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CASPAR SCHWENCKFELD'S COMMENTARY  
ON THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

A TRANSLATION AND CRITICAL  
INTRODUCTION

By

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B.A. Albright College, 1965  
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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts degree  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
1980

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## ABSTRACT

Grater, Fred Alexander, Caspar Schwenckfeld's Commentary on the Augsburg Confession: A Translation and Critical Introduction.

The purpose of this thesis is to present a scholarly English translation, with appropriate background matter and historico-theological material, of Caspar von Schwenckfeld's Commentary on the Augsburg Confession, written sometime during or after Autumn, 1531. There is a brief biographical chapter, as well as short chapters on Schwenckfeld's relationship with Luther and Melancthon, and a synopsis of Schwenckfeld's theology, with special emphasis on themes presented in this Commentary (religious liberty, concept of the Church). The text of Document 10<sup>3</sup> of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum (Vol. III, pp. 362-940, No. 5<sup>3</sup> in the so-called "P" Epistolar) is translated with notes and comments. Three appendices are added to round out the thesis: 1. Paul Gerhard Eberlein's article "Schwenckfelds Urteil über die Augsburger Confession," from the Jahrbuch für schlesische Kirche und Kirchengeschichte (1955), pp. 5<sup>3</sup>-6<sup>3</sup>, is translated into English for the first time. 2. An excerpt from Christian August Salig's Vollständige Historie der Augsburgischen Confession.

(Bd. III, pp. 984-8) is also translated for the first time.

3. A brief consideration of Schwenckfeld's use of St. John Chrysostom is added to conclude the presentation.

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## PREFACE

Caspar von Schwenckfeld, Freiherr (Baron) von Ossig remains today as enigmatic and little-known a figure as he was in his own lifetime. His writings have been edited, his ideas (in part) analyzed, and his biography written, yet he remains virtually unknown even to the scholars of the Reformation Era.

The cause of this neglect must be sought, I think, in the fact that his words, though edited, are still in a dialect of a very foreign language--a German no longer old, yet not new, a German in transition, being reshaped and refashioned by new experiences and a new sense of religious and philosophical inquiry.<sup>1</sup> Schwenckfeld as a prolific and profound writer was helping to shape this new language, even as his own thought was being shaped by the limitations his language inevitably imposed on him. Such terms as gelassenheit (resignation), stillstand (suspension, as of a sacrament), and erkenntniss (knowledge gained by experience) were being filled with new and deeper meanings as his thought developed and progressed.

This thesis, thus, has as its aim and object the presentation of a scholarly translation of a "Commentary" on the Augsburg Confession by Caspar von Schwenckfeld,

Freiherr von Ossig who became the spiritual leader of the small band of dissenting German Protestants who came ultimately to bear his name. The problems of Schwenckfeldian historiography are exemplified to a great degree by this commentary: we do not know when, where, or for whom it was written. All that we can say for certain is that Schwenckfeld wrote it some time after the autumn of 1531, for persons unnamed of the Catholic faith. It was likely written in the home of either Wolfgang Capito or Jacob Englemann in Strassburg, although this is not definite. Schwenckfeld may have been asked to provide a text for his correspondents, but even this is not certain. His rather cavalier attitude toward the reproduction of the text in his discussion of the later Articles may reflect the fact that this original purpose was no longer necessary, because of the text's previous publication and widespread distribution.

I have undertaken to translate this text because it represents one of the few times in which a member of the "Radical" wing of the Reformation directly addressed the "Magisterial" Reformers on their own terms,<sup>2</sup> and, also, because of the eloquent appeal made in the text on behalf of religious toleration and the rights of private opinion. Here Schwenckfeld's challenge to confessionalism and enforced orthodoxy is both clear and compelling. His arguments deserve to be remembered and considered by those on both sides of these thorny confessional questions today.

My own knowledge of and appreciation for Lutheran

Confessionalism are rather severely limited. I make no other apologies for the sketchiness of my treatment of these subjects. I see my function as that of presenting a clearly edited and intelligible translation. Those who seek for elaborate commentaries on the text will not find them here. Such commentaries as I provide are to elucidate and not unduly encumber the reading of the text itself. I believe that the text is its own best commentary, and that if I have done my work sufficiently well that the reader will be able to move through Schwenckfeld's arguments with understanding. Whether one agrees with them or not is not ultimately for me to say.

It has, unfortunately, not been possible to check the accuracy of the Patristic citations (with a few exceptions indicated in the Notes). Therefore, I have simply supplied the sources as given in the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum. How well Schwenckfeld knew these sources is unclear (My own work in this area is alluded to in Appendix III.); he appears to have studied Canon Law as part of his university training,<sup>3</sup> and he did edit a book of selections from the Canon Law in 1530 (at the same time the Augsburg Confession was being drafted!).<sup>4</sup>

Materials included in square brackets in this translation are of three types: German words for which the preceding English word(s) are my translation; emendations or completions of Schwenckfeld's biblical citations (all of which have been checked and found to be accurate as to reference); and words required by the sense of the German,

though not included therein. Most of these materials might just as easily have been inserted into the notes, but that would have rendered the notes too many and cumbersome. I have included the third class of materials in the text because I desired to achieve a smoothly flowing translation but did not wish to sacrifice literal accuracy. If these goals seem mutually exclusive, I can only reply that if they are, then the reader will get more material than he can use.

There yet remains for me the pleasant duty of rendering thanks to those persons and institutions which have helped make this project possible. To Dr. Peter C. Erb first of all for checking the translation and attempting to locate Patristic sources; to Dr. Oscar Arnal and Dr. Walter Klaassen for their patience with this project; to Dr. David Wartluft of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Germantown for permission to wander about amidst the treasures of the basement stacks, to the Schwenkfelder Library, Dr. Erb, and Ms. Conway for the extended loan of many valuable materials, and to Dr. Hultsch of the Jahrbuch für Schlesische Kirche und Kirchengeschichte for providing me with a copy of Eberlein's article, translated as Appendix II. The real burden of producing this work falls not upon me but upon my typist, Mrs. Jo-Anne Heebner, to whom adequate thanks cannot ever be expressed, but I wish it to be known here and now that her work is as deeply appreciated as it is possible for me to say. This thesis is dedicated to my Father and to the memory of my Mother,

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in token of my gratitude for their encouragement of my work.

## NOTES TO PREFACE

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Seyppel, Joachim, Schwenckfeld, Knight of Faith  
A Study in the History of Religion (Pennsburg, PA: The  
Schwenckfelder Library, 1961), pp. 24ff. passim.

<sup>2</sup> A careful reading of the text, however, will show  
clearly that although many of the terms are the same,  
Schwenckfeld and Melancthon differed widely in their  
understanding of these terms.

<sup>3</sup> Schwenckfeld, Caspar, Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum:  
Letters and Treatises of Caspar von Schwenckfeld edited  
by Chester D. Hartranft et al. (Leipzig: Breitkopf &  
Härtel, 1907ff), III, 754. (Hereafter this will be  
cited as either Corpus or C.S. with following volume and  
page or document number. Document numbers have been  
romanized for ease of reading).

<sup>4</sup> C.S. III, Doc. 101.

## CHAPTER I

### A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF SCHWENCKFELD

Caspar von Schwenckfeld, Freiherr (Baron) von Ossig<sup>1</sup> was born late in 1489 or early in 1490.<sup>2</sup> The records are inconclusive here, and even the editors of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum are not agreed on the date. The date is not, in and of itself, an important matter, but it is in its uncertainty symbolic of the state of Schwenckfeld scholarship in general. We know far less than we should like about the life and times of this Silesian nobleman. We do not know where he went to school, or which universities (except Frankfurt an der Oder, where his name is in the Matriculation list)<sup>3</sup> he attended. He probably studied with private tutors at several universities until 1511 when he entered Silesian Court life.<sup>4</sup>

He worked in the courts of three Silesian Dukes (Karl I of Münsterberg-Oels, 1511-15; Georg I of Brieg, 1515-18; Friedrich II of Liegnitz, 1518-23) until impaired hearing forced his retirement from active court life.<sup>5</sup> Thence he retired to the estate in Ossig which he had inherited on his father's death in 1519. He became a Knight of the Teutonic Order, and, true to the vow of celibacy he had taken upon joining that Order, he never

married.<sup>6</sup> He continued to take an active if restricted interest in the affairs of Silesia, working for both the physical and spiritual betterment of the life of the peasants. It is significant that there was no Peasants' Revolt in Silesia: the wise government of Friedrich II rendered such a course of action unnecessary.

In 1518 Schwenckfeld became aware of the writings of Doctor Martin Luther. He was especially moved by reading Luther's Exposition of the Seven Penitential Psalms.<sup>7</sup> In 1518 or 1519 he had the first of two "Gracious visitations of God (Gnädige Heimsuchungen Gottes)."<sup>8</sup> Just what this visitation was we cannot say: Schwenckfeld is reluctant even to discuss it. Whether it was connected with the death of his father we also do not know, because Schwenckfeld is not precise as to when it happened. The second of these "Gracious Visitations" happened in 1525 or 1526, thus presumably after the rejection of his concept of the Lord's Supper by Luther. Thus one is tempted to raise the question of whether these "Visitations" were "triggered" by events in Schwenckfeld's life. To this question no satisfactory answer is forthcoming.

In 1526<sup>9</sup> Schwenckfeld and Valentine Crautwald<sup>10</sup> (1470-1545) linguist and lector in the Cathedral of Liegnitz wrote a circular Letter to the Brotherhood of Liegnitz (the Conventicle Schwenckfeld and his colleagues had formed for the purpose of Bible study, prayer, and mutual edification) advising the Stillstand or suspension of their participation in the Lord's Supper until such time as God



should reveal to the Church and its members which of the competing views of that Institution was correct. They took this rather drastic step because they had such a high regard for the Supper and because they believed that all the parties (Catholic, Lutheran, Zwinglian) were abusing the Supper, partaking of it unworthily, and dishonoring Christ and God by their actions.

Schwenckfeld's concept of the Lord's Supper<sup>10a</sup> may be summarized as follows. On the night in which He was betrayed, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and said, "My body is like this bread, a spiritual food for your souls." He also took the cup, blessed it, and said "My blood is like this wine, a drink for your souls."

You will not find these words in the Bible, because they are not so recorded. Yet this is how Schwenckfeld read what was recorded (I Corinthians 11:23ff. and parallels). His reasoning in this matter was (for him) simple and straightforward. The Scriptures tell us that Judas, that arch-enemy of Jesus and all He stood for, was present at the Lord's Supper and partook of it from Jesus' own hands, Matthew 26:26-9 and parallels. Now if this were, in fact, true, then Judas must have inherited eternal life if Jesus had been in any way, shape, or form present in, with, or under the bread and wine, or if these elements had been somehow transformed by Him or His words. Subsequent events, however, proved to Schwenckfeld that Judas did not, in fact, inherit eternal life. Therefore, Jesus cannot have been present physically in the bread and wine,

and these elements cannot have been transformed by Him in any way. Yet Jesus had said that the bread was His body. What can He have meant?

Schwenckfeld's answer came from a reading of the Sixth Chapter of John, specifically John 6:55, "For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed." (R.S.V.) Schwenckfeld reasoned that Jesus was not speaking physically here, but He was speaking spiritually. Thus, the "food" which Jesus' flesh was was spiritual food, to nourish men's spiritual natures or souls. Hence, the physical eating of the physical elements could not have any effect at all upon the spirit of man. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John 3:6 R.S.V.).

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and Johannes Oecolampadius (1492-1531) had come into possession of some of Schwenckfeld's manuscripts concerning the Lord's Supper. They read them hastily and uncritically, believing that Schwenckfeld was in substantial agreement with their position in the interpretation of the Supper. Briefly stated their interpretation was that the words of Institution "Hoc est Corpus Meum." "This is My body" (I Corinthians 11:24 and parallels in the Gospels) were to be interpreted memorially. "Est" was believed by them to be equivalent to "Significat." or "signifies." Thus, they read this text in this way: "This [bread] signifies my body." Their emphasis thus was on the "memorial" aspect of the Supper: for them was therefore neither transubstantiation (Catholic) nor impanation

(Schwenckfeld's term for Luther's theory, usually called "consubstantiation") a valid expression of the truth.

They published Schwenckfeld's booklet De Cursu Verbi Dei (The Progress of the Word of God) in 1527,<sup>11</sup> and in 1528 they printed (also without Schwenckfeld's knowledge or consent) Ein Anwysunge ... (A Demonstration that the Opinion concerning the Physical Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Bread or Under the Form of Bread has Been Judged and Found Wanting.)<sup>12</sup> That they had not even read the books carefully is shown by their ignorance of their contents.<sup>13</sup>

When these booklets were brought to the attention of Ferdinand I (King of Hungary and Bohemia and future Holy Roman Emperor, 1503-64) probably by his Confessor Johannes Fabri (1478-1541),<sup>14</sup> Ferdinand issued a Royal Mandate against the "haters of the Holy Sacrament," demanding that the observance of the Sacraments be re-instituted and that those who taught otherwise be condemned to death. Friedrich II wrote a letter of protest and had Schwenckfeld draft two Apologies, which were also submitted to Ferdinand.

Schwenckfeld, fearful that his movement and people in Silesia might be destroyed by the wrath of Ferdinand, decided to go into voluntary exile.<sup>15</sup> He left Silesia sometime in 1529, probably in the early spring, and arrived in Strassburg sometime before May 1<sup>o</sup>, 1529.<sup>16</sup> There he took up residence in the home of Wolfgang Capito (1478-1541)<sup>17</sup> who was a preacher in Strassburg friendly to

many spiritualists. In fact, it had been Capito and Martin Butzer (1491-1551), another Strassburg preacher, who had forwarded Schwenckfeld's books to Zwingli in 1527-8.

Thus, Schwenckfeld may have been living in the home of Wolfgang Capito when he began to write the Commentary on the Augsburg Confession, the translation of which forms the substance of this thesis. Because he had left Capito's home by September 24, 1531,<sup>18</sup> however, it does not appear likely that Schwenckfeld had finished this commentary at that place, but, rather, in the home of Jacob and Margaret Englemann, whither he had moved after the death of Capito's wife. Capito's subsequent coolness towards his erstwhile house guest seems to have stemmed also from this event, which Capito viewed as a divine judgement of his toleration of so many unorthodox opinions.

The course of Schwenckfeld's later life is one of increasing persecution, especially at the hands of Lutheran preachers. Martin Butzer's attitude became increasingly hostile after Schwenckfeld successfully resisted his efforts to bring him into the Concordia movement, and especially after the Strassburg colloquy in which he was unable to defeat Schwenckfeld in theological debate.<sup>19</sup> Schwenckfeld reminded Butzer that in siding with the Concordia he (Butzer) is surrendering Christian truths to which he had formerly given allegiance. These controversies, together with the failure of Capito (after the death of his wife) to remain steadfast in his own religious

convictions eventually convinced Schwenckfeld to leave Strassburg and to settle in Ulm after brief stays in Augsburg and other South German cities. In 1540, his theological position on the Non-Creaturity of Christ was condemned by the theologians assembled at Schmalkald. In 1541, Schwenckfeld wrote his Great Confession in reply to the Schmalkald condemnation.<sup>20</sup> From 1542 to 1547, he lived in the von Freyberg Castle in Justingen. In 1543, Luther attacked Schwenckfeld in his book, The Last Words of David. Schwenckfeld attempted to make peace with Luther, but Luther instead wrote the famous malediction to which Schwenckfeld wrote a reply but did not publish it until 1555.<sup>21</sup>

In 1546, the Schmalkald War erupted and Schwenckfeld was forced to flee the von Freyberg Castle. Schwenckfeld took refuge in the Convent of Esslingen, where he assumed the name of Eliander (The Second Elijah). His books and manuscripts in the Varnier printery in Ulm were confiscated, but returned in 1550,<sup>22</sup> when printing resumed. During this period he made many journeys incognito, the purpose(s) of which are unknown.

Matthias Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575), a Lutheran preacher, took up the cudgels against Schwenckfeld after Schwenckfeld had published The Holy Scriptures (1551)<sup>23</sup> and The Gospel of Christ (1552).<sup>24</sup> Their theological debate centered around the question of what the Bible is and in what respect it might be called "the Word of God." Schwenckfeld argues that the Word of God is Christ

alone (John 1:1) and that no external perishable thing can or ought to usurp that place. Flacius' books are crude, vulgar, and show an obvious lack of understanding of Schwenckfeld's position. Schwenckfeld, by contrast, shows himself to be both a gentleman and a scholar both in his refutation of Illyricus and in the soundness of his own position. It was in 1555, during this controversy, that Schwenckfeld was forced to publish Luther's Malediction and his own Answer, thereto to defend himself against Illyricus' slanders.<sup>25</sup>

The last ten years of his life saw frequent and increasing persecution. Mandates were issued against him and his followers almost every year from 1552 onward. He was forced to travel in secret and in disguise. This constant flight to avoid persecution undermined his health. In 1561 he returned to Ulm to the home of Agatha Streicher, a physician of note. There he died on December 10, 1561, and was secretly buried, although where he is buried remains a mystery to this day.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> This is his full legal name and title, although he shortened it to "Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig." Modern Schwenckfelders retain the "c" in his name but omit it elsewhere. I follow their usage throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Schultz, Selina Gerhard, Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561) (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1977), p. 1 gives the date as "between November 5 and December 20, 1489." Unfortunately her sources in the Corpus (IX, 651, l. 30; XI, 228, l. 30; 667, l. 9) do not support her contention. Note 4 in IX, 651 says that Schwenckfeld was born in 1490, while the references in XI are both equivocal.

<sup>3</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> He himself says that he studied in Cologne, yet his name is not on the matriculation lists there. Cf. Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> For a chronological conspectus of his life, cf. Schultz, Selina Gerhard, A Course of Study in the Life and Teachings of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig (1489-1561)... (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenckfelder Church, 1964), pp. 32-9.

<sup>6</sup> Rothenberger, Jack R., Caspar Schwenckfeld von

Ossig and the Ecumenical Ideal (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenkfelder Church, 1967), p. 15. Wach, Joachim, Types of Religious Experience, Christian and Non-Christian (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972 (1951), p. 142 says, more prosaically that "... he never married 'for reasons satisfactory to himself'."

<sup>7</sup> Weigelt, Horst, Spiritualistische Tradition in Protestantismus: Die Geschichte des Schwenckfeldertums in Schlesien (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), pp. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> C.S. IV, 775-6; V, 535; VIII, 128-9; IX, 60; XVI, 795. An examination of these references shows that Schwenckfeld's "gracious visitations" occurred from 1519-1524 (and beyond). He is so vague about them that it is not even possible to say how many of them there were.

<sup>9</sup> C.S. II, Doc. 28; Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 105-10.

<sup>10</sup> Weigelt, Tradition, pp. 6-10 et passim.

<sup>10a</sup> On the Schwenckfeldian understanding of the Lord's Supper cf. Kriebel, Martha B., Schwenckfelders and the Sacraments (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenkfelder Church, 1968).

<sup>11</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 152-5; C.S. II, Doc. 41.

<sup>12</sup> C.S. III, Doc. 56.

<sup>13</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 154-5.

<sup>14</sup> Weigelt, Tradition, p. 102.

<sup>15</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 160-2.

<sup>16</sup> Weigelt, Tradition, pp. 104-5.

<sup>17</sup> Williams, George Huntston, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 254-7.



1<sup>8</sup> C.S. IV, 243, n.1; Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 172.

1<sup>9</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, Chapter 9.

2<sup>0</sup> C.S. VII, Doc. 354; Schultz, Schwenckfeld,  
pp. 254-9.

2<sup>1</sup> Williams, George Huntston and Mergal, Angel M.,  
Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers (Philadelphia: West-  
minster Press, 1957), pp. 161-82.

2<sup>2</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 302, 306.

2<sup>3</sup> C.S. XII, Doc. 780.

2<sup>4</sup> C.S. XII, Doc. 313.

2<sup>5</sup> Williams and Mergal, Spiritual, p. 162, n. 1.

## CHAPTER II

### SCHWENCKFELD, LUTHER, AND MELANCHTHON

The contacts between Schwenckfeld and Luther were to run the whole emotional gamut from intellectually and religiously stimulating to disastrous, personally frustrating, and spiritually shattering. These contacts spanned almost the whole of Luther's life in the Reformation (ca. 1518-1544). Beyond this, Schwenckfeld found the Lutheran theologians to be his fiercest and most scurrilous opponents. The ultimate breach with Luther put Schwenckfeld's irenic temperment to its severest test,<sup>1</sup> and his battles with Flacius Illyricus<sup>2</sup> led him to use some of the harshest language of his career. These latter contacts, however, are outside the scope of this thesis.

Schwenckfeld was probably first drawn to Luther's works in 1518, when the Ninety-Five Theses were being hawked in Silesia. As a result of what he was later to call the "Grädige Heimsuchung Gottes," Schwenckfeld began to study the Scriptures earnestly and with thoroughness. He became an ardent follower of the type of Lutheranism embodied in Luther's Freedom of a Christian and Address to the German Nobility (which may well have

struck home with Schwenckfeld, as he was, himself, a member of that nobility).<sup>3</sup> Especially significant for Schwenckfeld's conversion to Lutheranism was Luther's Exposition of the Seven Penitential Psalms.

In 1518 or 1519 Schwenckfeld entered the courtly service of Friedrich II, Herzog von Liegnitz. Unlike his brother Georg I, Herzog von Brieg, who had been Schwenckfeld's previous employer, Friedrich II was a deeply religious man. Schwenckfeld seems to have won him over to the Evangelical [Protestant] cause early and completely. Thus Lutheranism was introduced into Silesia by 1520 at the latest.

Although an avid reader of Luther's books and an ardent supporter of his doctrines, Schwenckfeld began to have his doubts at a fairly early date about Luther's doctrine of "Justification by faith alone"--because that doctrine did not provide for the kind of improvement of life Schwenckfeld felt should have been a consequence of true conversion. This problem, together with the problem of the interpretation and understanding of the Words of Institution, led Schwenckfeld in July, 1525 to send Luther a copy of his "Twelve Questions or Arguments Against Impanation."<sup>6</sup> Schwenckfeld had been earlier encouraged by a letter from Luther,<sup>7</sup> and he was anxious now to have the Doctor's judgement in this most important matter. Unfortunately, this Document has been lost, but the Editors of Schwenckfeld's works have "reconstructed" it on the basis of a tract written in 1529.<sup>8</sup>

When after four months Luther had not replied, Schwenckfeld journeyed to Wittenberg to confer with him on this matter, and also on official business for Duke Friedrich II, in whose employ Schwenckfeld still was, at least on a part-time basis, even though a progressively worsening hearing impairment had rendered official court life impossible for him. The story of his conversations with Luther was recorded in detail by Schwenckfeld in 1540 from an otherwise now lost diary he had kept at the time.<sup>9</sup> This material has been translated and edited by Selina Gerhard Schultz in her biography of Schwenckfeld. It is, therefore, not necessary for me to recount that meeting in detail here. The two men parted amicably enough, each thinking he had found the proper solution to the problem of the interpretation of those four fateful words: Hoc Est Corpus Meum. Luther promised to study Schwenckfeld's work, but there is no evidence that he did so in any detail. As I point out elsewhere,<sup>10</sup> both men approached reality from different perspectives, so it should not really surprise anyone that they came to totally different conclusions.<sup>11</sup> What is surprising, in light of the more-or-less amicable nature of their conversation, is Luther's increasingly harsh and downright nasty attacks on Schwenckfeld in 1527 and again in 1528. Luther was never again, so far as is known, to have a good word to say in Schwenckfeld's behalf. Schwenckfeld never spoke disrespectfully of Luther, even though he could not accept his increasingly conservative stands. It always appeared

to Schwenckfeld that Luther, having taken a strong stand in favor of inward religion at the start of the Reformation, had changed his position, as time went on, to an increasingly more ceremony-oriented and externals-emphasizing one.<sup>12</sup> Schwenckfeld naturally deplored this state of affairs and tried to convince Luther of the error of his ways. This attitude, pursued even as irenically as Schwenckfeld pursued it, could not help but alienate Luther who felt (even as did Schwenckfeld but to a far less extent) that every vision of the truth he had was both ultimate and ultimately divine--thus, unimpeachable. This is one of the unfortunate hallmarks of the Reformation in particular and of Christianity in general, one which can only be deplored, because it so stymies the search for truth.

A few lines will suffice to delineate Schwenckfeld's relationship with Melanchthon. Until the 1550's Schwenckfeld and Melanchthon had almost no direct dealings with each other.<sup>13</sup> It is true that Melanchthon propagandized against Schwenckfeld (and even threatened to refute Schwenckfeld's most important Christological treatise, his Great Confession--although, in truth, he never even bothered to open the manuscript submitted to him by Schwenckfeld);<sup>14</sup> but it is also true that these efforts of Melanchthon were, for the most part at least, undertaken behind Schwenckfeld's back and in places where Schwenckfeld was not able to be physically present--as, for example, the Schmalkald condemnation, which, when he

was confronted with it by Schwenckfeld, he did all he could to deny his part in the affair.<sup>15</sup>

It was through Melanchthon's efforts that Schwenckfeld was condemned by the theologians at the Naumburg Colloquy of 1554<sup>16</sup> and at Nürnberg in 1555.<sup>17</sup> Philip von Hesse tried unsuccessfully to effect a reconciliation between Melanchthon and Schwenckfeld, but to no avail.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the author of the Augsburg Confession and his lonely theological commentator died estranged and at enmity with each other, Melanchthon on April 19, 1560, Schwenckfeld on December 10, 1561.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> Williams and Mergal, Spiritual, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> C.S. XII-XIV: thus, this controversy bulks as the largest of Schwenckfeld's many theological battles over questions of orthodoxy.

<sup>3</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Weigelt, Tradition, pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Weigelt, Tradition, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 62ff.

<sup>7</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> C.S. II, Doc. 11.

<sup>9</sup> C.S. II, Doc. 18, translated in Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 73-97.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Chapter III, infra.

<sup>11</sup> Maier, Paul L., Caspar Schwenckfeld on the Person and Work of Christ: A Study of Schwenckfeldian Theology at its Core (Assen, The Netherlands: Royal van Gorcum, 1959), especially Part I. Maier's book remains, I think, the best presentation on Schwenckfeld available in English.

<sup>12</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 288.

<sup>13</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> C.S. VII, p. 464-7; Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 257ff.

<sup>15</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 253-4.

- 16 Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 339ff.
- 17 Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 342.
- 18 Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 349-51.



### CHAPTER III

#### SCHWENCKFELD'S THEOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW

Underlying Schwenckfeld's entire unsystematic theological presentation is the distinction between the spirit and the flesh.<sup>1</sup> This distinction is neither Hebrew nor Latin, but Greek, and points up the fact that whereas the major magisterial reformers derive their ideas chiefly from the Latin Church Fathers, Schwenckfeld derived his chiefly from the Greek Fathers, Basil, the Gregories, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, and Hilary of Poitiers, among others.<sup>2</sup>

Everything in Schwenckfeld's view was made up of two parts--spirit and flesh. Thus man was both a creature (created being) according to the first Creation (the Adamic Creation), and a spirit (or soul, psyche) which could partake of the benefits of the Second Creation (the first fruits of which was Christ Himself). These two elements are always at war with each other, as St. Paul states in Romans 7. There is a radical, a fundamental separation and distinction between them. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God--only the Spirit can do that. The flesh is of no value: it profits us nothing. It is the spirit, and the things of the spirit, with which we

are to be concerned.

In the Lord's Supper,<sup>3</sup> for example, there were both a physical eating and a spiritual eating. These two events were not connected in any way--they might or might not take place together. But regardless of all this, only the spiritual eating was of any salvific value: only the spiritual participation in the Body and Blood of the Lord could bring salvation and spirit-satisfying nourishment. The outward ceremony was not worthless-but it also was not necessary for salvation, so that in 1526<sup>4</sup> Schwenckfeld could write a circular letter to the Liegnitz Conventicles advising them to abstain from the physical, ceremonial observance of the Supper until such time as God should give more light regarding the true interpretation of it. Schwenckfeld believed he had the truth, but stood in such awe of the Sacrament and its possible misuse that he would suspend its observance altogether, rather than see it used as a means of tearing the body of Christ (His Church) apart any further. There is no evidence that Schwenckfeld intended this Stillstand (as he called the suspension) to be permanent, but as the spirit of brotherhood and Christian love which he felt should be part of the observance continued to be replaced by acrimony and animosity in its observance, he could not see his way clear to lift the Stillstand, although he never made it mandatory for any of his followers. In fact, many of them did observe the Sacrament in districts where the pastors (mostly Lutheran) preached it in accordance with

Schwenckfelder teaching.<sup>5</sup>

Baptism,<sup>6</sup> too, has its outward and inward complements: the physical water only washes the physical body--it has no effect whatsoever on the spiritual condition of the believer. Thus, although baptized as an infant, Schwenckfeld saw no reason to be rebaptized as an adult, for, for him, the ceremony would have had no spiritual significance. However, he opposed infant baptism in principle and in practice, because the choice must be made in faith by the person who is being baptized, and, furthermore, because the physical baptism must be preceded by an experiential knowledge of the presence of Christ in the heart of the believer.

This "Experiential Knowledge" (Erkenntniss Christi) was a chief tenet of Schwenckfeld's system.<sup>7</sup> He believed that everyone who believed in Christ should know Him spiritually. It was not enough simply to know the histories of the Scriptures: one had to have direct, unmediated experience of Christ from Christ Himself. Anything less was simply hearsay, second-hand spiritually, and was of no value insofar as the spiritual life of the believer was concerned. The records of the Scriptures, in fact, referred to the past, and could not, of themselves, bring either salvation or spiritual consolation. They were, in fact, apart from the living presence of the Spirit within the heart of the believer, a dead letter and of no value at all, for without the Spirit and the Word (Christ) within the heart, they could speak only to

the outward, physical man, and could not offer any consolation at all to the spirit.<sup>8</sup> Yet Schwenckfeld did not disparage the use of the Scriptures: on the contrary, he saw them as revealing to the physical man his completely depraved condition apart from God and Christ, and he saw them as guiding the spiritually discerning reader into the path he must follow if he wished to be saved. To these ends, he recommended the reading of the whole of the scriptures every year; four chapters a day, he figured, would accomplish this end.<sup>9</sup> But this must not be simply inattentive reading, for the Scriptures contain the record of the voice of the Word, so they must be studied with the greatest attention and care. Yet they must never be viewed as means or mediators of Grace, for God works spiritually, directly in the heart of the believer, without any external means at all, otherwise it must be impossible for those believing Patriarchs (Abraham, Moses, David) who did not have either the physical presence of Christ or the Written Scriptures which testify to Him, to be saved. But saved they surely were, as the Scriptures testify, so it needs must be that they had the presence of Christ--which can only have been communicated to them spiritually.

This brings us to the complicated and complex subject of Schwenckfeld's Christology.<sup>10</sup> To understand Schwenckfeld's arguments, it is necessary to keep his flesh-spirit distinction firmly in mind.

Schwenckfeld reasoned along these lines. Christ

was without sin. Now how can this be, seeing that the whole of Creation is condemned and depraved because of Adam's fall? Obviously, Christ's flesh, his physical humanity, cannot have derived from the first creation, otherwise it must have been tainted with original sin. Yet we read in the Scriptures that Christ was fully human. What this must mean, Schwenckfeld reasoned, (basing his thought on the Greek Fathers) is that Christ's flesh was celestial, heavenly, hence, it was not a Creature (a creation of the first creation). Yet it was still fully human, and Jesus was still God and man. There was no comingling of the persons, as Luther thought (this is why he called Schwenckfeld a Eutychian).

What Schwenckfeld did teach, however, was that this flesh is progressively deified or divinized, so that it ultimately becomes fully divine and is physically present in the Godhead at the right hand of God. In this way, it is possible for His Flesh to be truly a Food for our souls, for not only is it now without sin, but partakes of the Divine Essence and is truly communicable to the hearts of those who believe. Thus Luther's doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ gains a dimension of spiritual depth it did not have before.<sup>11</sup> Thus also the believer is not constrained to depend upon ceremonies for his Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ: he may partake of them whenever and wherever he has need, as often as he wishes. Yet even in this glorified state (whence Schwenckfeld's followers derived for themselves the name of

"Confessors of the Glory of Christ"),<sup>12</sup> Christ's two natures remain distinct, which occasions Paul L. Maier much difficulty in his book on Schwenckfeld's Christology.<sup>13</sup>

How, then, can such a perfect man be our example? "Paul" says: "He was tempted as we are yet remains without sin." (Hebrews 4:15) Thus, it behooves us to follow His example, for He succeeded, and we have His promise of help and assistance in our distress. In fact, Schwenckfeld taught that it was perfectly possible for a person to follow Christ completely--insofar as he was truly a spiritual person, that is, the more his spiritual nature overcame his physical nature, by that much more was he enabled to perfectly follow Christ. This, too, was misunderstood by Schwenckfeld's contemporaries, for they felt that it smacked of human perfection, which was not Schwenckfeld's point at all. In fact, in 1560,<sup>14</sup> Schwenckfeld wrote a tract in which he showed that a Christian is a sinner so long as he is alive physically, yet is not a sinner insofar as he has attained to spiritual maturity. The same process that St. Paul talks about is operative here; one is putting off the old nature ever more and more, and drawing on the new nature, the spiritual life in Christ.

The New Birth<sup>15</sup> is thus not a matter of ritual or of external activity, but comes as the activity of Christ within, acting as God's sole mediator, nourishing and strengthening the still weak spirit with God's grace unto salvation. Hence, for Schwenckfeld, there is no question of "once saved, always saved." Salvation may

indeed be lost, for man has free will to do good (and not to, though Schwenckfeld does not dwell on this). Hence it also follows that the life in Christ is a growth toward the image of Christ, toward perfection, not in it. Perfection will not be attained in this life because the flesh is and remains sinful.

Predestination<sup>16</sup> was for Schwenckfeld a comforting assuring doctrine, designed for believers and not to be a burden to the conscience of the unbeliever, or the man whose faith was still weak. For Schwenckfeld, the life of a Christian is a life of growth in knowledge of Christ and of ever deeper understanding of Christian doctrines. The mysteries of the faith are to be more and more participated in, that is, to become more and more a part of our lives.

The Scriptures, technically speaking, are not the word of God.<sup>17</sup> There is only One Word of God, Jesus Christ, Whom God speaks continually into the hearts of believers. The Scriptures are the record of the voice of the Word of God. The Scriptures are inspired by God, but are powerless in and of themselves to do anything or to save anyone. Apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they are a dead letter, and are profitable for nothing.

The Church,<sup>18</sup> Schwenckfeld believed, is the whole company of believers in all times and in all places. Hence, its total membership is known only to God. There is also an external church, which exists to promote the outward worship of God, but it is not the total number of the elect,

for its members are not all truly regenerate. Here again we see the principle of outward-inward, and, in this case, the truth is known only to God.



