] That faith looks not only to the obedience of Christ, but to his divine nature, as it dwells and works in us, and that by this indwelling our sins are covered before God.
5. That faith is such a trust in the obedience of Christ as can be and remain in a man who has no genuine repentance, in whom also no love follows, but he persists in sins against conscience.
6. That not God, but only the gifts of God, dwell in the believer.

These errors and the like, one and all, we unanimously reject as contrary to

the clear Word of God, and, by God's grace, we abide firmly and constantly in the doctrine of the righteousness of faith before God, as in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology which follows it is presented, developed and proved from God's Word.

Concerning what besides is needful for the real explanation of this sublime and chief article of justification before God, upon which rests the salvation of our souls, we will direct every one to the excellent and magnificent exposition by Dr. Luther of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, and for the sake of brevity to it we hereby refer.

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1. Ch. ii., art. iv.: 2.↵
  2. Ch. ii., art. iv.: 12.↵
  3. Apology, ch. v., art. xii.: 46 sq.↵
  4. Cf. Apology, ch. iii.: 100.↵
  5. See above, 1 25 sqq.↵
  6. Apology, ch. iii.; 127↵
  7. Apology, ch. iii.: 129.↵
  8. Ibid., §§ 126, 130.↵
  9. Errors 2-5 charged both against the Papists and the subscribers to the Augsburg and Leipsic Interims.↵
  10. For Errors 6, 7, see Epitome, iii.: 21, 22.↵
  11. Cf. Epitome, iv.: 7.↵
  12. Of Osiander.↵
  13. For Errors 1-6, see notes on Epitome, iii.: 13 sqq.↵



## Chapter IV. Of Good Works.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, vi., xx.; *Apology* (iii.), xx. *Smalcald Articles*, Part, III., Art. xiii.; *Epitome*, vi.

A disagreement has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession also concerning good works. For a part are accustomed to speak in the following words and manner: “Good works are necessary for salvation;” “It is impossible to be saved without good works;” “No one can be saved without good works;” because by the rightly believing good works are required as fruits of faith, and faith without love is dead, although such love is no cause of salvation.

[625] But the other side, on the contrary, have contended that good works are indeed necessary; not for salvation, but for other reasons; and that, on this account, the preceding propositions or expressions used (as they are not in accord with the form of sound doctrine and with the Word, and have been always and are still set over against our Christian faith by the Papists, in which we confess “that faith alone justifies and saves” ) are not to be tolerated in the Church, in order that the merit of Christ our Saviour be not diminished, and the promise of salvation may be and remain firm and certain to believers.

In this controversy also the following controverted proposition or expression was introduced by some few,<sup>1</sup> viz. “that good works are injurious to salvation.” It has also been disputed by some that good works are not “necessary,” but are “voluntary” [free and spontaneous], because they are not extorted by fear and the penalty of the Law, but are to be done from a voluntary spirit and a joyful heart. On the contrary, the other side<sup>2</sup> contend “that good works are necessary.” This latter controversy was originally introduced with respect to the words “necessity” and “liberty,” because especially the word “necessity” signifies not only the eternal, immutable order according to which all men are indebted and obliged to obey God, but also sometimes a coercion, whereby the Law forces men to good works.

But afterwards there was a disputation not alone concerning the words, but, in the most violent manner, the doctrine itself was called into question, and it was contended that the new obedience in the regenerate, in accordance with the above-mentioned divine order, is not necessary.<sup>3</sup>

In order to explain this disagreement in a Christian way and according to the guidance of God’s Word, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

First, there is no controversy among our theologians concerning the following



points in this article, namely: that it is God's will, regulation and command that believers should walk in good works; and that truly good works are not those which every one, with a good intention, himself contrives, or which are done according to human ordinances, but those which God himself has prescribed and commanded in his Word. Also, that truly good works are done, not from our own natural powers, but when by faith the person is reconciled with God and renewed by the Holy Ghost, or (as Paul says) "created anew in Christ Jesus to good works" (Eph. 2:10).

[626] There is also no controversy as to how and for what reason the good works of believers, although, in this flesh, they are impure and incomplete, please God and are acceptable, namely, for the sake of the Lord Christ, by faith, because the person is acceptable to God. For the works which pertain to the maintenance of external discipline, which are done also by the unbelieving and unconverted, and required of them, although commendable before the world, and besides rewarded by God in this world with temporal possessions; yet, because they do not proceed from true faith, are in God's sight sins, i. e. stained with sin, and are regarded by God as sins and impure on account of the corrupt nature and because the person is not reconciled with God. For "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18), as also it is written (Rom. 14:23): "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." For the person must first be accepted of God, and that alone for the sake of Christ, if the works of that person are to please him.

[627] Therefore, of works that are truly good and well pleasing to God, which God will reward in this world and the world to come, faith must be the mother and source; and on this account they are correctly called by St. Paul "fruits of faith," as also "of the Spirit." For, as Luther writes in the introduction of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us, of God regenerates us, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind and all powers, and confers the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, efficacious, active thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without intermission. It also does not ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked it has wrought them, and is always busy. But he who does not produce such works is a faithless man, and gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith nor what good works are, yet meanwhile babbles and prates, in many words, concerning faith and good works. Justifying faith is a living, firm trust in God's grace, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it [rather than suffer this trust to be wrested from him]. And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders him joyful, fearless and cheerful with respect to God and all creatures, which joy and cheerfulness the Holy Ghost works

though faith; and on account of this, man becomes ready and cheerful to do good to every one and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace. Therefore it is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, just as impossible as for heat and light to be separated from fire.”

But since there is no controversy on this point<sup>4</sup> among our theologians, we will not treat it here at greater length, but only make a simple and plain statement of the controverted points.

And first as to the necessity or voluntariness of good works, it is manifest that in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology the following expressions are often used and repeated: that good works are necessary, which also should necessarily follow faith and reconciliation, also, that we necessarily should do and must do the good works which God has commanded.<sup>5</sup> Thus also in the Holy Scriptures themselves the words “necessity,” “needful” and “necessary,” also “should” and “must,” are used concerning what we are bound to do, because of God’s arrangement, command and will, as Rom. 13:5; 1 Cor. 9:9; Acts 5:29; John 15:12; 1 John 4:21.

Therefore it is wrong to censure and reject the expressions or propositions mentioned in this Christian and proper sense, as has been done by some.<sup>6</sup> For it is right to employ them for the purpose of censuring and rejecting the secure, Epicurean delusion, by which many fabricate for themselves a dead faith or vain persuasion which is without repentance and without good works, as though there could be at the same time in a heart true faith and the wicked intention to persevere and continue in sins — an impossibility; or, as though any one, indeed, could have and retain true faith, righteousness and salvation, even though he be and remain a corrupt and unfruitful tree, whence no good fruits whatever come; yea, even though he persist in sins against conscience, or willfully relapse into these sins — all of which is incorrect and false.

[628] But here also mention must be made of the following distinction, viz. that necessity of Christ’s arrangement, command and will, and of our debt, be understood; but not necessity of coercion. That is: When the word “needful” is employed, it should be understood not of coercion, but alone of the arrangement made by God’s immutable will, to which we are debtor; for his commandment also shows that the creature should be obedient to its Creator. For in other places, as 2 Cor. 17, 9:7, and in the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon (v. 14), also 1 Pet. 5:2, the term “of necessity” is used for that to which any one is forced against his will or otherwise, so that he acts externally for appearance, but nevertheless without and against his will. For such hypocritical works God will not have [does not approve], but wishes the people of the New Testament to be a “willing people” (Ps. 110:3), and “sacrifice freely” (Ps. 54:7), “not grudgingly

or of necessity, but to be obedient from the heart” (2 Cor. 9:7; Rom. 6:17). “For God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7). In this understanding, and in such sense, it is correctly said and taught that truly good works should be done freely or from a voluntary spirit by those whom the Son of God has liberated; as the disputation concerning the voluntariness of good works has been introduced especially with this intention.

But here, again, it is also well to note the distinction of which St. Paul says (Rom. 7:22 sq.) “I delight in the Law of God” [I am ready to do good] “after the inward man. But I see another law in my members,” that is not only unwilling or disinclined, but also “warring against the law of my mind.” And concerning the unwilling and rebellious flesh Paul says (1 Cor. 9:27): “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection,” and (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13): “They that are Christ’s have crucified,” yea, slain, “the flesh with its affections and lusts.” But the opinion is false, and must be censured, when it is asserted and taught that good works are so free to believers that it is optional with them to do or to omit them, or that they can act contrary thereto, and none the less are able to retain faith and God’s favor and grace.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, when it is taught that good works are needful, the statement must also be made wherefore and for what reasons they are needful, as these causes are enumerated in the Augsburg Confession and Apology.<sup>8</sup>

[629] But here we must be well on our guard lest into the article of Justification and Salvation works may be introduced, and confused with it. Therefore the propositions are justly rejected,<sup>9</sup> “that to believers good works are needful for salvation, so that it is impossible without good works to be saved.” For they are directly contrary to the doctrine concerning the exclusive particles in the article of Justification and Salvation, i. e., they directly conflict with the words by which St. Paul entirely excludes our works and merit from the article of Justification and Salvation, and ascribes everything alone to the grace of God and merit of Christ, as explained in the preceding article. Again they [these propositions concerning the necessity of good works for salvation] take from tempted, troubled consciences the comfort of the Gospel, give occasion for doubt, are in many ways dangerous, strengthen presumption in one’s own righteousness and confidence in one’s own works; besides are accepted by the Papists, and quoted in their interest, against the pure doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Thus they are contrary also to the form of sound words, where it is written that blessedness is only “of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (Rom. 4:6). Also in the sixth article of the Augsburg Confession it is written that “we are saved without works, by faith alone.” Thus Luther also has rejected and condemned these propositions:

1. In the false prophets among the Galatians [who led the Galatians into error].
2. In the Papists, in very many places.
3. In the Anabaptists, when they presented this interpretation: “We should not indeed rest faith upon the merit of works, but we should nevertheless regard them as things needful to salvation.”
4. Also in some among his contemporaries, who wished to interpret the proposition thus: “Although we require works as needful to salvation, yet we do not teach to place trust in works.” On Gen. 22.

[630] Accordingly, and for the reasons now enumerated, it should, in accordance with what is right, be settled in our churches that the aforesaid modes of speech should not be taught, defended or excused, but be rejected from our churches and repudiated as false and incorrect, and as expressions which, being renewed by the Interim, originated in times of persecution, when there was especial need of a clear, correct confession against all sorts of corruptions and adulterations of the article of Justification, and were drawn [again] into disputation.

Thirdly, since also it is disputed whether good works preserve salvation, or whether they be needful for preserving faith, righteousness and salvation, and upon this much that is of great importance depends; for “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13); also (Heb. 3:6, 14): “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;” we must declare precisely how righteousness and salvation are to be maintained in us, lest it be again lost.

And therefore the false Epicurean delusion is to be earnestly censured and rejected, by which some imagine that faith and the righteousness and salvation received can be lost through no sins or wicked deeds, even though willful and intentional, but that even if a Christian without fear and shame indulge his wicked lusts, resist the Holy Ghost, and intentionally acquiesce in sins against conscience, yet that he none the less retains faith, God’s grace, righteousness and salvation.<sup>10</sup>

Against this pernicious delusion the following true, immutable, divine threats and severe punishments and admonitions to Christians who are justified by faith should be often repeated and impressed. (1 Cor. 6:9): “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, etc., shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5): “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Rom. 8:13): “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” (Col. 3:6): “For which thing’s sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.”

[631] But when and in what way, from this foundation, the exhortations to

good works can be earnestly urged without an obscuration of the doctrine of faith and of the article of Justification, the Apology affords an excellent model, where in Article XX., on the passage (2 Pet. 1:10): “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,” it says as follows: “Peter teaches why good works should be done, viz. that we may make our calling sure, i. e. that we may not fall from our calling if we again sin. ‘Do good works,’ he says, ‘that you may persevere in your heavenly calling, that you may not fall away again, and lose the Spirit and the gifts, which have fallen to you, not on account of works that follow, but of grace, through Christ, and are now retained by faith. But faith does not remain in those who lead a sinful life, lose the Holy Ghost and reject repentance.”<sup>11</sup> Thus far the Apology.

But, on the other hand, the sense is not that faith only in the beginning lays hold of righteousness and salvation, and afterwards resigns its office to works that they may in the future sustain faith, the righteousness received and salvation; but in order that the promise, not only of receiving, but also of retaining righteousness and salvation, may be firm and sure to us; St. Paul (Rom. 5:2) ascribes to faith not only the entrance to grace, but also that we stand in grace and boast of future glory, i. e. he ascribes the beginning, middle and end, all to faith alone. Also (Rom. 11:20): “Because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.” (Col. 1:22): “He will present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith.” (1 Pet. 1:5, 9): “By the power of God we are kept through faith, unto salvation.” “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Since, therefore, from God’s Word it is manifest that faith is the proper and only means whereby righteousness and salvation are not only received, but also preserved by God, the decree of the Council of Trent,<sup>12</sup> and whatever elsewhere<sup>13</sup> is set forth in the same sense, should by right be rejected, viz. that our good works support salvation, or that the righteousness of faith received, or even faith itself, is either entirely or in part supported and preserved by our works.

[632] For although before this controversy some few pure teachers employed such expressions and the like, in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, yet thereby it was in no way intended to establish the above-mentioned error of the Papists; nevertheless, because afterwards controversy arose concerning such expressions, from which all sorts of offensive amplifications [debates, offenses and dissensions] followed, it is safest of all, according to the admonition of St. Paul (2 Tim. 1:13), to hold non fast to the form of sound words, as the pure doctrine itself, whereby much unnecessary wrangling may be avoided and the Church be preserved from many scandals.

Fourthly, as to the proposition that good works are injurious to salvation, we

explain ourselves clearly, as follows: If any one should wish to introduce good works into the article of Justification, or rest his righteousness or trust for salvation thereon, in order to merit God's grace and thereby be saved, to this we say nothing, but St. Paul himself declares, and repeats it three times (Phil. 3:7 sqq.), that to such a man his works are not only useless and a hindrance, but also "injurious." But the fault is not in the good works themselves, but in the false confidence placed upon the works, contrary to the express Word of God.

Nevertheless, it by no means follows thence that we should say simply and barely: "Good works are injurious to believers or to their salvation;" for in believers good works are indications of salvation when they occur from proper causes and for true ends, i. e. as God requires them of the regenerate (Phil. 1:20). Since it is God's will and express command that believers should do good works, which the Holy Ghost works in believers, and with which, for Christ's sake, God is pleased, and to which he promises a glorious reward in this life and the life to come.

For this reason, also, this proposition is censured and rejected in our churches, viz. because it is stated in so absolutely false and offensive a manner, whereby discipline and decency are impaired, and a barbarous, savage, secure, Epicurean life is introduced and strengthened. For what is injurious to his salvation a person should with the greatest diligence avoid.

Since, however, Christians should not be deterred from good works, but should be admonished and urged thereto most diligently, this bare proposition cannot and should not be tolerated, borne or defended in the churches.

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1. Amsdorf, especially.↵
  2. John Agricola. Cf. notes on Epitome, in loco.↵
  3. Thus, the Antinomians.↵
  4. §§ 7, 8.↵
  5. Augsburg Confession, vi.: 1; xx.: 27; Apology, chap. iii.: 68; xx.: 92.↵
  6. See note above, 2 8.↵
  7. Cf. Epitome, iv.: 11.↵
  8. See parallel passages above, § 14.↵
  9. Epit., iv.; 16.↵
  10. Epitome, iv.: 19.↵
  11. Apology, xx.: 90.↵
  12. Sess. vi., Can. xxiv.↵
  13. Melanchthon's *Loci Theolgici*, Ed. of 1543, and books of Major and

Menius.↩

## Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Apology*, iv.: 1 sqq.; 61 sqq. (iii.); 65 sqq., xii.: 59 sqq.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Arts, ii., iv.; *Epitome*, v.

[633] As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a very brilliant light, which is of service in rightly dividing<sup>1</sup> God's Word, and properly explaining and understanding the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, we must with especial care observe it, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or out of the Gospel a law be made whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached in its purity, and by which also they can support themselves in their most grievous temptations against the terrors of the Law.

But here, likewise, there has occurred a dissent among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession. For the one side<sup>2</sup> asserted that the Gospel is properly not only a preaching of grace, but also that it is at the same time a preaching of repentance, which rebukes the greatest sin, viz. unbelief. But the other side held and contended that the Gospel is not properly a preaching of repentance or of reproof [preaching of repentance, convicting sin], as it properly belongs to God's Law to reprove all sins, and therefore unbelief also; but that the Gospel is properly a preaching of the grace and favor of God for Christ's sake, through which the unbelief of the converted, which previously inhered in them and which the Law of God reprov'd, is pardoned and forgiven.

[634] When we now consider aright this dissent, it is especially caused by this, viz. that the terra "Gospel" is not always employed and understood in one and the same sense, but in two ways, in the Holy Scriptures, as also by ancient and modern church-teachers. For sometimes it is employed so that thereby is understood the entire doctrine of Christ our Lord, which he inculcated in his ministry upon earth, and commanded to be inculcated in the New Testament, and thus comprised the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God, his heavenly Father, as it is written (Mark 1:1): "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." And shortly afterwards the chief heads are stated: "Repentance and forgiveness of sins." Therefore when Christ, after his resurrection, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world" (Mark 16:15), he compressed the sum of this doctrine into a few words, when he said (Luke 24:46, 47): "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to



suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." So, too, Paul (Acts 20:21) calls his entire doctrine the Gospel, but he embraces the sum of this doctrine under the two heads: "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And in this sense the general definition, i. e. the description of the word "Gospel," when employed in a wide sense, and without the peculiar distinction between the Law and the Gospel, is correct, when it is said that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and remission of sins. For John, Christ and the apostles began their preaching with repentance, and explained and urged not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins, but also the Law of God. Afterwards the term "Gospel" is employed in any other, namely, in its peculiar sense, by which it comprises not the preaching of repentance, but only the preaching of the grace of God, as follows directly afterwards (Mark 1:15), where Christ says: "Repent and believe the Gospel."

[635] But also the term "repentance" is not employed in the Holy Scriptures in one and the same sense. For in some passages of Holy Scripture it is employed and understood with reference to the entire conversion of man, as Luke 13:5: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And in chap. 15:7: "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." But in Mark 1:15, as also elsewhere, where a distinction is made between repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:21) or between repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:46, 47), repentance means to do nothing else than to truly acknowledge sins, from the heart to regret them, and to abstain therefrom. This knowledge proceeds from the Law, but does not suffice for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the consolatory preaching of the holy Gospel offers to all penitent sinners who are terrified by the preaching of the Law. For the Gospel proclaims the forgiveness of sins, not to coarse and secure hearts, but to the bruised or penitent (Luke 4:18). And that from repentance or the terrors of the Law despair may not result, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be repentance to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10).

For since the mere preaching of the Law, without Christ, either makes men presumptuous,<sup>3</sup> who imagine that by outward works they can fulfill the Law, or forces them utterly to despair, Christ takes the Law into his hands, and explains it spiritually, from Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14 and 1:18, and thus reveals his wrath from heaven upon all sinners, and shows how great it is; whereby they are instructed in the Law, and from it first learn aright to know their sins — a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them. For as the apostle testifies (2 Cor. 3:14 sq.), even though Moses be read, yet nevertheless the veil which hangs before the face always remains unremoved, so that they cannot perceive

that the Law is spiritual and how great things it requires of us, and how severely it curses and condemns us because we cannot observe or fulfill it. “Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away” (2 Cor. 3:16).

Therefore the Spirit of Christ must not only comfort, but also, through the office of the Law, reprove the world of sin,<sup>4</sup> and thus do in the New Testament what the prophet calls “a strange work”<sup>5</sup> (viz. reprove), in order that he may do his own work, which is to comfort and preach of grace. For on this account, through Christ, he was obtained [from the Father] and sent to us, and for this reason also is called the Comforter, as Dr. Luther has explained in his exposition of the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, in the following words:

[636] “That is all a preaching of the Law which holds forth our sins and God’s wrath, let it be done how or when it will. Again, the Gospel is such a preaching as shows and gives nothing else than grace and forgiveness in Christ, although it is true and right that the apostles and preachers of the Gospel (as Christ himself also did) sanction the preaching of the Law, and begin it with those who do not yet acknowledge their sins nor are terrified before [by the sense of] God’s wrath; as he says (John 16:8): ‘The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me.’ Yea, what more forcible and more terrible declaration and preaching of God’s wrath against sin is there than the suffering and death of Christ his Son? But as long as this all preaches God’s wrath and terrifies men, it is still properly the preaching neither of the Gospel nor of Christ, but of Moses and the Law, against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never provided and given to us in order to terrify and condemn, but to comfort and cheer those who are terrified and timid.” And again, “Christ says (John 16:8): ‘The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin;’ which cannot happen except through the explanation of the Law” (Jena Ed., vol. ii., p. 455).

So, too, the Smalcald Articles say: “The New Testament maintains and urges the office of the Law, which reveals sins and God’s wrath; but to this office it immediately adds the promise of grace through the Gospel.”<sup>6</sup>

And the Apology says: “To a true and salutary repentance the preaching of the Law is not sufficient, *but the Gospel should be added thereto.*”<sup>7</sup> Therefore the two doctrines belong together, and should also be urged by the side of each other, but in a definite order and with a proper distinction; and the Antinomians or assailants of the Law are justly condemned, who abolish the preaching of the Law from the Church, and wish sins to be reproved, and repentance and sorrow to be taught, not from the Law, but from the Gospel.

But in order that every one may see that in the dissent of which we are treating we conceal nothing, but present the matter to the eyes of the Christian reader plainly and clearly:

[637] We unanimously believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, wherein the true, immutable will of God is revealed as to how man ought to be, in his nature, thoughts, words and works, in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God; and it threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. For as Luther writes against the Antinomians: "Everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the Law, whose peculiar office it is to reprove sin and to lead to the knowledge of sins (Rom. 3:20; 7:7);" and as unbelief is the root and spring of all reprehensible sins, the Law reproves unbelief also.

But it is likewise true that the Law with its doctrine is illustrated and explained by the Gospel; and nevertheless it remains the peculiar office of the Law to reprove sins and teach concerning good works.

In this manner the Law reproves unbelief if the Word of God be not believed. Since now the Gospel, which alone peculiarly teaches and commands to believe in Christ, is God's Word, the Holy Ghost, through the office of the Law, also reproves unbelief, i. e. that sinners do not believe in Christ, although it is the Gospel alone which peculiarly teaches concerning saving faith in Christ.

But the Gospel is properly a doctrine which teaches (as man does not observe the Law of God, but transgresses it, and his corrupt nature, thoughts, words and works conflict therewith, and for this reason he is subject to God's wrath, death, all temporal calamities and the punishment of hell-fire) what man should *believe*, that with God he may obtain forgiveness of sins, viz. that the Son of God, our Lord Christ, has taken upon himself and borne the curse of the Law, has expiated and settled for all our sins, through whom alone we again enter into favor with God, obtain by faith forgiveness of sins, are exempted from death and all the punishments of sins, and are eternally saved.

For everything that comforts, that offers the favor and grace of God to transgressors of the Law, is and is properly said to be the Gospel, a good and joyful message that God does not will to punish sins, but, for Christ's sake, to forgive them.

[638] Therefore every penitent sinner ought to believe, i. e. place his confidence alone, in the Lord Christ, that "he was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), who was "made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21), "who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30), whose obedience is reckoned for us before God's strict tribunal as righteousness, so that the *Law*, as above set forth, is a ministration that kills through the letter and preaches condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7), but the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that

believeth” (Rom. 1:16), that preaches righteousness and gives the Spirit (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 3:2). Dr. Luther has urged this distinction with especial diligence in nearly all his writings, and has properly shown that the knowledge of God derived from the Gospel is far different from that which is taught and learned from the Law, because even the heathen had to a certain extent, from the natural law, a knowledge of God, although they neither knew him aright nor glorified him (Rom. 1:20 sq.).

These two proclamations [kinds of doctrines] from the beginning of the world have been always inculcated alongside of each other in the Church of God, with a proper distinction. For the successors of the venerated patriarchs, as also the patriarchs themselves, not only constantly called to mind how man was in the beginning created by God righteous and holy, and through the fraud of the serpent transgressed God’s command, became a sinner, and corrupted and precipitated himself, with all his posterity, into death and eternal condemnation; but also, on the other hand, encouraged and comforted themselves by the preaching concerning the Seed of the woman, who would bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). Also, concerning the Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 22:18). Also, concerning David’s Son, who should restore again the kingdom of Israel and be a light to the heathen (Ps. 110:1; Isa. 49:6; Luke 2:32), who “was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities,” by whose “stripes we are healed.” Isa. 53:5.

[639] These two doctrines we believe and confess, viz. that even to the end of the world they should be diligently inculcated in the Church of God, although with proper distinction, in order that, through the preaching of the Law and its threats in the ministry of the New Testament, the hearts of impenitent men may be terrified, and be brought to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; but not in such a way that they inwardly despair and doubt, but that (since “the Law is a schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24), and thus points and leads us not from Christ, but to Christ, who “is the end of the Law,” Rom. 10:4), they be on the other hand comforted and strengthened by the preaching of the holy *Gospel* concerning Christ our Lord, viz. that to those who believe the Gospel, God, through Christ, forgives all their sins, adopts them for his sake as children, and out of pure grace, without any merit on their part, justifies and saves them, but nevertheless not in such a way that they abuse and sin against the grace of God. Paul (2 Cor. 3:7 sqq.) thoroughly and forcibly shows this distinction between the Law and the Gospel.

Therefore, in order that the two doctrines, viz. that of the Law and that of the Gospel, be not mingled and confounded with one another, and to the one that be ascribed which belongs to the other, whereby the merit and benefits of Christ are

obscured and the Gospel made again a doctrine of the Law, as has occurred in the Papacy, and thus Christians be deprived of the true comfort which in the Gospel they have against the terrors of the Law, and the door be again opened in the Church of God to the Papacy; the true and proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel must with all diligence be inculcated and preserved, and whatever gives occasion for confusion between the Law and the Gospel, i. e. whereby the two doctrines, Law and Gospel, may be confounded and mingled into one doctrine, should be diligently avoided. It is on this account dangerous and wrong to convert the Gospel, properly called as distinguished from the Law, into a preaching of repentance or reproof [a preaching of repentance, reproofing sin].<sup>8</sup> For otherwise, if understood in a general sense of the whole doctrine, as the Apology also sometimes says, the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins.<sup>9</sup> But close by the Apology also shows that the Gospel is properly the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and of justification through Christ; but that the Law is a doctrine which reproves sins and condemns.

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1. Apology, chap. iii.: 66.↩
2. Epitome, iv.: 19.↩
3. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. ii.: 3.↩
4. John 16:8.↩
5. Isa. 28:21. Cf. Apology, xii.: 61.↩
6. Part III.. Art. ill.: 1, 4.↩
7. Ibid., chap, (iii.): 139.↩
8. Cf. Formula of Concord, Epitome, v.: 11.↩
9. Ibid., § 1.↩

## Chapter VI. Of the Third Use of the Divine Law.

*Parallel Passages.— Epit., vi.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. iii.: 36, Sol. Dec, ii: 63 sqq.*

[640] Since the Law of God is useful, not only that thereby, external discipline and decency be maintained against wild, disobedient men; likewise, that through it men be brought to a knowledge of their sins; but even when they have been born anew by the Spirit of God and converted to the Lord, and thus the veil of Moses has been removed from them, they live and walk in the Law; a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning this last use of the Law. For the one side<sup>1</sup> taught and maintained that the regenerate should not learn the new obedience, or in what good works they ought to walk, from the Law; neither is this doctrine to be urged thence, because they have been liberated by the Son of God, have become the temples of his Spirit, and therefore are free, so that, just as the sun of itself without any constraint fulfils its course, so also they of themselves, by the prompting and impulse of the Holy Ghost, do what God requires of them. The other side taught, on the contrary: Although the truly believing are really moved by God's Spirit, and thus, according to the inner man, do God's will from a free spirit; yet the Holy Ghost uses with them the written law for instruction, whereby even the truly believing may learn to serve God, not according to their own thoughts, but according to his written Law and Word, which are a sure rule and standard of a godly life and walk, directed according to the eternal and immutable will of God.

For the explanation and final settlement of this dissent we unanimously believe, teach and confess that although the truly believing and truly converted to God and justified Christians are liberated and made free from the curse of the Law; yet that they should daily exercise themselves in the Law of the Lord, as it is written (Ps. 1:2; 119:1): "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in his Law doth he meditate day and night." For the Law is a mirror, in which the will of God and what pleases him are exactly represented, so that it should be constantly held forth to believers and be diligently urged upon them without intermission.

[641] For although "the Law is not made for a righteous man," as the apostle testifies (1 Tim. 1:9), "but for the unrighteous," yet this is not to be understood so absolutely as that the justified should live without law. For the Law of God is written in their heart, and to the first man immediately after his creation a law also was given, according to which he should have acted. But the meaning of

St. Paul is that the Law cannot burden with its curse those who through Christ are reconciled to God, and need not vex with its coercion the regenerate, because, after the inner man, they have pleasure in God's Law.<sup>2</sup>

And indeed, if the believing and elect children of God would be completely renewed by the indwelling Spirit in this life, so that in their nature and all its powers they would be entirely free from sin, they would need no law, and so also no impeller, but what they are in duty bound to do according to God's will they would do of themselves, and altogether voluntarily, without any instruction, admonition, solicitation or urging of the Law; just as the sun, the moon and all the constellations of heaven have of themselves, unobstructed, their regular course, without admonition, solicitation, urging, force or necessity, according to the arrangement of God which God once gave them, yea, just as the holy angels render an entirely voluntary obedience.

But since in this life believers have not been renewed perfectly or completely, *completive vel consummative* [as the ancients say], (for although their sins are covered by the perfect obedience of Christ, so that they are not imputed to believers for condemnation, and also, through the Holy Ghost, the mortification of the old Adam and the renewal in the spirit of their mind is begun), nevertheless the old Adam always clings to them in their nature and all its internal and external powers. Of this the apostle has written (Rom. 7:18sq.): "I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing." And again: "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Again: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Also (Gal. 5:17): "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

[642] Therefore, because of these lusts of the flesh, the truly believing, elect and regenerate children of God require not only the daily instruction and admonition, warning and threatening of the Law, but also frequently reproofs, whereby they are roused [the old man is shaken from them] and follow the Spirit of God, as it is written (Ps. 119:71): "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." And again (1 Cor. 9:27): "I keep under my body and bring nAn it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." And again (Heb. 12:8): "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons;" as Dr. Luther in more words has fully explained in the summer part of the Church Postils, on the Epistle for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

But we must also separately explain what with respect to lo the new obedience of believers the Gospel does, affords and works, and what herein, so

far as concerns the good works of believers, is the office of the Law.

For the Law says indeed that it is God's will and command that we should walk in a new life, but it does not give the power and faculty so that we can begin and do it; but the Holy Ghost, who is given and received, not through the Law, but through the preaching of the Gospel (Gal. 3:14), renews the heart. Afterwards the Holy Ghost employs the Law, so that from it he teaches the regenerate, and in the Ten Commandments points out and shows them "what is the good and acceptable will of God" (Rom. 12:2), in what good works "God hath before ordained that they should walk" (Eph. 2:10). He exhorts them thereto, and when, because of the flesh in them, they are idle, negligent and rebellious, he reprove them on that account through the Law, so that he carries on both offices together; he slays and makes alive, he leads to hell and brings up again. For his office is not only to console, but also to *reprove* as it is written: "When the Holy Ghost is come, he will reprove the world" (under which also is the old Adam) "of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." But sin is everything that is contrary to God's Law. And St. Paul says: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof," etc., and to reprove is the peculiar office of the Law. Therefore as often as believers stumble they are reprov'd by the Holy Ghost from the Law, and by the same Spirit are again comforted and consoled with the preaching of the Holy Gospel.

[643] But in order that, so far as possible, all misunderstanding may be avoided, and the distinction between the works of the Law and those of the Spirit be properly taught and preserved, it is to be noted with especial diligence that when the subject of good works which are in accordance with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works) is treated, the word "Law" has only one sense, viz. the immutable will of God, according to which men should conduct themselves in their lives.

But there is a distinction in the works, because of the distinction with respect to the men who strive to live according to this Law and will of God. For as long as man is not regenerate, and conducts himself according to the Law, and does the works because they are thus commanded, from fear of punishment or desire for reward, he is still under the Law, and his works are properly called by St. Paul works of the Law, for they are extorted by the Law, as those of slaves; and they are saints after the order of Cain [that is, hypocrites].

But when man is born anew by the Spirit of God, and liberated from the Law, i. e. made exempt from this coercion, and is led by the Spirit of Christ, he lives according to the immutable will of God, comprised in the Law, and does everything, so far as he is born anew, out of a free, cheerful spirit; and this is called not properly a work of the Law, but a work and fruit of the Spirit, or as



St. Paul names it “the law of the mind” and “the Law of Christ.” For such men are no more under the Law, but under grace, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8 [Rom. 7:23; 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21]).

But since believers are not, in this world, completely renewed, but the old Adam clings to them even to the grave, there also remains in them a struggle between the spirit and the flesh. Therefore they have indeed pleasure in God’s Law according to the inner man, but the law in their members struggles against the law in their mind to such an extent that they are never without law, and nevertheless are not under, but in the Law, and live and walk in the Law of the Lord, and yet do nothing from *constraint* of the Law.

But so far as concerns the old Adam, which still clings to them, it must be urged on not only with the Law, but also with punishments; nevertheless it does everything against its will and under coercion, no less than the godless are urged and held in obedience by the threats of the Law (1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 7:18, 19).

[644] So, too, this doctrine of the Law is needful for believers, in order that they may not depend upon their own holiness and devotion, and under the pretext of the Spirit of God establish a self-chosen form of divine worship, without God’s Word and command, as it is written (Deut. 12:8, 28, 32): “Ye shall not do . . . every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes ’ etc., but” observe and hear all these words which I command thee.” “Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom.”

So, too, the doctrine of the Law, in and with good works of believers, is needful for this reason, for otherwise man can easily imagine that his work and life are entirely pure and perfect. But the Law of God prescribes to believers good works in this way, that, at the same time, it shows and indicates, as in a mirror, that in this life they are still imperfect and impure in us, so that we must say with the apostle (1 Cor. 4:4): “I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified.” Therefore, when Paul exhorts the regenerate to good works, he presents to them expressly the Ten Commandments (Rom. 13:9), and that his good works are imperfect and impure he recognizes from the Law (Rom. 7:7 sqq.); and David declares (Ps. 119:35): “I have run the way of thy commandments,” but “enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified” (Ps. 143:2).

But how and why the good works of believers, although in this life, because of sin in the flesh, they are imperfect and impure, nevertheless are acceptable and well pleasing to God, the Law does not teach, as it requires an entire, perfect, pure obedience if it is to please God. But the Gospel teaches that our spiritual offerings are acceptable to God, through faith, for Christ’s sake (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 11:4 sqq.). In this way Christians are not under the Law, but under

grace, because by faith in Christ the persons [of the godly] are freed from the curse and condemnation of the Law; and because their good works, although they are still imperfect and impure, are acceptable, through Christ, to God, because they do, not by coercion of the Law, but by renewing of the Holy Ghost, voluntarily and spontaneously from their hearts, what is pleasing to God, so far as they have been born anew according to the inner man; although nevertheless they maintain a constant struggle against the old Adam.

[645] For the old Adam, as an intractable, pugnacious ass, is still a part of them, which is to be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the doctrine, admonition, force and threatening of the Law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles, until the sinful flesh is entirely put off, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection, where he needs no longer either the preaching of the Law or its threatenings and reproofs, as also no longer the Gospel; as these belong to this [mortal and] imperfect life. But as they will behold God face to face, so, through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, will they do the will of God [the heavenly Father] with unmingled joy, voluntarily, unconstrained, without any hindrance, with entire purity and perfection, and will eternally rejoice in him.

Accordingly, we reject and condemn as an error pernicious and prejudicial to Christian discipline, as also to true piety, the teaching that the Law, in the above-mentioned way and degree, should not be urged upon Christians and those truly believing, but only upon the unbelieving, not Christian, and impenitent.

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1. See Epitome, vi.: 1.↩
  2. Rom. 7:22.↩

## Chapter VII. Of the Holy Supper.

*Parallel Passages.* — *Augsburg Confession*, x.; *Apology*, x.; *Smalcald Articles*, Part III., Art. vi.; *Small Catechism*, Part V.; *Large Catechism*, Part V., 499; *Epitome*, vii.

[646] Although perhaps, according to the opinion of some, the exposition of this article should not be inserted into this document, wherein it has been our intention to explain the articles which have been drawn into controversy among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession (from which the Sacramentarians almost in the beginning, when the Confession was first composed and presented to the Emperor at Augsburg in 1530, entirely withdrew and separated, and presented their own Confession<sup>1</sup>), yet, alas! as we have still some theologians and others who glory in the Augsburg Confession, who in the last few years no longer secretly, but partly publicly, have given their assent in this article to the Sacramentarians, and against their own conscience have wished violently to cite and pervert the Augsburg Confession as in entire harmony in this article with the doctrine of the Sacramentarians; we neither can nor should forbear in this document to give testimony in accordance with our confession of divine truth, and to repeat the true sense and proper understanding, with reference to this article, of the Word of Christ and of the Augsburg Confession, and [for we recognize it to be our duty] so far as in us lies, by God's help, to preserve it [this pure doctrine] also to posterity, and to faithfully warn our hearers, together with other godly Christians, against this pernicious error, which is entirely contrary to the divine Word and the Augsburg Confession, and has been frequently condemned.

*Statement of the Controversy.*

The Chief Conflict between our Doctrine and that of the Sacramentarians in this Article,

Although some Sacramentarians strive to speak and to employ words the very nearest the Augsburg Confession and the form and mode of these churches, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly received by believers,<sup>2</sup> yet if they be forced to declare their meaning properly, sincerely and clearly, they all unanimously explain themselves thus, viz. that the true essential body and blood of Christ is as far from the consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Supper as the highest heaven is distant from the earth. For their own words run thus:

*Abesse Christi corpus et sanguinem a signis tan to intervallo dicimus, quanto abest terra ab altissimis coelis.* That is: “We say that the body and blood of Christ are as far from the signs as the earth is distant from the highest heaven.” Therefore, they understand this presence of the body of Christ not as here upon earth, but only with respect to faith [when they speak of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, they do not mean that they are present upon earth, except with respect to faith], i. e. that our faith, reminded and excited by the visible signs, as by the preached Word, elevates itself and rises up above all heavens, and there receives and enjoys the body of Christ, which is present there in heaven, yea, Christ himself, together with all his benefits, in a true and essential, but nevertheless *only spiritual*, manner. For [they think that] as the bread and wine are here upon earth and not in heaven, so the body of Christ is now in heaven and not upon earth, and on this account nothing else is received by the mouth in the Holy Supper but bread and wine.

[647] In the first place, they<sup>3</sup> have alleged that the Lord’s Supper is only an external sign, whereby Christians may be known, and that therein nothing else is offered but mere bread and wine (which are bare signs [symbols] of the absent body of Christ). Since this would not stand the test, they have confessed that the Lord Christ is truly present in his Supper, namely by the *communicatio idiomatum*,<sup>4</sup> i. e. alone according to his divine nature, but not with his body and blood.

Afterwards, when they were forced by Christ’s words to confess that the body of Christ is present in the Supper, they still understood and declared it in no other way than spiritually, that is, through faith to partake of his power, efficacy and benefits [than that they believed the presence only spiritual, i. e. that Christ only makes us partakers of his power, efficacy and benefits], because [they say] through the Spirit of Christ, who is everywhere, our bodies, in which the Spirit of Christ dwells here upon earth, are united with the body of Christ; which is in heaven.

Thus through these grand, plausible words many great men were deceived when they proclaimed and boasted that they were of no other opinion than that the Lord Christ is present in his Holy Supper truly, essentially, and as one alive; but they understand this alone according to his divine nature, and not of his body and blood, which are now in heaven, and m>\* where else [for they think concerning these that they are only in heaven, etc.], and that he gives us with the bread and wine his true body and blood to eat, that we may partake of them spiritually through faith, but not bodily with the mouth.

[648] For they understand the words of the Supper: “Eat, this is my body,” not properly, as they sound, according to the letter, but as figurative expressions;

thus, that “eating” the body of Christ means nothing else than “believing,” and that “body” is equivalent to “symbol,” i. e. a sign or figure of the body of Christ, which is not in the Supper on earth, but alone in heaven. The word is they interpret sacramentally, or in a significative manner, in order that no one may regard the thing so joined with the signs, that the flesh also of Christ is now present on earth in an invisible and incomprehensible manner. That is: “The body of Christ is united with the bread sacramentally, or significatively, so that believing, godly Christians as surely partake spiritually of the body of Christ, which is above in heaven, as with the mouth they eat the bread.” But that the body of Christ is present here upon earth in the Supper essentially although invisibly and incomprehensibly, and is received orally, with the consecrated bread, even by hypocrites or those who are Christians only in appearance [by name], this they are accustomed to execrate and condemn as a horrible blasphemy.

On the other hand, it is taught in the Augsburg Confession from God’s Word concerning the Lord’s Supper, thus: “That the true body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Holy Supper under the form of bread and wine, and are there communicated and received, and the contrary doctrine is rejected” (namely, that of the Sacramentarians, who at the same time at Augsburg presented their own Confession,<sup>5</sup> that the body of Christ, because he has ascended to heaven, is not truly and essentially present here upon earth in the sacrament [which denied the true and substantial presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper administered on earth, on this account, viz. because Christ had ascended into heaven]. For this opinion is clearly expressed in Luther’s Small Catechism in the following words: “The sacrament of the altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself.” Still more clearly in the Apology is this not only declared, but also established by the passage from Paul (1 Cor. 10:16), and by the testimony of Cyril, in the following words: “The tenth article has been received [approved], in which we confess that in the Lord’s Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly offered with the visible elements, bread and wine, to those who receive the sacrament. For since Paul says: ‘The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ,’ etc., it would follow, if the body of Christ were not, but only the Holy Ghost were truly present, that the bread is not a communion of the body, but of the Spirit of Christ. Thus we know that not only the Romish, but also the Greek Church, has taught the bodily presence of Christ in the Holy Supper.”<sup>6</sup> And testimony is also produced from Cyril that Christ also dwells bodily in us in the Holy Supper by the communication of his flesh.<sup>7</sup>

[649] Afterwards, when those who at Augsburg delivered their Confession concerning this article seemed to be willing to approve the Confession of our churches, the following *Formula Concordiae*,<sup>8</sup> i. e. articles of Christian agreement between the Saxon theologians and those of Upper Germany, was composed and signed at Wittenberg in the year 1536, by Dr. Martin Luther and other theologians on both sides:

"We have heard how Mr. Martin Bucer explained his own opinion, and that of other preachers who came with him from the cities, concerning the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, viz. as follows:<sup>9</sup>

"They confess, according to the words of Irenaeus, that in this sacrament there are two things, a heavenly and an earthly. Therefore they hold and teach that, with the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, offered and received. And although they believe in no transubstantiation, i. e. an essential transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and also do not hold that the body and blood of Christ are included locally, i. e. with respect to space, in the bread, or are otherwise permanently united therewith apart from the use of the sacrament; yet they concede that through the sacramental union the bread is the body of Christ, etc. [that when the bread is offered the body of Christ is at the same time present, and is truly tendered]. For apart from use, if the bread be laid by and preserved in a pyx, or be carried about and exhibited in processions, as occurs in the Papacy, they do not hold that the body of Christ is present.

"Secondly, they hold that the institution of this sacrament made by Christ is efficacious in Christendom [the Church], and that it does not depend upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister who offers the sacrament or of the one who receives it. Therefore, as St. Paul says, that even the unworthy partake of the sacrament,<sup>10</sup> they hold that also to the unworthy the body and blood of Christ are truly offered, and the unworthy truly receive them, where the institution and command of the Lord Christ are observed. But such persons receive them to condemnation,<sup>11</sup> as St. Paul says; for they abuse the holy sacrament, because they receive it without true repentance and without faith. For it was instituted for this purpose, viz. that it might testify that to them the grace and benefits of Christ are there applied, and that they are incorporated into Christ and are washed by his blood, who there truly repent and comfort themselves by faith in Christ."