### NOTES TO CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my translation: "A Comforting Christian Instruction and Understanding of the Outward and Inward Word of God," by an unknown author (Pseudo-Tauler) in Schwenkfeldian 72(July, 1973), pp. 4-6 for the best explanation of this of which I am aware.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the indexes to the various volumes of the Corpus. This is also the conclusion of Williams, Spiritual, p. 162 and Furcha, Edward J., Schwenckfeld's Concept of the New Man: A Study in the Anthropology of Caspar von Schwenckfeld as Set Forth in his Major Theological Writings (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenkfelder Church, 1970), pp. 18-26.

<sup>3</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 60-72 and passim.

<sup>4</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 105-10.

<sup>5</sup> Schultz, Christopher, [et al.], A Vindication of Caspar Schwenckfeld von Cossig, An Elucidation of his Doctrine and the Vicissitudes of his Followers ... trans. and ed. by Elmer Schultz Gerhard (Allentown, PA: Edward Schlechter, 1942), pp. 41, 52.

<sup>6</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 191-5; Schultz, Course, pp. 55-7.

<sup>7</sup> C.S. III, Doc. 79; VI, Doc. 275, Doc. 290.

<sup>8</sup> C.S. XIII, Doc. 790.

<sup>9</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, pp. 26-7.

<sup>10</sup> The major work by Schwenckfeld on this subject is his Great Confession (C.S. VII, Doc. 354). See Maier, Schwenckfeld, especially parts II and III. See also Schultz, Vindication, Chapter XII for the Schwenckfelders' Eighteenth Century understanding of this doctrine.

<sup>11</sup> But cf. Maier, Schwenckfeld, pp. 80-1 who takes some exception to this.

<sup>12</sup> C.S. XIII, Doc. 821, and Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 401.

<sup>13</sup> Maier, Schwenckfeld, Chapter X.

<sup>14</sup> C.S. XVII, Doc. 1139.

<sup>15</sup> C.S. VI, Doc. 256; Furcha, Concept is the best presentation of this topic in English.

<sup>16</sup> Schultz, Course, pp. 78-80.

<sup>17</sup> C.S. XIII, Doc. 834; Schultz, Course, pp. 45-9.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. infra on Articles VII and VIII of the Augsburg Confession; also cf. C.S. III, Doc. 103; IV, Doc. 110, 112. Gottfried Maron, Individualismus und Gemeinschaft bei Caspar von Schwenckfeld: Seine Theologie dargestellt mit besonderer Ausrichtung auf seinem Kirchenbegriff (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1961) treats this in great detail; however, his conclusion that Schwenckfeld never founded a Church, while technically correct, is nevertheless in error, as the existence of a Schwenckfelder Church in America cogently demonstrates. While it must be admitted that this Schwenckfelder Church is not the one

Schwenckfeld had in mind (his vision was far more universal), nevertheless this Church does indeed try to keep Schwenckfeldian thought alive, as witness their sponsorship of the Corpus and of many of the books used in this study. Cf. also, Jones, Rufus M., Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959(1914), esp. pp. 73-80.

## CHAPTER IV

### SCHWENCKFELD'S COMMENTARY ON THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION: HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some time between the Autumn<sup>1</sup> of 1531 and 1540<sup>2</sup> Caspar Schwenckfeld composed the Commentary<sup>2a</sup> on the Augsburg Confession<sup>3</sup> here translated into English for the first time. It is not possible to state the date of the composition with more exactness because there is no internal evidence to support a more exact date. What can be said is that if the contention of the editors of the Corpus<sup>4</sup> is accurate (and the assumption seems reasonable) that Schwenckfeld was asked to supply a text of and a commentary to the Augsburg Confession, then he must have written this commentary before that text became generally available--presumably sometime in late 1531 or early 1532. The fact that Schwenckfeld's concept of the Erkenntniss Christi is in this commentary still "orthodox" (that is, has not yet assumed the more mystical character it bears after 1533)<sup>5</sup> also lends credence to an early date for this composition.

Schwenckfeld cites Luther in this commentary but does not cite Melancthon. This raises at least the question of whether Schwenckfeld knew that Melancthon et al.

were the authors of the Augsburg Confession and not Luther. This question cannot be answered but the fact of the Luther citation is suggestive. The issue of Schwenckfeld's knowledge of sources is, however, clouded by the inclusion on p. 179 below (C.S. III, 935) of a marginalium naming Calvin, Beza, et al. If this marginalium did not occur in the original (now lost) manuscript, (as would seem likely based on the dating of the Commentary suggested above) one is left with the question of which if any of the other marginalia are also later additions. I have, accordingly translated only the most important of them as Notes. Their omission does not materially alter the text.

Schwenckfeld's Commentary may be divided for purposes of analysis into five parts, as follows:

- I. Salutation and Introductory Remarks
- II. An Essay on Christian Freedom
- III. Commentary on the Augsburg Confession,  
Arts. I-VI
- IV. An Essay on the Christian Church (Augsburg  
Confession VII-VIII)
- V. Commentary on the Augsburg Confession Articles  
IX-XXI

Schwenckfeld is engaged in considerations of these themes (especially II, on Christian Freedom and IV, on the Christian Church) above in the years 1531-2, according to the reconstructed chronology of the editors of the Corpus. Hence, a dating of this Commentary to this period is

appropriate, given the general soundness of their dating methods.

As may be seen from the above outline, this Commentary is composed of three essays and a brief covering letter. That these elements are independent as to content may be seen from the fact that Schwenckfeld himself took this commentary apart and published some of its parts separately as need or circumstances dictated. In 1548 he rewrote the section on the Christian Church and sent it as a letter "to certain prominent learned men."<sup>6</sup> This re-writing is simply a refocusing of the essay by the elimination of the references to the Augsburg Confession. Because it was included in Epistolar M<sup>7</sup> of Schwenckfeld's collected works (issued 1564-70) it is not possible to identify further the recipients of it. In the latter part of his life Schwenckfeld again published a part of this commentary, this time the section of Christian Freedom.<sup>8</sup> Just when this was published we do not know, more than the fact that it was done before the publication of the Catalogus of Schwenckfeld's printed writings in August, 1561.<sup>9</sup> Thus Schwenckfeld saw this Commentary as being of continuing value for its expressions of his ideas on the Church and on the freedom of a Christian in matters of faith.

The editors of the Corpus located two manuscripts of this commentary and one printed edition. Both the manuscripts are copies, made at approximately the same time (1530/40),<sup>10</sup> of the autograph, now lost, which is

reproduced in Epistolar P.<sup>11</sup> They also remark that manuscript copies of this commentary were in circulation as late as 1553.<sup>12</sup> They have printed, and I have translated, the text of Epistolar P as being the most complete form extant.

Schwenckfeld's Commentary itself proceeds, in outline, as follows.<sup>13</sup> After a salutation and friendly greetings to his correspondents, Schwenckfeld proceeds to a consideration of God's method and manner of revealing His truth to men. God does not give men all His truth all at once, but gradually, as to Him seems best. Thus, because His truth is never complete for any one person, Christians should not attempt to coerce one another to or in faith. Divine truth, so far as we have it, is all of a piece; thus, no part of it may or ought to be surrendered in the name of temporal peace (religious co-existence). Faith in Christ is, moreover, a free gift of God, hence, it must not become the object of compulsion, that is, no one should ever be compelled to swear to a faith he does not hold, nor to accept under compulsion a faith he does not believe to be true. Thus, parenthetically, Schwenckfeld was never willing to countenance the executions of the Anabaptists or of Servetus.<sup>14</sup> In the Old Testament times, Schwenckfeld continues, religion and the conscience were the subjects of coercion by civil and religious authorities, but in the present New Testament times this should no longer be the case. The freedom which Christ has procured for His followers should now be the guiding

principle in matters of religion.

External worship of God is ordained for the external man and cannot effect any fundamental change in the inward condition of man. For this reason, the spiritual freedom of a Christian must be preserved above all else. But this freedom must never be seen as an occasion for sin, nor for the flesh to exercise its own lusts; rather, this freedom is for the inner, spiritual man so that he can benefit from the working of the Spirit and His inspiration. Schwenckfeld here cites Article 2<sup>3</sup> of the Augsburg Confession as in harmony with his own position. Even the things Christ Himself instituted for the outer man are not mandatory but must remain free so that the conscience may use them or refrain from their use as God Himself may direct.<sup>15</sup>

Now Schwenckfeld takes up the Articles of the Augsburg Confession in order. After the text of each Article, he presents his Proba or "Examination."<sup>16</sup> With Article One, on God, he has no substantial disagreement. With Article Two, on original sin, he agrees on the power of original sin, but disagrees that outward water baptism can have any but a purely cleansing effect for the outer man. Baptism cannot forgive sins, nor does it give new birth. The new birth of man is from above, from God, a spiritual matter not effected by outward washing. With Article Three, on the Son of God, there is also no fundamental disagreement. Schwenckfeld does, however, desire to have man's experience with the Living Christ stressed



more than it is in this Article. Schwenckfeld here contrasts this lived experience as over against the mere "historical knowledge" the outer man gets by reading the Scriptures.

Concerning Article Four, on Justification, Schwenckfeld does not accept the idea of "imputed righteousness." Luther's idea of "both sinner and yet righteous" (Simul justus et peccator) Schwenckfeld cannot accept: if there is no fundamental change in a man, he has not been saved. The old (outer) man cannot please God, but the new (inner) man can please Him, not by his own power, but with Christ's help. Schwenckfeld does accept a concept of civil righteousness which is rewarded with temporal benefits in this life, but which does not receive eternal life because it is not rooted in Christ.

Schwenckfeld's disagreement with Article Five, on the Office of Ministry, is at the heart of his disagreement with all of Lutheran theology. For him there are not, nor can there ever be, any external "means" or mediators of grace or of God's power. God gives Himself directly through Christ (who is God) into the heart of the inner, new man. Thus, no "means" are necessary for salvation, otherwise those who could not avail themselves of them (children, the deaf, e.g.) must be lost, which would be too painful to hear. Concerning Article Six, the New Obedience, Schwenckfeld has no really serious disagreement, but he does think that more emphasis should be placed on the effective power of faith in the new (reborn) man.

Schwenckfeld's "examinations" of Articles Seven, on the Church, and Eight, what the Church is, constitute the largest part of this commentary. The Christian Church, he argues, is not founded on, nor does it depend upon, external rites or ceremonies for its continued existence. There are, moreover, two kinds of Church, the outward, visible assembly of people and the inward, invisible number of men and women whose names are known only to God. This outward Church is full of real Christians and hypocrites, with no way to tell them apart, while the inner Church is made up of true Christians only, men and women who may not even be known to each other but who are all known to God. If the Church could be seen, it would no longer be an object of faith. The "marks" of the Church are all spiritual characteristics; faith, patience, righteousness, truth, unity, love, to name but a few. There is no Church today which can come up to the standards of perfection he there lays down, Schwenckfeld asserts; at least, he knows of none.

Article Eight Schwenckfeld finds to be self-contradictory: for this reason it must be denied outright. The Church cannot and ought not to defend evil priests: only those who live good, blameless lives according to Paul's Epistle to Timothy (I Timothy 3). The service of hypocrites is not acceptable, even for the outward man. Jesus' parables on good and bad things (the dragnet, the wise and foolish virgins, etc.) do not reflect the ideal Church, nor do they advocate the keeping

of open sinners in the Church. Matthew 23:2, cited in Article Eight, is refused by Schwenckfeld as permitting hypocritical priests. Finally, he argues that the power of the sacrament is wholly and exclusively from God, not from men: it is inward and spiritual, not external and physical.

On Article Nine, Baptism, Schwenckfeld remarks that outward Baptism is not given the power to save anyone, nor yet to cleanse them or forgive their sins. This cleansing of sin is effected by God in His inward baptizing of those who repent of their sins. Article Ten, Communion, Schwenckfeld says must be rewritten because he denies the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Private Confession (Article Eleven) is not to be condemned for the outer man, but too much trust must not be put into it either, for it is not essential for the forgiveness of sins. With regard to Article Twelve, Repentance, Schwenckfeld accepts unhesitatingly the fact of God's forgiveness of sinners, but he refuses with equal vigor the claims of the Office of the Keys and their power. To Article Thirteen, the use of Sacraments, Schwenckfeld says that the Sacraments are signs only and have no power in and of themselves.

Article Fourteen, Church Order, he accepts with the proviso that the Pope and the Cardinals should not be allowed under its auspices to practice as they have in the past. Article Fifteen, Church Usages, he accepts because it stresses Christian freedom in these matters.

Article Sixteen, Civil Government, he accepts, but as my note makes clear at that point, he does not consider the whole text of this article. Article Seventeen, The Return of Christ to Judgement, he also accepts, although in later life he came increasingly to view the Second Coming as a spiritual, not a physical event.<sup>17</sup> Article Eighteen, Free Will, he also accepts, but says that it needs to be more clearly explained, the old man and his unfree will more carefully distinguished from the new man and his truly free will in Christ. Article Nineteen, The Cause of Sin, he accepts and says that it ought to be frequently presented in the Church for the instruction of the hearers.

Article Twenty, Good Works, he accepts with reservations. He says that good works done without faith are sin before God--yet God will reward good works with temporal gifts in this physical life, even though they will not gain eternal life for those who do them. Thus, civil righteousness should not be discouraged as sin (although it is) for it has its reward from God.<sup>18</sup>

Article Twenty-One, the Cult of Saints, he refuses to accept, on the ground that all glory and honor belong to God alone, and not to any of his created beings. The saints are to be remembered only insofar as they do not receive any of the honor due to God alone.

The editors of the Corpus somehow got the notion that the Augsburg Confession (or at least the copy Schwenckfeld used) contained only twenty-two Articles.<sup>19</sup> Where they got this idea is not made clear. Schwenckfeld

himself quotes from Article Twenty-Eight.<sup>20</sup> They also believed that the editio princeps (the first authorized edition of the Augsburg Confession, issued by Melanchthon) was published in February, 1531, when, in fact, it appeared in May, 1531 (Latin) and Autumn, 1531 (German).<sup>21</sup>

Schwenckfeld's use of Patristic sources in this Commentary may well surprise modern readers, who if they know these names at all know them only as shadowy figures from a long-dead past. Schwenckfeld and his contemporaries did not view them in this light at all: for them these "alltenleerer" [lit. old teachers] were still a vital force in the shaping of their "contemporary" ideas of theology and philosophy. In this commentary, for example, Schwenckfeld cites no fewer than four Latin and three Greek Fathers of the Church. The most frequently cited is, of course, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430). This is not so surprising in view of the fact that St. Augustine was the most popular of the Christian writers outside the New Testament. What is surprising is the fact that St. John Chrysostom (345?-407) is cited as frequently as St. Augustine--and in a way that seems to indicate that his thought was more crucial to the development of Schwenckfeld's argument than was St. Augustine's. Our knowledge of Schwenckfeld's use of Patristic sources is at too primitive a stage for us to make too sweeping assumptions in this area, but my preliminary studies tend to bear out the assumptions of Maier<sup>22</sup> and Furcha<sup>23</sup> that it was the Greek Fathers of the Church who had the more

profound influence on Schwenckfeld's thought.

The conception Schwenckfeld has of the Christian Church differs most radically from that espoused in the Augsburg Confession. Almost half of Schwenckfeld's commentary is devoted to a discussion of it. By contrast, Melanchthon's Apology<sup>24</sup> for the Confession covers only ten printed pages out of a total of 136 covering the same material Schwenckfeld does.<sup>25</sup> Melanchthon's chief concern is with Article Four, on Justification, which covers sixty-one pages, almost half the whole Apology.

Melanchthon and Schwenckfeld are defending two different concepts of "Church." Melanchthon is arguing that the Church is the visible assembly of all Christians, including even the evil ones.<sup>26</sup> For Schwenckfeld no such a "Church" is worthy of the name. As he sees it, the Church is the community of saints only: no open sinner may rightly claim membership in the Church of Christ. This is especially true of priests, pastors, and others who administer the (visible) sacraments. (Why this should have mattered to Schwenckfeld, with his emphasis on the spiritual nature of the Sacraments is not made clear in this commentary.) Schwenckfeld's position comes here perilously close to Donatism--and, would in fact be so defined by most theologians. That Schwenckfeld does not see himself in this light must, however, be made clear. Because of his emphasis on the inner, spiritual man and aspect of religious matters, he sees himself as upholding the purity of the Church as over against those who would

admit to Church membership even open (confessed) sinners (as Melancthon seems to do at the above citation). Thus, Schwenckfeld's emphasis on the purity of the Church as the Community of the redeemed is in some contrast to Melancthon's emphasis on the Church as the community of all Christian people at whatever stage of growth they may have attained.

But the real difference between them surfaces at Article Four, on Justification. Melancthon's (and Luther's) view of "imputed righteousness" ("forensic justification") simply does not satisfy Schwenckfeld the lay pastor. For him, there must be a change in the person which results in a change of life and attitude. Schwenckfeld can accept "simul justus et peccator" only for the outward, physical, fleshly existence of man. Man's inner, spiritual existence is either saved, renewed, transformed by God's direct spiritual action (mediated only through Christ) or it is not. And if this inner existence is not fundamentally changed, it is condemned, and no amount of external ceremonializing can change that fact. For Schwenckfeld does not see the Sacraments or any ceremonies (or, for that matter, any external things at all) as able to penetrate to the spiritual level of a man's existence, as does the Augsburg Confession (Article Five).

From this, I think, stems, ultimately, Schwenckfeld's emphasis on freedom in spiritual matters. He argued consistently throughout his whole life that it was neither right nor Christian for a person to be coerced to any faith or form of belief which he could not accept in and

by the light God had given him in his own conscience. The Spirit must be and remain free to inspire when and as, wherever and whomever He wills to inspire.<sup>27</sup> It must also be kept in mind that Schwenckfeld saw God's revelation as progressive throughout the Bible and even beyond it into our own times. For the same Spirit who inspired the Bible also inspires us--if we are open to His working. But because God "does not give everything all at once,"<sup>28</sup> we must not try to force to faith men and women whom God has not yet called. His is, finally, the calling as St. John writes, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ..." (John 6:44). Thus, Schwenckfeld argued that unless God call a man first, no call from anyone else will be of any value, and no attempt at coercion of faith could ever hope to succeed.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch=lutherischen Kirche, hrsg. vom Deutschen Evangelischen Kirchen=ausschuss ... (Berlin: Deutsches Evangelisches Kirchenbundesamt, 1930), I, XX (hereafter cited as Bekenntnisschriften with volume and page no.).

<sup>2</sup> C.S. III, 862. This date refers to Manuscript B of the present commentary. Manuscript A is tentatively dated to 1533 but the argument therefor is not entirely convincing.

<sup>2a</sup> This criticism of the Augsburg Confession by Schwenckfeld was the first to appear from Schwenckfeldian circles. It was not, however, to be the only one. Georg Mayer (d. after 1572), whose pseudonym was Theophilus Agricola wrote what Selina G. Schultz calls "a unique, scholarly, and exhaustive criticism of the Augsburg Confession and the inconsistent teachings of its proponets" (Schwenckfeld, p. 345). The work bore the title (translated): Institutions Theologicae Concerning the Contents of the Augsburg Confession, Their Use, Abuse, Together with Other Useful Points. This manuscript was in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, cataloged as Ms. Germ. fol. 74. (Schwenckfeld, p. 441 n.). Further information is

unavailable, as the editors of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum did not publish this text. This failure is especially striking as Mrs. Schultz also says that this second commentary stems from the period 1555-3 (Schwenckfeld, p. 345). The title page is, however, published in C.S. XVI, p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Bente, F., Historical Introduction to the Book of Concord (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Press, 1965 (1921).), Chapter III. Cf. also Tappert, Theodore G., ed. and trans., The Book of Concord: the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Phila.: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 23-4. The best presentation of the Lutheran exegesis of the Augsburg Confession of which I am aware is Holsten Fagerberg, Die Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften von 1529 bis 1537. Berechtigte Übersetzung aus dem schwedischen Manuskript von Gerhard Klose (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1965). If this has not been translated into English, it should certainly be translated.

<sup>4</sup> C.S. III, 359.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. C.S. VI, Doc. 275, esp. pp. 31<sup>a</sup>-21.

<sup>6</sup> C.S. XI, Doc. 679.

<sup>7</sup> C.S. II, 1<sup>a</sup>3.

<sup>8</sup> C.S. XVII, Doc. 1159. Cf. my translation of this text as "A Discourse on Freedom on Religion, Christian Doctrine, Judgement and Faith," Schwenckfeldian 71(Oct., 1972), pp. 3-3.

<sup>9</sup> C.S. XVII, 659.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Note 2, above.

<sup>11</sup> C.S. II, 134 provides bibliographical description of this Epistolar (volume of letters). It is designated "P" because its letters were written to persons in the Catholic "Papal" Party. The title page is reproduced at C.S. II, 138.

<sup>12</sup> C.S. III, 259. The Entschuldigung there cited in printed in C.S. XVI, Doc. 1033.

<sup>13</sup> This outline follows the course of Schwenckfeld's arguments. It has not, therefore, been thought necessary to refer to specific pages in the translation.

<sup>14</sup> Schultz, Schwenckfeld, p. 335.

<sup>15</sup> For Schwenckfeld's understanding of tolerance and religious freedom see especially Kühn, Johannes, Toleranz und Offenbarung: Eine Untersuchung der Motive und Motivformen der Toleranz in Offenbarungsgläubigen Protestantismus (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1923), pp. 140-161.

<sup>16</sup> This is the term used in Epistolar P. In the manuscripts the term Erinnerung (admonition, or remembrance) is used. This term is less harsh, less judgmental than Proba. Cf. C.S. III, 261.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. C.S. XIX, Doc. 1241, p. 267, 365.

<sup>18</sup> This is the most confusing of Schwenckfeld's "Examinations" of any of the Articles. He seems to be trying to balance two conflicting ideas at the same time. His concern for the "weak in faith" seems to have overshadowed his desire for complete objectivity.

<sup>19</sup> C.S. III, 260.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. below, p. 73 and note 13.

21 Cf. Note 1 above.

22 Maier, Schwenckfeld, p. 99.

23 Furcha Concept, pp. 18-26.

24 Bekenntnissschriften, I. pp. 233-46; Tappert,

Concord, pp. 168-178.

25 These statistics are from Tappert, Concord.

26 Tappert, Concord, pp. 168-9.

27 See below pp. 63 and following.

28 See below p. 49.

CASPAR SCHWENCKFELD'S  
COMMENTARY  
ON THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

## EPISTLE 58

Written to several earnest, good-hearted persons, both of the nobility and others within the Catholic Church, who asked C[aspar] S[chwenckfeld] to share with them his criticism of the Augsburg Confession and of the Articles which it contains.<sup>1</sup>

May the riches of the grace of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ through the power [im Ampt] of the Holy Spirit, together with the saving knowledge [Erkantnus<sup>2</sup>] of our Lord and God Jesus Christ in His Spirit [nach dem Geist] be increased in your hearts; for it is from these that a pure, healthy, and properly formed [rechtschaffen] spiritual discrimination arises and is obtained [folget und erlanget wird] in matters [Artickelln] of faith and religion, and in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. This [discrimination] is my desire for you from my heart, noble and beloved lords and friends, along with my offering [erbietung]<sup>3</sup> to you of everything of value which I am able to do by the grace of God. Dearly beloved friends and fellow-companions in [lit.: of] eternal life, in response to your Christian and friendly entreaty and desire that I should impart to you my criticism or judgement [Iudicium oder Proba] regarding the Augsburg

Confession and the Twenty-one Articles which it contains, etc., I do not know how to deny you this [reply] either on grounds of the love of truth or of proper faithfulness, [and] especially in consideration of the fact that no one should take offense at this, since the Holy Spirit in St. Paul grants to all Christians [the right of] free judgement and commands them to test everything (every kind of doctrine, above all else) thoroughly, and to hold fast to that which is good, I Thessalonians 5 [21]. For these reasons I have considered [erkant] your question to be both proper and valuable, expressed as follows: Does the Augsburg Confession agree in all its parts with divine truth and with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures so completely that nothing contained in it might not be improved, changed, or surrendered, etc.? To this question my answer and judgement will follow.

There are three concepts contained in this inquiry: improvement, change, and surrender, which are all to be carefully considered in matters of faith, although among men there is nothing so good, perfect, true, and assured that it might not be further improved, made richer, or rendered still more perfect.<sup>4</sup> Time changes all things, the Only Word of God alone excepted: He remains in His essence unchanged and continuous forever [ewiglich weret].

Now because Almighty God, from His boundless compassion, has let a wonderful light<sup>5</sup> arise in our times, [a light] by which we might see and recognize in what grave error we had been in times past, how far [we were]

from His Word and from a properly ordered [rechtschaffen] worship of God, and [how far we had] fallen from His truth, and, indeed, that this apostasy has lasted so many hundreds of years [so that] we might almost say that it took place shortly after the time of the Apostles, and that it has increased itself with so many errors, it is certainly not easily possible that everything should be set to rights [restituirt] and returned to the first Apostolic Order and to the perfection of pure doctrine so quickly in only a few short years, without [bevorab bey] any heavy opposition.

THAT GOD IN MATTERS PERTAINING TO RELIGION DOES NOT GIVE EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE, OR AT ONE TIME.

God the Merciful is moderate with His gifts in such a way that He does not give everything at once, nor does He pour them all into one man, nor strew everything in one place, but [rather, He] brings them forth gradually, one after the other, as to Him seems right [lößlich] and as seems useful, comprehensible, and [making for] improvement among men. This is because everything has its time, and every undertaking under heaven has its hour, as the Wise Man says, Ecclesiastes 3[:1]. We have many examples of this in the Holy Scriptures, which need not be related here.

Nevertheless, God did not reveal all things all at once even to His beloved Apostles, through whom He



wished to convert the whole world and lead the flesh into a new existence [wesen]; we read of this in the Acts of the Apostles. For this reason it must certainly [come as] no surprise that He in our own times with the ascendancy (we might almost say, the beginning) of the renewed [ernewerten] Gospel has withheld anything necessary, which, however, He will grant us in the future [in response] to our earnest prayers and petitions, as well as anything else [we might need].

Now whoever understands anything of this wretched, evil world and has read the Prophets concerning these last dangerous times and has observed anything regarding the condition of the church, and who has taken the general godlessness and our great thanklessness towards God more seriously to heart, will be able easily to figure out that everything has not yet come to pass [i.e.: has reached the state of perfection] which some people suppose it has.

Hence, we ought to practice more humility ourselves and learn to conduct ourselves more gently in matters pertaining to religion; no one ought to judge or damn others lightly, but in the great fear of God (Who alone desires to be the Master [in such matters]) ought one to take proper notice, with thanksgiving, of all His manifold works and gifts. Indeed, we should consider at all times that He is an Almighty, Perfect, Omniscient God, and remains so; we, however, are poor, weak, ignorant men.

Since this is really the case, no one must be surprised if even the Augsburg Confession (as it appears both in a rapid examination, and after careful consideration) does not in every part or in all its points agree so congruously [schnurrichtig] with divine truth and the Holy Scriptures that nothing contained in it might not be improved, changed, or rendered still more perfect. We also do not think [achten] that one ought to hold whatever is contained in it to be either the Word of God or Articles of Faith, but only so much [of it as is] found in Holy Scripture, and the things which one may reasonably establish from [the Scriptures], even as Augustine, Jerome, and all the ancient [alten] teachers of the church have ever and always done, [in that] they have desired to establish their confessions and teachings according to the Scriptures.

For these reasons our simple answer to the above-mentioned question is that we hold: In the above-named [Augsburg] Confession there are indeed things which might be bettered, changed, or stated in a still more perfect way. To do this, however, a healthy, pure judgement, careful consideration, diligence, and circumspection are necessary [wil gebühren], so that this will not be done [simply] for the sake of man, or, to please men, as some might hold. [No, rather,] let it be changed at that place wherever it is praiseworthy to God, confessing Christ, honorable to His truth, and valuable for our salvation [to do so]. If these precautions are not

taken, many people might, under the guise of improvement, insert something of human devising [menschlicher satzung] which would be more cumbersome than upbuilding for the conscience, more harmful than strengthening for Christian freedom (which Christ has obtained for us with His precious blood), and which would be more detrimental than advantageous for the good which is already contained in [the Confession]<sup>6</sup>. In short, it might well happen [as a result of injudicious correction] that in the good name [gestalt] of Church order, of peace, and of Christian obedience, that one might establish many things from which, finally, in the sight of both God and men [there] would issue more disgusting, disturbing, and discordant [things], rather than love, peace, and blessing. We see this now plainly in the Catholic Church [Papstumb] for under such a spiritual appearance of reformation, they have arrogated to themselves not only all the goods of the world, but have even assumed for themselves authority over both body and soul, and cast everyone under it, be he Emperor, King, Prince, or lord of any lands or peoples.

Thus, [watchful] eyes will be necessary here, if one desires to reform this or that matter, so that one considers all the ramifications, and so that one really improves that which before God [truly] is to be improved for the sake of pur doctrine and a good conscience, that one might be able to sustain with the clear testimony of the Holy Scriptures that [the change] really makes for improvement. Let the rest remain until its own time,

until the other things [die andern] have also come to pass, which God will grace with His truth.

Now because the Confession has become a common property and creed, and is not [simply] for one person alone, it will be necessary for each person who subscribes<sup>7</sup> to it to consider carefully in which things before God they rightly, and which wrongly [judged], as well as to determine which [parts] may be improved and how the truth may be more closely approached. [This is] just how truth itself must be perceived by each person individually, if he wishes to be preserved by it; indeed, it is [in] just this way that each person must make his own defense at the Last Judgement, and no one can make it for anyone else. This is why we have said that it is vitally important that careful consideration and a sharp spiritual discrimination are necessary in this matter and in all matters [Artickeln] if one desires to have the truth pure and clear and to keep it holy in these dangerous times.

MAY ANYTHING IN THE SCRIPTURES OR PERTAINING TO DIVINE TRUTH  
BE SURRENDERED IN THE NAME OF PEACE?

In matters of faith there is much danger connected with surrendering, especially when [it happens] because of fear or the favor of men, because of temporal affairs [zeitlichs genachs], or for the sake of tranquility and peace, [especially when] the conscience is not taken into proper consideration in such a case. For this reason the

servants of the Word, especially in these times, are in a difficult and dangerous position, for reasons they can easily comprehend.

For these reasons, in spiritual matters [handeln] (in which the honor of God and our own eternal salvation are concerned) we must not surrender, compromise, or turn aside from the Word of God and from recognized [erkanter] truth, as often may be necessary in physical, temporal things, for the sake of peace and love. Physical [things] pass away despite [human concern] for, in the course of time, they decay and are destroyed; God's Word, however, remains to eternity. All His Works abide forever: one can neither add to them nor detract from them, as the Preacher says, Ecclesiastes 3[:14], so that, in short, one may neither stray from nor surrender even so much as a hairsbreadth from [anything] which is God's Word or is of God.

To establish this the more firmly [we remark that] God forbade this [surrender] expressly by Moses's testimony, as it was written in his Fifth Book, Deuteronomy 4[:2]: You shall not add anything to what I have commanded you, and you shall take nothing from it, so that you keep the commandments of the Lord your God. And further: You shall not add anything to that which we do here today, as anyone thinks to be right. In short, everything that I shall command you, keep [it], to live according to it. You shall not add anything to it, nor take anything away from it, [Deuteronomy 12:32]. [Further he adds] that one should not even swerve by one word either to the right hand or to

the left, [Deuteronomy 28:14].

In order, however, that no one should say that this only applies to the Jews, etc., we see in the Gospel that Moses with all his doctrines was pointing to Christ (in whom is all perfection), and he testifies concerning Him in all his writings. The Lord Christ says this to the Jews: If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he has written concerning me, [John 5:46]. In Matthew [5:17] He spoke of this Himself: You should not presume that I have come to abolish either the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish, but to fulfil, for I tell you in truth that until heaven and earth pass away neither the smallest letter, nor even the smallest part of a letter will pass away, until it has all come to pass. In another place He says: Whoever is faithful in the smallest [thing] will be faithful in large [ones] as well, and whoever is faithless in the smallest [things] will be unfaithful in large [ones] as well, [Luke 16:10].

It follows from all of this, that in surrendering in matters of religion this distinction must be made: If anything is found to be improper which we undertake, teach, or believe in the worship of God, we should surrender it or correct it willingly and without delay, as soon as we have recognized it. Indeed, we should publish it ourselves and get rid of it, as has indeed happened in the past, to some extent at least.

However, [with regard to] whatever is proper, true, and founded in God's Word, it will not become any

Christian to surrender even the smallest point, thereby [attempting to] avoid God's punishment, ban, and condemnation. Rather, for the sake of God's honor and for his [a Christian's] own soul's salvation, it is incumbent upon him to forsake both body and life for this cause, and to suffer willingly on this account, to bear the cross of Christ for the sake of truth, for which he should certainly be prepared to suffer. Whoever remains steadfast to the end will be saved, says the Lord [Revelation 2:10]. And the Spirit of God declares in the Proverbs [30:5-6]: Every word of God is filled with light; they are a shield to those who trust in them. Add nothing to His words, so that He [might] not punish you or that you be found full of lies. We have seen above that one should not take anything away. How, then, could anyone surrender anything from the Word of God or anything which is founded upon or within it?

Thus the Gospel and our Christian faith testify to us that Christ is Truth itself, as He says: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, John 14 [6]. If He is the truth, and one surrenders something of the truth, it must indisputably follow that he is surrendering Christ Himself, for He is indivisible, indeed, even in the smallest truth, so to speak, He is whole [and entire] in Himself.

Thus, as far as the Gospel is concerned, it is not, indeed, proper either to yield any part of truth at all, or to surrender anything from it, for one would thereby be surrendering Christ Himself. The Lord has truly

warned about this, when He says: If you will remain faithful (that is, steadfast and without hypocrisy) in my word, you are my disciples and will perceive truth, and the truth will make you free, John <sup>o</sup> [132].

Now if the accepted, perceived truth of Christ is to make us free eternally before God, if we must remain in it without wavering, how, then, might we become free if we willingly surrender it for the sake of temporal affairs? [Or how shall we become free] if we depart from [truth] for the sake of men [and enter] into falsehood, error, or lies once again?

In short, the eternal immovable Truth, God and His holy Word, Christ, neither can nor will bend to serve our purposes, [neither can nor will] direct themselves towards our deeds of omission or commission; on the contrary, we should rather direct ourselves according to them (My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways, says the Lord.). Indeed, as far as the heaven is high above the earth, so are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts, Isaiah 55 [12, 9].

For these reasons I say that we poor men should direct ourselves toward God, not He towards us; we should allow Him to remain with His Word as our God, Lord, and Master, steadfastly; from Him we should not turn aside, as we have heard, either to the right hand or to the left, as it is written in Joshua 23 [16].

This is the first matter to be considered from the Scriptures in relation to the questions [raised above],



whether in the received religion anything might be improved, changed, or surrendered. If on this account this should be of interest to anyone, he might well ask: whether in such a case one should surrender God's Word or the doctrines of men, truth or error, improper or proper [doctrine] (for there is no middle ground between the two: either the tree is good or [it is] bad; whoever is not with me is against me; whoever is not gathering with me is scattering, says the Lord [Matthew 12:33; Luke 11:23].); after this short summary [anzeigen] of the command of God, he will know how to proceed further in this [consideration].