[650] In the following year, when the chief theologians of the Augsburg Confession assembled from all Germany at Smalcald, and deliberated as to what to present in the Council concerning this doctrine of the Church, by common consent the Smalcald Articles were composed by Dr. Luther, and were signed by

all the theologians, collectively and individually, in which the true and proper opinion is clearly expressed in short, plain words, which agree most accurately with the words of Christ, and every door and mode of escape for the Sacramentarians was closed. For they had interpreted to their advantage [perverted] the Formula of Concord, i. e. the above-mentioned articles of union, framed the preceding year, so that it should be understood that the body of Christ is offered with the bread in no other way than as it is offered, together with all his benefits, by the Word of the Gospel, and that by the sacramental union nothing else than the spiritual presence of the Lord Christ by faith is meant. These articles, therefore, declare: “The bread and wine in the Holy Supper are the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which are tendered and received, not only by the godly, but also by godless Christians”<sup>12</sup> [those who have nothing Christian except the name].

Dr. Luther has also more amply expounded and confirmed this opinion from God’s Word in the Large Catechism,<sup>13</sup> where it is written:

[651] “What is therefore the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine, which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink.” And shortly after: “It is the Word, I say, which makes and distinguishes this sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is properly called the body and blood of Christ.[^b] Again:” “With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, raise the objection, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in his little finger. For here stands the Word of Christ: ‘Take, eat; this is my body. Drink ye all of this; this is the new testament in my blood,’ etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves his masters, and make it different from what he has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word, or regard it without the Word, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the Word be added thereto, as it must be, then in virtue of the same it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ have spoken, so it is, as he can never lie or deceive.

“Hence it is easy to reply to all manner of questions about which at the present time men are anxious, as, for instance: Whether a wicked priest can administer and distribute the sacrament? and such like other points. For here conclude and reply: Even though a knave take or distribute the sacrament, he receives the true sacrament, i. e. the true body and blood of Christ, just as truly as he who receives or administers it in the most worthy manner. For it is not founded upon the holiness of men, but upon the Word of God. And as no saint



upon earth, yea, no angel in heaven, can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so also can no one change or alter it, even though it be abused.

“For the Word, by which it became a sacrament and was instituted, does not become false because of the person or his unbelief. For he does not say: If you believe or are worthy you will receive my body and blood, but: ‘Take, eat and drink; this is my body and blood.’ Likewise: ‘Do this’ (viz. what I now do, institute, give and bid you take). That is as much as to say, No matter whether you be worthy or unworthy, you have here his body and blood, by virtue of these words which are aided to the bread and wine. This mark and observe well; for upon these words rest all our foundation, protection and defense against all error and temptation that have ever come or may yet come.”

[652] Thus far the Large Catechism, in which the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is established from God’s Word; and the same is understood not only of the believing and worthy, but also of the unbelieving and unworthy.

But inasmuch as this highly-illuminated man [Dr. Luther, the hero illumined with unparalleled and most excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost] foresaw that after his death some would suspect that he had receded from the above-mentioned doctrine and other Christian articles, he has appended the following protest to his Large Confession:

“Because I see the longer the time the greater the number of sects and errors, and that there is no end to the rage and fury of Satan, in order that henceforth during my life, and after my death, some of them may not, in future, support themselves by me, and in order to strengthen their error falsely quote my writings, as the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists begin to do; I will in this writing, before God and all the world, confess my faith, point by point [concerning all the articles of our religion]. In this I intend to abide until my death, and therein (and may God help me as to this!) to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; and if after my death any one will say: If Dr. Luther were now living he would teach and hold this or that article differently, for he did not sufficiently consider it, against this I say now as then, and then as now, that, by God’s grace, I have most diligently considered all these articles by means of the Scriptures [have examined them, not once, but very often, according to the standard of Holy Scripture], and often have gone over them, and will contend as confidently for them as I am now contending for the Sacrament of the Altar. I am not drunk or inconsiderate; I know what I say; I also am sensible of the account which I will render at the coming of the Lord Christ at the final judgment. Therefore no one should interpret this as jest or



mere idle talk; to me it is serious; for by God's grace I know Satan in great part; if he can pervert or confuse God's Word, what will he not do with my words or those of another?"

[653] After this protest. Dr. Luther, of holy memory, presents among other articles this also: "In the same manner I also speak and confess" (he says) "concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, that there the body and blood of Christ are in truth orally eaten and drunken in the bread and wine, even though the priests [ministers] who administer it [the Lord's Supper], or those who receive it, do not believe or otherwise abuse it. For it does not depend upon the faith or unbelief of men, but upon God's Word and ordinance, unless they first change God's Word and ordinance and interpret it otherwise, as the enemies of the sacrament do at the present day, who, of course, have nothing but bread and wine; for they also do not have the Word and appointed ordinance of God, but have perverted and changed it according to their own caprice."

Dr. Luther (who certainly, above others, understood the true and proper meaning of the Augsburg Confession, and who constantly, even to his end, remained steadfast thereto, and defended it) shortly before his death, with great zeal, repeated in his last Confession his faith concerning this article, where he writes thus: "I reckon all in one mass as Sacramentarians and fanatics, as they also are who will not believe that the bread in the Lord's Supper is his true natural body, which the godless as Judas himself received with the mouth, as well as did St. Peter, and all [other] saints; he who will not believe this (I say) should let me alone, and not hope for any fellowship with me; there is no alternative [thus my opinion stands, which I am not going to change]."

From these explanations, and especially from that of Dr. Luther as the chief teacher of the Augsburg Confession, every intelligent man, if he be desirous of the truth and of peace, can undoubtedly perceive what has always been the proper sense and understanding of the Augsburg Confession in regard to this article. For the reason that in addition to the expressions of Christ and St. Paul (viz. that the bread in the Supper "is the body of Christ" or "the communion of the body of Christ"), also the forms: "under the bread," "with the bread," "in the bread" ["the body of Christ is present and offered"], are employed, is that hereby the Papistical transubstantiation may be rejected, and the sacramental union of the unchanged essence of the bread and of the body of Christ may be indicated; just as the expression, "the Word was made flesh" (John 1; 14), is repeated and explained by the equivalent expressions: "The Word dwelt among us;" (Col. 2:9): "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" also (Acts 10:38): "God was with him;" also (2 Cor. 5:19): "God was in Christ," and the like; namely, that the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but the two

natures unchanged are personally united. [These phrases repeat the expression of John above-mentioned, and declare that, by the incarnation, the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but that the two natures without confusion are personally united.]

[655] And indeed many eminent ancient teachers, Justin, Cyprian, Augustine, Leo, Gelasius, Chrysostom and others, use this simile concerning the words of Christ's testament: "This is my body," viz. that just as in Christ two distinct, unchanged natures are inseparably united, so in the Holy Supper the two substances, the natural bread and the true natural body of Christ, are present here together upon earth in the appointed administration of the sacrament. Although this union of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine is not a personal union, as that of the two natures in Christ, but a sacramental union, as Dr. Luther and our theologians, in the frequently-mentioned Articles of Agreement [Formula of Concord] in the year 1536 and in other places, call it; in order to declare that although they also employ the forms, "in the bread," "under the bread," "with the bread," yet the words of Christ they receive properly and as they sound, and understand the proposition, i. e. the words of Christ's testament: "This is my body," not as a figurative, but as an unusual expression. For Justin says: "This we receive not as common bread and common drink, but as Jesus Christ, our Saviour, through the Word of God became flesh, and on account of our salvation also had flesh and blood, so we believe that, by the Word and prayer, the food blessed by him is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." Dr. Luther also in his Large and especially in his last Confession, concerning the Lord's Supper, with great earnestness and zeal defends the very form of expression which Christ used at the first Supper.

For since Dr. Luther is to be regarded the most distinguished teacher of the churches which confess the Augsburg Confession, whose entire doctrine as to sum and substance was comprised in the articles of the frequently-mentioned Augsburg Confession, and was presented to the Emperor Charles V.; the proper understanding and sense of the said Augsburg Confession can and should be derived from no other source more properly and correctly than from the doctrinal and polemical writings of Dr. Luther.

And indeed this very opinion, just cited, is founded upon the only firm, immovable and indubitable rock of truth, from the words of institution in the holy, divine Word, and was thus understood, taught and propagated by the holy evangelists and apostles and their disciples.

For since our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, concerning whom, as our only Teacher, this solemn command: "Hear ye him," has been given from heaven to all men, who is not a mere man or angel, and also not only true, wise and

mighty, but the eternal truth and wisdom itself and Almighty God, who knows very well what and how he should speak, and who also can powerfully effect and execute everything that he speaks and promises, as he says (Luke 21:33): “Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away;” also (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” —

[656] Since now this true, almighty Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, after the Last Supper, when he is just beginning his bitter suffering and death for our sins, on that last sad time, with great consideration and solemnity, in the institution of this most venerable sacrament (which was to be used until the end of the world with great reverence and obedience [and humility], and was to be an abiding memorial of his bitter suffering and death and all his benefits, a sealing [and confirmation] of the New Testament, a consolation of all distressed hearts and a firm bond and means of union of Christians with Christ their head and with one another), in the founding and institution of the Holy Supper spake these words concerning the bread which he blessed and gave [to his disciples]: “Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you,” and concerning the cup or wine: “This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;” —

We are in duty bound not to interpret and explain these words of the eternal, true and almighty Son of God, our Lord, Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, as allegorical, metaphorical, tropical expressions, as may appear to be in conformity with our reason, but with simple faith and due obedience to receive the words as they sound,<sup>14</sup> in their proper and plain sense, and allow ourselves to be diverted therefrom [from this express testament of Christ] by no objections or human contradictions spun from human reason, however charming they may appear to the reason.

As when Abraham heard God’s Word concerning offering his son, although indeed he had cause enough for disputing as to whether the words should be understood according to the letter or with a moderate or mild interpretation, since they conflicted not only with all reason and with divine and natural law, but also with the chief article of faith concerning the promised Seed, Christ, who was to be born of Isaac; and yet, as before, when the promise of the blessed Seed from Isaac was given him (although it appeared to his reason impossible), he gave God the honor of truth, and most confidently concluded and believed that God could do what he promised; so also here faith understands and believes God’s Word and command plainly and simply, as they sound, according to the letter, and resigns the entire matter to the divine omnipotence and wisdom, which it knows has many more modes and ways to fulfill the promise of the Seed from Isaac than man with his blind reason can comprehend.

[657] Thus, with all humility and obedience we too should simply believe the plain, firm, clear and solemn word and command of our Creator and Redeemer, without any doubt and disputation as to how it may agree with our reason or be possible. For these words the Lord, who is infinite wisdom and truth itself, has spoken, and everything which he promises he also can execute and accomplish.

Now, all the circumstances of the institution of the Holy Supper testify that these words of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which in themselves are simple, plain, clear, firm and indubitable, cannot and should not be understood otherwise than in their usual, proper and common signification. For since Christ gave this command [concerning eating his body, etc.] at his table and at the Supper, there is indeed no doubt that he speaks of real, natural bread and of natural wine, also of oral eating and drinking, so that there can be no metaphor, i. e. an alteration of meaning, in the word “bread,” as though the body of Christ were a spiritual bread or a spiritual food of souls. So also Christ himself carefully shows that there is no metonymy, i. e. that there is no alteration of meaning in the same way, in the word “body,” and that he does not speak concerning a sign of his body, or concerning a symbol or figurative body, or concerning the virtue of his body and the benefits which he has earned by the sacrifice of his body [for us], but of his true, essential body, which he delivered for us to death, and of his true, essential blood, which he shed for us on the tree [altar] of the cross, for the remission of sins.

[658] Now, indeed, there is no interpreter of the Word of Jesus Christ so faithful and sure as the Lord Christ himself, who understands best his words and his heart and opinion, and who is the wisest and most knowing in expounding them; who here, as in the making of his last will and testament and of his ever-abiding covenant and union, as elsewhere in [presenting and confirming] all articles of faith, and in the institution of all other signs of the covenant and of grace or sacraments, as [for example] circumcision, the various offerings in the Old Testament and holy baptism, has employed not allegorical, but entirely proper, simple, indubitable and clear words; and in order that no misunderstanding could occur with the words: “given for you,” “shed for you,” he has made a clear explanation. He also allowed his disciples to rest in the simple, proper sense, and commanded them that they should teach all nations to observe what he had commanded them, the apostles.

Therefore, also, all three evangelists (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19) and St. Paul, who received it [the institution of the Lord’s Supper] after the ascension of Christ [from Christ himself], (1 Cor. 11:24), unanimously and with one and the same words and syllables, concerning the consecrated and distributed bread repeat these distinct, clear, firm and true words of Christ: “This

is my body,” altogether in one way, without any explanation [trope, figure] and variation.

Therefore there is no doubt that also concerning the other part of the sacrament these words of Luke and Paul: “This cup Is the new testament in my blood,” can have no other meaning than that which St. Matthew and St. Mark give: “This” (namely, that which you orally drink out of the cup) “is my blood of the new testament,” whereby I establish, seal and confirm with you men my testament and the new” covenant, viz. the forgiveness of sins.

[659] So also that repetition, confirmation and explanation of the Word of Christ which St. Paul makes (1 Cor. 10:16), as an especially clear testimony of the true, essential presence and distribution of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, is to be considered with all diligence and solemnity [accurately], where he writes as follows: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” From this we clearly learn that not only the cup which Christ consecrated at the first Supper, and not only the bread which Christ broke and distributed, but also that which we break and bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, so that all who eat this bread and drink of this cup truly receive and are partakers of the true body and blood of Christ. For if the body of Christ were present and partaken of, not truly and essentially, but only according to its power and efficacy, the bread would not be a communion of the body, but must be called a communion of the Spirit, power and benefits of Christ, as the Apology argues and concludes.<sup>15</sup> And if Paul speaks only of the spiritual communion of the body of Christ through faith, as the Sacramentarians pervert this passage, he would not say that the bread, but that the spirit or faith, was the communion of the body of Christ. But as he says that the bread is the communion of the body of Christ, viz. that all who partake of the consecrated bread also become participants of the body of Christ, he must speak indeed not of a spiritual, but of a sacramental or oral participation of the body of Christ, which is common to godly and godless Christians [Christians only in name].

As also the causes and circumstances of this entire declaration of St. Paul show that he deters and warns those who ate of offerings to idols and had fellowship with heathen demonolatry, and nevertheless went also to the table of the Lord and became partakers of the body and blood of Christ, that they should not receive the body and blood of Christ for judgment and condemnation to themselves. For since all those who were partakers of the consecrated and broken bread in the Supper have communion also with the body of Christ, St. Paul cannot speak indeed of spiritual communion with Christ, which no man

can abuse, and from which also no one should be warned.

Therefore, also, our dear fathers and predecessors, as Luther and other pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession, explain this expression of Paul with such words that it accords most fully with the words of Christ when they write thus: The bread which we break is the distributed body of *Christ*, or the common [communicated] body of Christ, distributed to those who receive the broken bread.

[660] By this simple, well-founded exposition of this glorious testimony (1 Cor. 10) we unanimously abide, and we justly are astonished that some are so bold as to venture to cite this passage, which they themselves had previously opposed to the Sacramentarians, as now a foundation for their error, that in the Supper the body of Christ is only spiritually partaken of. [For thus they speak]: “The bread is the communion of the body of Christ, i. e, that by which there is fellowship with the body of Christ (which is the Church), or is the means by which we believers are united with Christ, just as the Word of the Gospel is the means, apprehended by faith, through which we are spiritually united to Christ and inserted into the body of Christ, which is the Church.”

For that not only the godly, pious and believing Christians, but also unworthy, godless hypocrites, as Judas and his companions, who have no spiritual communion with Christ, and go to the table of the Lord without true repentance and conversion to God, also receive orally in the sacrament the true body and [true] blood of Christ, and by their unworthy eating and drinking grievously sin against the body and blood of Christ, St. Paul teaches expressly. For he says (1 Cor. 11:27): “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily,” sins not merely against the bread and wine, not merely against the signs or symbols and representation of the body and blood, but “shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” which, present there [in the Holy Supper], he dishonors, abuses and disgraces, as the Jews who in very deed violated the body of Christ and killed him; just as the ancient Christian Fathers and church-teachers unanimously have understood and explained this passage.

There is, therefore, a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ, one “spiritual,” of which Christ especially treats (John 6:54), which occurs in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and consideration of the Gospel, as well as in the Lord’s Supper, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Sapper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and a cause of condemnation.

[661] But this spiritual eating is nothing else than *faith*, namely, to hearken to God’s Word (wherein Christ, true God and man, is presented, together with all

his benefits which he has purchased for us by his flesh given for us to death, and by his blood shed for us, namely, God's grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness and eternal life), to receive it with faith and appropriate it to ourselves, and in the consolation that we have a gracious God, and eternal salvation on account of the Lord Jesus Christ, with sure confidence and trust, to firmly rely and abide in all troubles and temptations. [He who hears these things related from the Word of God, and in faith receives and applies them to himself, and relies entirely upon this consolation (that we have God reconciled and life eternal on account of the Mediator, Jesus Christ), — he, I say, who with true confidence rests in the Word of the Gospel in all troubles and temptations, spiritually eats the body of Christ and drinks his blood.]

The other eating of the body of Christ is *oral* or *sacramental*, where, in the Holy Supper, the true, essential body and blood of Christ are received and partaken of by all who eat and drink in the Supper the consecrated bread and wine — by the believing as an infallible pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them, and Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation. This the words of the institution by Christ expressly teach, when at the table and during the Supper he offers his disciples natural bread and natural wine, which he calls his true body and true blood, and in addition says: "Eat and drink." Such a command, in view of the circumstances, cannot indeed be understood otherwise than of oral eating and drinking, not in a gross, carnal, Capernaïtic, yet in a supernatural, incomprehensible way; to which the other command adds still another and spiritual eating, when the Lord Christ says further: "This do in remembrance of me," where he requires faith (which is the spiritual partaking of Christ's body).

Therefore all the ancient Christian teachers expressly, and in full accord with the entire holy Christian Church, teach, according to these words of the institution of Christ and the explanation of St. Paul, that the body of Christ is not only received spiritually by faith, which occurs also without the use of the sacrament, but also orally, not only by believing and godly, but also by unworthy, unbelieving, false and wicked Christians. As this is too long to be narrated here, we will have to refer the Christian reader, for the sake of brevity, to the more ample writings of our theologians.

[662] Hence it is manifest how unjustly and maliciously the Sacramentarian fanatics<sup>16</sup> deride the Lord Christ, St. Paul and the entire Church in calling this oral partaking, and that of the unworthy, *duos pilos caudae equinae et commentum, cujus vel ipsum Satanam pudeat*, as also the doctrine concerning the majesty of Christ, *excrementum Satanae quo diabolus sibi ipsi et hominibus illudat*, i. e. they speak so dreadfully thereof that a godly Christian man should

be ashamed to translate it.

But it must also be carefully stated who are the unworthy guests of this Supper — namely, those who go to this sacrament without true repentance and sorrow for their sins, and without true faith and the good intention to improve their lives, and by their unworthy eating of the body of Christ incur temporal and eternal punishments and are guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

For Christians of weak faith, diffident and troubled, who, because of the greatness and number of their sins, are terrified, and think that, in this their great impurity, they are not worthy of this precious treasure and the benefits of Christ, and who feel and lament their weakness of faith, and from their hearts desire that they may serve God with stronger, more joyful faith and pure obedience, are the truly worthy guests for whom this highly venerable sacrament [and sacred feast] has been especially instituted and appointed; as Christ says (Matt. 11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Also (Matt. 9:12): “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that be sick.” Also (2 Cor. 12:9): “God’s strength is made perfect in weakness.” Also (Rom. 14:1): “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye” (v. 3), “for God hath received him.” “For whosoever believeth in the Son of God,” be it with a strong or with a weak faith, “has eternal life” (John 3:15 sq.).

And the worthiness does not depend upon great or small weakness or strength of faith, but upon the merit of Christ, which the distressed father of little faith (Mark 9:24) enjoyed as well as Abraham, Paul and others, who had a joyful and strong faith.

[663] Thus far we have spoken of the true presence and two-fold participation of the body and blood of Christ, which occurs either by faith spiritually or also orally, both by worthy and unworthy [which latter is common to worthy and unworthy].

Since also concerning the consecration and the common rule, that “nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use” [or divinely-instituted act], a misunderstanding and dissension has occurred between some teachers of the Augsburg Confession, we have also, concerning this matter, made a fraternal and unanimous declaration to one another to the following purport, viz. that not the word or work of any man produces the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, whether it be the merit or declaration of the minister, or the eating and drinking or faith of the communicants; but all this should be ascribed alone to the power of Almighty God and the institution and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ. [But all that which we have present in the Supper of Christ is to be ascribed absolutely and altogether to the power and Word of Almighty God and the institution, etc.]



[664] For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ, which he spake at the first institution, were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but they endure, have authority, operate and are still efficacious [their force, power and efficacy endure and avail even to the present]; so that in all places where the Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Christ, and his words are used, from the power and efficacy of the words which Christ spake at the first Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received. For where his institution is observed and his words concerning the bread and cup [wine] are spoken, and the consecrated bread and cup [wine] are distributed, Christ himself, through the spoken words, is still efficacious *by virtue of the first institution*, through his Word which he wishes to be there repeated. As Chrysostom says in his sermon concerning the passion: “Christ himself prepares this table and blesses it; for no man makes the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified for us. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but, by God’s power and grace, the elements presented are consecrated in the Supper by the Word, where he speaks: ‘This is my body.’ And just as the declaration (Gen. 1:28): ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,’ was spoken only once, but is ever efficacious in nature, so that it is fruitful and multiplies; so also this declaration [This is my body; this is my blood] was once spoken, but even to this day and to his advent it is efficacious, and works so that in the Supper of the churches his true body and blood are present.”