As far as the Confession itself is concerned, because there are so many Articles in it and they contain so many and various materials, each [item] must be sought in its own Examination Section [Proba] and each [doctrine] must be observed and tested in the light of faith and with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, if one is to seriously [anders] write or judge anything basic regarding it. Hence, we will take them up one after the other, in the name of God, and share our small consideration of them, in as short a space as may be, attacking no one, but seeking the truth for the improvement of all, simply with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

Inasmuch, however, as Christian Judgement must remain free, to each according to his conscience [in matters] of truth, and there must be no respect of persons in it, if it is to be pleasing to God, we pray for the sake of the love of truth and of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, if

these writings should be [more widely circulated: welter kämen], no one should think ill of us, nor read them in a nasty way, even were we not to give our assent to all the Articles, for faith is always a free gift of God, hence, [spiritual] perception among Christians must always, concerning all doctrines, remain free, so that Christian freedom remains uninjured, as Paul teaches: Test everything; whatever is good, keep that [I Thessalonians 5:21].

Moreover, because no one is so apt, so wise, clever, learned, or so holy and understanding that he does not err or commit some blunder at some time or other, much less [wir schweigen] that he alone knows all things (especially the high mysteries of faith and of the Kingdom of God), or might appear so soon to be perfected [in them], it must not be troublesome for any Christian (especially as there is so much at stake for him both physically and spiritually) if his faith were to be tested [probirt] and that which was still deficient [ausstendig] or in need of improvement should be pointed out and warned against in a friendly manner so that in [conjunction with] the Word of God it might be further meditated upon. In this way occasion might be given for the further purification of doctrine and for the Gospel to appear ever more brightly.

Such [spiritual] judgement must always be free in the Christian Church, [practiced] with love, discipline, and honorableness. Paul says: Everyone is permitted: if a revelation comes to one who is sitting [and listening], let the first one be still, I Corinthians 14 [30] (which

true Christians always permit to everyone in all their teaching, preaching, writing, and assertions). [In this way] each member may freely extend his hand to the others for the edification of the Body of Christ, until we all shall have attained to that unity of faith and experience [erkantnus] of the Son of God, [and have attained to] perfect manhood, which is in the measure of the perfect maturity [Alter] of Christ our Lord. May He grant us His Holy Spirit, that we may be really [of one mind: recht dran] with Him; then the whole world will not be able to destroy even one hair of our [heads], and the gates of hell will be even as unable to overcome us. To Him, because of His revealed Gospel, be praise, honor, and glory forever.--Amen.<sup>9</sup>

CHRISTIAN FAITH IS A FREE GIFT OF GOD: HENCE, IT MUST NOT SUFFER ANY COMPULSION.

Before we consider the Articles themselves, it will not be out of place [übell schicken] if we discuss further in line with the matters presented above, something regarding the freedom of Christian faith, and it might also be considered whether with regard to our religion in certain places, etc., and against our opponents at this time it might be advantageous [to do so]. For it is true at one and the same time that the Christian faith is the free gift of the Holy Spirit, as it is a free present of God. For these reasons no man is able to grant it or to take it away,

even as everyone must live out [geleben] his own faith.<sup>9</sup> It must follow directly from this that no one, be he Pope, Bishop, etc., or whoever he will, is able with the full right of his authority to compel or bring [any one] by force to faith. Even so little ought he to hate him or envy him, therefore, if he has not received this gift from God.

This is not to imply, therefore, that it must be permitted to everyone to act or to teach according to his own wickedness or conceit against the Christian faith, nor that false doctrine and the improper worship of God must be tolerated. Nay, rather, insofar as what we say here concerns true faith and the experience of Christ, one must, according to the usage of love, bear with him patiently; one must also pray for him to God, not ceasing [to use] friendly warnings and persuasions, until God later comes to his aid. In this way the faithful person will more readily invite, encourage, and incline his neighbor to faith with [his] good example, patience, and all manner of blessings as much as possible with healthy, pure doctrine in peace, love, and harmony. [This is much better] than to compel him to it by mistaken means, or by attempting to talk him into it [dess wollen bereden] when God (on whom all things depend) has not yet put it into his heart.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WORSHIP OF GOD IN THE OLD AND  
NEW TESTAMENTS, OF THE LAW AND OF THE GOSPEL.

In the Old Testament and among the Jews there was

indeed a forced faith, religion, and worship of God [Gottesdienst]; even as it was bound up with [required] times, places, and persons, it was enforced with the sword and physical punishment according to the prescription [inhalt] of the Law of Moses. Paul calls this the office of the letter, which kills. It should continue no further than the time of righteousness and improvement, Hebrews 9 [9-11], that is, until the coming of Christ who has fulfilled all things and who has established [herfür bracht] the Office of the Spirit, who gives life, the true, perfect [Office], that is, the Gospel of grace and the true worship of God.

The Pope has, however, at various times, enforced his ceremonies, worship of God, force, and power over us from the Law of Moses; in this way he has robbed us of our Christian freedom and has mixed Christianity up with Judaism for the sake of his own advancement; he has burdened our consciences with unbearable laws, etc. [By these means] the whole Catholic Church, with its statutes, laws, and ceremonies, has become little more than a new Judaism; this has been deplored and many learned men at many times have remarked [this] and have both spoken and written concerning it.

Thus it is no longer appropriate for us in the Gospel to deal in the mosaic manner, much less in the Catholic manner and way, in matters of faith. Even in the New Testament and among Christians (as the appointed of the Lord are called) there neither can nor may be any

enforced faith or unwilling religion or worship of God. [Nay, rather], there must be a free willing worship of God which proceeds from a good, freely willing heart. Neither from sadness nor necessity, says Paul, but God loves a cheerful giver, II Corinthians 9[:7].

The Gospel is a teaching of the heart, not of law. It possesses the Office of the Spirit, as mentioned above, II Corinthians 3[:3]. The Holy Spirit, however, inspires [geistet] where, when, and as He will, John 3[:7]; I Corinthians 12[:7-11]. He does not permit Himself to be bound, coerced, or restricted by anything external. [This is so indeed] even less than is the wind able to be contained, overpowered, or captured. For these reasons any free people of goodwill whom God has chosen for himself who desire to belong to the New Testament, to the Gospel, and to the teaching of the Lord Christ, and who bring along, by preventient grace, a very good heart in which the seed of the Word of God is preserved and bring forth much fruit in patient [may do so].

Coercion of conscience and the human doctrines of law are never of any value [thun nimmer gut] in matters of faith, even as they can have no standing before God on that account. [Coercion] indeed, makes hypocrites and double dealers with whom, as the Lord says, it is worse now than formerly, but it is not able to make even one Christian: they all come from Christ. They must all be born anew from above and [must] be taught by God, John 3[:5]; 6[:45]. Your anointing will teach you all things,

John says. [I John 2:27] and Christ Himself says: Those who truly pray to God will do so in spirit and in truth, John 4[:23].

HOW THE EXTERNAL WORSHIP OF GOD IS VIEWED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, AND WHY IT WAS INSTITUTED.

[This is] not [to say] that the external worship of God, the preaching of the Gospel, the Sacraments, and church discipline are thereby cast away, or that the worship [Dienst] and ministers of the Word of God should thus be despised; no, that is far [from my meaning]. [It is rather to be inferred] that this [external] service is ordained by God only for the external man, to warn, remind, and incite him to the obedience of the Spirit and to instruct him in the experience and the blessings of Christ (these alone are able to alter, improve, and make right the foundations of the heart). Thus [the external service] remains for the external man, as his remembrance, praise, and thanksgiving to God.<sup>10</sup>

For this reason, the conscience in the New Testament may not be bound to any external thing, no matter how holy it may appear, nor may it be burdened or compelled thereby. Rather, it must remain standing, unencumbered by all external worship of God, for Christ Jesus the Lord, the Ruler and King of the consciences, indeed, the Inhabitant of all believing hearts. It [the conscience] must be directed in everything towards Him as the sole Executor of

this Testament, [as well as] directed to His inward work and Kingdom, so that the Word of Life and the grace of God in Jesus Christ might maintain their free progress, and [in this way] might be properly distinguished from the work of the servant [Dieners], even as the inward is distinguished from the outward, the master, from the servant, and God, from His created things in every [act of] the worship of God. In this way that which belongs alone to God and is appropriate to His grace is neither attributed nor given to any created thing [creatur].

Whether, however, these things have truly been perceived in the acts [hendeln] of faith of former times, and whether man has not robbed God of His honor, in that he has attributed to himself what was only appropriate to Christ and God, have now, God be praised! become bright, clear, and evident, with the unmasking of the Catholic Church, and of everything which had followed from [that institution].

#### ON THE APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH.

For as soon as one in the church presumes to surrender the work of God alone, that is, faith, namely, [by] compelling everyone to it and holding them there by force, [then] the servants [of the Word] have [already] begun to grow in pride, greed, and overconfidence; then [they presume] to distribute grace and indulgences, and have even forgotten the office of the Holy Spirit and



claimed the whole power and authority of God for themselves, even to forgive sins and to confer the Holy Spirit. In these things [they] have fallen ever further and further from Christ and His spiritual judgement, so that they have, as [we] might say, mixed everything up together and corrupted the pure, sound doctrine of Christ, darkened the bright light so much that they have finally preached the Romish faith as the true Christian Faith, given out their ceremonies to be the true worship of God, taught their laws [as if they were] the true Commandments of God, [and] asserted their own authority in place of God's authority, etc. [Thus, they have] burdened the whole of free Christianity with the yoke of servitude, even as they have led uncounted souls into [such] a labyrinth, that they are to be pitied even today.

From this single example we may easily perceive for our own times (insofar as we do not desire to be a deliberately corruptive [influence]) in what sort of manner and with what discretion, spirit, and foresightedness [we are] to deal in matters of faith under the Gospel [beim Evangelio], in order that Christian freedom might never be injured, since the Gospel was actually instituted by Christ to be preached only for the elect,<sup>11</sup> that is, for those who belong to the Kingdom of Heaven. This is written, for example, in Acts 13[:43]: And as many of them became faithful as were destined for eternal life. [And] in the same way that faith is not for everyone, II Thessalonians 3[:2], the Gospel of Christ is also not for everyone.

For these reasons it is obvious that the conscience remains free and no one may be compelled to faith.

This is mentioned by us for no other reason (as God who knows all hearts knows) than to honor Christ the ruling Lord, and [to bring] us all to blessed happiness, peace, love, and unity, so that we might remain together for a long time without tumult, factions, or sects, as they are commonly called. For just as Christ does not desire to have any forced worship of God, nothing can more embitter the hearts of men nor more easily engender misfortune and disunity than that one should think to compel another to faith by force, or to coerce him to that against his conscience which God has not yet granted him, much less [wir schweigen] that he cannot perceive in his own conscience that it is right.

This is what our Lord Christ says in the Gospel: Everything that you wish that people would do to you, do that to them, for that [daas]<sup>12</sup> is the Law and the Prophets, Matthew 7[:12]. On the contrary, whatever we do not wish to have done to us, we should refrain from doing to others.

Now, since we recognize that such an opinion regarding the freedom of Christian faith will not yet please all our brothers, we nevertheless hold that it is the truth and that it accords properly with the Scriptures, as you have now heard in part. It also does not become anyone worse than the servants of the crucified Lord Christ to compel people in any way at all, nor to drive them by force, nor to make up new laws, nor, contrary to the com-

mand of Christ, to do that [daas] to men which we do not want the Pope to do to us. This renders our doctrine suspicious; [it makes] the Catholics stiff-necked, and our prominent men mistrustful. There is the suspicion that we would [like to] set up a new authority for ourselves, or that we desired finally to quench the gifts of the Holy Spirit, destroy His office and the whole Kingdom of the free Lord Jesus Christ.

THAT IN CHRISTIANITY CHRISTIAN FREEDOM MUST BE MAINTAINED  
ABOVE ALL OTHER THINGS.

Therefore in matters of religion Christian freedom must be protected above all other things. Concerning [Christian freedom] from the first rise of the Gospel down to our own times many things have been taught and written, by which the Almighty God helped [to free] us from the tyrannical yoke of the Papacy, and graciously led us out from narrow [confines] into a broad [place]. For these reasons we [are] obligated to render Him praise and thanks as well as all reverence for His Christian freedom. Even at this very day (so far as we see it) the potentates of our opponents, especially the good-hearted ones, might not be softened, broken, and drawn from their persecution and brought to the Gospel any more easily than by the proper explanation and declaration of peaceful Christian freedom, which Christ has procured for us with His blood.

Christian freedom, however, is not the freedom of the flesh. Rather, it is the freedom of the spirit

and the conscience. It is not such a freedom as would withdraw from the authorities [Oberkeit] their order, honor, and proper obedience, [nor such as would] give occasion to men to sin, nor to live wickedly, disobediently, or wantonly; no, that is not [our meaning]. Rather, it is the freedom which was graciously procured for hearts, souls, and consciences faithful to Christ [Christgleubigen] for their salvation by His blood. In this way man is first freed from the law of sin and death, if by the Spirit of God in Christ he has been made righteous [gerecht], and his sins are forgiven him, as Paul says: The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death, Romans 8[:2]. It is this kind of freedom which the Spirit of Christ brings with Him, [for] He is also a Spirit of love, obedience, peace, and of all goodness and blessedness.

Saint Paul speaks thus concerning Christian freedom and the Christian when he says: You, however, dear brothers, have been called to freedom; only see to it that thereby you do not make freedom a place [raum - area to work in] for the flesh; rather, in love serve one another, etc., Galatians 5[:13]. Peter says on the same subject: Be obedient to all human order for the Lord's sake, to the king as to the rulers, or to the officeholders as to his own emissaries, etc., as free men and not as if you had freedom as a cover for evil, but as the servants of God be honorable to everyone, etc., I Peter 2[:17].

This is now the first part of Christian freedom,

that we, after our redemption by Christ should no longer serve the evil spirit and sin [which leads to] death. Rather, by the grace He has procured for us which has appeared to all men, Titus 2[:11], [we should] become pious, obedient, virtuous, peaceful men.

In the second place [these things] should also be considered in regard to Christian freedom. Because Christ has released us from the kingdom of the evil spirit, of sin, and of eternal death, and has transferred us graciously into the kingdom of grace, and desires to be our Lord and God, so that the heart, soul, and conscience in Christianity might be preserved for Christ alone and kept free for the word of His grace, so that He by the Holy Spirit (as well as in conjunction with the public church services, which we do not wish to abolish on any account, as mentioned above) might inwardly teach, rule, and lead [them] out to eternal life. Thus the consciences of Christians under the New Testament [should] not be burdened with any external things, statutes, or ceremonies in the service of God (as if they were necessary to salvation). Rather, they [consciences] should be kept completely free for their Lord and King, Christ. Moreover, with regard to all external things, they should be directed only to Him and to the rule of His grace.

One alone is your Master, who is Christ, says the Lord, Matthew 23[:9].

Paul wrote thus to the Galatians concerning this freedom when the false apostles sought to burden them with

external regulations on their conscience, and had already taken many of them captive from their freedom of the Gospel to the Law of Moses: That Jerusalem which is above, that is the free [city]; which is the mother of us all, etc. We are now, dear brothers, not the children of the slave woman, but of the free woman. Continue, therefore, in the freedom with which Christ has freed us, and do not let yourselves be yoked again with the yoke of slavery, etc. For in Christ neither circumcision nor foreskin is of any value, but faith which is active through love, Galatians 4[:31], 5[:1, 6].

Paul says this is to serve the elements, not God, Galatians 4[:3, 9].

From this it is now clear that Christians, with the assistance of Christian freedom for the sake of their consciences, are not bound to any external worship of God, ceremonies, or church discipline, nor to any time, place, or persons. Rather, they are bound for conscience's sake in Christ alone to faith (to such a faith which is active through love). For this reason one neither can nor should bring anything of external ceremonies upon their consciences, nor desire to burden them with it. Rather, these things should be permitted to be let standing as a practice, warning, discipline, and remembrance, for the outward man to the praise and thanksgiving, and for the benefits and grace of Christ.

Paul repeats this freedom again further on in the Sixth Chapter [of his Epistle, Galatians 6:15], where he

says: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor foreskin are of any value, but a new creature. Here, however, is not the place to explain in detail what the new creature is, more than to say that according to St. Paul's description [it is] such a man who has died in Christ and risen again, whose life is hid with Christ in God. Colossians 3[:3]. For this reason his conscience neither may nor can be burdened with any external things as necessary to salvation, as may be easily ascertained if these words of Paul are considered further.

For this reason also Paul says, Colossians 2[:16], after he has declared the blessings of Christ and of His sufferings, as well as the liberation of the conscience by Christ: Do not now let anyone trouble your conscience regarding food or drink, or on account of special days, such as holy days, or new moons, or sabbaths, which are the shadows of that which was to come, whereas the [reality, lit: body, corper] is in Christ. Thus let no one change your goal, etc., which all serves to say that no one should let himself be turned away from Christ Jesus to seek anywhere else salvation and blessing than in Him. Are then blessing and salvation in Christ alone? Yes, as it is written in Acts 4[:12]; thus, with the assistance of Christian freedom, no external church service, ceremonies, created things, or whatever, may be brought forth as necessary to salvation (even though it may well serve thereto), nor may the conscience be encumbered with it [in these circumstances].

WHAT THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION CONTAINS REGARDING CHRISTIAN  
FREEDOM.<sup>13</sup>

Regarding Christian freedom, however, there is something touched upon in the Augsburg Confession, under the title of The Power of Bishops.<sup>14</sup> There it stands written: That bishops do not have power to ordain or to impose whatever is contrary to the Gospel, as Canon Law teaches, Dist. 9. Now it is contrary to the Gospel to make or to impose Traditions whose import is that we should be reconciled to God, earn forgiveness of sins, and make [our own] satisfaction for sins. For in this way the honor due to Christ is taken away [from Him] and claimed for these external dogmas. Furthermore: there is the common error [erroneous assumption] that there must be such an external worship of God in the New Testament, as there is in the Law of Moses, and that Christ must have commanded the Apostles and bishops thus to institute such ceremonies as the worship of God and [made them] necessary [thereto], so that without them no one should be a Christian, and that Christian holiness [Heiligkeit] is one such external thing [wesen], etc. Whence have the popes and bishops this power to encumber the church and consciences in this way, especially if so many clear testimonies forbid the establishment of traditions, such as [making] worship of God [in public] necessary to earn forgiveness of sins, or as essential parts for salvation? This is what the Confession says. Finally: No one should



encumber the Church and make those things to have sin [in them] which the Gospel wishes to have free. Such [things] are called worthless worships of God, Matthew 15 [3, 9]. As regards the solemnities themselves, however, and other church-disciplines, one should thus hold that the bishops and priests may keep discipline [mögen ordnung machen], not that it thereby becomes [true] worship of God, or earns the forgiveness of sins, or is a necessary thing for salvation, to encumber the conscience with it. Rather, it is for the sake of external discipline that this takes place in an orderly and peaceful fashion in the church, etc. One can see from this what Christian freedom is able to do in external matters, and that neither pope, bishop, nor priest with their jurisdiction, statutes, or ceremonies is able to encumber the soul and the conscience freed by Christ, nor may they enact anything [else] as necessary to salvation.

WHETHER CHRISTIAN FREEDOM EXTENDS TO THE CEREMONIES, SACRAMENTS,  
OR CHURCH USAGES WHICH CHRIST HIMSELF HAS INSTITUTED.

At this point the question presents itself: Does the public worship of God [Gottesdienst] of the New Testament belong to Christian freedom; that is, is the conscience to be burdened with the things which the Lord Christ Himself established and commanded to be performed after Him, such as Sacraments, Baptism, Communion [Nachtmal], the

preaching of the Gospel, the [office of the] keys, absolution, the ban, etc., with regard to external [observance] is concerned? must these things be used as necessary to salvation?

Because this is such a difficult question in our own times (in the Catholic Church, where salvation is tied to external works, all these things are necessary to salvation, and are impressed [getrieben] on the conscience not only with the ban [of excommunication] but also with [the threat] of eternal damnation), we will gladly give an accounting according to that small [measure of light] which God has granted us, of what we believe and hold in these matters. If anyone can show us anything better from the Scriptures, we will receive it with good thanks.

In short, however, we do not know anything else than that that above-mentioned Christian freedom which Christ the Lord has obtained for all hearts faithful to Christ with His precious blood [remains] in every external worship of God in the New Testament, whatever it is, even as each must have its own reason for existence; so that even in those things which Christ Himself instituted, such as preaching, baptism, communion, etc., freedom must still remain. That Christ did not thereby establish any coercion of conscience, nor did he desire these to be necessary to salvation [we also know]. For if this had indeed been the case, salvation, eternal life, and the forgiveness of sins must have depended [gestellet] on external works, and from the beginning of the world all

men must have been condemned, and they are still condemned who have not made use of the external sacraments, or who still do not make use of them, and no inevitable reason might be urged against this which should, as some say, remove [abtreiben] this necessity.

It must follow from this that the Kingdom of God must be bound to [these means], which is not so, as the Lord says in the Gospel, when He says: The Kingdom of God does not come with external signs (ceremonies or observances [auffmerckung]): one will thus not say, Behold, here, or there it is, for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you [inwendig in euch], [Luke 17:21]. For this reason Christ abolished everything external as necessary to salvation (that is, for the Kingdom of God), and directed [our attention] toward the inward alone, and toward the Spirit. It is also for this reason that Paul says: The Kingdom of God does not consist of words, but of power, I Corinthians 4[:20]. There is also neither eating nor drinking, but rather righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14[:17]. In short, what is necessary to salvation is that without which no man may be made either righteous, holy, or saved, and without that, no one has ever become saved.

The Spirit it is who gives life: the flesh is of no value, John 6[:63].

Again: The Kingdom of God is not in words, but in power, I Corinthians 4[:20].

[As to the reasons] why our Lord Christ commanded

his disciples to preach the Gospel, to practice baptism, to observe the Communion and the other ceremonies, and what kind of work, service, and office they all incorporate-- there is not time to discuss this in great detail here.

[So much] is certain: they were not instituted by Christ in vain, nor were the disciples commanded [to observe them] to no purpose. For these reasons they should certainly not be despised. That, however, the Lord Christ should have bound salvation and His Kingdom to them, or have ensnared and burdened the conscience with externals as [if they were] necessary to salvation, we do not hold that this can be deduced or shown from the Holy Scriptures. Rather, we have [found] the contrary [to be the case], as you have heard in part.

In Luke 11 [10:42], the Lord says to Martha: One thing is (that is, for salvation) necessary. One, one thing alone, and no more, says the Lord. Thus He has encompassed the whole [matter] in this short summary, when He says: Truly, truly I say to you, whoever believes in me has eternal life, [John 6:47].

The seed of blessing, Genesis 22[:13] is the only thing necessary to salvation. Everything else must serve to that [end].

Behold, this is the only thing needful, by [means of] which all the saints from the beginning of the world forward have ever been saved. It is to this that all the prophets and the whole of the Holy Scriptures point, that is, that whoever believes in Christ will be saved and

[will] not come to destruction, and whoever does not believe in Him will be condemned. The word is near to you, says Paul, [Romans 10:8], that is, in your mouth and in your heart; that is the word of faith, etc: Jesus Christ our Lord. He it is who is that One Thing, concerning which He [spoke to that] Jew who boasted that he had kept all the commandments of God, Luke 18 [1<sup>o</sup>-23].

Now we ourselves have at various times written and taught that neither the sacraments, baptism and communion [which were instituted by Christ], nor circumcision and the sabbath, which were instituted by God Himself and were enjoined strictly to be observed, [can save us]; rather, it is faith in Jesus Christ alone which makes [one] righteous, pious, and saved. The Spirit it is which gives life, says the Lord [John 6:63]; the flesh is of no value, that is, to give life. Therefore no man, nor any outward ceremony or created thing is able to save us or to condemn us. Every public worship of God in Christianity must, rather, be free, so that the conscience remains unburdened thereby and [may] remain standing free to the Spirit of Christ inwardly. In the New Testament the external must regulate itself according to the internal; [it] must testify [thus] concerning it, and [it] must direct [the external] to the only Saviour Jesus Christ.

This freedom may be easily tested in the sacrament of baptism, in that the Lord said when instituting baptism: Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, [Mark 16:16]. Not, we repeat, whoever is not baptized, but whoever does

not believe, He says, will be condemned, so that to faith alone (which is from the essence of Christ) is given everything [pertaining] to justification and salvation, even as from unbelief everything is stripped away. By faith God cleanses the heart, Acts 15[:9]; whatever is not of faith is sin, Romans 14[:23].

Thus, even though the Lord Jesus spoke in the Communion to His disciples in the manner of a command: Do this in remembrance of me, [Luke 22:19], this command has in no sense penetrated to the conscience, nor is it to be taught as necessary to salvation, since Christian freedom is to be noted even from Saint Paul's description [of the institution] in which the Lord says: Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. [These words] Paul, following in [this] freedom, explains, saying: For as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you should announce the Lord's death until He comes, etc. But let each person test himself [I Corinthians 11:23] etc. Before this he says: This is not keeping the Lord's communion, etc. [I Corinthians 11:20].

From all the aforementioned we can now see in Christian freedom that although the communion is a splendid high festival and commemoration [begengknus] of the death of Christ, valuable and serviceable to all persons faithful to Christ, [the institution] is not such a command which is punished with the condemnation of the Lord, or in which salvation must necessarily be sought, [even] as the other commands in the New Testament [are], to which salvation is

also not bound. Whoever properly considers this "Do this in remembrance of me" will soon discover in which [things] salvation is dependent [gelegen], and how far the sacramental observance is obligatory, and for what reason it was instituted by Christ the Lord.

The commands of Christ, Matthew 10[:8]: Make the sick healthy; cleanse the lepers; raise the dead; drive the devils out.

Footwashing is also a command of Christ [John 13:4-14].

The sacraments and many other external things serve well to salvation, if Christ the Lord and Master works salvation in the heart, soul, and conscience Himself through the Holy Spirit, and establishes [there] His Kingdom. They do not, therefore, give salvation. That [thing] alone is necessary for salvation which gives salvation, which presents [it] to the heart, and, indeed, without which no one may be saved. For this reason one should distinguish carefully between that which gives [brings]<sup>15</sup> and presents salvation, and that which [only] serves thereto, which exhorts to the same, and furthers it among men. In this way men, be they pope, bishop, or the preachers and servants of the Word, will not be set up [auffgeworffen] as gods from whom salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven must be sought, nor that idolatry would be practiced in the case of any created things [Creaturen]. On the contrary, for God and to His Son Jesus Christ alone, our only High Priest, Teacher, Master, and Giver of salvation may His honor be purely kept, as is only proper.

Regarding this above-mentioned point we might, for the further confirmation of Christian freedom with regard to every external worship of God of the New Testament, bring forth more evidence from the Holy Scriptures, as well as from the Fathers [Leererern] [of the church], both old and new, if the occasion should require it. We know, God be praised, what Doctor Martin Luther has written in a proper and Christian manner concerning the Babylonian Captivity, and also regarding Christian freedom.

Whatever does not nourish [speiset] to eternal life is such a nourishment as is not necessary to salvation. Sacramental [i.e. external] eating does not nourish unto eternal life.

Therefore: John 6 [27]: Work for that food which is not destroyed.

Among other things there is an Article in the Confession which was submitted to the Diet at Augsburg [by Luther]<sup>16</sup> which reads as follows: That the secret confession should not be compelled by laws, even so little as the baptism, Sacrament, and Gospel should be compulsory; rather [they should be] free, etc. This is in the Eleventh Article. After that in the Twelfth Article [we read]<sup>17</sup>: That there is no doubt that there is and remains on earth one holy Christian church to the end of the earth, as Christ says in the last Chapter of Matthew [28:20]: Behold I am with you to the end of the world. Such a church is nothing less than those who believe in Christ, etc.; it is not bound with laws and external pomp to time or place, to person or



appearance, says D. Luther.

We hold this to be properly confessed, taught, and written regarding Christian freedom and the church of Christ, that it is bound neither to this [place] nor to that, neither to Rome, Wittenberg, Zürich, to the Anabaptists [Teuffern] in Moravia [Iehrenland], nor to any other place. The Lord knows His own, says Saint Paul, [II Timothy 2:19], they may be whoever they are, and each one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, Joel 2 [32]. We stipulate, however, because some persons take it amiss from us, that it is well known that we do not write this because we despise the Christian assembly or any good church discipline or obedience which agrees with the Holy Scriptures, still less that we desire to abolish the Holy Sacrament of Christ. [We write this], rather, so that no one be compelled thereto, nor that salvation be bound to it, nor that forgiveness of sins be sought there through works, for all these [things] are detrimental and opposed to Christ, as well as injurious to Christian freedom, harmful to the conscience, and damnable.

In short, the Christian conscience in the New Testament may not suffer any compulsion regarding the external worship of God without idolatry. It cannot escape the snares of bondage and error as long as it must hold the visible sacraments and other external things to be necessary for salvation. From this ground all Anabaptism has sprung as well as the tyranny over souls in the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Zwinglian [churches],

and our health and salvation are bound to men [from the same cause]. You have been dearly purchased; do not become the slaves of men, says Paul, I Corinthians 7 [:23].

Even if the sacraments or other external worship of God were necessary to salvation, and by tyranny we were to be taken bodily captive (as may now happen to the Christians who are in Turkey)<sup>1<sup>a</sup></sup> it must follow that Christ with His Kingdom and eternal life must also be taken away from us [thereby]: that would be too dreadful to hear. On the other hand we know, God be praised, that it is necessary to salvation to be baptized inwardly in the blood of Jesus Christ and to be washed clean of sin, as well as to be fed spiritually to eternal life with His Body. This, however, is not bound to the Sacrament, so that no one might experience it apart from the use of [the Sacrament]; rather, it remains free with the Lord Jesus Christ and is received by faith.

That the Apostles, however, did not burden the consciences of Christians with any ceremonies, sacraments, or external church services, but, rather, declared and taught Christ and His grace as the only proper way to salvation, is clear from this, that Peter, Acts 5 [15:10], says: Why do you test God by laying the yoke on the necks of the disciples? which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, but we believe that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as they were. Although Peter is speaking there concerning the ceremonies of the Law, he nevertheless concludes clearly and unmistakably that

both the Christians in the Old Testament (when no sacraments had been instituted) as well as those in the New [Testament] are made righteous and saved in one and the same way, that is, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we also believe as you have heard; we thus hold ourselves free for Christ our only Saviour and Ruler of all the hearts and consciences faithful to Christ, [free also] for the universal independent Christian Church, and for the Christian freedom He has obtained for us regarding acts [händeln] of faith and conscience. The Lord Christ certainly has more people, without doubt, as at the time of Elijah, even though they do not stand with us entirely in the external worship of God and confession.

But that we do not wish to condemn anyone on account of the external worship of God, nor thereby cut off anyone from the grace of God and salvation, we have a splendid example in this matter, in that the Lord Jesus would not permit that man [einen] to be restrained who was casting out the devils in His name, and yet did not follow along outwardly with the disciples. This is what John says: *First, we saw one who drove out devils in your name, who was not following with us, and we forbade him, because he was not following along with us. Jesus, however, said: You should not have forbidden him, for there is no one who does a deed in my name who then would speak evil of me, Mark 9 [3<sup>o</sup>-9].*

For this reason the Lord also says: Judge not, so that you are not judged [gerichtet werdet], for with

whatever kind of judgement you judge, you will be judged, Matthew 7[:1-2]. Whoever boasts of Christ as his Lord and lives a life pleasing to God, him we should let stand free and unencumbered with external things, for the sake of his conscience. Thus we will avoid the accusation of Paul, who says: Who are you that you judge a strange servant? He stands or falls to his own master, etc. Further along he says: Each one must give his own accounting before God; therefore, let each one of us not judge the rest any longer, Romans 14[:4-13].

In this connection the saying of Peter belongs, Acts 10[:34], where he says: Now I know in truth that God does not look to the person, but among every people whoever fears Him and does right is acceptable to Him.

Now because all of this [testimony] is incontrovertible, we must all consider everything very carefully, fear God in everything, and proceed gently everywhere. In this way the servants of the Word will not become the masters over faith, as Paul forbids, II Corinthians 2 [1:24]. For the same reason, as Peter teaches, I Peter 5[:4]: The flock of Christ should not be compelled, but freely pastured, not for the sake of shameful gain, but from a good will, not as those who lord it over their people, but be examples for the flock, says Peter to the congregational leaders and you will receive the imperishable crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd appears, I Peter[:4].

On the contrary, then, it appears from these [considerations] that we must not compel, drive, or coerce anyone

to faith, the Sacraments, or to anything else, just as we should not encumber the consciences faithful to Christ with any external worship of Christ, nor should we let ourselves be taken captive by any man, pope, bishop, priest, or whatever. Rather, as servants of Christ we should let every man, for the sake of his own conscience, remain free and unburdened for his Lord, and we ourselves, as much as we are able, without regard to persons, should remain free and unentangled. We do not preach ourselves, says Paul, but Jesus Christ, that He is the Lord; we, however, are your servants for Jesus's sake, II Corinthians 4 [;5]. This, then, pertains to Christian freedom; it brings peace, love, and unity, [and] especially to the servants [it brings] kindness and good will for all good-hearted men. But if one should even try to bend the Scriptures against Christian freedom into some coercion such as a tyranny [does], in the manner of the popes, it will not endure any length of time, because it has been now made known and is certain and sure that neither [common] man nor servant [of the Word], even as no external thing or created being, may reach the sin in the heart, drive death therefrom, or plant love in its place. This is the office of the only Son of God Jesus Christ, who is able to transform the heart, heal its sickness, and make from a poor sinner a pious, righteous man. Why, then, should we drive each other any longer, or persecute one another on account of faith?

Whoever is drawn by the Father (as Christ Himself

says [John 6:44] that no one comes to Him unless the Father draw him to Himself) will come voluntarily to the Christian church. Such a person can then make blessed use of our service for his own edification, for we direct him to Christ and to His grace, and further we admonish his flesh to the obedience of the spirit. [He can make use of this service] insofar as he recognizes that neither Paul nor Apollos counts for anything in the work of justification, but that it is God alone who gives the increase, and He alone is powerful in the heart, I Corinthians 3 [6-7]; Jeremiah 17 [5-7].

There are several reasons why we have desired to explain these matters with Scriptural testimony more fully: First: so that men might know how the matter stands before God in matters [händelln] of faith and the Christian religion; that there is therein nothing surrenderable of whatever pertains to the Word of God and to divine Truth; how these [matters] must be dealt with with great care and foresight; etc.

Second, [we desired] that the point concerning Christian freedom (not the freedom of the flesh, but of the spirit) [be] properly explained, properly considered, and properly understood, and thus held in a Christian way to the honor of Christ and to the well-being of all of us.

For, as we said in the beginning [of this Epistle], we can scarcely imagine anything more useful, according to the small understanding God has granted us, by which we might approach nearer to peaceful unity, and by which our

opponents might be more easily helped, than that they should truly [recht] come to know Christ as their only Saviour, and that they should become properly informed on that account from the Scriptures regarding Christian freedom. In this way they would [come to] permit Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit to be the free Lord over the conscience and over the Christian faith. In this way also, avoiding the wrath of God, no Christian might injure any other either with words or with deeds, even as each one must live out his own faith before God.

Thus (we believe) the common peace, love, and obedience might be furthered the more; hearts would not on this account become embittered with each other, and in the future all things might be brought into good, proper order again, to the honor of God and the improvement of men. Thus also Christians would recognize, judge, and come to appreciate each other not according to ceremonies, as do the Jews with their circumcision, but according to the Spirit of Christ, love, peace, and blessedness, II Corinthians 5 [14-16].

Third, and finally: it would also be necessary among ourselves to concern ourselves more for Christian freedom, to meditate upon it much more frequently, because of the many weak consciences which are still, in part, confused, which still cling to external things, which still desire to be rebaptized, and cannot seek salvation with Christ alone through faith. It can also be observed as well that in the future neither pope, bishop, nor pastor,

whoever he may be, may not introduce a new coercion into the church of Christ so easily as formerly, nor can they burden the consciences any more [as easily as formerly].

Let the service and everything external keep its own place, so that consciences are not tangled up by them. [Let] the work of Christ, too, have its own place, unmixed with the service. Thus, according to the rule of Paul [let] the spiritual be appropriated for the spiritual, that is, the grace of Christ for the inward man, for the heart, soul, and conscience, and also [let] the physical [be appropriated] for the physical; that is, doctrine, preaching, sacraments, and other things appertaining to the church are ordained for the external man, for remembrance, for warning, for disciplining the flesh so that it becomes obedient to the Spirit and also that it becomes accustomed to prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to God. That we might thus properly distinguish everything, may the Heavenly Father grant us grace through His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

First we teach and hold unanimously [eintrechtiglich] following the decision of the Council of Nicaea, that there is one single divine Essence which is called, and truly is, God; and yet there are three Persons in that same single divine Essence, equally powerful, equally eternal, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all three



one divine Essence, eternal, without parts, of unlimited power, wisdom, and goodness, without end, one Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And by the word persona is understood not a part, not one quality in another, but that which is self existent, as the Fathers have used the word in these matters.<sup>19</sup>

#### EXAMINATION

This article concerning the [Holy]<sup>20</sup> Trinity of God we also hold, teach, and believe firmly, without vacillation or surrender, as the chief point of our Christian faith, which may not, indeed, be disputed, condemned [getadelt], or denied by any Christian with any reason or in any manner. [To do so] would be to deny the Gospel of John, in which our Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches that God is One in Three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one Essence in three Persons, three Persons, one God and Essence. In that [Gospel] He says [John 14:24, 26; 16:5, 7]: The Father has sent Him; He is the Son, and after Him the Holy Spirit will come, Who proceeds from the Father and is sent and given by Christ the Son. This is what the Council of Nicaea, the Athanasian Creed, and our Common Christian faith all contain and confess.

That the Confession, however, says: By the word Persona is not to be understood a part or a quality in another, but that which exists of itself, needs to be explained a bit further, because of the word eigenschafft

[quality]. Otherwise one might think that they wished to deny or mix up the different qualities of the three Persons in the unity of the divine Essence. This the Confession neither desires nor intends beyond all doubt. Rather, as each Person is in His own existence self-existent and is God, therefore to each is given His own personal condition and especial quality, by which each Person is distinguished from the others. The Father creates, the Son redeems, the Holy Spirit sanctifies, etc. Yet no Person acts without the others, even as none exists without the others, even though they are all three One God of one Essence, power, might, and honor, and according to their proper personal condition alone have their distinction, as the Gospel of John clearly testifies.

For this reason this Clause [Clause 1] might thus be improved: that by the word Person is not only understood one quality in another, but that [which] exists essentially itself in almighty power and glory, and has a self-existent existence [hypostasim, as a separate Person], so that the Patripasians (who deny the distinction of the personal qualities in the Triune Godhead) as well as other heresies in the confession of this Article might be denied and refused.

#### THE SECOND ARTICLE.

Further, it is taught that after the fall of Adam all men who are born naturally are conceived and born in sin, that is, that they all from their mothers' bodies

forward are full of evil lust and inclination, and cannot by nature have any true fear of God, any true love of God, or any true faith in God, that even the inborn disease and original sin are truly sin and condemn everyone under the eternal wrath of God who has not been born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article contains two points. The first concerns Adam's fall, the damage of original sin, and the depravity of human nature. The second concerns the new birth of man and his justification before God. Regarding the first point we hold as follows: All men have died in Adam, I Corinthians 15 [22]. Moreover, because of their first birth, that is, of nature, they are children of wrath, Ephesians 2 [3], as those who have been conceived and born in sin, Psalm 51 [5].

There is no one who is righteous, says the prophet, no, not one who has understanding, who seeks after God; they all turned away and become unfit; there is no one who does good, no, not one, etc. The way of peace they do not know. There is no fear of God before their eyes, Psalm 13 [14:1-3]; Romans 3 [10].

Thus the depravity of human nature is greater than human reason can comprehend; otherwise, the understanding wise heathens, such as Seneca, Plato, Socrates, and the like, might also have understood this Adamic evil. Only

the Spirit of God, however, Who discovers the depths, tests the heart and the reins [nieren], is able to reveal this to the heart and conscience, John 16 [Hebrews 4:12], and to make comprehensible to them whatever they do not know on account of sin and the wrath of God.

Thus, because man is completely depraved both in body and in soul, we hold with the Confession that not only the actual sin but also the inborn concupiscence [Erbsucht] of the evil affections and desires [are also] sin and condemnable in all men who have not been born again and made righteous.

That men are born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit, however, we hold with a distinction.<sup>21</sup> If it is understood [as referring] to the Spiritual Baptism of the heart, that is, of the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ and by the water of grace, we agree. Concerning this baptism Paul says that God saves us according to His mercy by the bath of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, Titus 3[:5]. This bath is such a baptism and bath that it not only washes the skin and cleans a man physically but it even cleanses, converts, and transforms his whole nature, heart, and conscience, so that from a depraved old man a new healthy man is made.

Zachariah 13[:1]: At that time the house of David and all the citizens of Jerusalem will have a free, open fountain against sin and uncleanness, etc. And I will pour clean water upon you, says God the Lord, that you might be made clean of all your uncleanness, and I will cleanse you

of all your idols, Ezekiel 36 [:25].

But if this [Article] were to be understood as [referring] to the external water-baptism, we could not subscribe to it for many reasons, but especially because we do not attribute the new birth (which is from above) and our salvation to any earthly created things or poor elements. We let [these things] remain in and with Christ and His Holy Spirit alone, otherwise all the men in both the Old and New Testaments must have been condemned and lost who were not baptized externally with water.

Hence, one must distinguish well here (as Peter did, I Peter 3 [:21]) and make this Article still more plain, so that Christ Who is the only Saviour of men (as well as the seed of all the children of God) be not excluded from [the work] of the new birth. In all things, rather, His honor is to be preserved and ascribed to Him alone.

#### THE THIRD ARTICLE.

It is also taught that God the Son became man, was born from the pure Virgin, and that the two natures are thus indivisibly united in one Person, and are one Christ, who is true Man, who was truly born, suffered, crucified, died, and was buried, that He might be a Sacrifice, not only for original sin, but for all other sin and to appease God's wrath.

It is also taught that that same Christ descended into hell, that He truly arose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, [is now] sitting at the right

hand of God, that He will rule eternally over all created things and have dominion, that He will sanctify, purify, strengthen, and comfort all those who believe in Him through the Holy Spirit, and that He will distribute to them life and every kind of gifts and blessings [gütter] and will provide defense and protection against the devil and sin. Also that the same Lord Christ will come publicly to judge the living and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed; and all kinds of heresies which are opposed to this Article are condemned.<sup>22</sup>

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerns the Incarnation, Passion, resurrection, and glory of Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, that He, for our sake, came in the flesh and became the sacrifice for all our sin, that He saved us through His bitter death, that He has obtained for us the grace of God and the Holy Spirit, which He even now, after receiving His kingdom, gives, donates, and distributes to all faithful [persons] along with every kind of spiritual treasure, and that He sits at the right hand [of God], and from thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. This Article is in all its points well and properly presented, and we are happy to subscribe to it.

For God loved the world so [much] that He (from boundless mercy) gave the Messiah, that is, His only-begotten Son, to die for us, so that all those who believe in

Him would not be lost, but would have eternal life, John 3 [ :16]. He promised this graciously shortly after Adam's fall, Genesis 3 [ :15]; 22 [ :17], and in the fullness of time [He] has brought it to pass. This is thus described in Matthew 1 [ :23], where the angel says: Behold (the Holy Virgin) will give birth to a son, whom you shall name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. Thus it pleased God that in no other was salvation than in His Son Jesus Christ. There is no other name given to men in which we should be saved, Acts 4 [ :12].

There is, however, in this Article, likewise, more to be considered (as also Saint Paul and all the Apostles, as well as the ancient church Fathers [Lerer] who followed them, unanimously concur) [in that] the Lord Jesus Christ desires not only to be recognized and known by us according to the flesh and in a historical manner, that is, not only by reason or according to His physical life and good deeds [wolthat], not only according to the history of this existence, that is, that He was born, died, taught, and lived, what He suffered for us, what He procured for us by His suffering and thereupon set in motion for us. Rather, He desires to be learned about and meditated upon [bedacht] more according to the Spirit and His [Christ's] new, glorified, completely heavenly existence as the ruling Lord and King of heaven and earth, as the eternal High Priest of the Fouse of God, as the Mediator of the New Testament, which He has procured by His blood, and as the Distributor and Deputy [gewalthaber] of the

riches of heaven, and indeed, to be experienced [erkant] as the great Mystery of all blessedness, to be received in faith, and to be thus understood. For this reason also, Paul says: Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, we do not know Him that way any longer, II Corinthians 5[:16].

In this way we will not only concern ourselves about that which Christ accomplished here in the days of His flesh, and what He procured for us, so that we not only cling to and remain with Christ in an external way according to the manner of the old man with a faith borne of reason [vernunftsglauben], but that with prayer, teaching, exhortation, and other [things] we might [reach the point where we would] perceive much more [clearly] in ourselves how Christ now by the Holy Spirit applies the riches of God He has procured, what He does even today in the office of grace, what He works in all faithful hearts, how he bears them to new birth in the Holy Spirit for eternal life, [how He] cleanses them spiritually, feeds, nourishes, comforts, strengthens, teaches, and renews, and leads [them] out into the Kingdom of God.

Such things, I say, must be considered by all Christians in the experience of Christ, even as it must be necessary for the ministers to teach Christ with His spiritual riches, office, and His distribution of grace, to present Him in their services, and to direct [men] to Him.

In this way in the Christian faith and in the experience of Christ not only God in flesh is properly



taught, understood, and considered, but also, on the contrary, the flesh in God: not only how God became Man and the Word became flesh, but what even now after the resurrection, glorification, and exaltation of Christ, the flesh in the Word has become, what the Man in God and from God is able to do today, how the Man [who was] in Christ has come into all the power, authority, strength, glory, and splendor of the essence of God, and has been perfectly received therein. [It is also to be considered] what is to be hoped for all other men who believe in Christ, through Him, and that there is no other way to heaven than through the body, flesh, and blood of Christ in which God dwells bodily with His whole fulness. Indeed, [it must be considered] that for us Jesus Christ the Son of God has been made for us in His whole Person [to be] wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and salvation, I Corinthians 1[:30]. For this reason Christians boast in nothing except in their Lord Christ and have nothing on which to build and in which to trust than on Him alone, even as they according to the great promise become here participants in the flesh of His divine nature, II Peter 1[:4]. Of this, may Christ be all in all, Colossians 3[:11].

Because all these [things] actually belong to the experience of Christ (concerning which this Article speaks [gestellt], although imperfectly and only in one part), it must also be included, taught, understood, and considered concerning Christ, concerning whose experience Paul has admonished [us] to good purpose to pray for the spirit of

wisdom and revelation, and for enlightened eyes of understanding, Ephesians 1[:17-13].

#### THE FOURTH ARTICLE.

And because men are born into sin and can neither keep God's Law nor love God from their hearts, it is taught that we by our works and satisfactions cannot earn forgiveness of sins, nor are we accounted righteous before God because of our works; rather, we obtain forgiveness of sins and are accounted righteous before God for Christ's sake because of grace by faith when the conscience experiences consolation in the promise of Christ and believes that forgiveness of sins will certainly be given to us, and that God desires to be gracious to us, will account us righteous and give us eternal life for Christ's sake, who by His death has reconciled [us] to God and has made satisfaction for sin. Whoever truly believes this will obtain forgiveness of sin, will be pleasing to God, and will be accounted righteous before God, for Christ's sake, Romans 3[:28], and 4[:5].<sup>23</sup>

#### EXAMINATION

We must, according to our free judgement, make careful distinctions [with regard to] this Article which treats of the powers and abilities of men and of the office of the grace of Christ.

First, then, we indeed also believe, teach, and

hold that man by nature cannot keep God's commandments, nor [can he] love God from the heart, still less that he can obtain forgiveness of sins by his own powers. Because in the Second Article the new birth has been mentioned, however, and since this new birth transforms the [old] nature and brings to it new powers and, indeed, a new heart and a new spirit, as are promised in the prophets, Jeremiah 31 [:33]; Ezekiel 11 [:19]; 36 [:26-7]. Accordingly, after this [transformation] a man must always have a different form than formerly when he was merely a natural man and still a child of wrath. Hence, such a reborn, new man is not only accounted righteous before God, but he is essentially righteous [wesentlich gerecht], so that his conscience not only receives consolation in the promise of the coming of Christ, but, in fact, bears Christ, his promised consolation, and the newly procured grace and His given righteousness himself by faith in his heart.<sup>24</sup>

This, then, is the true work of Christ and the office of His grace in the justification of the sinner, in that He, as stated above, cleanses, renews, and sanctifies the natural man by the Bath of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, re-creating a new man or creature from an old [man]. Concerning this [new] man, John writes in his Epistle: We keep God's commandments and do what is pleasing to Him, I John 3 [:22]. Further: In this we know that we are God's children if we love God and keep His commandments, etc., and His commandments are not difficult, I John 5 [:2-3]. And again: Whoever does right is

righteous, I John 3[:7]. This all [takes place] through Christ and His grace who leads us in the will of God to keep His commandments by His Spirit, and who desires to fulfill everything which might be lacking therein from His own satisfaction, if we continually cling to Him by a true faith.

Matthew 11[:30]: Christ says: My yoke is easy and my burden is light (that is, for new, reborn men); hence, the saying of Jerome is relevant: Whoever says that God commands impossible things, let him be anathema.<sup>25</sup>

Thus our whole righteousness, as well as the new birth, grace, forgiveness of sins, merits, and all the treasures of heaven reach us in and through Christ (as also on His account). [It is] not that these things remain outside us, nor that they are believed by the assent of faith [assensiva fide] as they say, in a purely historical manner; rather, the living faith, which is a gift of God, brings it home to us, lays it upon our hearts, makes it our own, assures and seals us thereby into the inheritance of eternal life, II Corinthians 1[:21-22].

Therefore whoever believes that he has received Christ and His Holy Spirit in the gift of faith into his heart, by whom he is born again and becomes a different, a new, man and a child of God, has indeed obtained forgiveness of sins and has become pleasing to God. Such a one God accounts to be righteous and will no longer impute to him his original sin, his evil inclination, or any other sinful thing which is still in his flesh, for Christ's sake.

Thus we understand Paul when he writes about justification [Romans 3] otherwise, no one could depend upon it. Let him believe and hold it obstinately as long as he wishes that Christ was born for his good, and died [therefor], this will still avail him nothing before God. Unless he, in the power of faith, dies to sin [von sünden abstande], works repentance in the name of Christ, and becomes a new, reborn person through Christ in the Spirit of His grace [nothing else matters].

Hence, this Article, as there expressed, is quite imperfect, dark, and incomprehensible; it should be certainly further explained and improved, because it discusses, judges, and comments upon man with his powers, abilities, and essence only according to his fall, that is, only according to his depraved nature, and not according to his restitution. [This Article], also considers God in only one work with regard to man, even though God who made man in the beginning desires even after the fall [to set] him up again through Christ and to improve his depraved human nature by His grace. Thus a Christian man is now able to do that which he could not do before, on account of his depraved physical powers: I am able to do everything, Paul says, in Him (the Lord Christ) who gives me power, Phillippians 4[:13]. In II Peter 1[:3] we read: To us is given all kinds of His divine power which serve to life and a Godly conduct of it, by the experience of Jesus Christ, etc. And again, II Corinthians 7[:1]: Because we have such promises, my dearly beloved, let us cleanse

ourselves from every kind of contamination [befleckung] of the flesh and of the spirit, and let us proceed with our sanctification in the fear of God.

Thus it is simply not enough to believe that Christ was born for our good, that He died for us, etc.; rather, we must also believe that He has procured the Holy Spirit for us by His death, suffering, and the shedding of His blood, that He makes a new, holy man from our old Adam, such a [new] man who not only has forgiveness of his sins, but a cessation from sins and a new life. He bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might be free of sin and [might] live to righteousness, I Peter 2 [:24].

At this point the verses concerning grace and its riches [should also be considered]. Paul says [Titus 2:11]: The salvation-bringing grace has appeared, and it disciplines us, etc. Peter says it is brought to us in the revelation of Jesus Christ, etc. Therefore he cautions us that as obedient children we should hold fast to it and not live as formerly, but be holy in our whole manner of life [wandel] I Peter 1 [:14].

From this the words of Paul (cited in the Article) may be the more easily understood, when he says [Ephesians 2:8]: By grace are you saved through faith. [It is] not as if such faith were sufficient in itself, through which a man should hold the words regarding the promised grace and keep them against God's wrath and judgement, and comfort himself with them, etc.; rather, still more is necessary thereto, namely: to consider and to know to whom the mercy of God

is promised, what kind of [mercy] it is, and what it can effect and establish in a man who experiences it.

Thus these words: By grace have you been saved through faith, are nothing else than what Paul says of them, when he says [Ephesians 2:3-2]: We were also children of wrath by nature, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy has made us alive in Christ because of His great love with which He loved us when we were dead in our sins, etc. In this way He showed the boundless riches of His grace and His friendliness to us in Jesus Christ. For by grace are you saved through faith. This is as much as to say: You are newborn, blessed, holy, righteous men and have become a people pleasing to God, a people predestined [ausserwehlt], for the inheritance [eigenthums], zealous for doing good works; [a people who are] living in the newness of life, Titus 1 [2:14], Romans 6 [:4], I Peter 2 [:24]. Lest anyone should boast, however, he says that such blessedness, new birth, and holiness [are] the gifts of God and do not come from works or merits. For we, Paul says, are His work, made in Jesus Christ for good works, for which God has prepared us beforehand, so that we should live in them, Ephesians 2 [:10].

From this it is easy to deduce how matters stand with Christians [umb die Christen], their works, and faith; what Christians are able to do, and whence this power of performance springs. Indeed, one may say that for a true Christian, that is, a new, reborn man [whether] concerning faith or works, that he knows their place, and that on both

sides it is the prerogative of the grace of the Lord Christ and of God.

Now there has certainly been in our times not a little misunderstanding regarding this Article on Justification, faith and works, and the powers and abilities of man. Not only our opponents, but also many other people have come to grief [gestossen] in this [matter] who have not carefully perceived the restitution and the boundless riches of grace (which is the beginning, foundation, and origin of the conversion of the sinner and of all good works); indeed, even today, they know nothing else than that without distinction it is impossible for any man to do anything good or to keep God's commandments, to love God from the heart, or to work righteousness, etc. Only faith (as they understand it in a historical sense) justifies and saves, that we thus have a gracious God for Christ's sake who does not account our sins to us if we truly believe this. This is (according to their imagined understanding) as much as if God desired to take the old man with his sin, evil conscience, and his whole depraved nature, provided only, as you have heard, that he believes in Christ. For to believe in Christ they hold to be certainly [wol] possible, but to keep God's commandments, to be pious and live in a holy manner, [that they hold] to be impossible.

Hence, great wisdom is necessary here so that one might deal in an understanding, sober, and proper manner concerning the justification or the making righteous of the sinner. In this way the evil will not become the worse as,



unfortunately, in many places the matter has become publicly so. With regard to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures relating to the powers of men, as well as those concerning the understanding of the point about faith and works, in every case a careful distinction must be made between grace and nature, the new man and the old, the first birth and the second, and the good works of a Christian and the civic [bürgerlichen] good works of an unbeliever; moreover, the office of Christ the ruling King must be carefully considered in every life which is to be pleasing to God.

#### THE FIFTH ARTICLE.

To attain to such faith, God established the office of the ministry and gave the Gospel and the Sacraments, by which, as through means, the Holy Spirit works and gives the hearts faith and comfort when and where He will, in those who hear the Gospel which teaches that we have a gracious God through the merits of Christ if we believe this. And the Anabaptists and others are condemned who teach that we earn the Holy Spirit by our own preparation and work without the physical word of the Gospel.

#### EXAMINATION

With respect to this Article we maintain a distinction such that the beginning of faith and of all righteousness which is valid before God, as well as the sinner's conversion is the concern of Christ and of the preventient

grace of God, <sup>26</sup> and is not our concern either in preaching or in the hearing of preaching; for the preacher does not begin to make us pious. Rather, [it is] God who calls us into His Kingdom, gives us rebirth, strengthens us, and completes the work He has begun in us through Christ Jesus in the Holy Spirit.

Because this beginning should not be attributed to men, nor to any work or ministry, [but is solely to be attributed] to the grace and mercy of God which is Christ, even as it is written in Romans 9[:16]: It does not depend upon the willing or desiring [of man], [but on] God's having mercy. In sum we hold and firmly believe that Christ with His grace is the only beginning, middle, and end of our whole salvation.

But as to what pertains to the office of preaching, to the Sacraments, to the Holy Scriptures, and to every service and ordinance of the Christian Church, we know how to give them their proper honor in their proper place. [That place] is to point to Christ alone, the only Giver of the Holy Spirit and the Gift of Faith in that same Spirit, to testify concerning Him, concerning His merits and benefits, that is, that He has graciously obtained for us the Holy Spirit, forgiveness of our sins, salvation and eternal life by His sufferings, death, and the pouring out of His blood; and that now as the King of Grace and Distributor of the holy things of God mentioned above, indeed, all the heavenly treasures, He desires to distribute [these things] without any instrument or means Himself to

any creature at all, and to all those who truly believe in Him, even as it is written: whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame, [Romans 10:11].

The office of preaching and the oral preaching [itself] testify concerning the benefits of Christ, concerning His Kingdom, Spirit, grace, power, salvation, eternal life, etc. They exhort to faith, to the experience of Christ, to repentance, and to the improvement of life in the name of Christ. But that God should give such [things] through the office of preaching, and [should give] the Holy Spirit through the Sacraments as by means, into the soul, we hold [these points] to be untrue.

For if the preached Gospel teaches that we through the merits of Christ have a gracious God if we believe, as the Article teaches, then it cannot itself give such grace and faith. In the same way the Holy Spirit cannot work or establish anything with men unless He Himself comes down from above into the heart: this takes place through grace, not through any elemental means, but through the only Mediator, the Man Jesus Christ.

These things may be corroborated by the Holy Scriptures in many places; they are announced in the Gospel, and taught by the office of preaching, that is, that it is alone through the merits of Christ that we can have a gracious God and the Holy Spirit if we (truly) believe. What it means to believe we have explained in part already, and it will be covered in more detail in subsequent articles. For these reasons it would be erroneous and untrue, if the

Anabaptists and Catholics, or any others, should teach that we could earn the Holy Spirit by our own preparation or works. It is equally untrue if anyone teaches that we can attain to Him or earn [Him] through the office of preaching or through hearing preaching. We do not desire, however, to rob Christ of His freedom, for He can give the Holy Spirit along with the physical word or without it, whenever, wherever, and to whomever He will. In the same way He does not have only one method in His school, and, indeed, even in the conversion of the sinner, to accomplish His ends, of which we have many examples concerning the Prophets and Patriarchs, and of many others in the Scriptures, who were first converted, made righteous, pious, holy, and blessed without the oral word or the preaching of the Gospel, but by the inward speaking of God. We see this obviously in the cases of the chamberlain of Ethiopia and the centurion Cornelius, Acts 8; 10. Both were previously pious, faithful men pleasing to God, released from the darkness of idolatry by the grace of God before they heard preaching or the external word.<sup>27</sup>

But that even in the first Apostolic church men were only converted and made faithful by the preaching of the oral word, as they say, but in other ways, we read in I Peter 3[:1]: Wives must be obedient to their husbands so that even those who do not believe in the word might be won by the lives of the women without words, etc. Herein Peter gives sufficient testimony that men are sometimes won by other means without preaching or preacher through

Christ to faith and are thereby taken up to blessedness.

In I Peter 2[:12], the same thing is repeated, when he says: Lead a good life among the heathens, so that, etc.

Bede,<sup>2<sup>o</sup></sup> on Esdras 1 writes: [It is] Christ alone through whom we come to salvation, for no one comes to the Father except by me [John 6:44, 65] who gathers the single ones of his elect either through Himself by secret inspiration or through preachers by open wisdom from the confusion of this present life to the vision of peace and the confession of divine praise, just as to Judea and Jerusalem [He collected them] from Babylon. Here he speaks of the two kinds of ways which God uses in the conversion of the sinner, that is: beside the service, and apart from the service.

We do not make mention of this distinction because we wish to diminish the office of preaching or to abolish it: far be it from me [to wish to do that]. Rather, as you have heard, [we speak] solely from the grounds that for Christ as an Almighty Free Lord, His honor, work, and office might remain free and unbound in the heart, soul, and conscience with regard to every physical church service, and might remain unmixed with any elements. Otherwise, if the heavenly gifts came through faith as a result of preaching, it must follow that the salvation of souls, the gift of faith and of the Holy Spirit must be bound to the services of men, just as if God could not or would not save any man without the priest or the preacher, as the Pope has decreed for a long time now. This would be quite

injurious to the divine Majesty and Omnipotence [of God]. It would be just as if one were to say that a king, prince, or lord neither might nor could give anyone anything or make them rich without his servants, deputies, or officeholders. That the Lord with His gifts should be bound to His servants is to Him disgraceful.

The Holy Scriptures do not make use of the word "means" [Mittel] when they speak of God and His works. They never say that God works His spiritual gifts into the heart by means or the instrumentality of any created thing, or gives them thus into the soul.

Therefore we hold that the point under consideration regarding means must certainly be clarified to honor our only Mediator, Lord, and High Priest Christ, [and] in consideration of the Article on Justification, must be given up. Yet, nevertheless, the Christian service and all the things pertaining thereto should not therefore be neglected but should be the more firmly established even as Christ has ordained them, for the external man, for his obedience to the Spirit, and to the praise of God. To it, [Christian worship] however, must not be attributed that which belongs to Christ Himself in the Kingdom of God, so that the servant is not made equal to the master, nor is set up along side him.

Saint John says [John 3:27]: A man cannot take anything unless it is given to him from heaven. Saint James writes thus [James 1:17]: Make no mistake, beloved brothers, all good gifts and all perfect gifts come down from above

from the Father of Lights, that is, through the only Mediator our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the servants of the word ought to testify, and towards whom in all their services [they] ought to direct the hearts, and ought to teach them that they should turn to God in faith, that they should remain with God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and that [from them] they should obtain grace and remission [of their sins].

For this reason we differentiate in [matters of] church discipline the inward work of God from the external service-works of men. [We] confess, believe, and hold that Christ and His grace alone, both in the preaching and apart from the preacher, is able to do everything for the justification of the sinner, in the building up of His church, which is His body, and in the distribution of His spiritual gifts. He alone can touch the heart and make from a stony one a heart of flesh. To this work He has been sealed by God the Father, and this is His own proper office, without means, in the Holy Spirit.

For the accomplishment of all these things the preachers and true servants of the Gospel serve in the progress of its grace for the external man, to arouse and to incite the flesh to the obedience of the Spirit. I have worked much more than all of them, says Paul [I Corinthians 15:10] but not I, but God's grace which is in me. See: there he distinguishes clearly that one should not hold, boast in, or raise himself up to be (as the Pope [did] formerly) beside or with Christ as a saviour.

For this reason he also writes, I Corinthians 3[:7]: Thus neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but God who gives the increase. In this way Christ our Lord and God may remain in everything the free Lord and [our] only Saviour. Him the preachers should declare, praise, and hold high; they should testify concerning Him, His grace, and His office, and even in every external service of men they should point to Christ and to Him above themselves with the Sursum corda [Lift up your hearts].

Even so He Himself has admonished in the Gospel when He cries out [Matthew 11:28]: Come to me all you who are weary and burdened; I, I will refresh you. This is what the true Apostle Paul always did, for he says in another place: We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ, that He is the Lord; we, however, are your servants for the sake of Jesus Christ, II Corinthians 5[:5]. In this way the Lord, together with that which He has reserved for Himself, will always be properly distinguished from the servant and his service. There are distinctions of services, Paul says in another place, yet there is One Lord, etc., who works everything in everything, I Corinthians 12[:6].

#### THE SIXTH ARTICLE.

It is also taught that such faith should bring forth good fruits and good works, and that one must do good works of every kind which God has commanded, for the sake of God. Yet we should not trust in such works that



in them we are keeping God's Law or that we are accounted righteous because of our works, for we receive forgiveness of our sins and are accounted righteous by faith for Christ's sake, as Christ says: When you have done everything, you should say: We are unworthy servants [Luke 17:10]. Thus the Fathers also taught, for Ambrose says: Thus has it been decided by God that whoever believes in Christ is saved, and not by works, but only by faith will have forgiveness of sins without merit.

#### EXAMINATION.

Although we have discussed our understanding concerning the justification, or the making righteous [of the sinner] by faith and of its consequences, that is, good works, in regard to the office of grace, above, nevertheless, we will say a bit more concerning it in relation to this Article. [This is] especially so because we find that the Confession is quite dark in this matter of faith, and that even preaching about justification or the making righteous [of the sinner] by faith as it is usually presented, does not bring forth as much fruit, nor will this happen as some would like. For this reason there must be, without doubt, much that is lacking and much which still needs explanation. May the Lord Jesus enlighten us graciously, to recognize the clarity of His truth. Amen.

But that faith in Jesus Christ makes us righteous before God, however, may easily be defended with the Holy

Scriptures for those who know the kind, nature, and reality of faith. There are also clear testimonies [Sprüche] which openly confirm this. In the Prophet Habakkuk it is clearly written that the just man will live [because] of his faith, [Habakkuk 2:4]. Paul writes to the same effect in Romans [1:17] and Galatians [3:11] with many arguments. He concludes that a man becomes righteous and saved not by his works, nor by the merit of his works, but by faith and by grace. He also presents Abraham<sup>29</sup> as an example of this, concerning whom the Scriptures testify [Galatians 3:6]: Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Christ the Lord Himself concludes thus when He says: Whoever believes in me has eternal life, John 6 [47].

Thus, for all Christians, this is indisputable, that faith makes one righteous, insofar as it is a proper, that is, a living, divine [faith], indeed, such a faith, concerning which Paul writes [I Corinthians 13], and not merely a human, reasoned faith, or a dead idea or opinion. True faith is the new heavenly light, life, and power of God which comes down from above into the heart, which eradicates sin, changes the heart, mind, and understanding, renews, and indeed [makes] another man, a new creature out of us. [It is] such a faith which works powerfully through love, Galatians 5 [6], which cleanses the hearts, Acts 15 [9], which gives men new birth, I Peter 1 [3-5], and unites us with God. Thus, because true faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit and is the fruit of the Spirit and includes all

kinds of good works within itself, [it follows] that where these [fruits and works] are not found, there is still no true justifying faith, no grace, and no Christ.

It can easily be understood from this that we are accounted righteous before God and our sins are forgiven not because of our works but because of faith alone, that is, for the sake of Christ if He dwells in our hearts through faith. Hence also we should not trust in our works, still less in ceremonies, to earn the forgiveness of our sins and heaven; rather, we should build upon Christ and set all our hope and trust [in Him].

We are by nature children of wrath, [Ephesians 2:3], dead in our sins, worthless before God, indeed, an evil tree, an accursed earth, and poor condemned men.<sup>30</sup> But Christ, the Son of God, invites all our guilt, sin, and condemnation onto Himself; He offers up His body, pours out His blood, and dies for [these sins]. Thereby He reconciles us to God His Father, and has thereby also released us from the prison of the evil spirit, from sin, death, and hell, even as He has also obtained for us the Holy Spirit, that through Him He [Christ] might make of us pious, righteous men.

Thereupon this faith now follows; by this [faith] we receive Christ as Lord and Saviour with our hearts, and are made partakers of such salvation and benefits. Indeed hereby we are at once awakened from death into life, transformed from sin to righteousness, and drawn from hell into the Kingdom of God. Therefore faith (if it is otherwise

proper) must always bring all these things mentioned above to the heart according to its capacity in the receiving of the Lord Christ, [things] such as grace, forgiveness of our sins, the Holy Spirit, piety, and a holy, new life.

If we truly believe that Christ has rescued us from the devil's kingdom and eternal condemnation, a heartfelt love for Christ and for everything which is pleasing to Him must easily follow. If Christ has become our Lord through faith we shall certainly know how to conduct ourselves in obedience to Him. If we believe that He has made us dead men before God to be living again by His death in Himself and by His resurrection, and thereby has freed us from sin, [then] such a Christian life and righteousness will manifest itself blessedly in us.

The faith by which we become pious in the heart (which comes down from above) is a spiritual thing, light, and power in the heart, by which we are renewed and win another heart and mind.

What kind of a faith would that be which had no faithfulness, love, or truth in it? Indeed, what kind of a servant would he be who would not wish to serve his master at all? What kind of freedom would that be which would not show itself with activities and works? This is why Paul says: We hold that if one (that is, Christ) has died for all, they have all died, and He has therefore died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and was resurrected, II Corinthians 5[:15].

But that true faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ and in His salvation includes all this, Zacharias testifies very agreeably in his hymn Benedictus: Praised, he says, be God the Lord of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people. After this it follows further why and for what purpose this redemption has taken place, and what those [people] do who believe in this said redemption of Christ, and how they comfort themselves somewhat [in it], when he says: That we are saved out of the hands of our enemies without fear (that is, lovingly and childlike) in service our whole life long, in holiness and righteousness, which is pleasing to Him, Luke 1 [67-79], which all contains and encompasses true faith in itself, as we have heard.