Luther also [writes concerning this very subject in the same manner], (vol. vi., Jena Ed., p. 99): “This his command and institution are able and effect it that we administer and receive not mere bread and wine, but his body and blood, as his words run: ‘This is my body,’ etc.; ‘This is my blood,’ etc. It is not our work or declaration, but the command and ordination of Christ, that makes the bread the body, and the wine the blood, from the beginning of the first Supper even to the end of the world, and that through our service and office they are daily distributed.”

Also (vol. iii., Jena, p. 446): “Thus here also, even though I should pronounce over all bread the words: ‘This is Christ’s body,’ it would of course not follow thence, but if we say, according to his institution and command, in the administration of the Holy Supper: ‘This is my body,’ it is his body, not on account of our declaration or demonstration [because these words when uttered have this efficacy], but because of his command — that he has commanded us thus to speak and to do, and has united his command and act with our declaration.”

[665] And indeed, in the administration of the Holy Supper the words of

institution should be publicly [before the church] spoken or sung, distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted [and this for very many and the most important reasons. First,] in order that obedience may be rendered to the command of Christ: “This do” [that therefore should not be omitted which Christ himself did in the Holy Supper], and [Secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this sacrament (concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins and all benefits which have been purchased by the death and shedding of blood of Christ, and are bestowed upon us in Christ’s testament) may be excited, strengthened and confirmed by Christ’s Word, and [besides that the elements of bread and wine may be consecrated or blessed for this holy use], in order that the body and blood of Christ may therewith be administered to be eaten and to be drunk [that with them the body of Christ may be offered us to be eaten and his blood to be drunk], as Paul declares (1 Cor. 10:16): “The cup of blessing which we bless,” which indeed occurs in no other way than through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution.

Nevertheless, this blessing, or the narration of the words of institution of Christ, does not alone make a sacrament if the entire action of the Supper, as it was instituted by Christ, be not observed, as [for example] when the consecrated bread is not distributed, received and partaken of, but is enclosed, sacrificed or carried about. But the command of Christ, “This do,” which embraces the entire action or transaction in this sacrament, viz. that in an assembly of Christians bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, i. e. eaten and drunk, and the Lord’s death is thereby shown forth, should be observed unseparated and inviolate, as also St. Paul presents before our eyes the entire action of the breaking of bread or of distribution and reception (1 Cor. 10:16).

[666] [Let us now come also to the second point, of which mention was made a little before.] To preserve the true Christian doctrine concerning the Holy Supper, and to avoid and obliterate various idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, the following useful rule and standard has been derived from the words of institution: “Nothing has the nature of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ,” or “apart from the action divinely instituted.” That is: “If the institution of Christ be not observed as he appointed it, there is no sacrament.” This is by no means to be rejected, but with profit can and should be urged and maintained in the churches of God. And the use or action here is not chiefly the faith, also not only the oral participation, but the entire, external, visible action of the Lord’s Supper instituted by Christ. [To this indeed is required], the *consecration*, or words of institution, and the *distribution* and *reception*, or oral partaking [manducation] of the consecrated bread and wine,

likewise the partaking of the body and blood of Christ. And apart from this use, when, in the Papistic mass, the bread is not distributed, but offered up or enclosed and borne about, and presented for adoration, it is to be regarded as no sacrament; just as the water of baptism, if used to consecrate bells or to cure leprosy, or otherwise presented for worship, would be no sacrament or baptism. For from the beginning [of the reviving Gospel] this rule has been opposed to these Papistic abuses, and is explained by Dr. Luther himself (vol. iv., Jena Edition).

But we must besides observe also this, viz. that the Sacramentarians artfully and wickedly pervert this useful and necessary rule, in order to deny the true, essential presence and oral partaking of the body of Christ, which occurs here upon earth alike by the worthy and the unworthy; and who interpret it as referring to the use by faith, i. e. the spiritual and inner use of faith, as though with the unworthy there were no sacrament, and the partaking of the body occurred only spiritually through faith, or as though faith made the body of Christ present in the Holy Supper, and therefore unworthy, unbelieving hypocrites do not actually receive the body of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

Now, it is not our faith that makes the sacrament, but only the true word and institution of our Almighty God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which always is and remains efficacious in the Christian Church, and neither by the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister nor the unbelief of the one who receives it is as anything invalidated or rendered inefficacious. Just as the Gospel, even though godless hearers do not believe it, yet is and remains none the less the true Gospel, but does not work in the unbelieving to salvation; so, whether those who receive the sacrament believe or do not believe, Christ remains none the less true in his words when he says: "Take, eat: this is my body," and effects this [his presence] not by our faith, but by his omnipotence.

But it is a pernicious, shameless error that some from cunning perversion of this familiar rule ascribe more to our faith, which [in their opinion] alone renders present and partakes of the body of Christ, than to the omnipotence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[667] Concerning what pertains to the various imaginary reasons and futile counter-arguments of the Sacramentarians with respect to the essential and natural attributes of a human body, the ascension of Christ, his departure from this world, etc., inasmuch as these have one and all been considered thoroughly and in detail, from God's Word, by Dr. Luther in his controversial writings: "Against the Heavenly Prophets,"<sup>18</sup> "That these words, 'This is my body,' still stand firm;"<sup>19</sup> likewise in his "Large"<sup>20</sup> and his "Small Confession concerning the Holy Supper,"<sup>21</sup> [published some years afterwards], and other of his writings,

and inasmuch as since his death nothing new has been advanced by the factious spirits, for the sake of brevity we will refer and appeal thereto.

For that we neither will, nor can, nor should allow ourselves to be led away by thoughts of human wisdom, whatever authority or outward appearance they may have, from the simple, distinct and clear sense of the Word and testament of Christ to a strange opinion, other than the words sound, but that, in accordance with what is above stated, we understand and believe them simply; our reasons upon which we rest in this matter, ever since the controversy concerning this article arose, are those which Dr. Luther himself,<sup>22</sup> in the very beginning, presented against the Sacramentarians in the following words:

"The reasons upon which I rest in this matter are the following:

"1. The first is this article of our faith: Jesus Christ is essential, natural, true, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

"2. The second, that God's right hand is everywhere.

"3. The third, that God's Word is not false and does not deceive.

"4. The fourth, that God has and knows of many modes of being in any place, and not only the single one concerning which fanatics talk flippantly and which philosophers call local."

Also: "The one body of Christ [says Luther] has a threefold mode or three modes of being anywhere.

[668] "First, the comprehensible, bodily mode, as he went about in the body upon earth, when, according to his size, he made and occupied room [was circumscribed by fixed places]. This mode he can still use whenever he will, as he did after the resurrection, and will use at the last day, as Paul says (1 Tim. 6:15): "Which in his times He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." And to the Colossians (3:4) he says: "When Christ who is our life shall appear." In this manner he is not in God or with the Father, neither in heaven, as the wild spirits dream; for God is not a bodily space or place. And to this effect are the passages of Scripture which the fanatical spirits cite, how Christ left the world and went to the Father.

"Secondly, the incomprehensible, spiritual mode, according to which he neither occupies nor makes room, but penetrates all creatures according to his [most free] will, as, to make an imperfect comparison, my sight penetrates air, light or water, and does not occupy or make room; as a sound or tone penetrates air or water or board and wall, and is in them, and also does not occupy or make room; likewise, as light and heat penetrate air, water, glass, crystal, and the like, and is in them, and also does not make or occupy room; and much more of the like [many comparisons of this matter could be adduced]. This mode he used when he rose from the closed [and sealed] sepulchre, and passed through the

closed door [to his disciples], and in the bread and wine in the Holy Supper, and, as it is believed, when he was born of his mother [the most holy Virgin Mary].

[669] "Thirdly, the divine, heavenly mode, since he is one person with God, according to which, of course, all creatures must be far more penetrable and present to him than they are according to the second mode. For if, according to that second mode, he can be so in and with creatures that they do not feel, touch, circumscribe or comprehend him, how much more wonderfully is he in all creatures according to this sublime third mode, so that they neither circumscribe nor comprehend him, but rather that he has them present before himself, and circumscribes and comprehends them! For you must place this mode of the presence of Christ, as he is one person with God, as far beyond creatures as God is beyond them; and again as deep and near to all creatures as God is in, and near them. For he is one inseparable person with God; where God is there must he also be, or our faith is false. But who will say or think how this occurs? We know indeed that it is so, that he is in God beyond all creatures, and is one person with God, but how it occurs we do not know; this [mystery] is above nature and reason, even above the reason of all the angels in heaven; it is understood only by God. Because, therefore, it is unknown to us, and yet is true, we should not deny his words before we know how to prove to a certainty that the body of Christ can by no means be where God is, and that this mode of being [presence] is false. This the fanatics ought to prove; but we challenge them to do so.

"That God indeed has and knows still more modes in which Christ's body is anywhere, I will not herewith deny; but I would indicate what awkward and stupid men our fanatics are, that they concede to the body of Christ no more than the first, comprehensible way; although they cannot even prove the same, that it conflicts with our meaning. For I in no way will deny that the power of God is able to effect so much as that a body should at the same time be in a number of places, even in a bodily, comprehensible way. For who will prove that this is impossible with God? Who has seen an end to his power? The fanatics think indeed that God cannot effect it,<sup>23</sup> but who will believe their thoughts? Whereby will they confirm such thoughts?"

From these words of Dr. Luther it is also clear in what sense the word *spiritual* is employed in our churches with reference to this matter. For to the Sacramentarians this word (*spiritual*) means nothing else than the spiritual communion, when through faith those truly believing are in the spirit incorporated into Christ, the Lord, and become true spiritual members of his body.

[670] But when this word *spiritual* is employed in regard to this matter by

Dr. Luther or us, we understand thereby the spiritual, supernatural, heavenly mode, according to which Christ is present in the Holy Supper, and not only works trust and life in the believing, but also condemnation in the unbelieving; whereby we reject the Capernaitic thoughts of the gross [and] carnal presence which is ascribed to and forced upon our churches, against our manifold public testimonies, by the Sacramentarians.<sup>24</sup> In this sense we also say [wish the word spiritually to be understood when we say] that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are spiritually received, eaten and drunken; although this participation occurs with the mouth, yet the mode is spiritual.

Therefore our faith in this article, concerning the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, is based upon the *truth* and *omnipotence* of the true, almighty God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These foundations are sufficiently strong and firm to strengthen and establish our faith in all temptations concerning this article, and to subvert and refute all the counter-arguments and objections of the Sacramentarians, however agreeable and plausible they may always be to the reason; and upon them a Christian heart also can firmly and securely rest and rely.

Accordingly, with heart and mouth we reject and condemn as false, erroneous and misleading, all errors which are discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrines above mentioned and founded upon God's Word, as,

1. The Papistic transubstantiation, where it is taught that the consecrated or blessed bread and wine in the Holy Supper lose entirely their substance and essence, and are changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, in such a way that only the mere form of bread and wine is left, or the accidents without the object; under which form of the bread, which is no more bread, but according to their assertion has lost its natural essence, the body of Christ is present, even apart from the administration of the Holy Supper, when the bread is enclosed in the pyx or is presented for display and adoration.<sup>25</sup> For nothing can be a sacrament without God's command and the appointed use for which it is instituted in God's Word, as is shown above.<sup>26</sup>
2. [671] We likewise reject and condemn all other Papistic abuses of this sacrament, as the abomination of the sacrifice of the mass for the living and dead.
3. Also, that contrary to the public command and institution of Christ, to the laity only one form of the sacrament is administered; as the same Papistic abuses are thoroughly refuted by means of God's Word and the testimonies of the ancient churches, in the common confession of our churches, and the

Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and other writings of our theologians.

But because in this document we have undertaken especially to present our Confession and explanation only concerning the true presence of the body and blood of Christ against the Sacramentarians, some of whom, under the name of the Augsburg Confession, have shamelessly insinuated themselves into our churches;<sup>27</sup> we will also present and enumerate especially here the errors of the Sacramentarians, in order to warn our hearers to [detect and] be on their guard against them.

Accordingly, with heart and mouth we reject and condemn as false, erroneous and misleading all Sacramentarian opinions and doctrines which are discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrines above presented and founded upon God's Word:

1. As when they assert that the words of institution are not to be understood simply in their proper signification, as they sound, of the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but should be wrested, by means of tropes or figurative interpretations, to another new, strange sense. We hereby reject all such Sacramentarian opinions and self-contradictory notions [of which some even conflict with each other], however various and manifold they may be.
2. Also, that the oral participation of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is denied [by the Sacramentarians], and it is taught, on the contrary, that the body of Christ in the Holy Supper is partaken of only spiritually by faith, so that in the Holy Supper our mouth receives only bread and wine.
3. Likewise, also, when it is taught that bread and wine in the Lord's Supper should be regarded as nothing more than tokens, whereby Christians are to recognize one another; or,
4. That they are only figures, similitudes and representations [symbols, types] of the far-absent body of Christ, in such a manner that just as bread and wine are the outward food of our body, so also the absent body of Christ, with its merit, is the spiritual food of our souls.
5. [672] Or that they are no more than tokens and memorials of the absent body of Christ, by which signs, as an external pledge, we should be assured that the faith which turns from the Holy Supper and ascends above all heavens becomes there as truly participant of the body and blood of Christ as in the Supper we truly receive with the mouth the external signs; and that thus the assurance and confirmation of our faith occur in the Holy Supper only through the external signs, and not through the true, present body and



blood of Christ offered to us.<sup>28</sup>

6. Or that in the Lord's Supper the power, efficacy and merit of the far-*absent* body of Christ are distributed only to *faith*, and we thus become partakers of his absent body; and that, in this just-mentioned way, the sacramental union is to be understood, viz. with respect to the analogy of the sign and that which is signified, i. e. as the bread and wine have a resemblance to the body and blood of Christ.
7. Or that the body and blood of Christ cannot be received and partaken otherwise than only spiritually by faith.
8. Likewise, when it is taught that, because of his ascension into heaven with his body, Christ is so enclosed and circumscribed in a definite place in heaven that with the same [his body] he cannot or will not be truly present with us in the Holy Supper, which is celebrated according to the institution of Christ upon earth, but that he is as remote therefrom as heaven and earth are from one another,<sup>29</sup> as some Sacramentarians have willfully and wickedly falsified the text (Acts 3:21): "Who must occupy heaven," for the confirmation of their error, and instead thereof have rendered it: "Who must be received by heaven" or "in heaven," or be circumscribed and contained, so that in his human nature he could or would be in no way with us upon earth.<sup>30</sup>
9. [673] Likewise, that Christ has not promised the true, essential presence of his body and blood in his Supper, and that he neither can nor will afford it, because the nature and property of his assumed human nature cannot suffer or permit it.
10. Likewise, when it is taught that not only the Word and omnipotence of Christ, but faith, renders the body of Christ present in the Holy Supper; on this account the words of institution in the administration of the Holy Supper are omitted by some. For although the Papistic consecration, in which efficacy is ascribed to the speaking as the work of the priest, as though it constitutes a sacrament, is justly rebuked and rejected, yet the words of institution can or should in no way be omitted, as is shown in the preceding declaration.<sup>31</sup>
11. Likewise, that believers do not seek the body of Christ, according to the words of Christ's institution, with the bread and wine of the Supper, but are sent with their faith from the bread of the Holy Supper to heaven, the place where the Lord Christ is with his body, that they should become partakers of it there.
12. We reject also the doctrine that unbelieving and impenitent, godless Christians, who only bear the name of Christ, but do not have right, true,



living and saving faith, receive in the Lord's Supper not the body and blood of Christ, but only bread and wine. And since there are only two kinds of guests found at this heavenly meal, the worthy and the unworthy, we reject also the distinction made [by some] among the unworthy, viz. that the godless Epicureans and deriders of God's Word, who are in the external fellowship of the Church in the use of the Holy Supper, do not receive the body and blood of Christ for condemnation, but only bread and wine.

13. So too the doctrine that worthiness consists not only in true faith, but in man's own preparation.<sup>32</sup>
14. Likewise, the doctrine that even the truly believing, who have and retain a right, true, living faith, and yet are without the above-mentioned sufficient preparation of their own, can, just as the unworthy guests, receive this sacrament to condemnation.
15. [674] Likewise, when it is taught that the elements or the visible form of the consecrated bread and wine ought to be adored. But no one unless he be an Arian heretic can deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper in the true use of the same, should be adored in spirit and in truth, as also in all other places, especially where his congregation is assembled.
16. We reject and condemn also all presumptuous, derisive, blasphemous questions and expressions which are presented with respect to the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this Supper in a gross, carnal, Capernaitic way.

Other and additional antitheses, or rejected contrary doctrines, are reproved and rejected in the preceding declaration, which, for the sake of brevity, we will not repeat here. The condemnable or erroneous opinions that still remain, can be easily understood and named from the preceding declaration; for we reject and condemn everything that is discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrine which is above mentioned and is thoroughly grounded in God's Word.

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1. See Epitome, vii.: 1.↩
  2. The words of Calvin and Beza.↩
  3. Zwingli and his adherents.↩
  4. By which to the entire person that which belongs to one nature ascribed. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 36.↩
  5. The Tetrapolitan.↩

6. Apology, X.: 54 sq.↵
7. Ibid., x.: 66,↵
8. The Wittenberg Concordia, written by Melanchthon.↵
9. See Corpus Reformatorum. iii.: 75.↵
10. 1 Cor. 11:27.↵
11. Ibid., 11:29.↵
12. Smalcald Articles, Part III.. Art. vi↵
13. Part v., 6, 8 10-14; 499 sqq.↵
14. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 7.↵
15. Art.x.:64.↵
16. Theodore Beza and others.↵
17. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 35, 37.↵
18. A. D. 1525.↵
19.  
1527.  
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20.  
1528.  
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21.  
1544.  
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22. In his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper.↵
23. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 32, 34.↵
24. Ibid., vii.: 42↵
25. Cf. Council of Trent, sess. xiii., caps. 4-6, Cans. 2, 4, 6, 7.↵
26. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 1.↵
27. § 85.↵
28. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 30.↵
29. Calvin and Beza.↵
30. Calvin and the Wittenberg Crypto-Calvinists.↵
31. Above, § 79 sq.↵
32. Beza. See Mentzer's Exegesis, Aug. Conf., p. 488. See also Epitome vii.: 38.↵

## Chapter VIII. Of the Person of Christ.

*Parallel Passages.* — (*Ecumenical Creeds; Augsburg Confession, III.; Apology, Art. iii.; Smalcald Articles, Part I.; Small Catechism, Creed, Art. ii. Large Catechism, ib., 453 sqq.; Epitome, viii.*)

A controversy has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerning *the Person of Christ*, which nevertheless did not first arise among them, but was originally introduced by the Sacramentarians.

For since Dr. Luther, in opposition to the Sacramentarians, maintained, with firm foundations from the words of institution, the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper; the objection was urged against him by the Zwinglians that, if the body of Christ were present at the same time in heaven and on earth in the Holy Supper, it could be no real, true human body; for of such majesty as is peculiar to God, the body of Christ is not capable.

[675] But as Dr. Luther contradicted and effectually refuted this, as his doctrinal and polemical writings<sup>1</sup> concerning the Holy Supper show, which, as well as his doctrinal writings, we hereby publicly confess [approve and wish it to be publicly attested]; some theologians of the Augsburg Confession, since his death, although they have not yet been willing publicly and expressly to confess themselves with the Sacramentarians concerning the Lord's Supper, have introduced and employed precisely the same foundations concerning the person of Christ whereby the Sacramentarians attempted to remove the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ from his Supper, viz. that nothing should be ascribed to the human nature in the person of Christ which is above or contrary to its natural, essential property; and in regard to this have burdened the doctrine of Dr. Luther, and all those who have embraced it as in conformity with God's Word, with the charge of almost all the ancient monstrous heresies.<sup>2</sup>

To explain this controversy in a Christian way, in conformity with God's Word, according to the guidance [analogy] of our simple Christian faith, and by God's grace entirely settle it, our unanimous doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

We believe, teach and confess, although the Son of God has been from eternity a particular, distinct, entire divine person, and thus, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, true, essential, perfect God, nevertheless that, in the fulness of time, he also assumed human nature into the unity of his person, not in such a way that there now are two persons or two Christs, but that Christ Jesus is now in one person, at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from

eternity, and a true man, born of the blessed Virgin Mary, as it is written (Rom. 9:5): “Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

We believe, teach and confess, that now, in this one undivided person, there are two distinct natures, the divine, which is from eternity, and the human, which in time was assumed into the unity of the person of the Son of God; which two natures in the person of Christ are never either mingled or separated from one another or changed the one into the other, but each abides in its nature and essence in the person of Christ to all eternity.

[676] We believe, teach and confess also, that, as both natures mentioned abide unmingled and destroyed, each retains also its natural, essential properties, and for all eternity does not lay them aside, neither do the essential properties of the one nature ever become the essential properties of the other nature.

Accordingly we believe, teach and confess, that to be almighty, eternal, infinite, to be of itself everywhere present at the same time naturally, that is, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, and to know all things, are essential attributes of the divine nature, which never to eternity become essential properties of the human nature.

On the other hand, to be a corporeal creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and circumscribed, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, cold, thirst, heat and the like, are properties of the human nature, which never become properties of the divine nature.

We believe, teach and confess also, that now, since the incarnation, each nature in Christ does not so subsist of itself that each is or constitutes a separate person, but that they are so united that they constitute only one person, in which, at the same time, both the divine and the assumed human nature are and subsist, so that now, since the incarnation, to the entire person of Christ belongs not only his divine nature, but also his assumed human nature; and that, as without his divinity, so also without his humanity, the person of Christ or of the incarnate Son of God, i. e. the Son of God who has assumed flesh and become man, is not entire. Hence Christ is not two distinct persons, but is only one person, notwithstanding that two distinct natures are found in him, unconfused in their natural essence and properties.

[677] We believe, teach and confess also, that the assumed human nature in Christ not only has and retains its natural, essential properties, but that, besides, through the personal union with divinity, and afterwards through glorification, it has been exalted to the right hand of majesty, power and might, over everything that can be named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph.

1:21).<sup>3</sup>

With respect now to this majesty, to which Christ has been exalted according to his humanity, he did not first receive it when he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but when, in his mother's womb, he was conceived and became man and the divine and human natures were personally united with one another. Nevertheless, this personal union is not to be understood, as some incorrectly explain it, as though the two natures, the divine and the human, were united with one another, as two boards are glued together, so that they really, i. e., in deed and truth, have no communication whatever with one another. For this was the error and heresy of Nestorius and Samosatenus, who, as Suidas and Theodore, presbyter of Raithu, testify, taught and held: δυο φύσεις ἀχαινωνητους προς εαυτας πανταπασιν, i. e. the two natures have no communication whatever with one another. Thereby the two natures are separated from one another, and thus two Christs are constituted, so that the one is Christ, and the other God the Word, who dwells in Christ.

For thus Theodore the Presbyter wrote: "At the same time in which the heretic Manes lived, one by the name of Paul, who by birth was indeed of Samosata, but was a bishop<sup>4</sup> at Antioch in Syria, wickedly taught that the Lord Christ was nothing but a man in whom God the Word dwelt, just as in each of the prophets; therefore he also held that the divine and human natures are apart and separate, and that in Christ they have no communion whatever with one another, as though the one were Christ, and the other God the Word, who dwells in him."

[678] Against this condemned heresy the Christian Church has always and everywhere simply believed and held that the divine and human natures in the person of Christ are so united that they have a true communion with one another; whereby the natures [do not meet and] are not mingled in one essence, but, as Dr. Luther writes, in one person. Accordingly, on account of this personal union and communion, the ancient teachers of the Church, before and after the Council of Chalcedon, frequently employed the word mixture in a good sense and with [true] discrimination. For this purpose [the sake of confirming this matter] many testimonies of the Fathers<sup>5</sup> (if needful) could be adduced, which also are to be found frequently in the writings of our divines, and explain the personal union and communion by the illustration of the soul and body, and of glowing iron. For the body and soul, as also fire and iron, have communion with each other, not by a phrase or mode of speaking, or in mere words, but truly and really, i. e. in deed and truth; and, nevertheless, no confusion or equalizing of the natures is thereby introduced, as when from honey and water hydromel is made, which is no more pure water or pure honey, but is a mixed drink. For in the union of the divine and

human natures in the person of Christ it is far different. For it is a far different, more sublime, and [altogether] ineffable communion and union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, on account of which union and communion God is man and man is God. Nevertheless, thereby neither the natures nor their properties are intermingled, but each nature retains its own essence and properties.

On account of this personal union (without which such a true communion of the natures would not be thought of, neither could exist) not the mere human nature, whose property it is to suffer and die, has suffered for the sins of the world, but the Son of God himself truly suffered (nevertheless, according to the assumed human nature), and in accordance with our simple Christian faith [as our Apostles' Creed testifies] truly died, although the divine nature can neither suffer nor die. This Dr. Luther has fully explained in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper in opposition to the blasphemous *allaeosis* of Zwingli, as he taught that one nature should be taken and understood for the other, which Dr. Luther committed, as a mark of the devil, to the abyss of hell.<sup>6</sup>

For this reason the ancient teachers of the Church combined both words, *κοινωνία* and *ένωσις*, i. e. *communion* and *union*, in the explanation of this mystery, and have explained the one by the other. (Irenaeus, Book iv., ch. 37; Athanasius, in the Letter to Epictetus; Hilary, concerning the Trinity, Book 9; Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, in Theodoret: Damascenus, Book 3, ch. 19.)<sup>7</sup>

[679] On account of this personal union and communion of the divine and human natures in Christ we believe, teach and confess also, according to our simple Christian faith, all that is said concerning the majesty of Christ according to his humanity, [by which he sits] at the right hand of the almighty power of God, and what follows therefrom; all of which would not be, and could not occur, if this personal union and communion of the natures in the person of Christ did not exist really, i. e. in deed and truth.

On account of this personal union and communion of the natures, Mary, the blessed Virgin, bore not a mere man, but such a man as is truly the Son of the Most High God, as the angel [Gabriel] testifies; who showed his divine majesty even in his mother's womb, that he was born of a virgin, with her virginity uninjured. Therefore she is truly the mother of God, and nevertheless truly remained a virgin.

Because of this he also wrought all his miracles, and manifested this his divine Majesty, according to his pleasure, when and as he willed, and therefore not only after his resurrection and ascension, but also in his state of humiliation. For example, at the wedding at Cana of Galilee; also when he was twelve years old among the learned; also, in the garden, where with a word he cast his

enemies to the ground; likewise in death, where he died not merely as any other man, but in and with his death conquered sin, death, hell, and eternal damnation; which his human nature alone would not have been able to do if it had not been thus personally united and did not have communion with the divine nature.

[680] Hence also the human nature had, after the resurrection from the dead, its exaltation above all creatures in heaven and on earth; which is nothing else than that he entirely laid aside the form of a servant, and nevertheless did not lay aside his human nature, but retains it to eternity, and according to his assumed human nature is put in the full possession and use of the divine majesty. This majesty he nevertheless had already in his conception, even in his mother's womb; but as the apostle testifies (Phil. 2:7): "He humbled himself," and, as Dr. Luther explains, in the state of his humiliation he concealed it, and did not employ it except when he wished.

But now, since not merely as any other saint he has ascended to heaven, but, as the apostle testifies (Eph. 4:10), "above all heavens," and also truly fills all things, and is everywhere present not only as God, but also as man [has dominion and] rules from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth; as the prophets predict (Ps. 8:1,6; 93:1 sq.; Zach. 9:10) and the apostles testify (Mark 16:20) that he everywhere wrought with them and confirmed the word with signs following. Yet this occurred not in an earthly way, but, as Dr. Luther explains, according to the manner of the right hand of God, which is no fixed place in heaven, as the Sacramentarians assert without any ground in the Holy Scriptures, but is nothing else than the almighty power of God, which fills heaven and earth, in [possession of] which Christ is placed according to his humanity, really, i e, in deed and truth, without confusion and equalizing of the two natures in their essence and essential properties. From this communicated [divine] power, according to the words of his testament, he can be and is truly present with his body and blood in the Holy Supper, to which he directs us by his Word. This is possible to no man besides, because no man is in such a way united with the divine nature, and placed in this divine almighty majesty and power through and in the personal union of the two natures in Christ, as Jesus, the Son of Mary. For in him the divine and human natures are personally united with one another, so that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), and in this personal union have such a sublime, inner, ineffable communion that even the angels are astonished at it, and, as St. Peter testifies, look into these things with delight and joy (1 Pet. 1:12); all of which will shortly be explained in order and more fully.

[681] From this foundation, of which mention has now been made, and which the personal union declares, i. e. from the manner in which the divine and human

natures in the person of Christ are united with one another, so that they have not only the names in common, but have communion with one another, without any commingling or equalizing of the same in their essence, proceeds also the doctrine concerning the *Communicatio Idiomatum*, i. e. concerning the true communion of the properties of the natures, of which more will be said hereafter.

For since this is true, viz. that “properties do not leave their subjects,” i. e. that each nature retains its essential properties, and these are not separated from one nature and transferred to another, as water is poured from one vessel into another; so also no communion of properties could be or subsist if the above-mentioned personal union or communion of the natures in the person of Christ were not true. This, next to the article of the Holy Trinity, is the greatest mystery in heaven and on earth, as Paul says (1 Tim. 3:16): “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh.” For since the apostle Peter in clear words testifies (2 Ep. 1:4) that we also in whom Christ dwells only by grace, on account of that sublime mystery, are in Christ, “partakers of the divine nature,” what then must be the nature of the communion of the divine nature, of which the apostle says that “in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” so that God and man are one person?

But since it is highly important that this doctrine of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*, i. e. of the communion of the properties of both natures, be treated and explained with proper discrimination (for the propositions or assertions, i. e. expressions, concerning the person of Christ, and his natures and properties, are not all of one kind and mode, and when they are employed without proper discrimination the doctrine becomes erroneous and the simple reader is readily led astray), the following statement should be carefully noted, which, for the purpose of making it plainer and simple, may be presented under three heads:

First, since in Christ two distinct natures exist and remain unchanged and unconfused in their natural essence and properties, and moreover there is only one person of both natures, that which is an attribute of only one nature is ascribed not to that nature apart, as though separate, but to the entire person, which is at the same time God and man, whether called God or man.

[682] But in this genus, i. e. this mode of speaking, it does not follow that what is ascribed to the person is at the same time a property of both natures, but a discriminative declaration is made as to what nature it is according to which anything is ascribed to the entire person. Thus the Son of God was “born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3). Also: Christ was put to death according to the flesh, and hath suffered according to the flesh (1 Pet. 3:18; 4:1).

But since, when it is said that that is ascribed to the entire person which is peculiar to one nature, beneath the words secret and open Sacramentarians



conceal their pernicious error, by naming indeed the entire person, but nevertheless understanding thereby only the one nature, and entirely excluding the other nature<sup>8</sup> — as though merely the human nature had suffered for us — inasmuch as Dr. Luther has written concerning the *alloeosis* of Zwingli in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper, we will here present Luther's own words, in order that the Church of God may be guarded in the best way against this error. His words are as follows:

“Zwingli calls that an *allaeosis* when anything is ascribed to the divinity of Christ which nevertheless belongs to the humanity or the reverse. As Luke 24:26: ‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?’ Here Zwingli triflingly declares that [the word] Christ is understood with respect to the human nature. Beware, beware, I say, of the *alloeosis*; for it is a mask of the devil, as it at last forms such a Christ after which I certainly would not be a Christian. For its design is that henceforth Christ should be no more, and do no more with his sufferings and life, than another mere saint. For if I believe [permit myself to be persuaded] that only the human nature has suffered for me, Christ is to me a Saviour of little worth, since he indeed himself stands in need of a Saviour. In a word, what the devil seeks by the *alloeosis* is inexpressible.”

[683] And shortly afterwards: “If the old sorceress. Dame Reason, the grandmother of the *alloeosis*, should say, Yea, divinity can neither suffer nor die; you should reply. That is true; yet, because in Christ divinity and humanity are one person, Scripture, on account of this personal union, ascribes also to divinity everything that occurs to the humanity, and the reverse. And thus, indeed, it is in truth. For this must certainly be said [acknowledged], viz. the person (he refers to Christ) suffers and dies. Now the person is true God; therefore, it is rightly said: The Son of God suffers. For although the one part (so to say), viz. the divinity, does not suffer, yet the person, which is God, suffers in the other part, viz. in his humanity; for in truth God's Son has been crucified for us, i. e. the person which is God. For the person, the person, I say, was crucified according to the humanity.”

And again shortly afterwards: “If the *allaeosis* exist, as Zwingli proposes, it will be necessary for Christ to have two persons, one divine and one human, because Zwingli applies the passages concerning suffering, alone to the human nature, and of course diverts them from the divinity. For if the works be parted and disunited, the person must also be divided, since all the works or sufferings, are ascribed not to the natures, but to the person. For it is the person that does and suffers everything, one thing according to one nature, and another according to the other nature, all of which the learned know well. Therefore we consider

our Lord Christ as God and man in one person, so that we neither confound the natures nor divide the person.”

[684] Dr. Luther says also in his book, “Of the Councils and the Church:” “We Christians must know that if God were not in the [one] balance, and gave it weight, we would sink to the ground with our scale of the balance. By this I mean: If it were not said [if these things were not true], ‘God has died for us,’ but only a man, we are lost. But if the death of God, and that God died, lie in the scale of the balance, he sinks down, and we rise up as a light, empty scale. But he also can indeed rise again or spring from the scale; yet he could not have descended into the scale unless he had first become a man like us, so that it could be said: ‘God died,’ ‘God’s passion,’ ‘God’s blood,’ ‘God’s death.’ For in his nature God cannot die; but now God and man are united in one person, so that the expression ‘God’s death’ is correct, when the man dies who is one thing or one person with God.” Thus far Luther.

Hence it is manifest that it is incorrect to say or write<sup>9</sup> that the above-mentioned expressions (“God suffered,” “God died”) are only verbal assertions, that is, mere words, and that it is not so in fact. For our simple Christian faith proves that the Son of God, who became man, suffered for us, died for us, and redeemed us with his blood.

Secondly, as to the execution of the office of Christ, the person does not act and work in, with, through, or according to only one nature, but in, according to, with and through both natures, or, as the Council of Chalcedon declares, one nature operates, with the communion of the other, in that which is a property of either. Therefore Christ is our Mediator, Redeemer, King, High Priest, Head, Shepherd, etc., not only according to one nature, whether it be the divine or the human, but according to both natures, as this doctrine is in other places more fully treated.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, but it is still a much different thing when the subject of the question, or declaration, or discussion concerning this is, whether then the natures in the personal union in Christ have nothing else or nothing more than only their natural, essential properties; for that they have and retain these, is mentioned above.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, as to the divine nature in Christ, since in God there is no change (James 1:17) by the incarnation, his divine nature, in its essence and properties, is not abated or advanced; is thereby, in or by itself, neither diminished nor increased.

But as to the assumed human nature in the person of Christ, there have indeed been some who have wished to contend that this also, in the personal union with divinity, has nothing more than only the natural, essential properties according to

which it is in all things like its brethren; and that, on this account, nothing should or could be ascribed to the human nature in Christ which is beyond or contrary to its natural properties, even though the testimony of Scripture is to this effect.<sup>12</sup> But that this opinion is false and incorrect is so clear from God's Word that even their own comrades censure and reject such an error. For the Holy Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers from the Scriptures, very plainly testify that the human nature in Christ, inasmuch as it has been personally united with the divine nature in Christ (because, since the form of a servant and humiliation has been laid aside, it is glorified and exalted to the right hand of the majesty and power of God), has received, over and beyond its natural, essential, permanent properties, also special, high, great, supernatural, inscrutable, ineffable, heavenly prerogatives and excellences in majesty, glory, power and might above everything that can be named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:21). So that the human nature in Christ, in its measure and mode, is employed at the same time in the execution of the office of Christ, and has also its efficacy, i. e. power and force, not only from, and according to, its natural, essential attributes, or only so far as its ability extends, but chiefly from and according to the majesty, glory, power and might which it has received through the personal union, glorification and exaltation. And even now the adversaries can or dare scarcely deny this, except that they dispute and contend that those are only created gifts or finite qualities, as in the saints, with which the human nature is endowed and furnished; and that, according to their [artful] thoughts or from their own [silly] argumentations or [fictitious] proofs, they wish to measure and calculate of what the human nature in Christ, without annihilation, is capable or incapable.

But the best, most certain and sure way in this controversy is this, viz. that what Christ has received, according to his assumed nature, through the personal union, glorification or exaltation, and of what his assumed human nature is capable beyond the natural properties, without annihilation, no one can know better or more thoroughly than the Lord Christ himself; and he has revealed in his Word as much thereof as it is needful for us to know. Of this, so far as pertains to the present matter, we have in the Scriptures clear, certain testimonies that we should simply believe, and in no way dispute to the contrary, as though the human nature in Christ were not capable of the same.

[686] Now that is indeed correct and true which has been said concerning the created gifts which have been given and imparted to the human nature in Christ, viz. that it possesses them in or of itself. But these do not sufficiently explain the majesty which the Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers from Scripture, ascribe to the assumed human nature in Christ.

For to quicken, to have all judgment and power in heaven and on earth, to have all things in his hands, to have all things in subjection beneath his feet, to cleanse from sin, etc., are not created gifts, but divine, infinite properties, which, nevertheless, according to the declaration of Scripture, are given and communicated to the man Christ (John 5:27; 6:39; Matt. 28:18; Dan. 7; 14; John 3:35; 13:3; Matt. 11:27; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:27; John 1:3).

And that this communication is to be understood, not as a phrase or mode of speaking, i. e. only in words with respect to the person, and only according to the divine nature, but according to the assumed human nature, the three following strong, irrefutable arguments and reasons show:

1. First, there is a unanimously-received rule of the entire ancient orthodox Church that what Holy Scripture testifies that Christ received in time he received not according to the divine nature (according to which he has everything from eternity), but the person has received it in time, by reason of, and with respect to, the assumed human nature.
2. Secondly, the Scriptures testify clearly (John 5:21 sq.; 6:39 sq.) that the power to quicken and to exercise judgment has been given to Christ because he is the Son of man and as he has flesh and blood.
3. [687] Thirdly, the Scriptures speak not merely in general of the Son of man, but also expressly indicate his assumed human nature (1 John 1:7): “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,” not only according to the merit [of the blood of Christ] which was once attained on the cross; but in this place John speaks thereof, that in the work or act of justification not only the divine nature in Christ, but also his blood, by mode of efficacy, i. e. actually, cleanses us from all concerning this article many other glorious testimonies of the ancient orthodox Church are elsewhere cited.

That Christ, therefore, according to his human nature, has received this, and that it has been given and communicated to the assumed human nature in Christ, we should and must believe according to the Scriptures. But, as above said,<sup>13</sup> because the two natures in Christ are so united that they are not mingled with one another or changed one into the other, and each retains its natural, essential property, so that the properties of one nature never become properties of the other nature; this doctrine must also be rightly explained and be diligently preserved against all heresies.

While we, then, invent nothing new from ourselves, but receive and repeat the explanations which the ancient orthodox Church has given hereof from the

good foundation of Holy Scripture, viz. that this divine power, light, might, majesty and glory was not given the assumed human nature in Christ such a way as the Father, from eternity, has communicated to the Son, according to the divine nature, his essence and all divine attributes, whence he is of one nature with the Father and is equal to God. For Christ is only according to the divine nature equal to the Father, but according to the assumed human nature he is beneath God; hence it is manifest that we make no confusion, equalization or abolition of natures in Christ. So, too, the power to quicken is not in the flesh of Christ as in his divine nature, viz. as an essential property.

[688] Moreover, this communication or impartation has not occurred through an essential or natural infusion of the properties of the divine nature into the human, as though the humanity of Christ had these by itself and apart from the divine essence, or as though the human nature in Christ had thereby [by this communication] entirely laid aside its natural, essential properties, and were now either transformed into divinity, in and by itself, with such communicated properties, had become equal to the same, or that now the natural, essential properties of both natures are of one kind, or indeed equal. For these and similar erroneous doctrines were justly rejected and condemned in ancient approved councils from the foundation of Holy Scripture. “For in no way is either conversion, confusion or equalization of the natures in Christ, or the essential properties, to be either made or admitted.”

We indeed never understand the words “*real communication*” or “*communes really*” (i. e. the impartation or communion which occurs in deed and truth) of any physical communication or essential transfusion, i. e, of any essential, natural communion or effusion, whereby the natures would be confused in their essence, and their essential properties (as, against their own conscience, some<sup>14</sup> have craftily and wickedly made perversions, in order to make the pure doctrine suspected); but only have opposed them to “*verbal communication*” i. e, the doctrine when such persons assert that it is only a phrase and mode of speaking, or nothing more than mere words, titles and names, upon which they have also laid so much stress that they are not willing to know of any other communion. Therefore, for the true explanation of the majesty of Christ we have used the terms, “Of the Real Communion,” and wish thereby to show that this communion has occurred in deed and truth, nevertheless without any confusion of natures and their essential properties.

[689] Therefore we hold and teach, with the ancient orthodox Church, as it explained this doctrine from the Scriptures, that the human nature in Christ has received this majesty according to the manner of the personal union, viz. because the entire fulness of the divinity dwells in Christ, not as in other holy men or

angels, but bodily, as *in its own body*, so that with all its majesty, power, glory and efficacy in the assumed human nature, voluntarily when and as he [Christ] wills, it shines forth, and in, with, and through the same manifests, exercises, and executes its divine power, glory and efficacy, as the soul does in the body and fire in glowing iron. For by this illustration,<sup>15</sup> as is also mentioned above, the entire ancient Church explained this doctrine. At the time of the humiliation this majesty was concealed and withheld [for the greater part]; but now since the form of a servant [or *exinanitio*] has been laid aside, it fully, powerfully and publicly is exercised in heaven and on earth before all saints, and in the life to come we will also behold this his glory face to face (John 17:24).

Therefore in Christ there is and remains only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty and glory, which is peculiar alone to the divine nature; but it shines, manifests and exercises itself fully, yet voluntarily, in, with and through the assumed, exalted human nature in Christ. Just as in glowing iron there are not two kinds of power to shine and burn [(as though the fire had a peculiar, and the iron also a peculiar and separate power of shining and burning)], but the power to shine and to burn is a property of the fire; yet because the fire is united with the iron it manifests and exercises this its power to shine and to burn in, with and through the glowing iron, so that the glowing iron has thence from this union the power to shine and to burn without conversion of the essence and of the natural properties of fire and iron.

[690] On this account we understand such testimonies of Scripture as speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted, not so that the divine majesty which is peculiar to the divine nature of the Son of God should be ascribed in the person of the Son of man [to Christ] only according to his divine nature, or that this majesty in the human nature of Christ should be only of such a kind that his human nature should have only the mere title and name by a phrase and mode of speaking, i. e, only in words, but in deed and truth should have no communion whatever with it. For, since God is a spiritual, undivided essence, and therefore is present everywhere and in all creatures, and in whom he is (but he dwells especially in believers and saints), there he has with him his majesty, it might also with truth be said that in all creatures in whom God is, but especially in believers and saints, in whom he dwells, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, all power in heaven and earth is given, because the Holy Ghost, who has all power, is given them. For in this way there is no distinction made between Christ according to his human nature and other holy men, and thus Christ is deprived of his majesty, which he has received above all creatures, as a man or according to his human nature. For no other creature, neither man nor angel, can or should

say: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth;” since although God is in the saints with all the fulness of his Godhead, which he has everywhere with himself; yet in them he does not dwell bodily, or with them is not personally united, as in Christ. For from such personal union it follows that Christ says, even according to his human nature (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Also (John 13:3): “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands.” Also (Col. 2:9): “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Also: “Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him” (Heb. 2:7 sq.; Ps. 8:6). “He is excepted which did put all things under him” (1 Cor. 15:27).

Moreover we believe, teach and confess that there is in no way such an infusion of the majesty of God, and of all his properties, into the human nature of Christ, whereby the divine nature is weakened [anything of the divine nature departs], or anything of its own is surrendered to another, that [in this manner] it does not retain for itself, or that the human nature has received in its substance and essence, equal majesty separate or diverse from the nature and essence of the Son of God, as when water, wine or oil is poured from one vessel into another. For the human nature, as also no other creature, either in heaven or on earth, is capable of the omnipotence of God in such a manner that it would be in itself an almighty essence, or have in and by itself almighty properties; for thereby the human nature in Christ would be denied, and would be entirely converted into divinity, which is contrary to our Christian faith, as also to the doctrine of all the apostles and prophets.