Here is the place where the verse cited [in the Article] belongs, wherein the Lord after He had earlier been teaching concerning faith and its power, told His disciples a parable about a master and his own purchased, submissive, obedient servants, and said to them [Luke 17:10]: Thus you, when you have done everything which you have been commanded, should say: we are worthless or useless servants. He does not say, as some [do] who misquote it, that they are worthless servants, but that when you have done everything, everything, then say: We are unworthy servants. He shows thereby that He does not despise their service, nor does He cast their works away as useless. Rather, He admonishes them that they should not boast of their works, nor think themselves righteous because of them,

nor put any confidence in them, but that rather they should in humility and abandonment [gelassenheit]<sup>31</sup> place all their trust in the Lord, who created, purchased, freed, and redeemed them, so that He might be their only boast, comfort, and hope, who they are morally obligated to serve, who gives [them] all power to do good, including the desire and the accomplishment.

We have desired to specify all this for the sake of a fuller explanation of the power, kind, and nature of justifying faith, and also for the sake of the worthiness of the works which happen in faith and [come] from God, for the [better] understanding of the above Article, because we know what kind of faith with [its] doctrine and life is commonly met with today [heut auff der ban ist]. [we] therefore agree in this with the above-cited Article that a faith such as makes us righteous before God contains all kinds of good works and fruits of the Spirit, for it is of the essence and nature of the Holy Spirit.

On the contrary, wherever good works, the love of Christ, and a new Christian life do not follow, there is no proper faith. No testimony of the Scriptures will be of any value [in that case].

For this reason one should certainly judge and learn to recognize the faith according to its love-rich works, even as the tree [is judged] by its fruits, the servant, by his obedience, and the minister, by his ministry, if one does not wish to attain to a false fantasy [gedicht], to fleshly licence, to an assumed

safety, and to damnable judgement, as, unfortunately, is too much [the case] today.

#### THE SEVENTH ARTICLE.

It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy Christian church which is the assembly of all the faithful, in which the Gospel is purely preached and the Holy Sacraments are distributed according to the Gospel.

For this is enough for the true unity of the Christian church, that there harmoniously the Gospel is preached according to its pure understanding and the Sacraments are distributed in accordance with the Divine Word. It is not necessary to the true unity of the Christian church that everywhere identical ceremonies instituted by men are held, as Paul says, Ephesians 4[:15, 16]: One body, one Spirit, even as you are called to the same hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerning the universal Christian church is abrupt, dark, and incomprehensible; it does not speak with discretion concerning the church of Christ, nor in the same way as the Holy Scriptures speak concerning [that Church]. For this reason we hold that [this Article] must certainly be clarified and placed on a firmer foundation, otherwise, one cannot by any means subscribe to it

in Evangelical truth.

For although it well confesses that the church is the assembly of all the faithful, nevertheless the following addition, namely: in which the Gospel is purely preached and the Sacraments are distributed according to the Gospel, [carries with it] such an understanding as if the universal Christian church were founded on preaching and the Sacraments, [were] bound to them, and might be recognized solely by these things. [It is as if], indeed, that there were no members of the church of Christ, nor any Christians where the external service of the Gospel and the Sacraments were not used. This is simply too disgraceful for the Master-Builder, Foundation, and Cornerstone of the church, as well as for the Master Teacher and Bishop of our souls, our Lord Christ.

Now this little word Church is equivocal, that is, one is accustomed to speak about the church, as well as about faith and the faithful in two different ways. On the one hand [it may be viewed] from the foundation of truth, as the matter stands before God, for the church is built up out of Christ in His Kingdom and united [therein], that He rules it and preserves it here in the Kingdom of grace by the Holy Spirit, that He nourishes and takes care of it, indeed, that it is His bride and His holy body. Concerning this church the Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles testify when they consider the Lord Christ variously, that it [the church] is the beautiful, pious, well-adorned, chosen, and most beloved.



Paul says that the King of Heaven, Christ, was given to the church to be its Head, and that from Him it, as His body, has a direct [unvermittelten] spiritual outpouring of grace, as well as its growth, nourishment, and increase. He says that it is holy and blameless, and the fullness of Him who fills everything in everything, Ephesians 1 [:23]; 4 [:10]; 5 [:23, 27]. Its people are a people zealous for good works, a people who belong to God, Titus 2 [:14]. It is the congregation of the living God, a pillar and fastness of truth, I Timothy 3 [:15]. Concerning it the Prophet David also speaks in the 45th Psalm [vv. 10, 14-16], when he is writing about Christ, he says: The bride stands at your right hand in fine precious gold. Then he calls her a daughter: The king's daughter is very splendid within; she is clothed with gold pieces; they bring her to the king in gorgeous apparel, etc. They bring her with joy and love.

[It is] concerning this church that our [Apostles'] Creed speaks in which we confess that we believe in one universal Christian church, and that it is the whole number of all the elect and the firstborn children of God whose names are written in the book of life, in heaven indeed, Revelation 21 [:27]. They are well known to Christ the great Shepherd as His sheep, even though they live physically scattered abroad over the world, in Turkey, Calcutta, or anywhere else they might be. Concerning this church the Lord also says in the Gospel, John 10 [:27, 28]: My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me, and I

will give them eternal life, etc.

On the other hand, one speaks about the church of Christ according to its assembly, in the service of the apostles and of the other servants of the Holy Spirit, who are ordered by Christ the King of Heaven to serve His people and to be assistants in the upbuilding of His body, for in the Apostolic writings every separate Christian assembly is called a church or congregation of God, as we read in the New Testament [I Corinthians 12:27].

Accordingly one now calls an assembly of men a church who boast of the name of Christian, and who have come together under the same church usages, doctrines, and worship of God, to use the Sacraments in the same manner, and to assemble for preaching, singing, prayer, and the other practices pleasing to God. Let it be in their consciences, Christian lives, spiritual conduct, policy, or in the whole foundation on which they are to be built up, that is, in the growth and properly formed existence of their church before God however it will, [it makes no difference].

If now the Confession in the first point of the Article under consideration intends the church to be the [one] in which we believe that it is the [whole] number of the elect, as the Scripture concerning the church speaks, [Mark 13:27] which we confess in the Creed, [then] we agree that there is and remains at all times one holy Christian church, the assembly of all the faithful (to be understood are those who truly believe, as mentioned

above) who are assembled spiritually by the Holy Spirit in Christ for the building up of His body, and who are united in His Spirit.

It does not follow, however, that the oral Gospel is always in such churches, nor that it is preached to all their members. Nor does it follow that the Holy Sacraments must always be distributed to such people, or that the church and its salvation must be bound to them. Rather, Christ the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls who always has His own [people] everywhere, teaches and preserves their number without external services, even in the midst of all kinds of error, by His Spirit, who is the Spirit of grace, without which no one can be saved.

For where would the church have remained so many years under the Papacy, when neither the Gospel was preached purely, nor were the Sacraments distributed according to the Gospel, as is apparent today? How would the church remain in Turkey or in Calcutta, where, without doubt, there are Christians who are, nevertheless, offered neither preaching nor Sacraments?

Therefore one should not bridle the Holy Universal Christian Church with church usages, nor hem it in so narrowly, nor judge, nor view it simply according to human opinion or external activity. Rather, one should let it stand in faith before God who knows it best, since it is in its members physically scattered wherever they are. One should also not mix anything physical into the definition of [the church], nor bind anything like that to it.

Much rather, judge spiritual [things] spiritually, as Paul teaches, [I Corinthians 2:13], to distinguish there's everything properly, for such a universal church according to the spirit, that is, in its spiritual existence which it has with Christ in God, may certainly not be seen, otherwise, it would not be believed.

It is indeed true that where the Gospel is purely preached and the Sacraments are distributed properly according to the Gospel (which is, indeed, a large, weighty matter for which especial grace and revelation from God are necessary for one to know how to determine this', that there are there true members of the universal Christian church, whom Christ teaches in their hearts along with the external services, and [whom] He leads out for the building up of His body. [We do not intend], however, that the church and the people of God should be abandoned when these above-mentioned things are not taking place.

For God has also elsewhere His own [people], who are not all known to us but are scattered hither and yon in the world, and even though they, indeed, lead a Christian and Godly quiet life in Christ outwardly, nevertheless, they remain unknown to the majority of the [people] in the world whom, as we have heard, Christ the living Word, [who] has now become flesh, baptizes, feeds, teaches, rules, and leads to eternal life without the external preaching and sacraments, entirely inwardly. Who will deny Him this [power]? He has exercised it from the beginning of the world and can and will [exercise] this freedom after his glorification

even unto the Last Judgement. [His exercise], however, is not injurious to those [external] services, which are neither abolished thereby nor despised.

For these reasons, then, the definition and description of the church, as it is presented in the Confession (because this Article [of Faith] is so important and glorious) should certainly be improved. In this way we will neither compel, imprison, nor attach God the Lord and His work again either to us unworthy servants, or to the Pope and bishops. [We will] rather let the way of the grace of Christ and of the office of instruction of His Spirit, who teaches hearts and inspires wheresoever He wills, and in the same way the building up of the body of Christ, stand free and unbound in the Spirit. For [it does not become] the holy Christian church to be bridled in this or any other land, for reasons of policy, either to Rome, Wittenberg, Zurich, Geneva, Moravia [Verhern], or to any other place, or to time, persons, or anything else external, indeed, neither to preachers, preaching, or sacraments. It is, rather, to be spread abroad throughout the whole world with all its members wherever faithful Christians are [to be found].

The sure foundation of God remains and has this seal: The Lord knows His own, Paul declares [II Timothy 2:19]. And, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, Romans 10 [:13]. Peter says the same kind of things about Cornelius: Now I know in truth that God does not look upon the person, but among every people whoever fears Him and

practices righteousness, is pleasing to Him, Acts 10[:34, 35], whoever he may be. It is a great grace from God whenever He gives and sends out chosen faithful servants who preach His Gospel purely and simply, who serve the Lord Christ in His household for the conversion of sinners and for the improvement of men, and where the Sacraments of the Gospel are properly used, and even the children of God, to the praise of Christ, are assembled together, so that the church might be built in Christ and might grow up to be a holy temple of God.

Hence, we cannot agree with this Article when it says: For the true unity of the Christian church it is enough that there is one Gospel and one Sacrament is distributed, for no external unity, either in doctrine, ceremonies, or sacraments makes the church of Christ, for it [the Church] is not simply either recognized or proved by them. It is rather the inward unity of the Holy Spirit, of hearts, souls, and consciences in Christ and in the experience of Him which makes the church of Christ. If the body is attached to Him, as to its Head, and exists, grows, and increases in Him in love and unity, [it is] according to this that the external unity must always be judged.

For in the Christian church everything must be ordered, lived, and practiced according to the Spirit of Christ, so that there might be unity of spirit among the members, not only among the teachers, but among the listeners as well. For they are all one spiritual body

which has its divine outpouring from Christ its Head, and [they are] found in one faith and in one Spirit, as Paul declares concerning Christians, when he writes: We many are one bread and one body. For we are all partakers of the one bread. Again: We are all baptized in the one Spirit into the one body, etc., and have all been imbued with the one Spirit, I Corinthians 12 [13], so that also for the faithful there is one heart and one soul, as it is written in Acts 4 [32].

Therefore the Christian church is not to be judged according to the gathering together of external signs or doctrine or ceremonies (as is the Jewish [church]<sup>32</sup> by circumcision and the old Law). [If this were the case], it must then be as if one were to exchange the proper true church for a hypocritical appearance-church. [This is] rather, how [the church] is in Christ, how it stands in the communion of the saints and in the participation in the spiritual riches of God, that is, [it exists] in the experience of Christ, in true faith, in the patience of the Holy Spirit, in the righteousness of the heart, in love, in peace, in the fear of God, and in a God-pleasing life: it and its members should be, first and foremost, confirmed, tested, and recognized in such inward qualities [Stücken], gifts, and adornments of essential truth, if it is to break out [into the open] as the well-adorned bride of Christ the King of Heaven.

This is surely what the Lord Christ desires in the Gospel, as well as what all His Apostles [desire], that,

namely, His church and its unity should be recognized not as [is] the Jewish church [Kirch] by its ceremonies nor by outward signs, preaching, or sacraments, but in the unity of minds, in love, in the power of God, and in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. For the Kingdom of God does not consist of words or sermons, but in power, [and in] the peace, joy, and righteousness [which] is in the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 4 [:20], and Romans 14 [:17].

Chrysostom writing on Matthew: The faithful man ought not to be known by [this] means, by the communion of the Mystery, but in truth by the newness of [his] life; salt is appropriate for the faithful man, and to enlighten the world [is appropriate for him].<sup>33</sup>

In John 13 [:34], Jesus speaks to His church as follows: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. Hereby will all men know that you are my disciples (that is, that you are members of my church and are of my people) if you love one another. And again: If you love me, then keep my commandment, and I will pray to the Father and He will give you another Comforter, that He might remain with you eternally, who is the Spirit of Truth, [John 14:15].

Behold, there we have the surest signs of the church of Christ, that is, the love and experience of Christ, the unity of the Holy Spirit, the truth, and the keeping of the commandments of God which, together with many other points or signs, are those which the Lord describes in John, Chapters 15 and 16, [to which] are added patience, overcoming



the world, peace, and spiritual joy, as is written elsewhere [Revelation 13:10; 14:12]. Here (that is, in the church of Christ) there is patience and the faith of the saints; there, [in the same church] there is also the spirit of prophecy, of understanding, and of the love of God.

Saint Paul admonishes us to such unity when he writes to the Ephesians [4:3-6]: Be zealous to keep the unity in the spirit by the bond of peace: one body and one spirit, even as you are called into the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is over us all and through us all and in us all. With this Paul has properly described the church of Christ and sufficiently indicated how it might be recognized. He does not speak concerning external signs, nor concerning a historical faith or an external body, as other people are wont to do. He speaks, rather, concerning a spiritual body, a heavenly baptism, and the faith of all the elect. He speaks concerning the Holy Spirit, power, life, and truth in re-born hearts, indeed, [he speaks] concerning that which has its eternal existence in Christ and before God in its essence. Wherever such [things] are not, wherever the Spirit of Christ does not have the governance, how can there be [there] an assembled Christian church, [even though] a person preach and distribute the sacraments however he will? If now the Confession indeed does consider somewhat of this verse of Paul concerning the unity of the spirit, it is, nevertheless mixed up and the one thing [flesh] is forced into the other [spirit], so that one

cannot understand from that [what] is the true foundation of the church of Christ.

It is indeed well spoken that they are called a harmonious church who believe in one Christ and who have one Gospel, one Spirit, one faith, and the same sacrament, if it is only properly understood. It must, however, not be observed or considered simply politically [politice] from the external undertaking or organization [hausshaltung], that is, according to the letters. Rather, it must be understood and judged according to the inward power and essential spirituality. For as we have said above concerning the nature and manner of faith, such a faith is active in love, powerful in overcoming the world, and sensitive [empfindlich] in cleansing the heart, and such a Gospel, as described above, is the power of God to salvation and to the conversion of sinners, so that it shows itself powerfully in its works. Again [faith is present] so that the gifts of the spirit might show themselves visibly among those who have the one Spirit, and that the members of such a church might live a repentant, holy, blameless, life.

Thus it is certain and true that all those are called a harmonious Christian church, who, from the heart, believe in one Christ, who hear the one Gospel which is the power of God, who have the one Holy Spirit and a living faith, and who also receive the same Sacrament properly according to the heart and mind of Christ.

What does it matter if men boast much in appearances and cannot show any firm foundation by their deeds? How

does it help [matters] if a mob is assembled which would call itself the church of Christ, which in truth before God was not really [the church]? Not all the congregations are Christian churches who call themselves the churches of Christ, as, indeed, all are not Christians who call themselves such.

The Papacy certainly boasts of its churches, indeed, of all the power of the church and of Christian faith, with great pomp, worldly kingdoms, and unity, as we know. But if one examines this in the light and [compares] it to the internal adornments of the Christian church, according to the unity of the Spirit, and according to Christ the Head, and even with the Apostolic church, it will soon become clear, that it [the Catholic Church] is not the true bride, but the painted whore of the Apocalypse [Revelation 17], who also has holy scriptures, gospel, sacraments, sermons, and a form and appearance of Christian religion, and has powerfully amassed for herself all of those [things] which are Christ's: power, doctrine, and services, in external appearance and semblance. But the inward existence of such external things, which is the power, life, spirit, righteousness, and divine truth of God, one will search for for a long time in the Papacy beside its ceremonies, even as little [as he will find] the way of the Kingdom of God and His grace [there]. For these reasons the Christian church must be judged [by a standard] higher than [that] of the external church services.

This must not be understood, however, as if we desired to make a Platonic state of the Christian church,

which would be nothing else than a fantasy, [or] as if we desired to abolish the church, or to give [the name] of Christians only to such as were merely righteous in the faith of the heart and who did not also demonstrate this outwardly by fruits and works. Far be that from us! For, as you have heard at the beginning, we hold and firmly believe that there is one Christian church on earth, and it will remain even to the end of the world, which [church] is the bride of Christ, and He is [its] Lord, Ruler, Shepherd, and Head, from whom it has its whole divine inspiration, grace, the holy Spirit, and spiritual treasures, and also, because of its life in the flesh, forgiveness of sins. Indeed, each member, according to the measure of his faith, has these things for himself, and demonstrates his faith publicly with a life pleasing to God.

So then, wherever the Christian church is assembled, even though there are many false Christians and hypocrites mixed in among them, the Spirit of God must, nevertheless, have the upper hand and keep the governance therein, so that the majority, but especially the leaders [fürstherren], must be above all obedient, God-fearing, repentant, and pious Christian people. Where this is not [to be found], however, there it may in no sense [be said] that a Christian, Apostolic governance pleasing to God, saving for souls, and bettering for everyone, is being held in judgement and righteousness; indeed, no Christian church assembled [thus] will be preserved very long.<sup>34</sup> We have a good example of this in all the good civil politics which must be ruled by

understanding, honorable, upright people, even as the majority of the people must be obedient (if [the government] is to endure) [and must] have good examples. The church of Christ does not, however, demand so much the obedience of ceremonies and of external things, as [it does] of the obedience of faith, of the commandments, of love, and of the final will of God.

Even though we cannot now point with our fingers to such an assembled Apostolical church, as [existed] at the time of Paul, which would be gifted with its spiritual adornments and riches, as, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures it certainly should be, nevertheless, the inward building up of the church of Christ and the outpouring of His grace into the members of His body has in no wise ceased. Christ [can still] today assemble for Himself a church (that is, a gathering of people pleasing to God), even as in its first newness [He could do so], and its members are able to make themselves known to one another. We thus hope, therefore, that He has graciously prepared Himself to do such a work, and has given [us] somewhat in preparation, so that, as is customary, the endings of all the transactions [hendell] of God will bless their beginnings.

With regard to the inward building up of the church of Christ, the matter stands in brief as follows: Because Christ, as King of the Kingdom of Grace, rules and presides in Spirit, He begets for Himself a church in the Spirit, in and from Himself, from His flesh and from His

body [gebeinen]. The members of this church He renews, washes, and cleanses with the bath of water in the Word of Life, that is, with the Holy Spirit. He also refreshes them spiritually with the water of grace; He feeds them with the Bread of His body, comforts them in temptation through the Holy Spirit, strengthens them with divine power, and teaches them as [their] eternal High Priest with the anointing of His Spirit. Indeed, as the great Shepherd of the sheep of God, He pastures, preserves, and rules them, even as He leads them, in the blood of the New Testament, from the holes where there is no water, that is, from the prison of the evil spirit, into the freedom of the Holy Spirit, from the world, to heaven, and prepares them for their eternal dwelling with God in the Holy Spirit.

In all [these matters] external things: preaching, the sacraments, and created things, only serve the outward man. Indeed, they direct everyone to Christ; they testify concerning the riches of His grace in the salvation of the sinner, as has been said now many times. The power, the increase, and the growth of hearts, however, in the building up of the church, is completed by Christ Himself, who is all in all, in the Throne of the grace of God, for He is the only complete, perfect Saviour of His body, in the Holy Spirit. Concerning the church and its service, however, more will also be said [in the future] than we now, in the light of the grace of God and Christ, according to the small amount [of that light] which God has granted us, wish to observe and consider.

## THE EIGHTH ARTICLE.

Again, although the Christian church is actually nothing else than the assembly of all the faithful and saints, nevertheless, because in this life many false Christians and hypocrites, and even open sinners remain among the pious [persons], the sacraments remain equally powerful, even though the priests by whom they are administered, are not pious, as Christ says, Matthew 23[:2]: The pharisees sit on Moses' seat, etc. For this reason the Donatists are condemned and all others who hold differently.

## EXAMINATION.

This Article announces in brief [for] three points joined together, although each should be considered separately, if it is to be judged properly. The first [point] is a repetition of the [previous] material on the church; the second [point] treats of the church service and of godless servants or priests; the third [point] treats of the power of the sacraments when they are distributed by an evil [person]. If, however, one reads the Scriptures with open eyes on these points, so that even the point regarding the church is properly understood, the other [points] are easily to be judged from it, and it will be shortly seen that the Article contradicts itself, and cannot on any account be let stand as it is [when compared] to the healthy, pure doctrine of the Gospel of Christ.

For the proper Christian church, which has its direct [vnuermittelichen] outpouring of grace from Christ its Head, shows, indeed, together with its members, what the sacraments are able [to do], why they have been instituted, what their office or service is, and how it ought to use them, so that they are not viewed according to their servants and their [servants'] merits or service, nor [on that account] are held to be more powerful; let the Donatists say what they will. Rather, the [church] judges them according to the Lord Christ, according to His saving power, which He Himself exercises in believing hearts, and according to the progress of His grace, which the sacraments serve, [even as] in typification [Erbildunge] they point us to it, for they also remind us to testify concerning the blessings of Christ.

For the Christian church adds nothing divine either to the sacraments or to the service or servant in the transactions of faith. Rather, [the church] ascribes everything which is powerful in the soul to the Lord Christ alone (as the complete Saviour of all men) and to his grace, which it well knows how to distinguish, with His divine power, from the servant (be he whomever he will) and from all external sacraments and services, for Christ (in the Christian church) is everything and in everything (its members).

Moreover, the Christian church also knows how to identify the spirits [I John 4:1]. It tests all things, and keeps that which is good [I Thessalonians 5:21]. It has received the anointing which teaches it all kinds of



things [I John 2:27], so that it can also know the voice of its shepherd in [His] servants. It also knows well how to distinguish this [voice] from that voice of the strangers (that is, of the false godless priests or preachers who have sneaked in); it does not follow them, but, according to the word of the Lord, flees from them, and avoids them [John 10:3-5]. In the true Christian church, thus, there is not so great a concern about the godless or about impious priests (especially in the distribution of the sacraments), for it does not place great [emphasis] on the distribution, or on him who distributes [them]. Of much greater concern is [the fact] that they [the sacraments] be properly used.

Then even if a hypocrite or such an evil priest should [get] mixed into the church and its members, as Judas [was] formerly among the disciples, and should remain unknown (it behooves [the church] to stand apart from and to flee from public evil, as you have heard, even according to the testimony of the Canons of spiritual rights); nevertheless it knows well whither it shall go for grace, remission, forgiveness of sins, and the divine outpouring, and how in all its services it should, as one, raise up its believing hearts to the Lord Christ the Head of the church. Indeed, through Him alone it should expect all things before God, so that for it and for its members, that is, for true Christians, nothing can be broken away or turned aside from the internal working of Christ and of His grace by any hypocrite, even though he would certainly further its growth in grace only a little with his services. On the

contrary, however, a pious servant of the church [Kirchenliedner] in whom Christ shows His presence with grace, life, power, and blessing, and who serves Christ the Master in his office of teaching, can greatly further [such growth], which is as clear as day.

He cannot serve the Word of God, Christ, in his office of teaching, in whom Christ the Lord does not dwell essentially, so that through him and his service, He [Christ] Himself preaches with grace.

This is why we have said that this Eighth Article is contradictory to itself, and since it does, indeed, speak of the church, because of its consequences, it cannot be made to agree with Christ and His church. For these reasons also we cannot subscribe to it, unless it would be improved. For the Christian church will in no wise defend hypocrites and evil priests, nor compare them to the deputized [Sasandter] friends of God, much less tolerate open sinners or attribute to them and to the [external] sacraments anything of divine power. [The church] will, therefore, not permit anyone to hold that the sacraments are sufficient with their [simple] distribution or reception; rather, it teaches and reports something quite different in this [matter].

But because there have arisen in our own times so many divisive opinions concerning the service and servants of the church, as well as concerning the church and its sacraments, so that much consideration and [careful] observation are necessary, we desire to express our understanding

concerning the above-mentioned three points, for the praise of Christ, for the honor of His church, and for the service of the New Testament. [In this way] we will have presented such [matters], together with the foregoing [material] to all Christians again in the grace of Christ to judge freely.

#### ON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

First, concerning the church it is well said, as mentioned above, that the Christian church is simply nothing else than the assembly of all the faithful and saints of God who have the Spirit of Christ. [The definition] will also exclude everything which is unholy or unfaithful, and whatever does not pertain to the Spirit of Christ for the Christian church and its sacraments, nor permit it in any manner at all to be accounted as part of [the church]. Thus it follows further that no false Christian, no hypocrite or pharisee, much less an open sinner, is a member of the church, nor can [such a one] do anything fruitful or pleasing to God in the building up of the body of Christ, nor serve blessedly, nor establish anything good.

The Christian church also has no dead members in whom there is no spirit, life, or power, as some assert to the detriment of the church of Christ.<sup>35</sup> Rather, because it is the living body of the living Lord and King, Christ, who rules and presides in it with His Spirit as its Head, and who also fills and adorns it with spiritual ornaments, grace, and power, it is easy to see from this that according

to its measure it should certainly be like Him. This Fustand does not want any unchristian wife, even as she must have from Him, as the body has from its head, a living outpouring for itself and [for] all its members. [This is] because the members are all dependent upon one another, and must be bound together by linking in love. [The members] must hold fast to [their] Head, and thus grow up to the greatness of God, Ephesians 2 [:14-16]; 4 [:4-6]; Colossians 2 [:9, 10].

Now it is obvious that a dead member is not able to do such things, even as he has no outpouring from the Head, because he is no member of the body, nor can in truth be called [one]. Indeed, he is cut off so that the others do not become destroyed because of him. Concerning this the Lord Christ spoke clearly in the Gospel, when He said to His disciples: I am the true vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bring forth much fruit, for without me you cannot do anything; but whoever does not remain in me will be thrown away like a branch which has withered, and one gathers them and throws them into the fire and burns them, John 15 [:1-6].

With this the Lord desires to show us how [things are] done concerning Him and His church, how [matters] stand [in the church], whence the strength of the members comes, who belong to it, that is, who may be said in truth to be a member of the Christian church, even if at times false Christians or also hypocrites, as we said before, or those who have an appearance of blessedness (regarding open sinners,

however, who are to be excluded, we do not know what to say)<sup>36</sup>  
 who mix themselves in among the pious children of God in  
 the church and are like the members of the church in their  
 outward actions; nevertheless, they are not therefore from  
 the church or members of the church of Christ.

For this Householder does not desire to have any  
 useless, lazy people in his house, even as, indeed, he will  
 not consent to any such [persons] any office therein. The  
 Heavenly Vine Jesus Christ cannot bear any withered  
 branches in Himself, or any branches which do not bring  
 forth good fruit. He well knows the false fantasy-Christians,  
 even though they remain unknown to His servants and house-  
 holders; He permits them to be tolerated in the church and  
 to participate in the external services insofar as it is  
 profitable, but of the inward outpouring of His grace, they  
 must be completely bereft, as is now easily discoverable.

Thus it is also the case that the Gospel parables  
 concerning the wheat and the tares [Matthew 13:24-30], the  
 good and the bad fish, [Matthew 13:47-50], the wise and  
 foolish virgins, [Matthew 25:1-13], the green and withered  
 branches, [John 15:1-6], the sheep and the goats,  
 [Matthew 25:31-46], and others like them, are not to be  
 understood as concerning the church and how that [matter]  
 stands before God, nor on any account regarding its true  
 members, for one cannot in any sense prove that the evil  
 or false Christians belong to the Christian church or  
 should be reckoned as a part of it. The Lord Christ cer-  
 tainly did not intend that; rather, He speaks there in

parables concerning the church as it is here assembled in Apostolic services outwardly, in which the dissemblers and many false Christians would certainly be mixed in and would seem to be like the others in zeal and holiness. They, however, will have no part with Him there, as He says in another place, Matthew 7[:21]: Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but [only] those who do the will of my Father in heaven, etc.

From the preceeding, one thing, namely this is to be noticed, that the above-mentioned parables are not to be understood as referring to the godless or open sinners who breed scandal, and who are to be excluded, as Paul says, I Corinthians 5[:7]; rather, [they refer] simply to the dissemblers who cannot otherwise be found out [richten] by human means, for [they appear] to be members of the church and pious persons. The Lord Christ does not speak in the parables concerning things which are not comparable to each other. He does not speak about dogs and pigs, nor about foolish women and stones; He speaks, rather about virgins, even though some are foolish, about fish, even though some are bad, about seed, even though some of it is bad, and about [branches], even though [they] are withered and unfruitful, and the like. He speaks about a common assembly, in which everyone looks, to outward appearances, like everyone else; inwardly, however, their situation is most dissimilar. Therefore, one must judge these parables aright and not mix godless [persons] into them, nor count them as the same as the dissemblers concerning whom the

parables do speak. One must also distinguish the Christian church with its members from an external assembly where everything goes helter-skelter, if one truly desires to understand the Holy Scriptures which speak of the church, properly, and not be led into error on that [account].

In the Old Testament and in Judaism there was such a mixing of good and evil [persons], one with the other, in the church. Then, all who were born physically from the seed of Abraham and circumcised belonged to the church and were counted as [being] among the people of God, even as they were all partakers of the covenant and of the physical promise. This, however, was a type of the church which signified the true church to follow, as the shadow signifies the body, in Christianity and the New Testament, in which the shadow and the type cease, but the body and the truth continue. There, however, where there is a spiritual promise, the promise of the Kingdom of heaven and a doctrine of the heart, no false Christian or old Adamic man may belong to the church, still less can he be a partaker of the new covenant and the spiritual promise.

Thus the church of Christ is not to be judged by [the standard of] the circumcised people of the law, but according to Christ its Head, according to His Spirit and new spiritual existence, Acts 20 [:20]; II Corinthians 5 [:5]; Ephesians 1 [:13, 14]. For it [the church] is not the number [hauffe] of baptized Christians, nor those who boast of the name of Christ and of the Gospel, nor those who simply increase outwardly. Rather, it is the [whole

number] of pious, repentent, new men and true children of God, who, by faith, know Christ properly, who have the spirit of Christ, and who live and act according to the Spirit in a Christian manner, regardless of what they are like externally.

Such [people] are those Paul had in mind when he wrote about the church and said: For God the Father gave Christ His Son to be the Head of the church (which is His body), whom Christ also loved on that account, so that He gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, and cleanse it in the bath<sup>37</sup> of the water in the Word of life, so that He might attach it to Himself [as] a glorious company without spot or wrinkle, or anything of the kind, but that it might be holy and blameless, Ephesians 1 [22, 23]; 5 [26, 27].

In this description of the church Paul does not look to anything external, nor to the common mass of people, much less to the hypocrites or false Christians who have mixed themselves in. He judges [the matter], rather, at a higher [level], and for this reason, as it is, in its foundation of truth before God concerning the church of Christ; he looks to that which is performed before God and is comparable to Christ, that is, to the new creature and to the new man who has been begotten from the flesh and the body of Christ. For he says soon thereafter: We are members of His body [Ephesians 5:30], of His flesh and of His body, for he speaks of the church which [Christ] takes care of and increases.



Here also belong [those words] which Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: Brethren, do not be in darkness so that the day come upon you like a thief, for you are all children of light and children of the day, etc. I Thessalonians 5[:4, 5]. Here he has certainly not spoken concerning dissemblers or false, mixed-in Christians, for nothing in it pertains to them, just so little as they belong to the church of Christ. When he says: You are all children of light, he speaks about the church and its members who were at Thessalonika, assembled in the truth as it is before God, for one cannot speak or conclude anything else from the Holy Scriptures.

We have desired to go into more length both here and in the former Article because in our times almost everyone boasts of the church and helps himself to the name "church," and thinks he has the proper church so that each tries by force to tear the other out of his church and bring him into his own. But what the church of Christ (according to the Apostolic description) is, where it is gathered together today, how it is built up, and how it might be recognized, only few [people] wish to take and keep to heart.

#### THE SERVICE AND SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH.

In the second place concerning the servants or priests of the Christian Church, it follows from the above that it is easy to judge what sort of people they must be, although Paul has, nevertheless, in his Epistles, maintained, even to excess, that no pharisee, Judas,

Balaam, Caiaphas, or any other false Christian is to be installed as a priest or servant of the New Testament, much less [will] the Lord Christ [have such persons]. On the contrary, he says clearly [Titus 1:7-9] that a bishop or priest must be blameless, that is, must live a blameless, pious Christian life; [he must be] modest, temperate, polite, good, chaste, just, holy, obedient, hospitable, instructive, not a drunkard, not a backbiter, not angry, not greedy, not proud, not holding himself too high; in short, he must be such a [person] who has a good report from everyone.

Protest: What if he is not such a [person]? etc. One must remove such a person and not tolerate him, etc.

What if one cannot get any others? One must then, according to Matthew 10 [9:3<sup>2</sup>] pray to the Lord of the harvest concerning this.

For this reason, because the servants (and their wives) must be honorable, not double-tongued, not drunkards, nor desirous of filthy lucre [schändtlichs gewins] but blameless, [as] those who have the mystery of faith with a clear conscience; this [is why] Paul says [these things]. But how they will harmonize [their ideas] with Paul, however, who say that an evil or godless priest or preacher could be with just as much value a bishop or servant of the Gospel of Christ and of His Christian Church as [could] one such as Paul describes-they must reveal it to us. The way we see it, it is as if they had said that Paul had written improperly, and that a servant of the Church does

not have to be as Paul described him.

Nevertheless the Lord Christ Himself has sufficiently testified that the Apostles and servants of His Gospel and New Testament must be capable. We read of this in many Chapters, but especially in Matthew 5, 6, 10, 20; John 15, 20, in which [latter] the Lord questioned Peter three times as an example to all shepherds whether, in fact, he really did love Him, before He would finally entrust him to the shepherding of His sheep. This would certainly have been groundless if one simply desired to admit Iosaic pharisees and godless priests to the service of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, or to compare their service to the service of the Apostles and chosen vessels of Christ. Such [persons], however, are those whom Christ sends out. He dwells in them; He works with them, and distributes His grace; indeed, for He makes His work their own, so that He has rightly called them the light of the world and the salt of the earth [Matthew 5:13, 14]. Concerning them He has also testified, when He said [Mark 13:11]: It is not you who speak; rather, it is the Father's Spirit which speaks in you. Concerning such servants [as these] the Lord Christ spoke when He said [Luke 10:16]: Whoever hears you hears me; whoever hates you hates me, etc. The Godless preachers and hypocrites cannot avail themselves of, or accept any of this [at all].