[691] But we believe, teach and confess that God the Father has so given his Spirit to Christ his beloved Son, according to the assumed humanity (for on this account he is called also *Messias*, i. e. the Anointed), that he has received the gifts of the Spirit, not, as other saints, in measure. For upon Christ the Lord, according to his assumed human nature (since according to his divinity he is of one essence with the Holy Ghost), there rests “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Col. 2:3; Isa. 11:2; .61:1). This occurs not in such a way that, on this account, as a man he knew and had ability only with regard to some things, as other saints know and are able by the grace of God, which works in them only created gifts. But since Christ, according to his divinity, is the second person in the Holy Trinity, and from him, as also from the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds, and is and remains his Spirit and that of the Father for all eternity, not separated from the Son of God; the entire fulness of the Spirit (as



the Fathers say) has been communicated by the personal union to Christ according to the flesh, which is personally united with the Son of God. This voluntarily manifests and exercises itself, with all its power therein, therewith and thereby [in, with and through the human nature of Christ], not so that he [Christ according to his human nature] not only knows some things and is ignorant of others, has ability with respect to some and is without ability with respect to others, but [according to the assumed human nature] knows and has ability with respect to all things. For upon him the Father poured without measure the Spirit of wisdom and power, so that, as man in deed and truth, he has received through this personal union all knowledge and all power. And thus all the treasures of wisdom are hidden in him, thus all power is given to him, and he is seated at the right hand of the majesty and power of God. From history it is also manifest that at the time of the Emperor Valens there was among the Arians a peculiar sect which was called the Agnoetae, because they imagined that the Son, the Word of the Father, knew indeed all things, but that his assumed human nature is ignorant of many things; against whom Gregory the Great also wrote.

[692] On account of this personal union, and the communion following therefrom, which the divine and human natures have with one another in deed and truth in the person of Christ, there is ascribed to Christ, according to the flesh, that which his flesh, according to its nature and essence, cannot be of itself, and, apart from this union, cannot have, viz. that his flesh is a true quickening food, and his blood a true quickening blood; as the two hundred Fathers of the Council of Ephesus<sup>16</sup> have testified, that “the flesh of Christ is quickening or a quickener.” Hence also this man only, and no man besides, either in heaven or on earth, can say with truth (Matt. 18:20): “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Also (Matt. 28:20): “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

These testimonies we also do not understand, as though with us in the Christian Church and congregation only the divinity of Christ were present, and such presence in no way whatever pertained to Christ according to his humanity; for in like manner Peter, Paul and all the saints in heaven would also be with us on earth, since divinity, which is everywhere present, dwells in them. This the Holy Scriptures testify only of Christ, and of no other man besides. But we hold that by these words [the passages of Scripture above] the majesty of the man Christ is declared, which Christ has received, according to his humanity, at the right hand of the majesty and power of God, viz. that he also, according to his assumed human nature and with the same, can be and is present where he will, and especially that in his Church and congregation on earth, as Mediator, Head, King and High Priest, he is not half present or there is only the half [one part of



him] present, but the entire person of Christ is present, to which two natures belong, the divine and the human; not only according to his divinity, but also according to and with his assumed human nature, by which he is our brother and we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. For the certain assurance and confirmation of this he has instituted his Holy Supper, that also according to our nature, by which he has flesh and blood, he will be with us, and in us dwell, work and be efficacious.

Upon this firm foundation Dr. Luther, of holy memory, has also written [faithfully and clearly] concerning the majesty of Christ according to his human nature.

[693] In the Large Confession concerning the Lord's Supper he writes thus concerning the person of Christ: "Since Christ is such a man as is supernaturally one person with God, and apart from this man there is no God, it must follow that also, according to the third supernatural mode, he is and can be everywhere that God is, and all things are entirely full of Christ, even according to humanity, not according to the first corporeal, comprehensible mode, but according to the supernatural, divine mode."<sup>17</sup>

"For here you must stand [confess] and say: 'Wherever Christ is according to the divinity, there he is a natural, divine person, and he is also there naturally and personally, as his conception in his mother's womb well shows. For if he were God's Son, he must naturally and personally be in his mother's womb and become man. But if, wherever he is, he is naturally and personally, he must also be in the same place as man. For there are not [in Christ] two separate persons, but only one person. Wherever it is, there the person is only one and undivided; and wherever you can say: 'Here is God,' there you must also say: 'Therefore Christ the man is also there.' And if you would show a place where God would be, and not the man, the person would be already divided, because I could then say with truth: 'Here is God who is not man, and who never as yet has become man.'

"Far be it from me that I should acknowledge or worship such a God. For it would follow hence that space and place separated the two natures from one another, and divided the person, which, nevertheless, death and all devils could not divide or rend from one another. And there would remain to me a poor sort of Christ [a Christ of how much value, pray?], who would be no more than a divine and human person at the same time in only one place, and in all other places he must be only a mere separate God and divine person without humanity. No, friend, wherever you place God for me, there you must also place with him for me humanity; they do not allow themselves to be separated or divided from one another. They became one person, which [as Son of God] does not separate

from itself [the assumed humanity].”

[694] In the little book concerning the Last Words of David, which Dr. Luther wrote shortly before his death, he says as follows: “According to the other, the temporal, human birth, the eternal power of God has also been given him, yet in time, and not from eternity. For the humanity of Christ has not been from eternity, as the divinity; but as we reckon and write Jesus, the Son of Mary, is this year 1543 years old. But from the instant when divinity and humanity were united in one person, the man, the Son of Mary, is and is called almighty, eternal God, has eternal might, and has created and sustains, by the *communicatio idiomatum*, all things, because he is one person with divinity, and is also true God. Of this he speaks (Matt. 11:27): ‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father;’ and Matt. 28:18: ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.’ To what me? To me, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, and born man. From eternity I had it of the Father, before I became man. But when I became man I received it in time, according to humanity, and kept it concealed until my resurrection and ascension; then it was to be manifested and declared, as St. Paul says (Rom. 1:4): ‘He is declared and proved to be a Son of God with power.’ John (17:10) calls it ‘glorified.’”

Similar testimonies are found in Dr. Luther’s writings, but especially in the book: “That these Words still stand Firm,” and in the “Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper;” to which writings, as well-grounded explanations of the majesty of Christ at the right hand of God, and of his testament, we refer, for the sake of brevity, in this article, as well as in the Holy Supper, as has been heretofore mentioned.

[695] Therefore we regard it a pernicious error when to Christ, according to his humanity, such majesty is denied. For thereby there is removed from Christians the very great consolation which they have from the presence and dwelling with them of their Head, King and High Priest, who has promised them that not only his mere divinity should be with them, which to us poor sinners is as a consuming fire to dry stubble, but that very man who has spoken with us, who has experienced all troubles in his assumed human nature, who can therefore have with us, as with men and brethren, sympathy,<sup>18</sup> will be with us in all our troubles also according to the nature in which he is our brother and we are flesh of his flesh.

Therefore we unanimously reject and condemn, with mouth and heart, all errors not in accordance with the doctrine presented, as contrary to the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, the pure [received and approved] symbols, and our Christian Augsburg Confession:

1. As when it is believed or taught by any one that, on account of the personal union, the human nature is mingled with the divine or is changed into it.
2. Also, that the human nature in Christ, in the same mode as the divinity, is everywhere present, as an infinite essence, from essential power, likewise from a property of its nature.<sup>19</sup>
3. Also, that the human nature in Christ has become equal to and like the divine nature in its substance and essence or in its essential properties.
4. Also, that the humanity of Christ is locally extended in all places of heaven and earth; which should not be ascribed even to the divinity.<sup>20</sup> But that Christ, by his divine omnipotence, can be present with his body, which he has placed at the right hand of the majesty and power of God, wherever he will; especially where, as in the Holy Supper, he has, in his Word, promised this his presence, this his omnipotence and wisdom can well accomplish without change or abolition of his true human nature.
5. Also, that merely the human nature of Christ has suffered for us and redeemed us, with which the Son of God had no communion whatever in suffering.<sup>21</sup>
6. Also, that Christ is present with us on earth, only according to his divinity, in the preached Word and right use of the sacraments; and this presence of Christ does not in any way pertain to his assumed human nature.<sup>22</sup>
7. [696] Also, that the assumed human nature in Christ has in deed and truth no communion whatever with the divine power, might, wisdom, majesty and glory, but has in common only the mere title and name.<sup>23</sup>

These errors, and all that are contrary and opposed to the [godly and pure] doctrine presented above, we reject and condemn, as contrary to the pure Word of God, the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, and our Christian faith and confession. And we admonish all Christians, since in the Holy Scriptures Christ is called a mystery,<sup>24</sup> upon which all heretics dash their heads, not in a presumptuous manner to indulge in subtle inquiries with their reason concerning such mysteries, but with the venerated apostles simply to believe, to close the eyes of their reason, and bring into captivity their understanding to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and thence console themselves [seek most delightful and sure consolation]; and thus rejoice without ceasing that our flesh and blood are placed so high at the right hand of the majesty and almighty power of God. Thus will we assuredly find constant consolation in every adversity, and remain well guarded from pernicious error.

1. Especially “*Das die Wort— nach fest stehen*,” A. D. 1527.↵
2. They were called Marcionites, Samosatenians, Monothelites, etc↵
3. Cf. § 60.↵
4. Latin: *Antistes*; Germ.: *Vorsteher*,↵
5. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 9.↵
6. See below, § 38 sqq.↵
7. For passage in full see Catalogus Testimoniorum.↵
8. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 4.↵
9. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 26.↵
10. Against Osiander and Stancar. See Epitome, iii.:1 sqq.; Sol. Dec. iii.: 57 sqq.↵
11. See above, § 19.↵
12. Mentzer in his Exegesis, Aug. Conf., p. 138, 142 sqq., has collected such expressions of the Sacramentarians.↵
13. See above, § 31 sqq.↵
14. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 27.↵
15. See above, § 18↵
16. Cf. above, § 59.↵
17. Cf. above, vii.: 99 sq.↵
18. Heb. 4:15↵
19. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 27.; xii.: 21.↵
20. See above, § 40, Epitome, viii.: 31.↵
21. Ibid., viii.: 24. 26.↵
22. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 29.↵
23. Cf. Epitome, viii.; 32↵
24. 1 Tim. 3:16.↵

## Chapter IX. Of the Descent of Christ to Hell.

*Parallel Passages.* — (*Ecumenical Creeds*; *Small Catechism*, *Creed*, Art ii.; *Large Catechism*, *ib.*, 452; *Formula of Concord*, *Epitome*, ix.

[697] And because, even in the ancient Christian teachers of the Church, as well as in some among us, dissimilar explanations of the article concerning the Descent to Hell are found, we, in like manner, abide by the simplicity of our Christian faith [comprised in the Creed], to which Dr. Luther in his sermon in the castle at Torgau in 1533, “Concerning the Descent to Hell,” has referred, where we confess: “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, .... dead and buried. He descended into hell.” For in this Confession the burial and descent of Christ to hell are distinguished as different articles; and we simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might. We should not, however, trouble ourselves with sublime and acute thoughts as to how this occurred; for this article can be comprehended by the reason and the five senses as little as the preceding, as to how Christ is placed at the right hand of the almighty power and majesty of God; but [in such mysteries of faith] we have only to believe and adhere to the Word. Thus we retain the substance [sound doctrine] and [true] consolation that neither hell nor devil can take, captive or injure us and all who believe in Christ.

## Chapter X. Of Church Rites which are [commonly] called Adiaphora, or Matters of Indifference.

*Parallel Passages. — Augsburg Confession, xv., xxvi.; Apology, vii.: 30 Sqq.; xv.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xv.; Epitome, x.*

Concerning Ceremonies and Church Rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been introduced into the Church with a good intention, for the sake of good order and propriety, or otherwise to maintain Christian discipline, a dissension has in like manner arisen among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession. Since the one side held that also in time of persecution and in case of confession [when confession of faith is to be made], even though the enemies of the Gospel do not agree with us in doctrine, yet some [long-since] abrogated ceremonies, which in themselves are adiaphora, and neither commanded nor forbidden by God, may, without violence to conscience, be re-established in compliance with the pressure and demand of the adversaries, and thus in such [things of themselves] adiaphora, or matters of indifference, we may indeed have conformity with them. But the other side contended that in case of confession in time of persecution, especially when thereby the adversaries design through force and compulsion, or in an insidious manner, to suppress the pure doctrine, and gradually to introduce again into our churches their false doctrine, this which has been said can in no way occur without violence to conscience and prejudice to the divine truth.

[698] To explain this controversy, and by God's grace at last to settle it, we present to the Christian reader the following simple statement [in conformity with the Word of God]: Namely, when, under the title and pretext of external adiaphora, such things are proposed as (although painted another color) are in fact contrary to God's Word, these are not to be regarded adiaphora, but should be avoided as things prohibited by God. In like manner, also, among the genuine adiaphora such ceremonies should not be reckoned which have the appearance, or to avoid thereby persecution, feign the appearance, as though our religion and that of the Papists were not far apart, or as though the latter were not highly offensive to us; or when such ceremonies are designed for the purpose, and therefore are required and received, as though by and through them two contrary religions were reconciled and became one body; or, again, when an advance towards the Papacy and a departure from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and true religion should occur or gradually follow therefrom [when there is danger

lest we seem to have advanced towards the Papacy, and to have departed, or to be on the point of departing gradually, from the pure doctrine of the Gospel].

For in this case what Paul writes (2 Cor. 6:14, 17) must( have weight: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”

Likewise, when there are useless, foolish spectacles, that are profitable neither for good order, nor Christian discipline, nor evangelical propriety in the Church, these also are not genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference.

But concerning those things which are genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference (as before explained), we believe, teach and confess that such ceremonies, in and of themselves, are no worship of God, also no part of the worship of God, but should be properly distinguished from this, as it stands written: “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9).

[699] Therefore we believe, teach and confess that the Church of God of every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the authority, power and right [in matters truly adiaphora] to change, to diminish and to increase them, without thoughtlessness and offence, in an orderly and becoming way, as at any time it may be regarded most profitable, most beneficial and the best for [preserving] good order [maintaining]. Christian discipline [and for εὐταξία worthy of the profession of the Gospel], and the edification of the Church. How even to the weak in faith we can yield and give way with a good conscience in such external adiaphora Paul teaches (Rom. 14), and proves it by his example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:19).

We believe, teach and confess also that at the time [in which a confession of the heavenly truth is required] of confession, when the enemies of God’s Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire Church of God, yea, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the presidents of the congregation of God [as those whom God has appointed to rule his Church], are bound, according to God’s Word, to confess the [godly] doctrine, and what belongs to the whole of [pure] religion, freely and openly, not only in words, but also in works and with deeds; and that then, in this case, even in such [things truly and of themselves] adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries, or permit these adiaphora to be forced upon them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry. For it is written (Gal. 5:1): “Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage.” Also (Gal. 2:4 sq.): “And that because of

false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.”

And [it is manifest that] Paul speaks in the same place concerning circumcision, which at the time was an adiaphoron (1 Cor. 7:18 sq.), and was used by Paul at other places [nevertheless] with [Christian and] spiritual freedom (Acts 16:3). But when the false apostles demanded and abused circumcision for confirming their false doctrine, as though the works of the Law were needful for righteousness and salvation, Paul says that he would yield not for an hour, in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue [unimpaired].

[700] Thus Paul yields and gives way to the weak in [the observance of] food and times or days (Rom. 14:6). But to the false apostles who wished to impose these upon the conscience as necessary things he will yield not even in those things which in themselves are adiaphora (Col. 2:16): “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day.” And when Peter and Barnabas yielded to a certain extent [more than they ought], Paul openly reproves them as those who have not walked aright, according to the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:11 sqq.)

For here it is no longer a question concerning adiaphora, which, in their nature and essence are and remain of themselves free, and accordingly can admit of no command or prohibition that they be employed or be intermitted; but it is a question, in the first place, concerning the sacred article of our Christian faith, as the apostle testifies, “in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue,” which is obscured and perverted by such compulsion and command, because such adiaphora are either publicly required for the sanction of false doctrine, superstition and idolatry, and for the suppression of pure doctrine and Christian liberty, or at least are abused for this purpose by the adversaries, and are thus received [or certainly are thus received by them, and are believed to be restored for this abuse and wicked end].

Likewise, the article concerning Christian liberty is also here at stake, to preserve which the Holy Ghost so earnestly charged his Church through the mouth of the holy apostle, as heard above. For as soon as this is weakened and the ordinances of men [human traditions] are urged with compulsion upon the Church, as though they were necessary and their omission were wrong and sinful, the way is already prepared for idolatry, whereby the ordinances of men [human traditions] are gradually multiplied and regarded as a service of God, not only equal to the ordinances of God, but are even placed above them.

[701] So also by such [untimely] yielding and conformity in external things,



where there has not been previously Christian union in doctrine, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry; on the other hand, the truly believing are distressed, offended and weakened in their faith [their faith is grievously shaken, and made to totter as though by a battering-ram]; both of which every Christian for the sake of his soul's welfare and salvation is bound to avoid, as it is written: "Woe unto the world because of offenses!" Also: "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6, 7.)

But especially is that to be remembered which Christ says: 17

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

Moreover, that this has been always and everywhere the faith and confession concerning such adiaphora, of the chief teachers of the Augsburg Confession, into whose footsteps we have entered, and intend by God's grace to persevere, in this their Confession, the following testimonies drawn from the Smalcald Articles, which was composed and subscribed in the year 1537 [most clearly], show:

*Testimonies derived from the Smalcald Articles<sup>1</sup> written in the year 1537.*

The Smalcald Articles say concerning this as follows: "We do not acknowledge them as the Church, and also they are not; we also will not listen to those things which, under the name of Church, they either enjoin or forbid. For, thank God, today a child seven years old knows what the Church is, namely, saints, believers and lambs, who hear the voice of their Shepherd."

And shortly before<sup>2</sup>: "If the bishops were true bishops, and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, they might be allowed, for the sake of love and unity, and not from necessity, to ordain and confirm us and our preachers; nevertheless, under the condition that all masks and phantoms of an unchristian nature and display be laid aside. Yet because they neither are nor wish to be true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord's Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church, but persecute and condemn those who, being called, discharge their duty; for their sake, the Church ought not to remain without ministers."

[702] And in the article, "Of the Primacy of the Pope," the Smalcald Articles say:<sup>3</sup> "Wherefore, just as we cannot adore the devil himself as Lord and God, so

we cannot endure his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill and to destroy body and soul eternally is a prerogative of the Papal government.”

And in the treatise “Concerning the Power and Primacy of the Pope,” which is appended to the Smalcald Articles, and was also subscribed by the theologians then present with their own hands, stand these words:<sup>4</sup> “No one should burden the Church with his own traditions, but here it should be enjoined that the power or influence of no one should avail more than the Word of God.”

And shortly afterwards<sup>5</sup>: “This being the case, all Christians ought most diligently to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies and unjust cruelties of the Pope; but ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his members as the kingdom of Antichrist, just as Christ has commanded (Matt. 7:15): ‘Beware of false prophets.’ And Paul commands us to avoid false teachers and execrate them as an abomination. And in (2 Cor. 6:14), he says: ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what communion hath light with darkness?’

“It is difficult to separate one’s self from so many lands and nations, and to be willing to maintain this doctrine; but here stands God’s command, that every one should beware and not agree with those who maintain false doctrine or who think of supporting it by means of cruelty.”

So, too, Dr. Luther has amply instructed the Church of God in an especial treatise concerning what should be thought of ceremonies in general, and especially of adiaphora, vol. iii., Jena ed., p. 523; likewise also in 1530, in German, vol. v., Jena ed.

[703] From this explanation every one can understand what it is proper for every Christian congregation and every Christian man, especially in time of confession [when a confession of faith should be made], and most of all preachers, to do or to leave undone, without injury to conscience, with respect to adiaphora, in order that God may not be incensed [provoked to just indignation], love may not be injured, the enemies of God’s Word be not strengthened, and the weak in the faith be not offended.

1. Therefore,<sup>6</sup> we reject and condemn as wrong when the ordinances of men in themselves are regarded as a service or part of the service of God.
2. We reject and condemn also as wrong when these ordinances are urged by force upon the congregation of God as necessary.
3. We reject and condemn also as wrong the opinion of those who hold that at a time of persecution we may comply with the enemies of the holy Gospel in [restoring] such adiaphora, or may come to an agreement with them,

which causes injury to the truth.

4. We likewise regard it a sin worthy of punishment when, in the time of persecution, on account of the enemies of the Gospel, anything either in adiaphora or in doctrine, and what otherwise pertains to religion, is done in word and act contrary and opposed to the Christian confession.
5. We reject and condemn also when these adiaphora are abrogated [the madness of those who abrogate] in such a manner as though it were not free to the Church of God at any time and place to employ one or more in Christian liberty, according to its circumstances, as may be most useful to the Church.

According to this doctrine the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they otherwise are in unity with one another in doctrine and all its articles, and also in the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying; “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith.”<sup>7</sup>

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1. Part III., Art. xii.↩
  2. Part III., Art. x.↩
  3. Part. II., Art. iv. § 14.↩
  4. § 11.↩
  5. § 41.↩
  6. For 1, 2, 3 and 6, see also Epitome, x.: 8 sq.↩
  7. Epitome, x.: 7.↩

## Chapter XI. Of God's Eternal Foreknowledge [Predestination] and Election.

*Parallel Passages. — Epitome, xi. Cf. Augsburg Confession.*

[704] Although among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession no public dissension whatever, causing offence, and that is widespread, has as yet occurred concerning the eternal election of the children of God; yet since in other places this article has been brought into very painful controversy,<sup>1</sup> and even among our theologians there was some agitation concerning it, and similar expressions were not always employed concerning it by the theologians; in order by the aid of divine grace to prevent disagreement and separation in the future among our successors, as well as among us, we have desired here also to present an explanation of the same, so that every one may know what is our unanimous doctrine, faith and confession concerning this article also. For the doctrine concerning this article, if presented from and according to the pattern of the divine Word [and analogy of God's Word and of faith], neither can nor should be regarded as useless or unnecessary, much less as causing offence or injury, because the Holy Scriptures not only in but one place and incidentally, but in many places, thoroughly discuss and urge [explain] the same. Therefore, on account of abuse or misunderstanding we should not neglect or reject the doctrine of the divine Word, but precisely on that account, in order to avert all abuse and misunderstanding, the true meaning should and must be explained from the foundation of the Scriptures. According to this the plain sum and substance [of the heavenly doctrine] concerning this article consists in the following points:

[705] First, the distinction between the *eternal foreknowledge of God*, and the *eternal election of his children to eternal salvation*[^bmc] is to be accurately observed. For foreknowledge or prevision, i. e. that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called *God's foreknowledge* [*prescience*] extends to all creatures, good and bad; namely, that he foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be, that is occurring or will occur, whether it be good or bad, since before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present. Thus it is written (Matt. 10:29): "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father." And (Ps. 139:16): "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when

as yet there were none of them.” Also (Isa. 37:28): “I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.”