For these reasons the verse of Matthew 23[:2], in which the Lord says: On the seat of Moses sit the Scribes and Pharisees, etc., most certainly should not be mentioned

in this connection [keins wegs hierher gehören]. Nor is it to be understood as referring to the servants of the New Testament or their services; it was, rather, spoken (when the Law of Moses with its compulsion still was in effect) solely concerning the teachers of the Law. According to the testimony of the Scriptures themselves, the preachers and servants of the New Testament are to be completely distinguished from these.

There is also another [distinction to be made] regarding the seat [cathedra] of Christ and that of Moses; it would be better to speak of this another place. Nevertheless [Darunt] those who [seek to] help out [their own case] with this verse should consider more carefully why Christ gave this teaching; what the seat of Moses is; whether it is still established; further, who and what the Pharisees are who sit on Moses' seat. [If they do this], they will no more desire to accept [what they find], than they will wish to be called Pharisees.

Chrysostom:<sup>30</sup> Christ says concerning the Jews that they are sitting on the seat of Moses, etc. Now it must not be said that His priests who have received His doctrine are sitting on the seat of Moses, but upon the seat of Christ. For this reason Paul says that we are doing the work of Christ [I Corinthians 16:10?].

At this point, however, some [persons] desire to separate the person and the office in this way: even though a priest is an evil [man], he can, nevertheless, conduct a good office, the office of teaching of the New

Testament, and can be a proper servant of the Holy Spirit. [This] is contrary to all the Scriptures and all the ordinances of Christ, and after Him, [to those] of Saint Paul, as we have heard. For even as no evil servant could ever please this Lord in any way, can he [in fact] not please Him? [If not] how can he then command anything [in His name] in His church? Or how [can he] work anything with Him? How can he further His service, or promote growth and grace thereby? This is why the Lord has not in vain punished and separated in the Gospel the evil scoundrelly servants who set themselves up over the people--even though they [our opponents] do not desire to hear [this] or take it to heart.

What kind of a teaching office of the Spirit would that be, in which the teaching master should be, both in and before God, ignorant in his own heart? or in whom the Word of God and truth, and, indeed, anything of goodness had neither place nor position? Can he also be a proper, useful teacher in the New Testament, who does not believe what he teaches? That is, [can he be such] who does not himself act and live [the same way] as he teaches, [even though] these two things, according to the testimony of the Apostolical writings and of the Lord Christ's example itself, must always be found with each other in the proper service of the New Testament? Indeed, [a man] can as little preach Christ in a truly proper fashion, who is inimical to Him in his life, as can the mouth [itself] be good when the heart is evil.

This is what Saint Augustine intends in several places. In his tractate, Super Psal. 66, he writes as follows: We have often told your love that to preach the truth is nothing if the heart does not agree with the mouth, and to hear the truth is nothing if the fruit does not follow the hearing.<sup>39</sup> What else can Augustine mean by this than that a godless preacher or evil priest cannot conduct a useful teaching office in the New Testament? As he says Super Psal. 103: Unless the preacher is himself burning, he cannot enkindle those to whom he is preaching. How, then, can one properly separate the person and the office, or how can a person be a heathen personally, yet according to his office of teaching be a Christian?<sup>40</sup>

The true office of teaching of the Gospel cannot fall to any evil inheritor, otherwise this [saying] must prove false: they are all taught by God [Isaiah 54:13]; and Christ could not remain their sole Master.

Augustine in his Tractate Super Psal. 103: "Unless the minister preaching is burning, he cannot enkindle those to whom he is preaching.

That this is not possible, however, the wise man Jesus Sirach confirms for us with plain [öffentlicher] words, when he says: A godless man cannot teach anything [rightly],<sup>41</sup> for it [i.e.: knowledge] comes from God, for (as he says at the same place): Wisdom belongs to proper teaching, and the godless cannot perceive how far [removed] it is from the proud, and hypocrites do not even know about it. You dare not say, Sirach continues, that if I have taught incorrectly,

that God has, [in fact] done it: [Or that] He has deceived me; for He has need of no godless [person], [Ecclesiasticus 15:9-12]. This was certainly written to describe the false teachers and godless priests who always want to sell their deeds in God's name, and immediately swear that what they say is God's word; what they do is the work of Christ, or else, indeed, God must be teaching falsely, or else, Christ's institutions must be in error, etc. It is even as if our Lord and God Jesus Christ together with His Spirit, power, grace, and works [must be] bound to us men, indeed, to everyone who ascends into the chancel. Where [pray tell] is that written [in the Scriptures]? Who has ever proved that? Or to whom did Christ ever promise such a thing? For these reasons one should certainly look to Christ with great reverence towards God in the church service, and tread very cautiously in all these matters.

Thus those in whom Christ neither works by His Spirit, nor dwells in them, are not "limbs" [gliedmasser] of the Church. Moreover, since hypocrites and godless men are neither the body of Christ nor His kingdom, they belong to the devil's kingdom: he it is who drives, leads, and directs them according to his own will (as the Apology<sup>42</sup> of the Confession itself says) how, then, may they belong to the Church of Christ, or how may they hold offices in the Church of Christ with profit and propriety?

In sum, however, the Lord Himself says [Matthew 12:33]:  
 Either set a good tree, and its fruit will be good, or set

a bad tree, and its fruit will be bad, etc. A good man brings forth good things from the good treasury of his heart, and an evil man brings forth evil from the evil treasury of his heart. And shortly before this, [He said]: Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me is scattering [Matthew 12:30; Luke 11:23]. Did not Christ, moreover, clearly command that everyone should remove the log from his own eye before attempting to remove the splinter from his neighbor's eye? Furthermore, He says at the same place: one blind man cannot show another the way, Luke 6 [39].

Therefore it stands incontrovertibly that Christ did not entrust His offices in the Church and the directing of men into the Kingdom of Heaven to blind [men], to strange heathens, to false Christians, or to hypocrites, but to His own elect servants and friends to occupy them. To them also He promised to further their service with His grace and power, and, indeed, to be with them even to their own end. Accordingly, in this order of things the office may not be separated from the person at all; wherever, on the contrary, this is not the case, it will be easy to perceive what value will be present there, as [we] have already sufficiently experienced.

Concerning all this the Canons and Laws<sup>43</sup> [Canones und Leges] declare that no one should be permitted to serve in church offices if anyone has anything to complain of concerning him. They hold that one should only set and accept blameless servants into such offices, who have a good report



from such persons who are even outside the church. The Canons forbid as well that anyone [involved in] concubinage should hear Mass, q. 32 cap. Nullus.,<sup>44</sup> or that anyone should receive the Sacrament from any evil priest (as a punishment for him, and as an example for others).

If such things would be seriously adhered to, and, according to the testimony of the Apostolic orders and the rules of the ancient church, those [persons] were to be condemned who lie in open depravity, such as simony, adultery, prostitution, gluttony, hatred, envy, usury, and the like, there would be no need of this article concerning godless priests, for [in such matters] one does not dare at all to separate the man from the office, nor should one do so, even though such a gloss has arisen [to be] a coverup for such spiritual godlessness and is simply a papistical fantasy.

Cyril<sup>45</sup> writes concerning John 20 on the verse: Receive the Holy Spirit, etc., that Christ desired to demonstrate that it is necessary that the Holy Spirit must be given to those [persons] first, who are to be sent forth in the Apostolic office, and that, moreover, the Lord Himself points out the reason in that place. They are unable to do what is pleasing to God and to flee the snares of sin unless they are armed with heavenly power and their consciences have been strengthened beforehand with divine strength, etc. Moreover, the disciples would certainly not have understood the mysteries nor have been able to teach them properly if they had not been taught beforehand

by the Holy Spirit and had not had the understanding of the things which pass beyond the reach of the human senses (from the Spirit of God). For, as Paul writes [I Corinthians 12:3]: "No one can say that Jesus is Lord, except in the Holy Spirit. If, then, they should preach that Christ Jesus is the Lord, that is, truly God and our Lord, it must be necessary, Cyril says, that they must first have received the grace of the Holy Spirit with the Apostolic office and honor from Christ.

That the servants of the New Testament should certainly and of necessity have the Holy Spirit, Cyril explains further at the same place with figures from the Old Testament. In these, Aaron and the priests had to be sprinkled externally with the blood of the sacrificed goat (which typified Christ and His shed blood) before they could complete the prescribed [figürlichen] service of God. These [symbols] demonstrate that the priests of the New Testament must also be sprinkled inwardly, be sanctified by Him, and be perfected with the blood of the goat of perfection, which is Christ our Lord, if they are to serve Him fruitfully in the office of the New Testament. This is what Cyril says.

If, then, as we have heard before, a hypocritical evil priest should sneak in and use this office, and, indeed, if (which God forbid) it should happen that there were evil priests everywhere, they could disclose no ore from the members of Christ or from His Church, because they have not set their hearts on the service or the servants,

but upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as on the Head of the Church Himself, [even] in all external things.

Therefore the third point of the Article under discussion, which reads as follows: The Sacraments are alike powerful even though the priest by whom they are administered is not pious, may be easily judged. Also, in this matter there arose in the times of the Fathers a great controversy concerning which much is written in the Spiritual Laws [geistlichen Rechten].<sup>46</sup> If, however, one properly understands what a Sacrament is, what end it serves, for whom and why it was instituted, and that the Sacraments do not belong either to men or to the priests who administer them, but only to the Lord Christ, and that, [finally], nothing even in the Apostolic office is to be imputed to the service, but everything, to the grace of Christ (even as that grace belongs to one Man, Jesus Christ, from whom all divine power comes), then the conscience will be helped in this matter so that it need have no scruples on account of the priest who distributes the Sacraments. Hence, also, such a form cannot be made into any opus operatum.<sup>47</sup> Therefore Chrysostom<sup>43</sup> writes that grace works everything in the gracious dealings of God with men. What priest? he writes, indeed; [or] what angel or archangel is able to accomplish anything in any of the things which have been given to us by God? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit does it all. It is God's gift alone. This is what Chrysostom says.

Therefore this point concerning the power of the

Sacrament must surely be improved for the honor of Christ, or, because the Sacraments are powerful, must be more carefully explained. [Otherwise], as [has happened] in the papacy, the power to save men will be ascribed to the visible Sacraments, which should always and only be ascribed to Christ our complete Saviour, to whom also the Sacraments [themselves] direct [our attention]. As Paul says [Romans 1:15]: He is the power of God, even as He is the fountain of all graces and the fulness from which we should all receive grace upon grace, John 1[:16]. These [same] things Augustine has clearly distinguished, when he says: We have thus received today the visible food (he means the bread of the Lord in the Lord's Supper), but the Sacrament is one thing and the power of the Sacrament is quite another.<sup>49</sup> And, when the Lord says, John 6[:51]: This is the bread which came down from heaven so that whoever eats of it should not die, Augustine interprets it and says: That the Lord speaks about the bread which belongs to the power of the Sacrament, not about that which belongs to the visible Sacrament, Tract. 26.<sup>50</sup> In the same way he clearly distinguishes the two kinds of bread in the Lord's Supper, Tract. 51.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, even though Augustine says somewhere in his writings against the Donatists (who attribute far too much to the service and to the servants and who desired to confirm the influence of grace in the church by the piety or merit of the priests): That the Sacraments in the Church of Christ are received by evil [persons], they are

not, therefore without power and reality.<sup>52</sup> He does not intend [here] any other power and reality than that they remind the external man of the merits of Christ and that they admonish [him] publicly to confess the received grace of God with thanksgiving. For this reason also he calls them visible words, in short, that they are to be held to be sacraments, that is, signs of invisible grace, so that even though an evil person should administer them they are still powerful and real for the faithful, that is, [they are] what they are to remain, and are not to be changed [on this account]. If, then, this Article also means the same thing and does not attribute, combine, or bind divine power to them, then we are satisfied on this account.

On the other hand, however, we know well by the grace of God, and the Holy Scriptures teach [the same thing], that the power by which the faithful are to be saved is to be sought elsewhere than in the Sacraments. There is also a great distinction between the offering and reception of the visible Sacrament before men, and the reception of the invisible power and grace of the Sacrament (that is, the mystery to which the Sacrament points) in the sight of God. We also know that the grace and power of God, Christ, is in no way bound to the Sacrament and to the ceremony, nor may [He] be in any way mixed up with it.

#### THE NINTH ARTICLE.

Concerning Baptism it is taught that it is necessary

and that thereby grace is offered; that one ought also to baptize infants, who are thereby offered up to God and become pleasing to Him; for this reason the Anabaptists are rejected who teach that infant baptism is not right.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article on Baptism and the necessity of it, if this necessity is understood [as meaning] for salvation, must be considered very carefully. Whether it is confirmed by the Scriptures--but it is rather to be properly distinguished according to I Peter 3[:21]. For, concerning the inward baptism of Jesus Christ, concerning the heavenly baptism of the heart, about which John [the Baptist] speaks, [Matthew 3:11]: I baptize with water; He (Christ) will baptize with fire and the Holy Spirit, in that case it is true that without such baptism (which is also called a washing of regeneration [lauacrum regenerationis], the baptism of the new birth) no one can be either saved or cleansed of sin. Concerning this baptism the Lord Himself spoke, when He said: John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not long after these days, Acts 1[:5].

Therefore although we also hold and teach that Baptism was not instituted in vain by Christ, [we believe that it] belongs to the organization [hausshaltung] and to the external church discipline as a Sacrament of the church. Nevertheless, we can bind neither salvation, the

forgiveness of sins, nor grace to it;<sup>53</sup> otherwise it must follow that all the elect persons who have not been outwardly baptized, and, likewise, all the children who die without baptism or who are otherwise lost must be directly condemned [on mittel verdampt] which is, however, painful to hear. For that alone which is necessary for salvation was necessary from the beginning, even before baptism or circumcision were instituted, and will always be necessary, without which no man has ever been saved nor ever can be saved.

There was liberty in this matter in the early Church, see Chrysostom, Homily 39.<sup>54</sup> Also see Ambrose's Epistle on the death of Valentinian.<sup>55</sup>

Because of this constraining condition [nötigen fürgeben] Anabaptism has sprung up now in our own times; for this reason [damit] also they [the church party, lit: mar] plague and entangle the common people ever more severely in their consciences even today on behalf of the Anti-Christian churches (which the Anabaptists hold the Pope's churches to be), lest they [the common people] should hold simply to the command of the Lord Christ, when He says [Luke 10:42]: One thing is necessary for salvation (which is faith in Jesus Christ). Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned [Mark 16:16]. The Lord does not say that whoever is not baptized will be condemned, but [He says] that whoever does not believe [will be condemned]. Thus it is well to consider [this] if one desires to make a thing

necessary for salvation of the outward water baptism: is it not contrary to the Article that faith alone should save, for even though grace and our salvation are not bound to the baptismal water, as is written in I Peter 3[:21], yet, nevertheless baptism is a sacrament of the church of Christ. Everything which Christ has instituted for the external man in the Christian service must remain undespised by all Christians.

#### THE TENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning the Communion of the Lord it is taught as follows: The True Body and Blood of Christ are truly present in the Communion under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received. Thus the teachings to the contrary are rejected.

#### EXAMINATION

This Article concerning the Communion of the Lord, that there the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine in the Communion is Papistical; to it also belongs transsubstantiation. [We] cannot understand how it came into the Confession because it is nowhere either taught or held thus in the Gospel; rather, transsubstantiation is even more [strongly] rejected and disapproved of by Paul, who after the Consecration still calls [the bread] bread. Therefore this Article must certainly be changed and properly improved



according to the true understanding and conception [sinn] of the Lord Christ with good judgement. But as pertains to the Lord's Communion and to the feeding on His body and blood, and also the thanksgiving therefor, we hold the [same] distinction as Augustine [does, writing] on the Sixth Chapter of John<sup>56</sup> and in Tract. 59,<sup>57</sup> as we have stated above.

#### THE ELEVENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning confession we teach as follows : that in the Church private absolution should be retained and not be allowed to fall away; although in the confession it is not necessary to relate all sins and evil deeds because this is impossible: Psalm 1<sup>o</sup> [19:12]: Who knows his wickedness?

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerning confession and absolution, that one ought in the Church to retain private absolution, that is, the especial release or forgiveness of sins, and not let it fall into disuse, has not been retained formerly in many churches because people have been afraid that a new Papacy might arise from it or else that it might give rise to a false confidence in the ceremonial works of the Church, [or] that the priests, as formerly, might undertake to discover men's secrets in the confession, to forgive their sins, and to distribute grace and absolution. Hereby men are

drawn away from faith in the only High Priest Jesus Christ and also from the inward comfort of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Their trust and comfort they would be placing in the priest or in the work of absolution, and [it] would be there that they would be seeking salvation.

Nevertheless we do not desire at all to abolish the confession or the external comforting of the consciences in the Church of Christ; therefore, [we] desire that this Article might be better explained from the Holy Scriptures. For this reason, then, we will withhold our further judgement. Above all other things, however, this must certainly be considered: what God says in the Prophets, when He says: My honor will I not give to another. I, I will expunge your transgression for my sake, says God the Lord, Isaiah 42[:3]; 43[:25].

#### THE TWELFTH ARTICLE.

Concerning repentance it is taught that those who have sinned after baptism may receive forgiveness of their sins at any time if they are converted. Absolution should not be denied them by the church. Now true, proper repentance is nothing else than sorrow and pain, or to have terror because of sin, and yet, concurrently, to believe in the gospel and in absolution, that sins are forgiven and that grace has been procured by Christ, which faith again comforts the heart and gives it peace.

After [these things] improvement should follow, in that one leaves off from sinning, for this should be the

fruits of repentance, as John [the Baptist] says, Matthew 3[:3]: Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article on repentance, [namely] that those who have sinned after baptism may receive forgiveness of their sins at any time through faith in Christ in this time of grace, for such faith, which also encompasses sorrow and pain for sin, [and] brings with it a repentent life, is not in doubt, and is an especial comfort for poor sinful men here on earth. For, even though the forgiveness of sins is an Article of our common Christian faith if even those who were once pious could not also fall again or sin, then the Lord's Prayer had been instituted in vain, for in it all Christians pray, Forgive us our debts, [Matthew 6:12]. Thus this Article is so apparent that no one can deny it with any justification [grund], as far as its first point is concerned, except that repentance must be reckoned somewhat higher [so that it embraces] not only sorrow and pain for past sins but also a good renunciation of sins and a complete changing of the whole life of man in the grace of Christ. Thus a repentent person must not only leave behind the works of his past life, but must also hate, regret, and bewail his whole sinful nature and turn himself in true faith to Christ; by this [faith] he will also be renewed to repentance and will be strengthened and empowered to live in the future a pious Christian life in the holiness and

righteousness of truth.

The church absolves insofar as it promises remission of sins to the faithful in Christ. It binds insofar as it pronounces the anger of God to the unbelievers and to the hardhearted. Those [persons] are released whom the light of the Gospel has illuminated [in] their hearts, so that they might trust in Christ.

They are bound from whom the Gospel is far away, and they perish.

As pertains to the other part, namely the keys and absolution, [these] may be surely distinguished by the progress of grace, so that the faith of the heart remains undividedly immovable in Jesus Christ the only Forgiver of sins, and does not become again a false confidence in the Absolution as was raised up in the Papacy in the hearts of men.

The keys are entrusted to the church, but not to each individual church or congregation, but to that Church which is the Bride of Christ and His Body, assembled and ruled by His Spirit.

#### THE THIRTEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning the use of the Sacraments it is taught that the Sacraments were instituted not simply to be signs by which one may outwardly recognize Christians, but that they are signs and testimony of God's will towards us to awaken and to strengthen our faith through them. For this reason they also demand faith and are then properly used if one receives [them] in faith, and faith is strengthened

thereby. Thus those are rejected who teach: The Sacraments make [one] righteous ex opere operato without faith, and [who] do not teach that this faith must be added to [the Sacraments and] that forgiveness of sins is offered there, which is obtained by faith and not by works.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerns the use of the Sacraments, that they were instituted not only to be signs by which one might know Christians, but that they are signs, testimonies, and reminders of the grace of God and of His divine will, as well as of the sufferings and merits of Christ, to give Him praise and thanks therefor, etc. That they may not be used properly without faith we also hold and teach, but that they [work] ex opere operato, or that in any other way forgiveness of sins is offered or received there and that faith is awakened or strengthened by the Sacraments, that we can neither hold nor accept because we have no Scripture [as proof] for such. Rather, we remain simply with the conception of Augustine when he writes: That the Sacrament is a sign of a holy thing,<sup>57</sup> a visible form of an invisible grace.<sup>59</sup>

The Sacraments point to and testify to [these things], but [they] are not able to give anything divine, nor to bring it into the heart; they remind [those who] understand concerning the grace of God in Christ. They also point to this [grace], so that one should seek through it alone to

receive through faith all grace, power, and eternal life.

Therefore we hold according to our understanding that this Article must certainly be improved so that not everyone might say that it is at war with itself. For, if the Sacraments demand faith, then [faith] cannot be first awakened by them nor given by them. If forgiveness of sins is received by faith in the blood of Christ, then it [forgiveness] cannot come through any external work, that is, through the use of the Sacraments. One must, in these connections, think about these things further.

Erasmus [in his Treatise] on Method:<sup>50</sup> Whatever is externally practiced relating to the divine cultus or to religion is a ceremony. If piety is not endangered by ceremonies, why does Paul always fight so strenuously against the Mosaic ceremonial laws in all his works, as growing stronger against the grace of Christ? The superstitious Jews prescribed ceremonies as necessary for salvation for the people which thus, by the superstition of men obscured the grace of the Gospel. It is just the same today.

Because, then, faith is a gift of God and of the Holy Spirit, it cannot be increased or strengthened by anything else than by the Holy Spirit Himself and by our Lord and God Christ, even as the disciples said: O Lord, increase (or strengthen) our faith, [Luke 17:5]. Paul says, II Corinthians 1[:21]: But it is God who has established us with you in Christ, who has anointed, sealed, and given to us in our hearts the pledge of the Spirit.

we cite these [examples] only so that men might not be directed in the use of the Sacraments or otherwise, to set their hearts and faith on visible signs, but, [rather], with the Sursur corda [Lift up your hearts] to direct [their hearts and faith] above themselves to Christ and through Him to God His Father in the Holy Spirit, so that the building up of the Body of Christ, which is attached to the Head, Christ, might be properly taught and brought about, [for] it is to increase, grow, and be preserved through His divine outpouring. In this way also men will not attribute the honor, power, and working which belong alone to God and to His Christ, to God's created things [creaturen], which can never take place without a very grave idolatry.

Erasmus:<sup>61</sup> To trust in ceremonies, as almost all men are wont to do, is the bane of the true piety; let those ceremonies cease, therefore, which by their occurrence jeopardize piety.

#### THE FOURTEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning Church Order it is taught that no one may publicly teach or preach or distribute the Sacraments without a regular call.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article, if it is only properly understood, needs no proving; it is sufficiently grounded in the Holy

Scriptures, even as Paul says: That no one assumes the honor for himself, but he is called by God just as was Aaron, Hebrews 7 [5:4]. And in I Corinthians 14[:26-42], he says that everything in the Church should be done in an honorable and orderly [manner].

But an Article such as this needs a good explanation as to what the regular call is, to whom it pertains, and what [conditions] attach to it. [Otherwise], the call will again come to the Pope and to the Cardinals, or to other such selfish, ambitious men who with their power depose the church and especially the Lord Christ as the Head of the Church and would like to assume such power for themselves alone without any basis from Scripture [for such a move]. [In such a situation] watchfulness is necessary so that the Church is not again taken over by courtesans and the Pope's toadies, instead of by servants of Christ, and the sheep are **w**atched over and pastured more by wolves than by faithful shepherds, as happened in the past.

In the New Testament there is one spiritual divine Authority, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God the Father set to be the Head of His Church before all things, Ephesians 1[:22]. He rules, protects, defends, and represents His people and His teaching (which is the Word of the Cross and the Gospel of the grace of God in the Holy Spirit). [In that Church] there is no need of a Secular Arm [Bracchium saeculare], but the patience of the saints, the service of Christ, and the distribution of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, I Corinthians 4[:1] [are all necessary].



In the second [place] this Article concerning the calling of the servants of the Church demands that no one run for himself nor press himself into the government of the Church or seek his own [advantage] in it, or make a human business from the Word of God. Rather, let [him] await a regular call and after that examine himself in his conscience, busy himself with prayer, teaching, and life so that he might be especially called, chosen, and finished by Christ as the Lord of the harvest, the Head and spiritual Regent of the Church, to bring forth much fruit and benefit in the blessing of Christ.

Therefore Christ must be entreated in everything, [for] He alone sends out proper workmen into His harvest, Matthew 10 [3<sup>o</sup>] and gives properly prepared servants for the Church, some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers, Ephesians 4 [11]. Thus He also speaks to His disciples: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and have determined that you should go forth and bring forth much fruit, [so that] your fruit may abide, John 15 [16]. In the regular calling of the servants of the Church [Christ] should certainly be imitated as much as possible, which every true servant of the Gospel who seeks the honor of Christ more than his own, will certainly know how to hold to in the future.

#### THE FIFTEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning ordinances in the Church made by men, it is taught to keep them if they may be kept without sin and

if they serve for peace and order in the Church, such [for example] as certain festivals and the like, but [to give] proper instruction concerning them, so that one should not burden the conscience with them, as if such ordinances were necessary services of God, without which no one might be justified before God, etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerning the ordinances of the Church, and ceremonies, that they [should] be held in Christian freedom, and [that] the conscience should remain unfettered by them is dealt with further on in the Confession under the Title of the Authority of Bishops [and is] so thoroughly confirmed with citations from the Scriptures that there is no need to write further about it here.<sup>62</sup> In this one may not weaken or surrender if one does not wish to surrender the Christian freedom of conscience. [Apart from this], good external order and even ceremonies which are not contrary to God's Word may certainly remain in the Church.

[We do] not, however, [hold] that man should think to obtain forgiveness of sins by them, nor [yet] that the conscience should be directed to them as if they were necessary to salvation. They have been instituted to serve for the sake of the external man, to teach him [with] every means concerning the work of salvation in the grace of Christ, to typify this before him, and to preach the Gospel to every creature, [and, finally], that things

[might] proceed in an orderly, peaceful, and improving [manner] in the Church. Nevertheless, above all else, this must be properly taught, spiritual judgement must be exercised, and moreover, Christ and His kingdom in the Holy Spirit must be everywhere pointed to. This last, because it was so neglected in times past [made] ceremonies and ordinances into very great idolatry. They ought to have directed [men] to Christ and to the spiritual experience of Him, but, on the contrary, men were directed by bad priests away from Christ and to ceremonies, to place their trust in them to seek grace and forgiveness there, [to] their great destruction,<sup>63</sup> as, alas, is all too prevalent today.

#### THE SIXTEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning civil government and the worldly authority [policey vnd weltlichen Regiment] it is taught that all authority in the world and established government, laws, and good order are created and established by God; and that Christians might be in government, occupying the office of princes or judges without sin, to speak judgement and right according to imperial and other praiseworthy laws [Rechten], etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerning civil government, power, and the worldly authority is also well grounded in the Holy

Scriptures. For there is an ordinance of God, made for the good of the physical, civil life, of which the magistracy is the defender, in order that [a person might be safe] from his neighbor, and so that the pious [person] could be safe and secure from the evil [person], and so that also the common peace might be maintained among men; information [concerning this] may be found in I Peter 2 and Romans 13.

[It is true moreover], that a Christian may well be a government officeholder,<sup>64</sup> even as a government officeholder or a worldly ruler may also be a Christian without any reservation of conscience insofar as he believes in Jesus Christ and lives and deals according to the manner of the Christian faith and does not misuse his position and office contrary to God.

It is not necessary to relinquish one's office and position on account of one's Christian faith, nor [is it necessary] to become a monk or an Anabaptist [on that account], etc. For because the government with its power has been ordained by God as the servant of God to praise good works and to punish evildoers, it must necessarily follow that its regular office and also obedience to it can by no means be either sin or contrary to God.

For these reasons we teach and hold together with the Holy Scriptures that no man by virtue of his office or position, be he emperor, king, prince, lord, or whatever he will, can cut another man off from salvation. On the contrary it must certainly remain true with him what Peter said, [Acts 10:34, 35], after he had been called to the centurion Cornelius, when he opened his mouth

and said: Now I know in truth that God does not look upon the person, but, rather, among all people whoever fears Him and does what is right is pleasing to Him.<sup>65</sup>

#### THE SEVENTEENTH ARTICLE.

It is also taught that our Lord Jesus Christ will come on the Last Day to judge and to awaken all the dead, to give to the elect and righteous eternal life and eternal joy, but to condemn godless men and the devils in hell [to] eternal punishment.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article is also one of the Twelve [Articles] of our common Christian faith [or: of our universal Christian Creed] and is undeniable by all Christians. In the Acts Peter confirmed it, after he had memorialized the passion and resurrection of Christ, [he said]: He, that is, the Almighty God, commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that Jesus Christ has been ordained by God to be a judge both of the living and of the dead; concerning this all the Prophets testify that in His name all who believe in Him will receive forgiveness of their sins, Acts 10 [42, 43]. In this passage not only the whole Gospel of Christ, but even the whole service of the same are clearly expressed.

From this, then, it follows further that not only grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, and mercy are to be declared in Christ through the Gospel; [but that] rather,

gracelessness, trouble, and the fear [are to be declared] for all the souls of men who do evil and who do not obey the truth, Romans 2[:9, 10], punishment, anger, judgement, and the condemnation of all godless existence and of every vice of men who do not know God, who in their stony unrepentent hearts hate the riches of His goodness, and who do not wish to be obedient to the Gospel nor to live God-pleasing lives. Such, as Paul says, will suffer pain, eternal destruction, and [separation] from the face of God and from the glory of His might when He descends from heaven in the flames of fire to judgement to give to each [person] according to his works, II Thessalonians 1[:7-9]; Romans 2[:9, 10].

#### THE EIGHTEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning the free will it is taught as follows, that man, to some extent, has a free will to live outwardly honorably and to choose among those things which the understanding comprehends. But without grace, help, and the working of the Holy Spirit man is not able to be pleasing to God, to fear, love, or believe God, or to throw out the in-born evil desire from his heart; this happens, rather, through the Holy Spirit who is given by God's Word, for Paul says, I Corinthians 2[:14]: Natural man perceives nothing from the Spirit of God, etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article concerning Free Will, as also Augustine<sup>66</sup>

writes concerning it, is correct: would to God it were properly considered [as] in the first newness of the Gospel [at the beginning of Christian history] and in the same way explained and understood. For, as it was once, and [is still] undeniable, we, without Christ, without His grace and Spirit are not able to do anything good which is good before God or which might remain [before Him], as the Lord says to His disciples, [John 15:5]: Without me you can do nothing. Because, however, Christians are new-born men of water and the Spirit, it must follow from this that they have received a new will, spirit, heart, and understanding through grace as well: indeed, they have now received a free will [to do] good.

That this Article concerning the Free Will must certainly be distinguished according [as it relates] to the old man and the new man [is obvious]; it should be done like this: The old natural man because of his depraved nature has, of his own powers, no free will, nor any power to live piously and holy before God, or to perform His will. [He does], however, have in some measure a free will to live before men an externally honorable life, to avoid calumnies, and to live according to human righteousness, even though he is likewise often hindered from this by his inborn weakness and also by the cunning of the devil, [so that he] is often driven to open calumny.

The new man, [on the other hand], concerning whom so much is said in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the Epistles of St. Paul (He it is we call a Christian.) has a

free will and the ability in the grace of Christ to do good and to abstain from evil. In this [matter], as Paul says: [Philippians 2:13]: God works the willing and the completing according to His good pleasure; and in another place, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom, II Corinthians 3[:17]. Thence also [comes] that, which Paul writes, II Corinthians 7[:1]: Because we now have such a promise, my beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every stain of the flesh and spirit, and proceed with our sanctification in the fear of God.

Since, now, almost everyone assumes for himself the name of Christian and comforts himself [in the assurance] of his salvation and, indeed, boasts of the Lord Christ, it would be better, according to our way of thinking, to teach the common man in Christianity with a proper understanding, that Christians have a free will, [one] which comes from the grace of God, rather than to say and to teach without distinction that our deeds are lost; we can earn nothing but useless anger, etc.

We hold the [former position] to be better and more edifying for the simple [folk], so that the office of the grace of Christ be not diminished, nor the guilt of our sinful evil lives be chargeable to God, as if men might proceed safely under it, etc. That one must certainly distinguish this great matter of the Free Will, concerning which some people wrote and taught injudiciously enough at the beginning of the [Reformation, lit: Gospel], according to the Scriptures, and [that we] also [must] learn to work



our own salvation with fear and trembling according to the command of Paul, Philippians 2 [12] [is also obvious].

However, concerning this we have written at greater length above in connection with the Fourth Article<sup>67</sup> concerning the abilities and powers of men and concerning the office of grace, so we will let the matter rest here.

#### THE NINETEENTH ARTICLE.

Concerning the cause of sin, it is taught among us that although the Almighty God created and sustains the whole of nature, nevertheless the perverted will works sin in all evil [persons] and haters of God. For it is the devil's will, and [the will] of all the godless which, as soon as God has taken His hand away, turns them away from God to evil, as Christ says: The devil speaks lies from his own [nature], John 8 [44].

#### EXAMINATION.

This Article, that God is not the Author of sin, but is a Lover and Worker of all good things and a Punisher of sins and a Judge of every [kind] of godless existence, is right, as the prophet says: You are not a God who is pleased with godless existence: whoever is evil does not remain before You, Psalm 5 [4, 5]. Moreover, it is written [I John 3:7]: Children, let no one deceive you: whoever does right is righteous, even as God is righteous; whoever sins is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning.

For this reason, however, the Son of God appeared that He might redeem the works of the devil, I John 3[1:2].

This Article should be often related and presented to the common people, because it is often imagined by many that God works everything, both good and evil, in everything; indeed, that He Himself is everything in every created thing. Many men have been deceived by Philosophy in this, and thereafter by an improper understanding of the Article concerning the Providence of God have been led to ascend so high that they have been led away from repentance as well as from the true faith of Jesus Christ and from all fear and love of God. Thus today several of them, and indeed, a large number, dare to ascribe all their fate [ding] to the undiscoverable Providence of God, as they say: If I am predestined, I will be saved, even though I do all kinds of evil, but, on the contrary, even if I do all kinds of good, if I am not predestined, it will be of no avail: I will be condemned.

This condemnation, however, is quite proper, as Paul says in another context, [Romans 1:27], because such people have a perverted mind and have neither God nor Christ. Such godlessness has come to the point where some people at the beginning of the Reformation taught, wrote, and disputed concerning de absoluta necessitate<sup>67</sup> [On Absolute Necessity] and quod Deus sit autor peccati<sup>69</sup> [That God is the Author of Sin], as well as concerning the Providence of God, most injudiciously from [the standpoint of] Philosophy. Hence, it must be a matter of great importance

for true pastors that this grave error and also the one concerning the Free Will which so many now imagine for themselves, must be frequently and ably refuted according to the contents of these just discussed Articles of the Confession for the common man, and that the office of grace in Christ Jesus must be properly emphasized and explained. Amen.

#### THE TWENTIETH ARTICLE.

Our [teachers] are falsely accused that they forbid good works; their writings on the Ten Commandments and other matters, however, demonstrate that they have given a good, useful report and admonition concerning the Christian positions in life and works, etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

That the Gospel does not forbid good works is obvious to all the world; rather, it teaches first how a man must previously become good through faith and the spirit of grace, and must become a Christian, if his works are to please God at last. [The Gospel teaches] also that good works without the spirit of faith save no one, etc. Concerning this matter we have written sufficiently [lit: said our piece] concerning the Eighteenth, and, before that, concerning the Fourth Articles.

In addition this Article is further explained in the Confession under the title that one should and must do good

works and how one is able to do them, how they are to be pleasing to God, etc. For, in short, the Spirit of Faith and the Lord Christ make us righteous through the Holy Spirit. There is, however, neither Spirit nor faith present there, where there are no good, God-pleasing works, and where no repentent life and no new Christian existence arise from them.

Nevertheless, however, all external works which God has commanded which are done without faith and the Holy Spirit with an unclean (and often an unwilling) heart, no matter how rich they might appear to be, are, nevertheless, sin before God. Even, for example, if one should without faith do good for his neighbor, show love to the needy, give alms, honor his parents, be obedient to the government, live a well-ordered life, and, indeed, keep all the Ten Commandments outwardly, and live in human righteousness as do the pious heathens, etc. [it would still be sin]. Thus such things, or things like them, as the explanation there makes clear, without faith are sin and, because of their impure hearts, [men] do not please God [with such works] must certainly be dealt with with great circumspection when that said time and place [are dealt with by preachers] because [such matters] are neither comprehensible nor edifying for everyone and, indeed, might give occasion for more self-willed behavior for the common man--we remain silent as to worse [consequences]. It is perhaps from [such considerations] that it is said that one forbids good works, etc., if one teaches that they are sin and of

no value if they [are done] without faith and without the Spirit of God.

Concerning works, however, we distinguish as follows: It is indeed true that because of Adam's fall and disobedience man has become so depraved that without Christ and His grace there is nothing good in him (which would be good before God). But, however, because God created man as a creature with understanding and is his Lord and God, He demands quite rightly that He be praised, feared, and honored by men. This means that a man must live piously, uprightly, and as is seemly for a reasoning man, even towards his neighbor, to praise and love God his Creator, which a man is required [schuldig] to do with all his strength. This is why God has placed the law of nature within him, so that he might live in human righteousness, a debtor both to God and to his neighbor.

Since, then, God is such a beneficent, merciful Lord and God, He will not only crown and reward the good works of Christians but He will also reward the good works of the law of nature (we are speaking of the works of love and merits of natural man), and will not let them be in vain. They are, hence, rewarded by the Rewarder of all good, but not in eternal life hereafter, but in this present life.<sup>70</sup>

Temporally, we say, God will reward such works with many physical gifts, [such as] honor and good things, healthy days, usefulness and welfare of this physical life, by which all men will be certain that God is a gentle Rewarder of all those who hope in Him and who put their

trust finally in Him. This He has also promised in the Law, as Paul says: The Law is not of faith, but the man who does it will live thereby; he will enjoy temporal [benefits], Galatians 3[:12]. [Further], he writes [in Ephesians 6:1-3]: You children, be obedient to your parents, etc., that is the first commandment which has a promise, that it might be well with you and that you might live long upon the earth. Even so the Lord Christ speaks in the Gospel: Whoever slakes the thirst of even the least of these with a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, I tell you in truth, he will not go unrewarded, Matthew 10[:42].

Therefore we do not hold it to be good if one tosses everything into one pile and teaches concerning works without proper distinction, thus frightening men away from the works of love and mercy, or makes such good civil works and an honorable life to be sin and condemnation. One should, rather, admonish, entice, and encourage everyone by the promise that no goodness will go unrewarded, to the benefit of his neighbor. Yet, nevertheless, [one should] direct [them] to Christ the only Saviour, and teach [them] to seek eternal salvation from Him alone and that we by faith in Him become pious, righteous, and alive before God, Galatians 3. In this way in the future everything will be best understood and may result in great riches in the grace of God, of which we have the good examples of Cornelius, Job, and others.

Consider Crigen's Tract 25 on Matthew,<sup>71</sup> wherein he says: Even the good works of natural righteousness

which are not done from love and for God's sake but for the sake of human nature are, nevertheless, pleasing to God, as Daniel testifies when he says to King Nebuchadnezzar, who did not know God: Obey my counsel, O King, that you may be released from your sin with righteousness, and your misdeed, with alms, that is, with mercy and good deeds for the poor (he is speaking of physical punishment for sins in this lifetime); such things will serve you for long days, for [your] peace and welfare, Daniel 4[:27]. In this passage Crigen cites Peter with Clement, and also makes a distinction between the two kinds of good works, the one which is useful to your neighbor, and the other which is praised by God, etc.<sup>72</sup>

We would judge this [matter] quite differently, even though this Section on Good works [were to be] more carefully distinguished with a clearer explanation of the human and divine righteousness as well as the rewards and consequences of each, and their violation, punishment, and pain were to be [more] judiciously dealt with and taught. This must not be done, however, as if the human understanding were sin which merited condemnation, as some [say] who thus understand this verse: All our labor is in vain/All we get is anger's pain, thereby throwing out even the works of love. [Nay], rather, one should more correctly teach that even such righteousness and good customs, as the commands of God done in obedient duty before God and man are also rewarded temporally in this life.

On the contrary, however, the divine righteousness

of faith is not only rewarded and crowned here temporally, but also eternally in that life, but always according to faith. This is what the Lord says in the Gospel, Matthew 5, 6, wherein He also clearly distinguishes the above-mentioned two kinds of righteousness. Because, however, some have come crashing down upon this confusion and give the Gospel the guilt, just as if one would impute sin to ethical works which are done without faith [such as] all common honorableness, obedience to authorities, and to all the civil government, even including the giving of alms and other works of mercy; it is our hope that when such a distinction would be employed that it would result in much good. Amen.

#### THE TWENTY-FIRST ARTICLE.

Concerning the worship of the saints it is taught by our [theologians] that one should remember the saints in order that we might strengthen our faith when we see how they received [widerfahren] grace, and how they were helped by faith, etc.

#### EXAMINATION.

As to this Article concerning the worship of the saints, it is obvious that it is nowhere commended in the Scriptures to worship the deceased saints, to honor them as divine, to pray to them, or to call upon them; rather, such [things] are reserved for the One Holy One, for God



our heavenly Father by whom all other [persons] are sanctified, who is our Lord Jesus Christ, so that He as the Son of God might be our only Mediator, eternal High Priest, Advocate, Defender, and Pleader before the face of God. This the Epistle to the Hebrews demonstrates sufficiently, even as does the Gospel and I Timothy 2 [:5, 6], where it is written: For He thus alone among all other men as the Duke of our Salvation, according to His humanity perfectly formed, completed, glorified both in body and in soul, sitting at the right hand of God, ruling and reigning in [His] heavenly existence.

The other saints, however, even though they are in soul and spirit with God in eternal life, are still not completely perfect, nor have they been glorified completely with their King Christ, which they certainly expect to take place according to the flesh in the resurrection of the dead, so that they might be in body like His clarity. All these, says Paul (speaking about the ancient deceased dear saints of God) have received a testimony by their faith, but have not received the promise, because God has predestined something better, so that it might not be perfected without us, Hebrews 11 [:39, 49]. Their souls live and rest under the Altar to Christ, until that which is still incomplete might be fulfilled with their co-believers as well, Revelation 6 [:11].

This is, in agreement with many other testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, a certain assertion that the deceased saints should not be prayed to, called upon, or

honored as divine so that from Christ our Lord and the Perfecter of all the saints might not be taken His honor and proper position. That, however, one should attend the Natal days and the remembrance of the saints, celebrate their days, praise God by means of His saints, and encourage [others] to emulate their example of faith, we do not know on any account to discard for the sake of every kind of good practice. However, we also [know] that according to the means of our Christian faith and of the Holy Scriptures all things are explained by them and in everything they direct [us] faithfully to our Lord and God Jesus Christ so that He might be the one who with His grace is honored, praised and adored among all the saints, even as the dear saints are praised and their memory preserved for His sake. Thus [it is] not they, but He alone who as the only mediator [Nothelfer] is to be called upon in every adversity, and [it is] with Him alone that help and comfort as well as strengthening of faith and all the heavenly gifts are to be sought.

For even as it once was [true] that Jesus Christ was the only mediator between God and man Who alone heard and attended and Who alone was able to save eternally all those who come to God through Him, and Who lived eternally to defend them, Hebrews 7 [24, 25] [it is still so today]. This He also declared in the days of His flesh to all the faithful, when He said, [John 16:23]: Truly, truly I say to you that if you will ask the Father anything in my Name (in my Name, says the Lord), He will give it to you.

John [says] in his Epistle: My children, I write such [things] to you that you might not sin, and if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous, Who is the Propitiation for our sins, I John 2 [:1, 2]; therewith [we can] let the matter rest.

Thus, dear lords and friends in Christ, you have [in answer] to your request and petition, my free judgement and examination of the Twenty-One Articles of the Augsburg Confession according to that little [bit of understanding] which God the Lord has graciously given me to see, [both] as to what in them might be improved, changed, or, without any harm to faith might be surrendered. Nothing herein is to be construed, however, that I prejudge anyone with these [considerations], or that I wish to disturb [anyone] in any good thing, nor to throw out [anyone's] teaching and faith which is grounded in the Scriptures. And if I should be instructed with something better from the Scriptures, I volunteer myself to accept it thankfully, so that the truth of God, Jesus Christ, alone, Who alone makes us free and will be preserved eternally in everything, right in all things keep the victory, honor and praise. Let it be so. Amen.<sup>73</sup>

## NOTES ON THE TRANSLATION

<sup>1</sup> Note by the editors of the "P" Epistolar. The vagueness of this note shows that even these editors themselves could not establish more detailed information regarding the time and place of its composition. See p. 30 above.

<sup>2</sup> Schwenckfeld has this word from Luther. However in Schwenckfeld's case the phrase Erkenntniss Christi becomes increasingly a mystical term, to denote the living experience the believer has in the heart because of the Presence of Christ. Thus Erkenntniss is to be distinguished from Gelehrtheit, which means knowledge gained solely by reading and not through actual spiritual participation. See, e.g. C.S. VI, Doc. 275 and XVI, Doc. 105<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Reading Erbietung for the rare Erbeitung. Schwenckfeld elsewhere uses Erbietung in his letters (C.S. I, 60; II, 205, 1.a.) and it seems safe to assume that this is a misprint.

<sup>4</sup> This is the keynote of the whole commentary. Schwenckfeld argued consistently throughout his whole life that God's revelation was never to be considered complete or final. See C.S. XVII, Doc. 1159, (which I translated in the Schwenckfeldian 71 (Oct., 1972), pp. 3-8) which is

a revision and expansion of the section on Christian Freedom (see below).

<sup>5</sup> The new dawning of religious truth in the Reformation.

<sup>6</sup> It is at places like this that our frustration concerning the dating of this commentary becomes so apparent. If the work was written, as we believe, in 1531/32, then this passage is surely prophetic of the course of the troubles in the Lutheran Church over Melanchthon's Editio Variata of the Confession of 1540. If, however, this is simply an editorial addition in light of later changed circumstances, this attitude is interesting as a contemporary commentary. On the Variata cf. Bente, Historical, pp. 23-8.

<sup>7</sup> Subscription to the Confession is a step on the way to swearing allegiance to it. One's first impulse is to say that here we have a proof of a late date for the composition of the commentary, yet subscription must here refer simply to the signing of the Confession by the Princes. J. C. G. Johannsen in his book Allseitige Wissenschaftliche und historische Untersuchung der ... Verpflichtung auf ... die Augsburgerische Confession ... (Altona: J. F. Hammerisch, 1833) has shown convincingly that there was no swearing on the Augsburg Confession before 1553 (pp. 466-80).

<sup>8</sup> From this point to p.89 l.19 the material here translated does not occur in the two surviving manuscripts. Cf. C.S. III, 869, note to l 24.

<sup>9</sup> The emphasis here as throughout this text and, indeed, all of Schwenckfeld, is on the individual and his religious life and duties as over against the Church and its formalities.

See especially Maron, Individualismus, esp. pp. 110-153 (III, Die Absonderung (Schwenckfelds Kirchenbegriff)).

Maron's conclusion that Schwenckfeld is so "individualistic" that the concept "church" has only an internal focus must be seen against the background of the Reformation itself in which for Schwenckfeld no room could be found, that is, that dogma became increasingly to be equated with faith, and non-conformity became treason. Maron's treatment of Schwenckfeld ignores this aspect and sees him as a truly independent person (esp. pp. 167-170), free of his own times, which he never was. If Schwenckfeld had been as independent as Maron suggests, then the bulk of this commentary would never have been written (especially the sections on Christian Liberty and on the Christian Church).

<sup>10</sup> This passage points up sharply the theological and philosophical dualism I have mentioned above, p. 19. Cf. especially Maier, Schwenckfeld, p. 14 and Maron, Individualismus, pp. 42ff.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Maier, Schwenckfeld, pp. 12-13, Schultz, Course, pp. 77-80. Schultz, Schwenckfeld, does not appear to have touched on this subject.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Seyppel, Knight, p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> The material contained in this section must have been added at a later date because it deals with sections of the Augsburg Confession not treated in the proper sequence of the Articles. It is possible, however, that Schwenckfeld treated this material here and did not consider the rest of Articles 22-8 to be of sufficient

importance to be separately dealt with, unless this whole section (pp. 73-4) is all a later addition. The manuscript evidence is mute on this point.

<sup>14</sup> Bekenntnisschriften, p. 86, 34. Schwenckfeld's citation does not agree verbally with the Bekenntnisschriften text, nor with any of the variants there listed.

<sup>15</sup> Omitted from the text of P in error, according to the errata.

<sup>16</sup> From the margin. The text says "Er," (He). These texts are from the "Schwabach Articles" (cf. Bente, Historical, p. 15-17). Luther did not present them at Augsburg, for he was not present at the Diet. Melancthon used them as the basis for Part II of the Augsburg Confession.

<sup>17</sup> Schwenckfeld does not quote the whole Article. Luther's definition of the church includes Word and Sacrament: "Denn wo das Euangelion gepredigt wird, und die Sacrament recht gebraucht, da ist die heilig Christlich Kirche. Und sie ist nicht mit gesetzen und eusserlicher Pracht an Steth und zeit, an person und geberde gebunden." "For where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are properly administered, there is the Holy Christian Church. And it is not bound with laws and external pomp to time or place, to person or form." (Luther, Martin, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883ff.), 30, III, p. 181. (Hereafter cited as W. A.)

<sup>18</sup> The reference is apparently to soldiers defeated or captured behind the enemy lines.

<sup>19</sup> It will be noticed that Schwenckfeld does not present the complete text as finally established by the Editio Princeps of any of the Articles of the Augsburg Confession. Thus, any attempt to determine which text Schwenckfeld had before him becomes a matter of speculation. The editors of the Corpus (III, 860) suggest that one of the manuscripts follows a reprint of the Confession. This, however, can hardly refer to the edition originally used by Schwenckfeld himself. The identification of this source appears to be impossible at this time, because no one has collated the various printed editions of the Confession. The Bekenntnisschriften (I, XX) assert this collation would be worthless in light of the existence of the manuscripts.

<sup>20</sup> This word was omitted in error from the printing of the text of P.

<sup>21</sup> Schwenckfeld here refers to the distinction he makes between the flesh and the spirit, and that the activity of the flesh is not sufficient to save man. No created thing is for Schwenckfeld a channel of grace. Cf. below Article Five of the Confession and Schwenckfeld's Examination of it.

<sup>22</sup> The phrase "... and all kinds of heresies which are opposed to this Article are condemned." does not occur in the Confession at all in any of its manuscript forms, cf. Bekenntnisschriften, I, p. 55. It is found in the Editio Princeps. The texts of Articles three through Eleven, Thirteen, Fourteen, and Nineteen are complete according to



the Editio Princeps. The other Articles are incomplete as Schwenckfeld records them: usually their anathemas are omitted.

<sup>23</sup> The text of this Article is that of the Editio Princeps with only minor orthographic variations. Cf. Bekenntnisschriften, I, p. 56-7.

<sup>24</sup> Thus Schwenckfeld attacks Luther's concept of "forensic justification." This theme runs through much of Schwenckfeld's criticism of Lutheran theology, cf. my translation of Schwenckfeld's "An Explanation of Some Points and Articles of Doctrine..." Schwenckfeldian, 73 (April, 1974), pp. 10-14, esp. pp. 10-11. This treatise was written "before 1552," and the German text is in C.S. XVIII, pp. 459-62.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome (340?-420) translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew and revised the existing Latin translation of the New Testament, thus producing the Vulgate Version of the Bible. The editors of the Corpus list no source for these words.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. below, p.218-9 for Eberlein's understanding of the term, "prevenient grace." Eberlein's idea is valuable and, I think, merits further consideration.

<sup>27</sup> Nota: Christ our heavenly Master Teacher has two ways to teach in the house of God: one is simply spiritual, heavenly, secret, and inward, in His Spirit by Himself [directly], where He [exists] as the natural Word of God (without which God created nothing, nor spoke, did, or taught anything). With [Auff] divine power according to

His omnipotence He freely teaches hearts inwardly, He enlightens [them], speaks into [them], and works salvation wherever He will and in whomever He will without any external service [dienst] or servant. This manner of teaching is described in John 6 [44, 65], Jeremiah 31 [3], Hebrews 9 [10], I John 2, Isaiah 54 [13], Thessalonians 4, and in many other places. In such a way [it seems to] we were Abel, Seth, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all the prophets, and also John the Baptist taught by the inward hidden Word, Christ.

"The second manner of teaching, however, occurs when Christ teaches through His servants and witnesses, whom He chose, graced, called, and sent forth for that [purpose]. Such were the beloved Apostles and the other servants of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, this takes place in such a way that these servants in this office of teaching serve the Holy Spirit and the Lord Christ alone; Christ, however, [still] retains [föhret] the mastery Himself in His Spirit; He furthers, preserves, and confirms His [own] doctrine. He also gives the increase and even works, teaches, and imparts inwardly His [own] doctrine into the soul by His grace [with] everything which pertains to our becoming righteous and being saved--even in the external service [of worship]. This material from Manuscript "B" is translated and inserted here because of its distinctively "Schwenckfeldian" character."

<sup>28</sup> Beda Venerabilis (673-735) is best remembered for his Ecclesiastical History of England. This quotation is

from his Opera (Coloniae Agrippinae, 1612), IV, Col. 355, according to the editors of C.S.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of Schwenckfeld's views on Abraham, see Seyppel, Knight, pp. 136-66.

<sup>30</sup> For Schwenckfeld's concept of original sin, see my translation of his Theologia deutsch, "A German Theology for God-Fearing Laity" in Schwenckfeldian 69 (Oct., 1970), pp. 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> For Schwenckfeld's connection to the German mystical tradition, of which Gelassenheit is one of the key terms, see Maier, Schwenckfeld, Chapter XI, esp. pp. 97-105 and Maron, Individualismus, pp. 154-60.

<sup>32</sup> This is the term Schwenckfeld uses to describe the Jewish community, but in the sense of "ecclesia"--the people called by God. The German term is "Kirch," see next paragraph.

<sup>33</sup> "Cf. Opera (Lyons: 1687), II." (C.S. III, p. 907n.) As more specific information is lacking in the C.S. citation, we must assume that either, 1. the editors could not locate this quotation, or 2. it is not a quotation but a synopsis of Chrysostom's thought. St. John Chrysostom (345?-407) was the most famous of the Greek preachers of the early church. His agnomen ("Chrysostom") means "golden-mouthed" and was conferred on him by later generations as a sign of the great respect paid to his preaching.

<sup>34</sup> Schwenckfeld's stand here (and elsewhere) in this commentary as regards the righteousness of priests runs counter to the whole Christian tradition in this area.

It is easy to accept his thinking in this, but hard to follow his logical process. He would appear to be upholding a double standard, except that his standard for lay Christians is so high. Cf. below Schwenckfeld's commentary on Article Eight of the Augsburg Confession.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Melanchthon's Apology, Articles VII and VIII, in Tappert, Concord, pp. 168ff.

<sup>36</sup> Schwenckfeld had, at one time, recommended the evangelical ban, cf. C.S. I, 268, 274, 275; cf. also Erb, Peter C., Schwenckfeld in His Reformation Setting (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), p. 79.

<sup>37</sup> Schwenckfeld does not identify this "bath" with baptism, but with the presence of Christ in the heart, cf. Furcha, Concept, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Opera (Lyons: 1687), III, 159.

<sup>39</sup> Opera (Antwerp: 1700-1702), IV, 496.

<sup>40</sup> Opera (Antwerp: 1700-1702), IV, 859. This citation is repeated in the text in German and Latin.

<sup>41</sup> This word was omitted from the P text in error.

<sup>42</sup> Bekenntnisschriften, I, p. 237; Tappert, Concord, p. 170, 16.

<sup>43</sup> Corpus Juris Canonici (Paris: 1705), I, 33.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. C.S. III, 762.

<sup>45</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Opus insigne beati patris Cyrilli patriarche Alexandrini in euangelium Ioannis: a Georgio Trapezontio traductum (Paris: Wolfgang Hopilius, 1508), fol. 213<sup>b</sup>-[214]<sup>a</sup>. The editors of C.S. did not trace this citation.

46 Schwenckfeld here refers to Canon Law.

47 A work which merely by its being done outwardly works salvation or renewal inwardly.

48 Opera (Lyons: 1687), III, 160. The text is given by Schwenckfeld in both German and Latin. I have omitted the repetition.

49 Opera (Basel: 1505/6), IX, 1 3<sup>b</sup>.

50 Opera (Basel: 1505/6), IX, 1 3<sup>b</sup>.

51 Opera (Basel: 1505/6), IX t 4<sup>b</sup>.

52 Cf. Opera (Basel: 1505/6), V, z 6<sup>b</sup> sqq.

53 Schwenckfeld remarks in the margin at this point that "Erasmus holds this in agreement with us in his declarations against the censure of the Parisians," to which the editors of C.S. refer the reader to Erasmus' Opera (Basel: 1540), IX, 654 sqq.

54 Opera (Lyons: 1687), III, 275.

55 Opera (Basel: 1557), III, 9 sqq., 132.

56 Opera (Paris: 1505/6), IX, 1 3<sup>b</sup>.

57 Opera (Paris: 1505/6), IX, t 4<sup>b</sup>.

58 Opera (Basel: 1505/6), pars VII, y.

59 Opera (Antwerp: 1700-1702), II, 228.

60 Opera (Basel: 1540). This sounds like the dough of Schwenckfeld leavened with the leaven of Erasmus.

That is probably why the citation in C.S. is so general.

61 Opera (Basel: 1540).

62 Augsburg Confession, Article 29, cf. Bekenntnisschriften, I, 120ff; Tappert, Concord, p. 81ff. From this it would appear that Schwenckfeld had intended to comment upon the

whole of the Augsburg Confession, yet for some reason he did not do so.

<sup>63</sup> Or: for the great destruction of [many] consciences-- the reading of Ms. B.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. my translation of Schwenckfeld's "Christian Counsel for an Officeholder: How to Discharge the Duties of an Office Properly and Honorably," in Schwenckfeldian 74 (April, 1975), pp. 9-14.

<sup>65</sup> The text of this Article of the Augsburg Confession is incomplete as Schwenckfeld here gives it, and this is most unfortunate for the subsequent history of the Schwenckfelders. The complete text of this Article encompasses such things as pacifism, the just war, the taking of oaths, and even capital punishment. Against all but the last-named of these the Schwenckfelder community (and, later, church) took strong theological and Scriptural stands without being able to point to a clear word from Schwenckfeld on these subjects. That they no longer hold these positions must also be ascribed to the same cause.

<sup>66</sup> Opera (Basel: 1505/6), pars VI, a 4<sup>b</sup> sq.; pars VIII, Ff sq.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. pp. 99-106 above, on Art. IV.

<sup>68</sup> WA 7, 146

<sup>69</sup> Cf. C.S. III, 26ff. The editors of P have made a marginal note here naming "Calvin, Beza, Zwingli, Melanchthon, and others." The editors of the Corpus have rightly called this a "later annotation" as neither Calvin nor Beza had attained prominence by 1531/2.

<sup>70</sup> Schwenckfeld treated this subject more thoroughly in a book written in 1546/7: Von dreierlai Leben der menschen The Three Kinds of Life of Man C.S., 826ff., which was translated into English by Rev. F. R. Anspach under the title: [The Three-Fold Life of Man] and published in Baltimore by Abraham Heydrich in 1858.

<sup>71</sup> Opera (Basel: 1571), II, 172. Origen (185?-254) was the first textual critic of the Christian Church. Although his Hexapla is lost, the methods he used continue to influence the textual criticism of the New Testament.

<sup>72</sup> The manuscript copies add after "etc.": "He gives examples of chastity, fasting, praying [and of the patience of Job, who] even in temptation did not shrink back from confessing the truth of God." The section in brackets is not in both manuscripts.

<sup>73</sup> The manuscript copies contain the following conclusion in place of the passage which begins "Thus, dear lords and friends ... grounded in the Scriptures.": "Thus we have, according to that small amount [of understanding] which God has graciously granted to us, freely desired to indicate our judgement concerning the twenty-one Articles of the Augsburg Confession [and] what [is] contained in them [which must be] steadfastly kept, [as well as] what [might be] improved, changed, or, without detriment to faith, might be surrendered in response to your request and petition. Nevertheless, we do not desire to pre-judge anyone, nor [do we wish] to disturb anyone in anything of value, [nor] thereby to throw away anyone's doctrine and faith which are based on the Holy Scriptures."

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I

### CHRISTIAN AUGUST SALIG ON SCHWENCKFELD'S COMMENTARY

#### Introductory Note

For the most part, Lutherans of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries took little note of Schwenckfeld's Commentary on the Augsburg Confession. This was especially so because the Book of Concord in both the Epitome and in the Solida Declaratio had classed him as among the errorists whose ideas were condemned and refuted by the Lutheran theologians.

The first full-scale treatment of the Commentary appears to have been by Daniel Schneider (b. 1667).<sup>1</sup> He was a Lutheran pastor in Goldberg and then in Laubach, Silesia, who had been accused of Schwenckfeldian leanings. He wrote his book primarily to assert his own orthodoxy and to refute the Schwenckfeldian accusation. The gist of his comments on Schwenckfeld's Commentary is that all the objections Schwenckfeld raises of a theological nature have already been sufficiently answered by the Lutheran defenders of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>2</sup>

The Lutheran scholar Christian August Salig (1692-1738)<sup>3</sup> is best remembered today for his history of the Augsburg Confession, a work in three massive quarto volumes. His history treats in exhaustive detail of every facet of the Confession from the causes which led to its writing to the history of Melancthon's Variata of 1540. Salig was born in Domersleben and became Conrector of Wolfenbüttel.

He is reported to have been no friend of empty doctrinizing and that in his writings he reduced most of the Lutheran theological disputes to battles over words not really worth the waging. As the last Book of his Third Volume, Salig offers an extended biography and bibliography on Caspar Schwenckfeld. His section on Schwenckfeld's Commentary is translated here as presenting an insight into the kind of work he was engaged in. His appreciation of Schwenckfeld is both sympathetic and perceptive.

Salig and the Lutheran scholar-mystic Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714) are almost the only Eighteenth Century German theologians to appreciate Schwenckfeld's theological insights as relevant for their study of Lutheranism.

#### Text

XXI. The Augsburg Confession was published in 1531; hence, I will here discuss Schwenckfeld's judgement concerning it, because it bears no date. Many people of consequence and others in the Catholic Party had requested him to render his judgement of the Augsburg Confession (e)<sup>4</sup> under the following heads: 1. Whether the Augsburg Confession agreed in every particular with divine truth and with the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, so that there was nothing in it which might not be improved, changed, or surrendered. To this Schwenckfeld replied that because in matters of religion God does not give everything or all at once, one must proceed with great humility and fear of God, and must pay close

attention to the works and the manifold gifts of God everywhere with thanksgiving, and not be so ready to damn or judge one's neighbor. Because the Augsburg Confession was presented in haste and under the pressure of circumstances and is thus not in every particular completely in harmony with the Scriptures, it must follow that it is not totally to be held to be God's Word and His Articles of Faith.

Thus indeed there might well be something in it needing improvement, change, or more perfect expression. But to do this a sound, pure judgement, a good consideration, diligence, and circumspection are all necessary, so that under the appearance of improvement nothing tainted with human tradition might be introduced, nor that under the guise of good Church Order a new papacy might be established, especially since the Confession has become a common treasure and creed. If the Augsburg Confession were in complete harmony with God's Word, one must not surrender anything in it. Yet one must leave the external worship of God and [Church] Order to the external man for his own admonition, but to bind the conscience to outward things would run counter to the manner of the New Testament.

The Word of Life and the grace of God must have their unhampered activity in Jesus Christ, and the Lord must be distinguished from His created things, even as the inward must be distinguished from the outward in every act of worship. The destruction of the church must surely follow the coercion of conscience, even as do the pride of the pastors, their greed and intemperance which led them to

distribute grace and indulgences, so that the office of the Holy Spirit is completely forgotten. Now because the Gospel is not everyone's thing, Acts 13:48, II Thessalonians 3:2, it must remain free to the conscience, because Christ does not desire any coerced worship for Himself. At the outbreak of the Reformation there was much talk of Christian freedom, and potentates and others were also moved thereby to come to the side of the Gospel. Yet this freedom is not a license for the flesh, but is a freedom of the spirit and of the conscience, for Christ alone rules in us, teaches, and leads us, without any statutes or ceremonies, by the rule of His grace, unto eternal life, without any abrogation of governmental or ecclesiastical--external--order. The Confession itself does indeed touch upon this matter in the section entitled "On the Power of Bishops." It should, however, have added at that point that to all external ceremonies and worship of God, even those instituted by Christ Himself, preaching, Baptism, communion, etc., a freedom must be permitted to remain, for Christ did not ordain them as being necessary to salvation. If He had done so, He would have been binding salvation and the forgiveness of sins to external things, and all men who lived before the institution of these things would have been damned. But Christ Himself said that the Kingdom of Heaven does not come with outward signs (ceremonies and observances). Yet one must not on any account therefore despise the sacraments, because Christ did not establish and command them to no purpose. Nevertheless, He did not

entangle the Kingdom of God, salvation, and the conscience in them. The celebration of the Communion is a splendid high festival and commemoration of the death of Christ, useful and serviceable for all believers (even as is Baptism), but it has not been commanded on pain of damnation or the loss of salvation for its non-observance. Foot-washing [under such a system] must also be an ordinance of Christ. The Sacraments and other external things serve well to salvation if Christ have [previously] by His Spirit established His Kingdom in the heart, but these things cannot of themselves grant salvation. The servants of the Word must not elevate themselves to the status of gods, and must not let salvation be sought from themselves, nor are they to practice any kind of idolatry with created things; no, they are, rather, to let all the honor be given to Christ alone, as even Luther himself recognized in his book, On the Babylonian Captivity, and as he, in a Confession which he himself submitted to the Diet of Augsburg, did therein, by leaving the practice of secret Confession remain a free matter for the believer. Thus Schwenckfeld denied both Anabaptism and the tyranny over souls in the Catholic Church, in Lutheranism, and in Zwingliism, as his words plainly show.

XXII. After this introduction Schwenckfeld examined all the Articles of the Augsburg Confession in order. In the First Article, On God, he wished that the word "Person" and the characteristics of each had been better explained. In the Second, on the Fall of Adam, he took issue that men

are born again by baptism and with the words: "the Holy Spirit." If one understands this as referring to the spiritual baptism of the heart, or as referring to the washing away of sins in the blood of Christ and by the water of grace, Titus 3:5; I Peter 3:21, then he would let it stand. In his consideration of the Third Article, On Christ, he reminds us that Christ desires to be known by us, not only with our reason according to His outward life and merits, or according to the history of His doctrine, life, and passion, but much more according to the Spirit and His New Glorified Heavenly Existence, even as He is still today so recognized in believing hearts as the Ruling King, High Priest, Mediator of the New Testament, Distributor of all the riches of heaven, and as the Great Mystery of all blessedness. One must not simply teach about God in the flesh, but also, contrariwise, the Flesh in God must also be properly taught and considered, as well as such questions as these: What is God in man able to do, and what is God Himself able to accomplish? How is man glorified in Christ, and what may all men hope for through Him? On the Fourth Article, On Justification, he wrote that a new-born Christian is not simply held to be righteous before God, but is in fact essentially righteous, that his conscience not only receives the hope of the promise of the death of Christ, but bears Christ Himself, its promised comfort and now acquired grace and granted righteousness, by faith in its heart. This must not remain outside of us and be believed only in a historical way

by the assent of faith [fide assensiva]; no, rather, living faith must place it in our hearts and assure and seal us to the inheritance of eternal life. God holds such a new-born person to be righteous and does not account to him his still adhering sin. Therefore this Article in the Augsburg Confession is quite imperfect, dark, and witless, and, hence, certainly open to further explanation and improvement, because it pertains to man only according to the Fall and not according to the New Birth. No one can avail himself of the [merits of the] passion and death of Christ unless he is living in a new life, II Corinthians 7:1; I Peter 2:24. The whole misunderstanding of this Article would be the more strengthened because this doctrine is added here, viz., that it is impossible for a man (a re-born man not excepted) to keep the commandments of God, to love God from the heart, and to do righteousness, and that faith (according to its imagined understanding) makes [one] righteous and holy if God does not account his sins to us if we simply believe, and that, finally, God will take the Old Man into heaven with all his sin, evil nature, and completely depraved nature, if only he has faith. For they hold it possible for a man to believe in Christ, but not to live a holy life. On the Fifth Article, On the Sacraments and the Gospel, he will not grant it that preaching begins to make man pious, rather, he asserts, it is the preventient grace of God which does this. As for the Sacraments, you may read my comments in the previous sections. On the Sixth Article, On Good Works, he agrees that faith

alone justifies; he calls that faith a new heavenly light, life, and power of God which comes down from above into the heart, roots out sin, and transforms the mind, and understanding and renews the heart, and makes of us a different man and a new creature, working powerfully through love, cleansing the heart, giving man a New Birth, and uniting us to God; because this [faith] is a gift of the Holy Spirit it produces the fruits of the Spirit and good works. Wherever this does not take place, there is no justifying faith, grace, or Christ present there. Thus, he thinks it is easy to understand that God forgives us our sins and holds us to be justified not because of our works but for the sake of the Christ now dwelling in us through faith. The Seventh Article, On the Church, he held to be too short, dark, and witless, and he took issue with the assumption which bases the universal church on preaching and the Sacraments, and seeks by these means to recognize the [true] church, as if there could be no [true] Christians where the external service and Sacraments were not practiced. That must be entirely too detrimental to the Builder and Cornerstone, the Master Teacher and Bishop of Souls [Jesus Christ], who Himself adorns His Bride and Holy Body, making it to be a People of His own Possession, wherever they may be hidden in the whole wide world. The church which only boasts of the name of Christians and of its outward ceremonies could not [possibly] be the true church. Where would it have been for so many hundreds of years among the Papacy? One must



judge the true church spiritually so that the imaginary and mouth-Christians are not included in it, and so that it does not adhere [only] to Rome, Wittenberg, Zurich, Geneva, or Moravia. External unity of doctrine, ceremonies, and Sacraments do not make up true signs [of the church]; rather, the inward unity of the hearts in the Spirit and in a godly life [do constitute such signs].