But the *eternal election of God*, or predestination, i. e, *God’s appointment to salvation*, pertains not at the same time to the godly and the wicked, but only to the children of God, who were elected and appointed to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says (Eph. 1:4, 5): “He hath chosen us in him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.”

The foreknowledge of God (prescience) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil, but not in such a manner as though it were God’s gracious will that evil should happen. But all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men purposes and desires to do, and will do, God sees and knows before; and his prescience, i. e. foreknowledge, so observes its order also, even in wicked acts or works, that to the evil which God does not will its limit and measure are fixed by God, how far it should go and how long it should last, when and how he would hinder and punish it; yet all this God the Lord so rules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of his elect; and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion.

Moreover, the beginning and cause of the evil is not God’s foreknowledge (for God does not procure and effect or work that which is evil, neither does he help or promote it); but the wicked, perverse will of the devil and of men [is the cause of the evil], as it is written (Hos. 13; 9): “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.” Also (Ps. 5:4) “Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.”

[706] But the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes what pertains thereto; upon this [divine predestination] also our salvation is so founded that “the gates of hell cannot prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). For it is written (John 10:28): “Neither shall any man pluck my sheep out of my hand.” And again (Acts 13:48): “And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.”

This eternal election or appointment of God to eternal life is also not to be considered merely in God’s secret, inscrutable counsel in such a manner as though it comprised in itself nothing further, or nothing more belonged thereto, and nothing more were to be considered therein, than that God foresaw who and how many would be saved, and who and how many would be damned, or that he only held a review, and would say thus: “This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned; this one shall remain steadfast [in faith to the end], that one shall not remain steadfast.”

For from this many derive and adopt strange, dangerous and pernicious

thoughts, which occasion and strengthen either security and impenitence or despondency and despair, so that they fall into troublesome thoughts and [for thus some think, with peril to themselves, nay, even sometimes] speak thus: Since “before the foundation of the world was laid” (Eph. 1:4) “God has foreknown [predestinated] his elect for salvation, and God’s foreknowledge cannot err or be injured or changed by any one” (Isa. 14:27; Rom. 9:19), “if I, then, am foreknown [elected] for salvation, nothing can injure me with respect to it, even though, without repentance, I practice all sorts of sin and shame, do not regard the Word and sacraments, concern myself neither with repentance, faith, prayer nor godliness. But I nevertheless will and must be saved; because God’s foreknowledge [election] must come to pass. If, however, I am not foreknown [predestinated], it nevertheless helps me nothing, even though I would observe the Word, repent, believe, etc.; for I cannot hinder or change God’s foreknowledge [predestination].”

And such thoughts occur indeed even to godly hearts, although, by God’s grace, they have repentance, faith and a good purpose [of living in a godly manner], so that they think: “If you are not foreknown [predestinated or elected] from eternity for salvation, everything [your every effort and entire labor] is of no avail.” This especially occurs when they regard their weakness and the examples of those who have not persevered [in faith to the end], but have fallen away again [from true godliness to ungodliness, and have become apostates].

[707] Against this false delusion and such dangerous thoughts we should establish the following firm foundation, which is sure and cannot fail, namely: Since all Scripture has been given by God, not for [cherishing] security and impenitence, but should serve “for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16); also, since everything in God’s Word has been prescribed to us, not that we should thereby be driven to despair, but “that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope” (Rom. 15:4); it is without doubt in no way the sound sense or right use of the doctrine concerning the eternal foreknowledge of God that thereby either impenitence or despair should be occasioned or strengthened. Therefore the Scriptures present to us this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the [revealed] Word (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:7), exhort to repentance (2 Tim. 3:16), urge to godliness (Eph. 1:14; John 15:3), strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation (Eph. 1:13; John 10:27 sq.; 2 Thess. 2:13 sq.).

Therefore, if we wish to think or speak correctly and profitably concerning eternal election, or the predestination and foreordination of the children of God to eternal life, we should accustom ourselves not to speculate concerning the mere, secret, concealed, inscrutable foreknowledge of God, but how the counsel,

purpose and ordination of God in Christ Jesus, who is the true book of life, has been revealed to us through the Word, viz. that the entire doctrine concerning the purpose, counsel, will and ordination of God pertaining to our redemption, call, righteousness and salvation should be taken together; as Paul has treated and explained this article (Rom. 8:29 sq.; Eph. 1:4 sq.), as also Christ in the parable (Matt. 22: 1 sqq.), namely, that God in his purpose and counsel decreed:

1. That the human race should be truly redeemed and reconciled with God through Christ, who, by his faultless [innocency] obedience, suffering and death, has merited for us righteousness which avails before God, and eternal life.
2. [708] That such merit and benefits of Christ should be offered, presented and distributed to us through his Word and sacraments.
3. That he would be efficacious and active in us by his Holy Ghost, through the Word, when it is preached, heard and pondered, to convert hearts to true repentance and preserve them in the true faith.
4. That all those who, in true repentance, receive Christ by a true faith he would justify and receive into grace, adoption and inheritance of eternal life.
5. That those also who are thus justified he would sanctify in love, as St. Paul (Eph. 1:4) says.
6. That, in their great weakness, he also would defend them against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and would rule and lead them in his ways, and when they stumble would raise them again [place his hand beneath them], and under the cross and in temptation would comfort and preserve them [for life].
7. That the good work which he has begun in them he would strengthen, increase and support to the end, if they observe God's Word, pray diligently, abide in God's goodness [grace] and faithfully use the gifts received.
8. That those whom he has elected, called and justified, he would eternally save and glorify in life eternal.

And that in his counsel, purpose and ordination he prepared salvation not only in general, but in grace considered and chose to salvation each and every person of the elect, who shall be saved through Christ, and ordained that in the way just mentioned he would by his grace, gifts and efficacy bring them thereto [make them participants of eternal salvation], and aid, promote, strengthen and preserve them.

[709] All this, according to the Scriptures, is comprised in the doctrine

concerning the eternal election of God to adoption and eternal salvation, and should be comprised with it, and not omitted, when we speak of God's purpose, predestination, election and ordination to salvation. And when, according to the Scriptures, thoughts concerning this article are thus formed, we can, by God's grace, simply [and correctly] adapt ourselves to it [and advantageously treat of it].

This also belongs to the further explanation and salutary use of the doctrine concerning God's predestination to salvation, viz.: Since only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life, are saved, how can we know whence, and whereby can we decide, who are the elect and those by whom this doctrine can and should be received for comfort?

And of this we should not judge according to our reason, also not according to the Law or from any external appearance. Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed abyss of divine predestination, but should give heed to the revealed will of God. For he has "made known unto us the mystery of his will," and made it manifest through Christ that it might be preached (Eph. 1:9 sqq; 2 Tim. 1:9 sq.).

But this is revealed to us thus, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8:2; 29 sq.): "Whom God predestinated, elected and foreordained, he also called." Now, God calls not without means, but through the Word, as he has commanded "repentance and remission of sins to be preached in his name" (Luke 24:47). St. Paul also testifies to like effect when he writes (2 Cor. 5:20): "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." And the guests whom the King will have at the wedding of his Son he calls through his ministers sent forth (Matt. 22:2 sqq.) — some at the first and some at the second, third, sixth, ninth, and even at the eleventh hour (Matt. 20:3 sqq.).

[710] Therefore, if we wish with profit to consider our eternal election to salvation, we must in every way hold rigidly and firmly to this, viz. that as the preaching of repentance so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, i. e. it pertains to all men (Luke 24). Therefore Christ has commanded "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." For God loved the world and gave his Son (John 3:16). Christ bore the sins of the world (John 1:29), gave his flesh for the life of the world (John 6:51); his blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 1:7; 2:2). Christ says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "The same Lord over all is rich unto



all that call upon him” (Rom. 10:12). “The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22). “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life.” Therefore it is Christ’s command that to all in common to whom repentance is preached this promise of the Gospel also should be offered (Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15).

And this call of God, which is made through the preaching of the Word, we should regard as no delusion, but know that thereby God reveals his will, viz. that in those whom he thus calls he will work through the Word, that they may be enlightened, converted and saved. For the Word, whereby we are called, is “a ministration of the Spirit,” that gives the Spirit, or whereby the Spirit is given (2 Cor. 3:8), and “a power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). And since the Holy Ghost wishes to be efficacious through the Word, and to strengthen and give power and ability, it is God’s will that we should receive the Word, believe and obey it.

For this reason the elect are described thus: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life” (John 10:27 sq.) And (Eph. 1:11, 13): Who according to the purpose are predestinated to an inheritance, who hear the Gospel, believe in Christ, pray and give thanks, are sanctified in love, have hope, patience and comfort under the cross (Rom. 8:25); and although in them all this is very weak, yet they hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

[711] Thus the Spirit of God gives to the elect the testimony that they are children of God, and when they do not know for what they should pray as they ought, he intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:16, 26).

Thus, also. Holy Scripture shows that God, who has called us, is so faithful when he has begun a good work in us that he also will preserve and continue it to the end, if we do not turn ourselves from him, but retain firmly to the end the work begun, for retaining which he has promised his grace (1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 1:6; [1 Pet. 5:10]; 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 3:2).

With this revealed will of God we should concern ourselves, and should follow and study it, because the Holy Ghost, through the Word whereby he calls us, bestows, to this end, grace, power and ability, and we should not attempt to scrutinize the abyss of God’s hidden predestination, as it is written in Luke 13:24, where to one who asks: “Lord, are there few that be saved?” Christ answers: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” Accordingly, Luther says [in the Preface to the Epistle to the Romans]: “Follow the Epistle to the Romans in its order, concern yourself first with Christ and his Gospel, that you may recognize your sins and his grace. Afterwards contend with sin, as Paul teaches from the

first to the eighth chapter. Then when in the eighth chapter you will come into temptation under the cross and afflictions, the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters will teach you how consolatory is predestination.”

[712] But that many are called and few are chosen is not owing to the fact that the meaning of the call of God, made through the Word, is as though God were to say: “Outwardly, through the Word, I indeed call to my kingdom all of you to whom I give my Word, yet in my heart I intend it not for all, but only for a few; for it is my will that the greatest part of those whom I call through the Word should not be enlightened or converted, but be and remain lost, although, through the Word in the call, I declare myself to them otherwise.” For this would be to assign to God contradictory wills. That is, in such a manner it would be taught that God, who is, however, eternal truth, would be contrary to himself; and yet God also punishes the fault when one thing is declared, and another is thought and meant in the heart (Ps. 5:9 and 12:2 sq.). Thereby, also, the necessary consolatory foundation is rendered altogether uncertain and of no value, as we are daily reminded and admonished, that only from God’s Word, whereby he treats with us and calls us, should we learn and conclude what his will to us is, and that that, to which he gives his Word and which he promises, we should certainly believe and not doubt.

Therefore Christ causes the promise of the Gospel to be offered not only in general, but through the sacraments, which he attaches as seals of the promise, he seals and thereby especially confirms it [the certainty of the promise of the Gospel] to every believer.

For that reason we also retain, as the Augsburg Confession, Art. xi.<sup>2</sup> says, Private Absolution, and teach that it is God’s command that we believe such absolution, and regard it as sure, when we believe the word of absolution, that we are as truly reconciled to God as though we had heard a voice from heaven; as the Apology<sup>3</sup> explains this article. This consolation would be entirely taken from us if we were not to infer the will of God towards us from the call which is made through the Word and through the sacraments.

[713] There would also be overthrown and taken from us the foundation that the Holy Ghost wills to be certainly present with the Word preached, heard, considered, and thereby to be efficacious and to work. Therefore the opinion should in no way be entertained of which mention has heretofore been made, that these would be the elect, even though they despise the Word of God, reject, calumniate and persecute it (Matt. 22:6; Acts 13:46), or, when they hear it, harden their hearts (Heb. 4:2, 7), resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51), without repentance persevere in sins (Luke 14:18), do not truly believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), only present [godliness in] an outward appearance (Matt. 7:22; 22:12), or

seek other ways for righteousness and holiness apart from Christ (Rom. 9:31). But as God has ordained in his [eternal] counsel that the Holy Ghost should call, enlighten and convert the elect through the Word, and that all those who, through true faith, receive Christ he will justify and save; he has also determined in his counsel that he will harden, reprobate and condemn those who are called through the Word if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious and to work in them through the Word. And for this reason “many are called, but few are chosen.”

For few receive the Word and follow it; the greatest number despise the Word, and will not come to the wedding (Matt. 22:3 sqq). The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God’s knowledge [or predestination], but the perverse will of man, who rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Ghost, which God offers him through the call, and resists the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious, and works through the Word, as Christ says (Matt. 23:37): “How often would I have gathered thee together, and ye would not.”

Therefore many receive the Word with joy, but afterwards fall away again (Luke 8:13). But the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom he has begun the good work, for this is contrary to St. Paul (Phil. 1:6); but the cause is that they willfully turn away again from the holy commandment [of God], grieve and exasperate the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world and garnish again the habitation of the heart for the devil; with them the last state is worse than the first (2 Pet. 2:10, 20; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:26; Luke 11:25).

[714] Thus far is the mystery of predestination revealed to us in God’s Word, and if we abide thereby and cleave thereto, it is a very useful, salutary, consolatory doctrine; for it establishes very effectually the article that we are justified and saved without all works and merits of ours, purely out of grace, alone for Christ’s sake. For before the ages of the world, before we were born, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when we indeed could do nothing good, we were according to God’s purpose chosen out of grace in Christ to salvation (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). All opinions and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in his counsel, before the ages of the world, decided and ordained that he himself, by the power of his Holy Ghost, would produce and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion.

Therefore this doctrine affords also the excellent, glorious consolation that God was so solicitous concerning the conversion, righteousness and salvation of every Christian, and so faithfully provided therefor, that before the foundation of the world was laid he deliberated concerning it, and in his [secret] purpose

ordained how he would bring me thereto [call and lead me to salvation] and preserve me therein. Also, that he wished to secure my salvation so well and certainly that since, through the weakness and wickedness of our flesh, it could easily be lost from our hands, or through craft and might of the devil and the world be torn or removed therefrom, in his eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, he ordained it, and placed it for preservation in the almighty hand of our Saviour Jesus Christ, from which no one can pluck us (John 10:28). Hence Paul also says (Rom. 8:28,39): “Because we have been called according to the purpose of God, who will separate us from the love of God in Christ?” [Paul builds the certainty of our blessedness upon the foundation of the divine purpose, when, from our being called according to the purpose of God, he infers that no one can separate us, etc.]

Under the cross also and amid temptations this doctrine affords glorious consolation, namely, that God in his counsel, before the time of the world, determined and decreed that he would assist us in all distresses [anxieties and perplexities], grant patience [under the cross], give consolation, excite [nourish and encourage] hope, and produce such a result as would contribute to our salvation. Also, as Paul in a very consolatory way treats this (Rom. 8:28, 29, 35, 38, 39), that God in his purpose has ordained before the time of the world by what crosses and sufferings he will conform his elect to the image of his Son, and that to every one his cross should and must serve for the best, because called according to the purpose, whence Paul concludes that it is certain and indubitable that “neither tribulation nor distress,” “nor death nor life,” etc., “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

[715] This article also affords a glorious testimony that the Church of God will abide against all the gates of hell, and likewise teaches what is the true Church of God, so that we may not be offended by the great authority [and majestic appearance] of the false Church (Rom. 9:24, 25).

From this article also powerful admonitions and warnings are derived, as (Luke 7:30): “They rejected the counsel of God against themselves.” Luke 14:24: “I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” Also (Matt. 20:16): “Many be called, but few chosen.” Also (Luke 8:8, 18): “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and: “Take heed how ye hear.” Thus the doctrine concerning this article can be employed with profit for consolation, and so as to contribute to salvation [and can be transferred in many ways to our use].

But with especial care the distinction must be observed between that which is expressly revealed concerning this in God’s Word and what is not revealed. For, in addition to that hitherto mentioned which has been revealed in Christ

concerning this, God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it alone for his wisdom and knowledge. Concerning this we should not investigate, nor indulge our thoughts, nor reach conclusions, nor inquire curiously, but should adhere [entirely] to the revealed Word of God. This admonition is in the highest degree necessary.

For our curiosity has always much more pleasure in concerning itself therewith [with investigating those things which are hidden and abstruse] than with what God has revealed to us concerning this in his Word, since we cannot harmonize them, which we also have not been commanded to do [since certain things occur in this mystery so intricate and involved that we are not able by the penetration of our natural ability to harmonize them, but this has not been demanded of us by God].

[716] Thus there is no doubt that God most exactly and certainly saw before the time of the world, and still knows, who of those who are called will believe or will not believe; also who of the converted will persevere [in faith] and who will not; who after a fall [into grievous sins] will return, and who will fall into obduracy [will perish in their sins]. So, too, the number, how many there are of these on both sides, is beyond all doubt perfectly known to God. Yet since God has reserved this mystery for his wisdom, and in his Word revealed nothing to us concerning it, much less commanded us to investigate it with our thoughts, but has earnestly discouraged us therefrom (Rom. 11:33 sqq.), we should not indulge our thoughts, reach conclusions nor inquire curiously therein, but should adhere to his revealed Word, to which he points us.

Thus without any doubt God also knows and has determined for every one the time and hour of his call and conversion [and when he will raise again one who has lapsed]. Yet since this is not revealed, we have the command always to adhere to the Word, but to entrust the time and hour [of conversion] to God (Acts 1:7).

Likewise, when we see that God gives his Word at one place [to one kingdom or realm], but not at another [to another nation]; removes it from one place [people], and allows it to remain at another; also, that one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is again converted, etc.; in these and similar questions Paul (Rom. 11:22 sqq.) fixes before us a certain limit as to how far we should go, viz. that, in the one part we should recognize God's judgment [for he commands us to consider in those who perish the just judgment of God and the penalties of sins]. For they are richly-deserved penalties of sins when God so punishes a land or nation for despising his Word that the punishment extends also to their posterity, as is to be seen in the Jews. Thereby God shows to those that are his, his severity in some lands

and persons, in order to indicate what we all have richly deserved, since we have acted wickedly in opposition to God's Word [are ungrateful for the revealed Word, and live unworthily of the Gospel] and often have sorely grieved the Holy Ghost; so that we may live in God's fear, and acknowledge and praise God's goodness, in and with us, without and contrary to our merit, to whom he gives and grants his Word, and whom he does not harden and reject.

[717] For inasmuch as our nature has been corrupted by sin, and is worthy of, and under obligation to, God's wrath and condemnation, God owes to us neither Word, Spirit, nor grace, and when, out of grace, he bestows these gifts, we often repel them from us, and judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46). Therefore this his righteous, richly deserved judgment he displays in some countries, nations and persons, in order that when we are considered with respect to them, and compared with them, we may learn the more attentively to recognize and praise God's pure [immense], unmerited grace in the vessels of mercy.

For no injustice is done those who are punished and receive the wages of their sins; but in the rest, to whom God gives and preserves his Word, and thereby enlightens, converts and preserves men, God commends his pure [immense] grace and mercy, without their merit.

When we proceed thus far in this article we remain upon the right [safe and royal] way, as it is written (Hos. 13:9): "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

But with respect to that in this disputation which will proceed too high and beyond these limits, we should, with Paul, place the finger upon our lips, and remember and say (Rom. 9:20): "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

For that in this article we neither can nor should inquire after and investigate everything, the great apostle Paul declares [by his own example]. For when, after having argued much concerning this article from the revealed Word of God, he comes to where he points out what, concerning this mystery, God has reserved for his hidden wisdom, he suppresses and cuts off the discussion with the following words (Rom. 11:33 sq.): "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?" i. e. in addition to and beyond that which he has revealed in his Word.

[718] Therefore this eternal election of God is to be considered in Christ, and not beyond or without Christ. For "in Christ," testifies the apostle Paul (Eph. 1:4 sq.), "he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world;" as it is written: "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." But this election is revealed from heaven

through the preached Word when the Father says (Matt. 17:5): “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” And Christ says (Matt. 11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And concerning the Holy Ghost Christ says (John 16:14): “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Therefore the entire Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, direct all men to Christ, as to the Book of Life, in which they should seek the eternal election of the Father. For it has been decided by the Father from eternity that whom he would save he would save through Christ (John 14:6): “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” And again (John 10:9): “I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”

But Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has published to us the will of the Father, and thus also our eternal election to eternal life, viz. when he says (Mark 1:15): “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel; the kingdom of God is at hand.” He also says (John 6:40): “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life.” And again (John 3:16): “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This proclamation the Father wishes that all men should hear, and that they should come to Christ. Those who come Christ does not repel from himself, as it is written (John 6:37): “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

And in order that we may come to Christ, the Holy Ghost works, through the hearing of the Word, true faith, as the apostle testifies when he says (Rom. 10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,” viz. when it is preached in its purity and without adulteration.

[719] Therefore no one who would be saved should trouble or harass himself with thoughts concerning the secret counsel of God, as to whether he also is elected and ordained to eternal life; for with these miserable Satan is accustomed to attack and annoy godly hearts. But they should hear Christ [and in him look upon the Book of Life in which is written the eternal election], who is the Book of Life and of God’s eternal election of all God’s children to eternal life; who testifies to all men without distinction that it is God’s will that all men who labor and are heavy laden with sin should come to him, in order that he may give them rest and save them (Matt. 11:28).