XXIII. The Eighth Article, On the Power of the Sacraments and On Godless Priests, he held to be contradictory. For, if Christ remains as the Head of His Church, then the Church would not concern itself very much with godless priests, who are neither servants of Christ nor members of His body; [the church] would, on the contrary, shun such [persons] in every way possible, because a dead member receives no influence from the Head. The Servants of the New Testament are not at all to be compared to the Jewish teachers [of the Old Testament], and the Seat of Christ is quite a different thing from that of Moses. One should no longer speak of evil priests in terms of Matthew 23:3, for the Seat of Moses is no longer in existence and the Office of the New Testament must be administered by God Himself. Otherwise, however, Schwenckfeld agrees that the power of the Sacraments does not depend on men; it is simply that one should have explained this better. He also touched upon the Ninth Article, On Baptism, and clarified it in the manner already described [On the Sacraments]. The Tenth Article, On the Lord's Supper, he held to be completely Papistical, because the transformation

of the bread is clearly concealed in its language. On the Eleventh Article, on Confession, he would have liked to say more if the subject itself had been better explained. Many churches had already done away with confession so that men might no longer seek comfort from the priest, but [should seek it] from their hearts' only Comforter, the Holy Spirit. The Twelfth Article, On Repentance, he lets stand, except that [repentance] must not take place simply in remorse and sorrow, but it must take place in the total transformation of one's life in the grace of Christ, and that absolution must not be established again as a new Papacy. The Thirteenth Article, On the Sacraments, he improves in the manner described above, in that they do not bring with themselves the forgiveness of sins, nor do they strengthen faith. God does this without external means. On the Fourteenth Article, On the Government of the Church, he comments that there they should have said more concerning the regular call and proper servants. The Fifteenth Article, On Church Order, he accepts insofar as that everything is accorded to Christ, and no coercion of consciences is instituted within its provisions. He does not attack either the Sixteenth Article, On Civil Authority, or the Seventeenth, On the Last Judgement. On the Eighteenth Article, On Free Will, he says that he wishes that in the beginning of the Reformation that the clear distinction between the Old Man and the New Man had been better explained and that this were still taught today [to the effect that] Christians have indeed a free will, but by grace [not by nature], so

that men would not blame God with the guilt of an evil life, and that these words: "All our deeds are lost; we warn only righteous wrath" would be properly understood. Such things simply cannot be said of Christians who stand under grace. On the Nineteenth Article, On the Cause of Sin, and on the Twentieth Article, On Good Works, he has nothing to say. He simply admonishes that the sentence: that good works which God has commended to us to do, as for example: obedience to authorities and to parents, love to the poor, etc., and even to the heathens, are all sin, be judiciously applied. God, he says desires to crown and reward not only the works of Christians, but also to reward the good works of the law of nature. On the Twenty-First Article, On Prayer to the Saints, he does not abolish all remembrances and feasts of the saints indeed, he simply admonishes that everyone everywhere direct the people to Christ.

NOTES TO APPENDIX I

<sup>1</sup> Schneider, Daniel, Unpartheyische Prüfung des Caspar Schwengfelds und gründliche Vertheydigung der Augspurgischen Confession, Auch der Lehre Lutheri/Wider die Beschuldigung des Caspar Schwengfelds (Giessen: Henning Müller, 1708). Biographical information may be found in Zedler, Johann Heinrich, hrsg., Grosses vollständiges Universal=Lexicon aller wissenschaftten und Künste ... (Leipzig und Halle: Johann Heinrich Zedler, 1732-50), 35, cols. 540-7.

<sup>2</sup> Schneider, Prüfung, pp. 129-70.

<sup>3</sup> For biographical information cf. Zedler, Lexicon, cols. 904-5.

<sup>4</sup> Note (e) contains the superscription of Schwenckfeld's Commentary, with its location in Epistolar P, pp. 626ff.

## APPENDIX II

### PAUL GERHARD EBERLEIN ON SCHWENCKFELD'S COMMENTARY

#### Introductory Note

After Salig's work on Schwenckfeld, Lutheran studies of Schwenckfeld's Commentary do not appear to have been undertaken until 1955 when Paul Gerhard Eberlein, a Silesian Lutheran theologian, published the essay here translated from the 1955 Jahrbuch für schlesische Kirche und Kirchengeschichte. This essay is important because it attempts to show with some precision just where and how Schwenckfeld agreed with Lutheranism and what the fundamental areas of disagreement were. Eberlein's insights are frequently profound, as, for example, his concept of Schwenckfeld's understanding of "prevenient grace," in the section "God's Objective Dealings for Salvation" below.<sup>1</sup> He does, however, reveal his Lutheran bias in a most striking way when he says, "It is part of the tragedy of this undoubtedly gifted man that he did not recognize this [i.e. the inadequacy of his concept of the Church] as his limitation and did not, on that account, entrust himself to the guidance of Martin Luther."<sup>2</sup>

## Text

### SCHWENCKFELD'S CRITICISM OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

By Paul Gerhard Eberlein

(Translated from the Jahrbuch für schlesische Kirche und Kirchengeschichte, (N.F. Bd. 34, 1955), pp. 58-68)

#### 1

Despite the assertion of the editors of the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum<sup>1</sup> Caspar Schwenckfeld does not appear to have presented his opinion, the Judicium to the public before autumn, 1531 (after the German version of the so-called "editio princeps" of the Augsburg Confession had appeared).<sup>2</sup> Hence the writing of this "Epistle 58" must have occupied him for a considerable time in its preparation.<sup>3</sup> This period of time may be limited approximately on the one hand by the expression of the desire of some nobles and friends for a copy and opinion of the Confessio Augustana before the several months-delayed official publication, and on the other hand by the appearance of the Judicium itself after the complete publication of the Confessio. The fruit of this long expectation was not only a document distinguishing the Silesian Reformer's position from that of the Wittenberg theology, but it is also a splendid testimony for the Reformation desire for fundamental moral renewal, as well as a confession unique in its own time for Christian freedom in the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The rebellion herein founded and brought forward with sincerity by Schwenckfeld against the bounds of confessionalism, bound as it is with a deeply inward faithfulness and

humility, makes it worthwhile in the ecumenical conversation of today to bring this Epistle to remembrance again.<sup>5</sup>

The question has not yet been answered why Schwenckfeld did not either present the "Articles concerning which there is still division" or give a judgement concerning them. They were, it may safely be said, known to him.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of his own theological position it may be inferred that he was not interested in the questions dealt with in Articles 22-28, since they had in part been already discussed in the considerations of the foregoing articles, or, perhaps--from his own point of view--they concerned simply external things of the Church. If we must, for an explanation of the question here proposed, take the whole of Schwenckfeld's theological position for aid in it, it is, on the other hand, also possible to deduce much from the very titles themselves of the seven prefatory sections which is decisive for his argument, point of view, and theology.<sup>7</sup> However, we will not, for the sake of clarity of results, make it the burden of this paper to present an article-by-article discussion of the contents of the Judicium.<sup>8</sup> Rather, we must, beginning with a few key questions (which we always name in our titles), restrict ourselves to saying the essential things in our systematic compendium.

Before we seek out the central point on which the different doctrines of Schwenckfeld depend, we desire to

present a series of theologieumena in which he sees himself in essential agreement with the Confessio.  
God.<sup>9</sup>

In the first place, let the doctrine of God be named. Schwenckfeld, in his "Examination"<sup>10</sup> of Article I of the Confessio writes as follows: "We hold, teach, and believe this Article concerning the Triune God firmly and without any wavering or surrendering as the chief point of our Christian faith."<sup>11</sup> The whole of this Examination confirms the first part of this sentence wholly and completely.<sup>12</sup> It must also be beyond doubt that the second part of this sentence mirrors the deepest conviction of Schwenckfeld. Thereby he reveals himself to be a representative of the true Reformation heritage of ideas in a most essential point. The Triune God stands at the center of his faith and life. Judgement.

The unreserved "Yes!" of Schwenckfeld to the doctrine of the Return of Christ to Judgement<sup>13</sup> is just as meaningful. Even though he writes this sentence in his Examination of Article 17 of the Confessio: "This Article is ... undeniable by any Christians,"<sup>14</sup> we cannot forbear from counting him, with regard to the question of last-times eschatology, as among the friends of the Confessio. It must be firmly asserted that in this matter he has nothing in common with a certain sort of enthusiasts [Schwärmern]. Insofar as he may have separated himself from the theology of the Confessio in other areas, in the area of theological conceptualization, if one may put it this way, so far as the



doctrine of Creation and Goal of History are concerned, he recognizes his fundamental agreement with the Confessio. Sin.

In the Examination of the Second Article of the Confessio, Schwenckfeld finds himself forced to the making of a fundamental distinction, for he cannot permit the words "Baptism" and "Holy Spirit" to pass by without a special comment. Right at this point in the text he makes a distinction concerning the Question of Baptism (which is dealt with explicitly in connection with the Fifth and Ninth Articles of the Confessio),<sup>15</sup> but in the doctrine of sin itself in the main and in toto no difference exists between him and the Confessio.<sup>16</sup> With reference to I Corinthians 15:22; Romans 3:10; Ephesians 3:2, and Psalm 14:2f, he explicates the theology of the Confessio in a paraphrase, in which he, making fine distinctions, brings forth three things:

1. That original sin itself--not simply the sin of commission--is condemned under the wrath of God.<sup>17</sup>
2. That man is unable by reason to recognize this destruction;
3. That God is not the Author of sin, but its Judge.<sup>18</sup>

God's Objective Dealings for Salvation.

The "vorgehende Gnade" [prevenient grace] of Schwenckfeld has nothing in common with the "gratia praeveniens" of the Catholic theology. Man cannot recognize his guilty boundness by himself; thus, he cannot help himself toward salvation. God must act. And He has already acted. Concerning this the Third Article of the Confessio

speaks.<sup>19</sup> God's objective dealings for salvation of man is what Schwenckfeld calls the prevenient grace of God. In point of fact he agrees here completely with the Confessio. In proportionately small space he enlarges on the theme: Faith, righteousness, conversion of the sinner, all these are bound to the prevenient gracious act of God in Jesus Christ. "But Christ, the Son of God, takes all our sin, guilt, and condemnation upon Himself, offers up His body, pours out His blood, and dies for that purpose, in order that He might reconcile us to God His Father. ...For the same reason He procured the Holy Spirit, so that out of us He might make pious, righteous men." "John 3:16."<sup>20</sup>

Whoever desires to be just to Caspar Schwenckfeld must study that sentence thoroughly. Indeed, in this estimation, much depends upon what is to be understood by the term "righteous men" and what place it takes in the theological outlook as a whole. But it is perhaps more to be preferred to gauge so many sharp formulations in other places and much of his polemical argument which could so easily be brought forward as definitive of this Silesian Reformer, by this Christocentric expression, than the reverse.

In four essential points we have demonstrated an agreement of Schwenckfeld with the Confessio. Wherever today the name of Schwenckfeld is named, one must not fail to make mention of these points of agreement.

But we have not yet reached the end of the Articles with which he agrees. If we are right, we can also add to these the following on "Justification." But at the same

time the concept of faith therein included is a central point at which the distinction between Schwenckfeld and the Confessio comes most strongly to the fore. We must hold fast to this distinction and speak, therefore, of justification as such in what follows, or faith especially in the Article which follows.

The Justification of Man before God by Faith.<sup>21</sup>

"Faith now follows from this," Schwenckfeld continues in the above-cited section (cf. fn. 20) on "God's objective Dealings for Salvation in Christ," "so that we might accept Christ as Lord and Saviour in our hearts and thereby make ourselves to be partakers of this salvation and benefit."<sup>22</sup> He thus speaks in the same way as does the Confessio concerning a justification by faith as opposed to any form of works-righteousness. Still clearer is this second statement: "that man is not made righteous either by works, or by the merit of works ... Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:6; ... John 6:47."<sup>23</sup>

The transition to the area of differences takes place, as we have said, in his formulation of justification, in which the word "faith" must not be absent. With this word, nevertheless, Schwenckfeld binds up his own presentation. Faith as the Bath of the New Birth.

If Schwenckfeld says: "The faith by which we become pious in our hearts comes down from above,"<sup>24</sup> this takes place in accord with the Confessio.<sup>25</sup> Another expression, that this faith is "not a humanly reasoned faith, or a dead idea or opinion"<sup>26</sup> we must consider in the light of a

possible inversion of this sentence in an entirely different way. Specifically, in Schwenckfeld's understanding, this faith, which is neither a reasoned faith nor an empty opinion, bears directly the visible fruits of the Spirit. "Wherever that does not take place, there is there no justifying faith, no grace, no Christ."<sup>26a</sup> Schwenckfeld himself provides the interpretation of this sentence<sup>27</sup> when he says that the Article on Justification is incomplete. The Article views man simply according to the Fall, for it declares that faith indeed works that man is held to be righteous, but is not essentially righteous before God. God, Schwenckfeld asserts, deals twice essentially with man:

1. By His creation of him, and--after his Fall,
2. by his re-establishment of him through Christ. Around the method of this re-establishment and its consequences, the especial theological treasure of Schwenckfeld's ideas centers itself. Here is therefore the point of suspension of his doctrine, concerning which we spoke above. We do not mean thereby the midpoint of his theology, but, rather, the point of his especial interest and thus the crucial point of his polemical argument. Schwenckfeld concerns himself--and this is his deepest concern--with a fundamental moral renewal. We shall not be in error if we assume that here the practical Schwenckfeld is speaking, and, indeed, out of his own experience,<sup>28</sup> and with a view toward the circle of those for whom he believes himself to be responsible. Faith, the Bath of the New Birth, lavacum regenerationis are the expressions which return again and again, by which he

signifies the fundamental event of inward renewal, and which speak an unmistakable language as regards his polemical concern.

Together with these pertinent citations, four sentences in essence come into the foreground:

1. The Act of the New Birth affects the whole human existence.<sup>29</sup>

Schwenckfeld denies the formulation in Article Four of the Confessio in which it is stated that the conscience receives consolation from the promise of Christ, and believes, on the contrary, that the conscience "bears Christ, the promised comfort and now procured grace and given righteousness Himself by faith in its heart."<sup>30</sup> In this connection the term "heart" means the whole human existence,<sup>31</sup> which is simply represented before God by Heart, spirit,<sup>32</sup> or, as Erich Seeberg once said, "final inwardness."<sup>33</sup>

2. The New Birth takes place without human agency.<sup>34</sup>

The washing and renewing of the human created being is thus an outpouring of the Spirit of God into man.<sup>35</sup> This happens without human means, without any human agency. Faith as an intimate condition between God and man, so Schwenckfeld thinks, is a happening without any binding to worship services and sacraments. As a result of this sharpening of focus the Way of the Passion of Christ surely loses in importance and receives more of a functional character: "Therefore, although we also hold that baptism was not instituted by Christ in vain ... we cannot therefore bind salvation, or the forgiveness of sins, or grace to it in any way. Otherwise it must follow that all chosen

men who have not been baptized externally, as well as all children who die unbaptized ... without means must be condemned, which is most grievous to hear. That which was once necessary to salvation, that is, from the beginning, even before baptism or circumcision were instituted, was necessary then and will always be necessary, without which no man was ever yet saved nor can ever be saved."<sup>36</sup>

This citation speaks a clear language insofar as it not only presents a difference with the Confessio which cannot be overlooked, but also presents an unclearness in the hermeneutics of Schwenckfeld. That we must hear over and over again the phrase: "that He (Christ) desires to give us the Holy Spirit ... without the instrumentality or means:"<sup>37</sup> that the above formulation does not deal with a single focussing cannot be ignored and is thus explainable in that Schwenckfeld has let the theological foundation of his thinking on the Church be dictated more by this consideration than from the Scriptures. Nevertheless, he has not thought his conception of the "Spiritual Church" [Geistkirche] through to all its consequences, and this very failing has made him appear in that double light which has given rise to such disparate interpretations (see below, "Church," Section 4.).

### 3. Christ the Lord and Guardian of the Spirit.<sup>38</sup>

To a position of spiritual thought restricted to Christ he does not arrive despite the possibility of such a conception. Indeed, again from his practice, that is, to safeguard the freedom of Christ from all false claims,

Schwenckfeld deduces that the Spirit is only bound to the glorified, ascended Christ. In the Confessio, it appears to him that the ascended Christ as the Distributor of the Spirit is not properly appreciated: "He desires much more to be learned and considered according to His new, glorified, completely heavenly existence as the reigning Lord and King of heaven and earth, as the eternal high Priest of the House of God, as the Mediator of the New Testament ... and as the Distributor and Empowered One over all the heavenly treasures ... "<sup>39</sup> In lordly freedom He guards the gifts of the Spirit. In this role He does not bind himself to any means. "As if God neither could nor would save anyone without the priest or pastor, as the Pope has claimed for a long time now."<sup>40</sup> "The Spirit (accompanied by Jesus Christ) inspires, however, when He will, where, and how He will." John 3:8."<sup>41</sup>

If the Liegnitz Reformer in this connection confesses himself to a simple doctrine of predestination--" ... not the preacher ... but God ... calls"<sup>42</sup>--he nevertheless undergirds the event of the New Birth as an exclusive dealing of God for salvation.

4. The Bath of the New Birth makes a man free.<sup>43</sup>

"Christian freedom" is, as we have already said, an important theme of this document. It is understood by Schwenckfeld as a part of the new life which has its beginning with the Bath of the New Birth. Because on the one hand heart, soul, and conscience bind themselves quite hard to the will of Christ as their Lord and God, so that He might

teach, rule, and lead them up into eternal life inwardly by the Spirit, man is, on the other hand, freed from original sin, the sin of commission, and especially from the binding of the evil spirit of sins, free thereby to every good work. Man does not remain a sinner, because he has already been accepted before God as righteous; Schwenckfeld does not sustain the tension of this expression. For him the "death in sin" now stands in contradistinction to "essential righteousness" (I John 5:2-3);<sup>44</sup> this is again something different from the Confessio's expression "imputare" [to impute].<sup>45</sup> Here again Schwenckfeld is concerned with the assurance which his practical background permits to shine through, that Christian freedom is not a freedom of the flesh but of the spirit and the conscience.<sup>46</sup> This freedom means also a duty, especially insofar as truth is concerned. Thus for him the excursus on the question of freedom is actually both a chapter on the justification of his undertaking to write a juditium of the Augsburg Confession, for "everyone will have to give an accounting for himself, and no one will be able to do it for another," "it is also necessary for everyone to consider in which things it [the Confessio] is right before God and in which it is wrong ... and in what way truth might be more closely approached."<sup>47</sup> But we are dealing here not simply with the private opinion which Schwenckfeld represents. He is presenting herewith also a fundamental Reformation understanding to the light of day, which was counterfeited by religious individualism, and which on the contrary must be evaluated by the present



ecumenical movement within the understanding of a deep and humble tolerance. Whether now he is precisely the man who will bring Biblical truth more clearly into the light than the Confessio itself is another question which will not yet be decided here.

With the former considerations we have laid the foundation for the understanding of the questions which refer to the most essential elements of the Christian life. Let us sum up once more the most important points for what follows. Schwenckfeld, and this is obvious and prominent, is concerned about a new living Christian and Church life. Thus he insists that faith must have "works," for the New Birth makes a man free, pious from thenceforward, virtuous, obedient, peaceful, Titus 2:11.<sup>48</sup> On the other hand, he recognizes as the only criterion for the presence of faith the presence of works.<sup>49</sup> Church.<sup>50</sup>

From his own point of view, therefore, much churchly life must appear to be nothing more than outward show; thus he arrives at the distinction between "internal church" and "external church." The organized, that is, "external" church stands, in his opinion, still under the judgement of Matthew 7:21;<sup>51</sup> 13:24-30; 25:1-13; John 15:1-6.<sup>52</sup> God does not work through the means of a Church. He creates for Himself His Church which is at the same time His "Bride." Christ is the Head; the body receives its direct influence from the Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:10; 5:23-27).<sup>53</sup> It is holy and innocent. Hypocrites cannot belong to it. There

are no dead members in it, John 5:1-6.<sup>54</sup> The Christian Church is not, therefore, the number of all the baptized Christians, but of those who have the Spirit of Christ who direct their lives according to the Spirit of Christ, Ephesians 5:31.<sup>55</sup> This one holy Christian Church is by the Holy Spirit spiritually assembled in Christ for the building up of His body, and it is united in His Spirit. "... such a universal Church according to the Spirit ... may not be seen in any manner at all, otherwise it would not be believed in."<sup>56</sup>

The unity of the Church does not consist of outward forms and things, but in the common relationship of the body to the Head which will serve as a yardstick for its external unity. The safest criteria for this universal church are love and the experiential knowledge of Christ.<sup>57</sup>

Referring to the office of the proclamation he holds to the opinion, contrary to Article Eight of the Confessio, that a hypocrite, since he does not indeed have Christ, cannot serve Christ in the teaching office. Matthew 23:2, on which the Article is based, he denies as being Old-Testamental. Preaching and Office, he says, with reference to Augustine, the Canons and Laws, may not be separated: "Unless the minister who is preaching is on fire, he cannot ignite him to whom he preaches."<sup>58</sup>

One might almost say, to the astonishment of the mystified reader, that the Church Discipline is recognized fundamentally from which Schwenckfeld warns at all events earnestly against a new Papacy, and that he is making "a human business out of the word of God."<sup>59</sup>

That Schwenckfeld in his concept of the Church reveals no unified conception, as we have indicated above, should be clear from the material here discussed. Formulations which out of context would stamp him as an enthusiast alternate with others which could well have come from Wittenberg. Schwenckfeld is, if one may put it this way, tangled up in his own hair, that is, the practical man in him aiming for a living community cannot agree with the Reformer aiming to be true to the Bible. This conflict never came to an end. Schwenckfeld never succeeded to a clear view of things, to a considered realization of contexts. This will become even clearer in what follows. It is part of the tragedy of this undoubtedly gifted man that he did not recognize this as his limitation and did not, on that account, entrust himself to the guidance of Martin Luther.

Elements of the Christian Life.

Contrary to the Articles of the Confessio which deal with the Sacraments, the office of preaching, etc., in short, the elements of the Christian life,<sup>60</sup> Schwenckfeld rejoins that people value them far too highly. They are simply signs, testimonies of remembrance which do not fundamentally enrich man in himself. In no circumstance must any force of any kind be used in their behalf.<sup>61</sup> They cry, "Sursum corda!"<sup>62</sup> [Lift up your hearts!]" but God gives faith through His inward work beside the elements or even without the elements. Thus he can say: "But as far as the office of preaching, the Sacraments, the Holy Scriptures,

as well as every service and ordinance of the Christian Church are concerned, we know how properly to honor them in their rightful place. To this end, that they point solely to Christ, the only Giver of the Holy Spirit and the Gift of faith in that same Spirit, and testify concerning Him, His merits and benefits ... "63

In contrast to this he would like to emphasize the Eleventh and Twelfth Articles of the Confessio<sup>64</sup> still more strongly. Confession and repentance are important things for him. Article 11, he thinks, should have been more securely undergirded with words from the Scriptures. Article 12 speaks too weakly for him: he would prefer it to be known as a radical metamorphosis.

Ethical Points of Departure.<sup>65</sup>

From what has been said already, the following conclusions may be reached for anthropology: Human life may now be completed in one of two ways, either in a fleshly, sinful manner which is condemned under the wrath of God, or in the Spirit, which is righteous before God. Furthermore, he explains, that, as a faithless person, one can have freedom to a limited extent at least, to do this or that. If he acts according to the law of nature, which God has planted into all men, God will reward these deeds in this world (according to Matthew 10:42) with physical gifts.<sup>66</sup> Eternal life, however, remains closed to natural man.

The faithful, New-born man, who proceeds upon the path of God as a righteous man has a free will by the grace of God to do good and to refrain from evil. This ability,

however, is at once also an obligation. Thus that sentence is also valid in which the deepest conviction of Schwenckfeld is also concealed: Wherever good works are not present, there is no faith, no grace, no Christ.

He cannot, however, subscribe to a sentence like: "All our striving is in vain/God's anger is all that we gain."<sup>67</sup> On the contrary he argues strongly against such a formulation "because it ... might lead the common man to more mischief, and we do not mention anything worse."<sup>68</sup>

In connection with Article Sixteen of the Confessio Schwenckfeld places himself firmly on the foundation of the Lutheran doctrine of worldly authority, which, considering his own personal calling is not surprising, but, considered in relation to the future development of Schwenckfeldianism, it is interesting.

Herewith we reach the end of our explanations. Let the gracious reader keep in mind that they stand under the Sign of Limitation, to which the lack of fulness in many areas, as well as the lack of comparative citations in the citation of references to the Augsburg Confession in the notes must be attributed. It was our intention to make a contribution to the question of where we are to place Schwenckfeld today. For this purpose his Judicium seemed to us to afford just the right foundation, for in it he distinguishes himself clearly from the very Confession which is still valid in the Lutheran Church today. It should now be obvious that in Schwenckfeld's theology the characteristics of Lutheran-Reformation perception are

still thoroughly in evidence. With regard to the other points of difference the impression is not easily erased that a powerful perfectionist impulse guided his pen. As far as many of his especial doctrines are concerned, nevertheless, the formulation holds good that he was done in by the danger contained in the verse I Thessalonians 5:21 (which he so liked to cite) to have understood "the good" in a moral sense. We cannot on this account stamp him as a heretic, because every expression of his is made with a deep humility before the Word of God,<sup>69</sup> and is bound up with his willingness to let others teach him. We should today, rather, understand and receive his works as a memorial to the unity of faith and love.

NOTES TO APPENDIX II

EBERLEIN'S NOTES TO HIS ARTICLE

<sup>1</sup> C.S. 3, 859.

<sup>2</sup> A comparison of the early manuscripts and prints of the A.C. shows clearly Schwenckfeld's dependence upon the (German) wording of the editio princeps of the A.C. in his Judicium. Cf. especially Articles 3-6 and 13. The assumption that Schwenckfeld had an earlier manuscript or print for his purpose has no powerful arguments in its favor.

<sup>3</sup> An indirect confirmation of this is found in C.S. 3, 864, l. 25f.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. C.S. 3, 859.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ecke, Karl, Schwenckfeld, Luther, und der Gedanke einer apostolischen Reformation (Berlin: 1911), pp. 211 and frequently.

<sup>6</sup> Contrary to Hartranft, cf. C.S. 3, 876, ll. 11ff, in which reference is made to Article 28 of the A.C.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. my Table of Contents for titles.

<sup>8</sup> Because repetitions and digressions are not uncommon in the text.

<sup>9</sup> Bekenntnisschriften, 50, ll. 2-18.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 90-1.

<sup>11</sup> C.S. 3, 884, 28ff.

<sup>12</sup> A section which deals with "what must be improved"

(C.S. 3, 885, 21f.) does not really present anything new.

<sup>13</sup> Bekenntnissschriften, p. 54, ll. 23-36; 72, ll. 1-19.

<sup>14</sup> C.S. 3, 932, ll. 23 and cf. the following lines.

<sup>15</sup> But over and over again we remind you to cf. our citations in the relevant sections of this work.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Bekenntnissschriften, 53, ll. 1-19; 75, ll. 1-11, and C.S. 3, 885, 23ff.; 890, 5ff; 892, 11ff; 899, 27f; 934, 26ff.

<sup>17</sup> C.S. 3, 899, 27f: "We are by nature children of wrath, dead in sin, worthless before God, indeed a bad tree, condemned earth, and poor depraved men."

<sup>18</sup> C.S. 3, 935, 4-6: "Whoever sins is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning ... I. John 3:6."

<sup>19</sup> Bekenntnissschriften, 54, ll. 1-26, cf. C.S. 3, 887, 12ff; 899, 21ff; 894, 1ff.

<sup>20</sup> C.S. 3, 899, 29ff and 888, 3. The only recognition of Christ as Mediator between God and man is also revealed in his agreement with Article Twenty-one of the Confessio, cf. C.S. 3, 938. Here he also concedes that one might well preserve the memory of the saints and imitate their example.

<sup>21</sup> Bekenntnissschriften, 56, ll. 1-15; 60, ll. 1-17, cf. C.S. 3, 889, 25ff.; 898, 8ff.; 892, 28ff.; 895, 1ff.

<sup>22</sup> C.S. 3, 894, 34ff.

<sup>23</sup> C.S. 3, 898, 34ff.

<sup>24</sup> C.S. 3, 900, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Bekenntnissschriften, p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> C.S. 3, 899, 9ff.



- 26a C.S. 3, 899, 18f.
- 27 cf. C.S. 3, 887, 1ff; 889, 9ff; 889, 25ff.
- 28 Cf. Ecke, Schwenckfeld, pp. 48ff.
- 29 C.S. 3, 889, 25ff; 871, 23ff; 882, 40; 886, 25ff;  
912, 3f; 871, 40.
- 30 C.S. 3, 890, 14ff.
- 31 C.S. 3, 886, 31ff "... [sic].
- 32 C.S. 3, 871, 33ff.
- 33 Reinhold Seeberg Festschrift, Band I., hgg. von  
Wilhelm Konz, Leipzig, 1929, p. 17 (RSF I.).
- 34 Confessio Articles 5, 7-10, 13, 21, cf. C.S. 3,  
871, 25ff; 877, 1ff; 880, 11f; 893, 26ff; 901, 25-925,  
17ff; 927, 34ff; 938, 24ff.
- 35 C.S. 3, 874, 40.
- 36 C.S. 3, 924, 22ff.
- 37 C.S. 3, 894, 19ff.
- 38 Bekennnisschriften, 54, 11. 1-28; C.S. 3, 887,  
12ff; 869, 24ff; 871, 8-36; 872, 33ff; 874, 36ff; 881,  
6ff; 890, 8ff; 894, 1ff; 896, 16ff; 897, 4ff; 904, 4ff;  
905, 17ff; 910, 11ff, 30ff; 913, 24; 916, 14; 929, 4;  
930, 6ff.
- 39 C.S. 3, 888, 17ff.
- 40 C.S. 3, 896, 23ff.
- 41 C.S. 3, 871, 8ff, cf. I. Corinthians 12:7-11.
- 42 C.S. 3, 894, 5ff.
- 43 Bekennnisschriften, 56, 11.1-15; 73, 1 1-74,  
1. 16; cf. C.S. 3, 889, 25ff; 933, 10ff; 862, 10ff; 864,  
17ff; 865, 20ff; 866, 15ff; 867, 16; 868, 39; 874, 4ff;

875, 40; 877, 11ff; 883, 18; 893, 17ff.

44 Cf. C.S. 3, 890, 24ff.

45 Bekenntnissschriften, p. 569 (Latin version).

46 Cf. C.S. 3, 874, 4f.

47 C.S. 3, 865, 27ff.

48 C.S. 3, 874, 4ff.

49 Cf. fn. 26a.

50 Bekenntnissschriften 61, 1. 2-62, 1. 14; 69, 11. 1-5,  
cf. C.S. 3, 901, 25ff; 911, 1ff; 929, 23; 870, 14ff; 872, 14ff.

51 Cf. C.S. 3, 915, 5ff.

52 Cf. C.S. 3, 914, cl.

53 C.S. 3, 916, 19-20; 902, 31.

54 Cf. C.S. 3, 914, 17.

55 Cf. C.S. 3, 916, 10ff.

56 C.S. 3, 904, 22ff.

57 C.S. 3, 908, 1ff.

58 C.S. 3, 919, 35-8.

59 C.S. 3, 930, 15.

60 Bekenntnissschriften, p. 58, 11. 1-15; 63, 1. 1-68,  
1. 11; 696-706; cf. C.S. 3, 893, 26ff; 924, 5ff; 927, 34ff;  
930, 31ff; 870, 35ff; 875, 5ff; 879, 1ff; 881, 6; 886, 25ff;  
904, 5ff; 905, 1ff; 908, 3ff; 911, 20ff; 916, 7ff; 922, 16ff.

61 C.S. 3, 870, 11ff.

62 C.S. 3, 897, 20ff.

63 C.S. 3, 894, 15..

64 Bekenntnissschriften, p. 66, 1. 1-67, 1. 23.

65 Bekenntnissschriften, p. 53, 11. 1-18; 60, 11. 1-17;

70, 1. 7-71, 1. 26; 73, 1. 1-74, 1. 16; 75, 1. 12-78,  
1. 22; cf. C.S. 3, 885, 28ff; 898, 8ff; 931, 24; 933, 10ff;  
935, 28ff; 874, 19ff; 888, 21-32; 890, 18ff; 891, 26-32;  
892, 25; 897, 23f; 916, 9ff.

<sup>66</sup> C.S. 3, 937, 17.

<sup>67</sup> C.S. 3, 934, 15.

<sup>68</sup> C.S. 3, 936, 12ff.

<sup>69</sup> cf. C.S. 3, 864, 17; 877, 11; 883, 17; 893, 18.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES TO EBERLEIN ARTICLE

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 218-9.

<sup>2</sup> p. 228.

### APPENDIX III

#### SCHWENCKFELD'S USE OF CHRYSOSTOM BEFORE 1531

St. John Chrysostom (345?-407) is the most frequently and copiously cited of the "allten leerer in this document who wrote in Greek. Thus it is instructive to ask: how frequently did Schwenckfeld cite him in his other writings? Did Schwenckfeld know Chrysostom's works at all well?

In the years 1523-30 Schwenckfeld himself mentions Chrysostom six times; he cites him as an authority (without quotation) six times; and he quotes him seven times. He is mentioned by Schwenckfeld for the first time in 1526. These seven quotations from Chrysostom occur in two groups. In 1528 Schwenckfeld quotes Chrysostom three times in a treatise entitled Von der Proba Paulj beim nachtmal .... In 1530?, he quoted him four times (in the present Document). All of these quotations have the (textual) appearance of being marginalia, so there is no assurance that they, in fact, "belong" to the texts to which they are attached. The argument is not conclusive either way, for none of the manuscripts is from Schwenckfeld's own hand. In fact, one of the manuscripts of this Document contains the Chrysostom quotations, while the other one does not. From the foregoing

statistics it is fair to conclude that if Schwenckfeld knew Chrysostom's works at all well, he did not choose to use them as an authoritative source. This observation seems to be borne out by a remark of Schwenckfeld in a letter of 1540 (C.S. VII, 124, ll. 15ff) to the effect that since he does not know the books of all the "allten leerer" as well as he would like, he is unwilling either to approve or to condemn them. This, from a man whose knowledge of Patristics was both wide and deep, seems fair enough.

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