According to this doctrine of Christ, they should abstain from their sins, repent, believe his promise, and entirely entrust themselves to him; and since this we cannot do by ourselves of our own powers, the Holy Ghost desires to work repentance and faith in us through the Word and sacraments. And in order that

we may attain this, and persevere and remain steadfast, we should implore God for his grace, which he promised us in holy baptism, and not doubt he will impart it to us according to his promise, as he has said (Luke 11:11 sqq.): “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

[720] And since the Holy Ghost dwells in the elect, who become believing, as in his temple, and is not inactive in them, but impels the children of God to obedience to God’s commands; believers, in like manner, should not be inactive, and much less resist the impulse of God’s Spirit, but should exercise themselves in all Christian virtue, in all godliness, modesty, temperance, patience, brotherly love, and give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, in order that the more they experience the power and strength of the Spirit within them they may doubt the less concerning it. For the Spirit 74 bears witness to the elect that they are God’s children (Rom. 8:16). And although they sometimes fall into temptation so grievous that they think that they perceive no more power of the indwelling Spirit of God, and say with David (Ps. 31:22): “I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes,” yet they should again [be encouraged and] say with David, without regard to what they experience in themselves: “Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.”

And since our election to eternal life is founded not upon our godliness or virtue, but alone upon the merit of Christ and the gracious will of his Father, who, because he is unchangeable in will and essence, cannot deny himself; on this account, when his children depart from obedience and stumble, he calls them again through the Word to repentance, and the Holy Ghost wills thereby to be efficacious in them for conversion; and when in true repentance by a right faith they turn again to him, he will always manifest his old paternal heart to all those who tremble at his Word and from their heart turn again to him, as it is written (Jer. 3:1): “If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.”

Moreover, the declaration (John 6:44) that no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him is right and true. But the Father will not do this without means, and has ordained for this purpose his Word and sacraments as ordinary means and instruments; and it is the will neither of the Father nor of the Son that



a man should not hear or should despise the preaching of his Word, and without the Word and sacraments should expect the drawing of the Father. For the Father draws indeed by the power of his Holy Ghost, but, nevertheless, according to his usual order [the order decreed and instituted by himself], by the hearing of his holy, divine Word, as with a net, whereby the elect are delivered from the jaws of the devil. Every poor sinner should therefore repair thereto [to holy preaching], hear it attentively, and should not doubt the drawing of the Father. For the Holy Ghost will be with his Word in his power, and thereby work; and this is the drawing of the Father.

[721] But the reason that not all who hear it believe, and some are therefore condemned the more deeply [eternally to severer punishments], is not that God has not desired their salvation; but it is their own fault, as they have heard the Word in such a manner as not to learn, but only to despise, traduce and disgrace it, and have resisted the Holy Ghost, who through the Word wishes to work in them. There was one form of this at the time of Christ in the Pharisees and their adherents. Therefore the apostle distinguishes with especial care the work of God, who alone makes vessels of honor, and the work of the devil and of man, who by the instigation of the devil, and not of God, has made himself a vessel of dishonor. For thus it is written (Rom. 9:22 sq.): “God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.”

For here the apostle clearly says: “God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath,” but does not say that he made them vessels of wrath; for if this had been his will, he would not have required for it any great long-suffering. The fault, however, that they are fitted for destruction belongs to the devil and to men themselves, and not to God.

[722] For all preparation for condemnation is by the devil and man, through sin, and in no respect by God, who does not wish that any man be damned; how then should he prepare any man for condemnation? For as God is not a cause of sins, so too he is no cause of the punishment, i. e. the condemnation; but the only cause of the condemnation is sin, for “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). And as God does not wish sin, and has no pleasure in sin, he also does not wish the death of the sinner (Ez. 33:11), and has no pleasure in his condemnation. For he is not “willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). So too it is written (in Ez. 18:23; 33:11): “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” And St. Paul testifies in clear words that from vessels of dishonor vessels of honor may be made by God’s power and working, as he

writes (2 Tim. 2:21) thus: “If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” For he who is to purge himself must first have been unclean, and therefore a vessel of dishonor. But concerning the vessels of mercy he says clearly that the Lord himself has prepared them for glory, which he does not say concerning the condemned, who themselves, and not God, have prepared themselves as vessels of condemnation.

It is also to be attentively considered, when God punishes sin with sins, i. e. afterwards punishes those who have been converted with obduracy and blindness, because of their subsequent security, impenitence and willful sins, that it should not be inferred hence that it never was God’s good pleasure that such persons should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. For it is God’s revealed will, both:

First, that God will receive into grace all who repent and believe in Christ.

Secondly, that those who willfully turn away from the holy commandment, and are again entangled in the pollutions of the world (2 Pet. 2:20), and garnish their hearts for Satan (Luke 11:25 sq.), and do despite unto the Spirit of God (Heb. 10:29), he will punish, and when they persist therein they shall be hardened, blinded and eternally condemned.

Therefore, even Pharaoh (of whom it is written (Ex. 9:16; 84 Rom. 9:17): “In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth”) was lost, not because God did not desire his salvation, or because it was his good pleasure that Pharaoh should be condemned and lost. For God “is not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9); he also has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (Ez. 33:11).

[723] But that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart, viz. that Pharaoh still continued to sin, and the more he was admonished the more obdurate he became, were punishments of his preceding sins and horrible tyranny, which, in many and manifold ways, he exercised towards the children of Israel inhumanly and against the accusations of his conscience. And since God caused his Word to be preached and his will to be proclaimed, and Pharaoh willfully resisted it in direct contradiction of all admonitions and warnings, God withdrew his hand from him, and thus his heart was hardened, and God executed his judgment upon him; for he deserved nothing else than hellfire. And indeed the holy apostle introduces the example of Pharaoh for no other reason than hereby to prove the justice of God, which he exercises towards the impenitent and despisers of his Word. Yet in no way is it there to be thought or understood that God did not desire his salvation, or that there is any man whose salvation he did not desire,

but that he was so ordained to eternal damnation in God's secret counsel that he neither should, could, nor might be saved.

Through this doctrine and explanation of the eternal and saving choice of the elect children of God his own glory is entirely and fully given to God, that in Christ he saves us out of pure [and free] mercy, without any merits or good works of ours, according to the purpose of his will, as it is written (Eph. 1:5 sq.): "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Therefore it is false and wrong<sup>4</sup> [conflicts with the Word of God] when it is taught that not alone the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also that there is in us a cause of God's election, on account of which God has chosen us to eternal life. For not only before we did anything good, but also before we were born, yea, even before the foundations of the world were laid, he elected us in Christ; and "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her. The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:11 sqq.; Gen. 25:23; Mai. 1:2 sq.).

[724] Moreover, no occasion is afforded either for despondency or for a shameless, dissolute life by this doctrine, viz. when men are taught that they should seek eternal election in Christ and his holy Gospel, as in the Book of Life, which excludes no penitent sinner, but allures and calls all the poor, heavy laden, and troubled [with the sense of God's wrath], and promises the Holy Ghost for purification and renewal. This article correctly explained thus gives the most permanent consolation to all troubled, tempted men, viz. that they know that their salvation is not placed in their own hands (for otherwise it would be much more easily lost, as was the case with Adam and Eve in Paradise — ay, it would be lost every hour and moment), but in the gracious election of God, which he has revealed to us in Christ, from whose hand no man shall pluck us (John 10:28; 2 Tim. 2:19).

Wherefore, if any one should so present the doctrine concerning the gracious election of God in such a manner that troubled Christians cannot console themselves therewith, but thereby occasion is afforded for despair, or the impenitent are confirmed in their wickedness; it is undoubtedly sure and true that such a doctrine is put forth, not according to the Word and will of God, but according to [the blind judgment of human] reason and the instigation of the devil.

For, as the apostle testifies (Rom. 15:4): "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of

the Scriptures might have hope.” But when by the Scriptures this consolation and hope are weakened or entirely removed, it is certain that they are understood and explained contrary to the will and meaning of the Holy Ghost.

By this simple, correct [clear], useful explanation, which has firm ground in God’s revealed will, we abide; we flee from and shun all lofty, acute questions and disputations [useless for edifying]; and reject and condemn that which is contrary to this simple, useful explanation.

So much concerning the controverted articles which have been discussed among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession for many years already, since in reference to them some have erred and severe controversies have arisen.

[725] From this our explanation, friends and enemies, and therefore every one, will clearly infer that we have not thought of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporary peace, tranquility and unity (as to do this is also not in our power). Such peace and unity, since devised against the truth and for its suppression, would have no permanency. Much less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But for that unity we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love, and this, on our part, we are sincerely inclined and anxious to advance according to our utmost power, by which his glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no place is admitted for the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, encouraged by faith, confirmed in new obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.

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1. Cf. Epitome, xi.: 1, note.↵
  2. Cf. Aug. Conf., XXV.↵
  3. Art. xi.: 69.↵
  4. Cf. Epitome, xi.: 20.↵

## Chapter XII. Of Other Factions [Heretics] and Sects, which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession.

*Parallel Passage. — Epitome, xii.*

The sects and factions [sectarists and heretics] which never embraced the Augsburg Confession, and of which, in this our explanation, express mention has not been made, such as are the Anabaptists, Schwenckfeldians, New Arians and Anti-trinitarians, whose errors are unanimously condemned by all churches of the Augsburg Confession, we have not wished to notice particularly and especially in this explanation; for the reason that at the present time only this has been sought [that we might above all refute the charges of our adversaries the Papists].

[726] Since our opponents, with shameless mouths, alleged and proclaimed, throughout all the world, of our churches and their teachers, that not two preachers are found who in each and every article of the Augsburg Confession agree, but that they are rent asunder and separated from one another to such an extent that not even they themselves any longer know what is the Augsburg Confession and its proper [true, genuine and germane] sense; we have wished to make a common confession, not only in mere brief words or names, but to make a clear, luminous, distinct declaration concerning all the articles which have been discussed and controverted only among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession, in order that every one may see that we do not wish in a cunning manner to screen or cover up all this, or to come to an agreement only in appearance; but to remedy the matter thoroughly, and so to set forth our opinion, that even our adversaries themselves must confess that in all this we abide by the true, simple, natural and only sense of the Augsburg Confession, in which we desire, through God's grace, to persevere constantly even to our end, and, so far as it is placed at our service, we will not connive at or be silent, so that anything contrary to the same [the genuine and sacred sense of the Augsburg Confession] be introduced into our churches and schools, in which the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has appointed us teachers and pastors.

But in order that the condemned errors of the above enumerated factions and sects may not be silently ascribed to us — since for the most part they have secretly stolen into localities, and especially, as is the nature of such spirits, at the time when no place or space was allowed to the pure Word of the holy Gospel, but all its orthodox teachers and confessors were persecuted, and the

deep darkness of the Papacy still prevailed, and poor simple men who were compelled to feel the manifest idolatry and false faith of the Papacy embraced, alas! in their simplicity, whatever was said to be according to the Gospel, and was not Papistic<sup>1</sup> — we cannot forbear testifying also against them publicly, before all Christendom, that we have neither part nor fellowship with these errors, but reject and condemn them, one and all, as wrong and heretical, and contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, as well as to our well-grounded Augsburg Confession.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists.**

[727] Namely, the erroneous, heretical doctrines of the Anabaptists, which are to be tolerated and allowed neither in the Church, nor in the commonwealth, nor in domestic life, since they teach:

1. That our righteousness before God consists not only in the sole obedience and merit of Christ, but in our renewal and our own piety, in which we walk before God; which they, for the most part, base upon their own peculiar observances and self-chosen spirituality, as upon a new sort of monkery.<sup>2</sup>
2. That children who are not baptized are not sinners before God, but are righteous and innocent, and thus are saved in their innocence without baptism, which they do not need. And in this way they deny and reject the entire doctrine concerning Original Sin and what belongs to it.<sup>3</sup>
3. That children should not be baptized until they have attained the use of reason and can themselves confess their faith.
4. That the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and the children of God even without and before baptism. For this reason also they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of the promise, which pertains only to those who keep God's covenant and do not despise it (Gen. 17:9).
5. That that is no true Christian assembly or congregation [church] in which sinners are still found.
6. That no sermon should be heard or attended in those churches in which the Papal masses have previously been said.
7. That no one should have anything to do with those ministers of the Church who preach the holy Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession, and censure the errors of the Anabaptists; also that no one should serve or in any way labor for them, but should flee from and shun them as perverters of

God's Word.

8. That under the New Testament the magistracy is not a godly estate.
9. That a Christian cannot, with a good, inviolate conscience, hold the office of magistrate.
10. That a Christian cannot, without injury to conscience, use the office of the magistracy in carnal matters against the wicked, neither can subjects appeal to the power of magistrates.
11. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, take an oath before a court, neither can he by an oath do homage to his prince or sovereign.
12. That without injury to conscience magistrates cannot inflict upon evil-doers capital punishment.
13. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, hold or possess any property, but that he is in duty bound to devote it to the community.
14. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, be a landlord, merchant or cutler.<sup>4</sup>
15. That on account of faith [diversity of religion] married persons may be divorced, abandon one another, and be married to another of the same faith.
16. That Christ did not assume his flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, but brought them with him from heaven.
17. That he also is not true, essential God, but only has more and higher gifts than other men.

And still more articles of like kind; for they are divided<sup>5</sup> into many bands [sects], and one has more and another fewer errors, and thus their entire sect is in reality nothing but a new kind of monkery.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians.**

As, when the Schwenckfeldians assert:

1. [729] That all those have no knowledge of Christ as the reigning King of heaven who regard Christ, according to the flesh or his assumed humanity, as a creature; that the flesh of Christ has by exaltation so assumed all divine properties that in might, power, majesty and glory he is everywhere, in degree and place of essence equal to the Father and the eternal Word, so that there is the same essence, properties, will and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of the Holy Trinity.
2. That church service, i. e. the Word preached and heard, is not a means

- whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith and new obedience.
3. That the water of baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals adoption and works regeneration.
  4. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means whereby Christ distributes his body and blood.
  5. That a Christian man who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can in this life observe and fulfill the Law of God perfectly.
  6. That that is no true Christian congregation [church] in which no public excommunication nor regular process of the ban is observed.
  7. That the minister of the Church who is not on his part truly renewed, righteous and godly cannot teach other men with profit or administer true sacraments.

### **Erroneous Articles of the New Arians.<sup>6</sup>**

Also, when the New Arians teach that Christ is not a true, essential, natural God, of one eternal divine essence with God the Father, but is only adorned with divine majesty beneath and beside God the Father.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Anti-Trinitarians.**

1. [730] Also, when some Anti-trinitarians reject and condemn the ancient approved creeds, the Nicene and Athanasian, both as to their sense and words, and teach that there is not only one eternal divine essence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but as there are three distinct persons, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, so each person has also its essence distinct and separate from the other persons; yet that all three, as three men otherwise distinct and separate in their essence, are either [some imagine] of the same power, wisdom, majesty and glory, or [others think] in essence and properties are not equal.
2. That the Father alone is true God.

*These and like articles*, one and all, with what pertains to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Catechisms of Luther. Of these articles all godly Christians will and should beware, as the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.

Therefore in the sight of God and of all Christendom [the entire Church of



Christ], to those now living and those who shall come after us, we wish to testify that the above declaration, concerning all the controverted articles presented and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine and confession, in which we also will appear, by God's grace, with un-terrified hearts before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and for it will give an account. We also will neither speak nor write, privately or publicly, anything contrary to this declaration, but, by the help of God's grace, intend to abide thereby. After mature deliberation we have, in God's fear and with the invocation of his name, attached our signatures with our own hands.

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1. Latin: "Of which evil the Papistic tyranny which persecutes the pure doctrine is the very chief cause."↵
2. See Epitome, xii.: 5.↵
3. See Epitome, xii.: 6.↵
4. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 18.↵
5. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 2.↵
6. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 28.↵

# Appendix: The Saxon Visitation Articles

Source: The Creeds of Christendom, Volume III, by Philip Schaff (Copyright, 1877, by Harper & Brothers. 1593 A. Hunnius, J. Löner, W. Mamphrasius, M. Mirus, G. Mylius, et al.

The Visitation Articles For the Electorate and Provinces of Upper Saxony, published A.D. 1592.

## Article I: Of the Lord's Supper

*The pure and true Doctrine of our Churches on the Lord's Supper.*

1. That the words of Christ, "Take and eat, this is my Body;" "Drink, this is my Blood," are to be understood in the simple and literal sense, as they sound.
2. That, in the Sacrament, there are two things which are exhibited and received together: one, earthly, which is bread and wine; the other, heavenly, which is the body and blood of Christ.
3. That these things [this union, exhibition, and sumption] take place here below on the earth, and not above in heaven.
4. That the true and natural body of Christ which hung on the cross, and the true and natural blood, which flowed from the side of Christ, are exhibited and received.
5. That the body and blood of Christ are received in the Supper, not only spiritually, which might be done out of the Supper; but by the mouth, with the bread and wine; yet in an inscrutable and supernatural manner; and this for a pledge and ascertainment of the resurrection of our bodies from the dead.
6. That the body and blood of Christ are received orally, not only by the worthy, but also by the unworthy, who approach them without repentance

and true faith; though with different effect. By the worthy, they are received for salvation; by the unworthy, for judgment.

## **Article II: Of the Person of Christ.**

*The pure and true Doctrine of our Churches on the Article of the Person of Christ.*

1. In Christ there are two distinct natures, the divine and the human. These remain eternally unmixed and inseparable (or undivided).
2. These two natures are personally so united that there is but one Christ and one person.
3. On account of this personal union it is rightly said, and in fact and truth it really is, that God is man, and man is God; that Mary begat the Son of God, and that God redeemed us by his own proper blood.
4. By this personal union, and the exaltation which followed it, Christ, according to the flesh, is placed at the right hand of God, and has received all power in heaven and in earth, and is made partaker of all the divine majesty, honor, power, and glory.

## **Article III: Of Holy Baptism.**

*The pure and true Doctrine of our Churches on this Article of Holy Baptism.*

1. That there is but one Baptism, and one Ablution: not that which is used to take away the filth of the body, but that which washes us from our sins.
2. By Baptism, as a bath of the regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, God saves us, and works in us such justice and purgation from our sins, that he who perseveres to the end in that covenant and hope does not perish, but has eternal life.
3. All who are baptized in Jesus Christ are baptized in his death; and by baptism are buried with him in his death, and have put on Christ.
4. Baptism is the bath of regeneration, because in it we are born again, and sealed by the Spirit of adoption through grace (or gratuitously).
5. Unless a person be born again of water and Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is not intended, however, for cases of necessity.
6. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh; and, by nature, all of us are children of divine wrath: because we are born of sinful seed, and we are all born in

sin.

## **Article IV. On Predestination and the Eternal Providence of God.**

*The pure and true Doctrine of our Churches on this Article.*

1. That Christ died for all men, and, as the Lamb of God, took away the sins of the whole world.
2. That God created no man for condemnation; but wills that all men should be saved and arrive at the knowledge of truth. He therefore commands all to hear Christ, his Son, in the gospel; and promises, by his hearing, the virtue and operation of the Holy Ghost for conversion and salvation.
3. That many men, by their own fault, perish: some, who will not hear the gospel concerning Christ; some, who again fall from grace, either by fundamental error, or by sins against conscience.
4. That all sinners who repent will be received into favor; and none will be excluded, though his sins be red as blood; since the mercy of God is greater than the sins of the whole world, and God hath mercy on all his works.

## **The False and Erroneous Doctrine of the Calvinists On the Lord's Supper.**

1. That the words of Christ ["This is my body; this is my blood"] are to be understood figuratively, and not according to the letter, as they sound.
2. That bare signs only are in the Supper; but the body of Christ is as far from the bread as the highest heaven from the earth.
3. That Christ is present therein, by his virtue and operation only, and not in his body; as the sun, by his splendor and operation, is present and effective on earth; but the body of the sun exists above in heaven.
4. That the body of Christ is therein a typified body, which is only signified and prefigured by the bread and wine.
5. That the body is received by faith alone, which raises itself to heaven, and not by the mouth.
6. That the worthy only receive it; that the unworthy, who do have the faith which rises to the heavens, receive nothing besides bread and wine.

# **The False and Erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists On the Person of Christ**

*Which differs, in particular, from the Third and Fourth Article of the more pure doctrine.*

1. That God is man, and man God, is a figurative mode of speech.
2. That human nature hath communion with the divine, not in fact and truth, but in name and words only.
3. That it is impossible to God, by all his omnipotence, to effect that the natural body of Christ, which is in one place, should, at the same time and instant, be in several.
4. That, according to his human nature, Christ hath, by his exaltation, received only created good and finite power; and doth not know and can not do all things.
5. That, according to his humanity, Christ reigns, where he is absent, as the King of Spain governs his new islands.
6. That it is a damnable idolatry to place the hope and faith of the heart in Christ, not only according to his divine, but also according to his human nature, and to direct the honor of adoration to both.

# **The False and Erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists On Holy Baptism.**

1. That Baptism is an external washing of water, by which a certain internal ablution from sin is merely signified.
2. That Baptism does not work nor confer regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and salvation, but only signifies and seals them.
3. That not all who are baptized in water, but the elect only, obtain by it the grace of Christ and the gifts of faith.
4. That regeneration doth not take place in and with Baptism, but afterwards, at a more advanced age-yea, with many not before old age.
5. That salvation doth not depend on Baptism, and therefore in cases of necessity should not be required in the Church; but when the ordinary minister of the Church is wanting, the infant should be permitted to die without Baptism.
6. The infants of Christians are already holy before Baptism in the womb of

the mother, and even in the womb of the mother are received into the covenant of eternal life: otherwise the Sacrament of Baptism could not be conferred on them.

## **The False and Erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists On Predestination and the Providence of God.**

1. That Christ did not die for all men, but only for the elect.
2. That God created the greater part of mankind for eternal damnation, and wills not that the greater part should be converted and live.
3. That the elected and regenerated can not lose faith and the Holy Spirit, or be damned, though they commit great sins and crimes of every kind.
4. That those who are not elect are necessarily damned, and can not arrive at salvation, though they be baptized a thousand times, and receive the Eucharist every day, and lead as blameless a life as ever can be led.

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# How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that one is made right with God not by any good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith rests in the one-time substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for one's sins. Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

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## Benediction



Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Jude 1:24-25

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