

Augustana Enchiridion:

A Christian handbook of catechesis, doctrine, and practice

Introduction

The lament of Luther after his visitation of congregations in his time, inspired him to write his Large and Small Catechisms, to improve the understanding of the people in his territories. Likewise, Martin Chemnitz lamented the poor education and understanding of the people in his territories, noting their basic misunderstanding of cardinal Christian doctrine, and writing his *Enchiridion* to improve this situation. 400 years later and a continent away, American Lutherans find themselves in a similar situation, poorly educated on the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, losing their great inheritance of doctrine and practice refined in the fires and persecution of the 16th century Reformation, and guarded by the blood of martyrs and confessors since the time of Christ. Having visited many congregations, of various synods and regions, it is my similar lament that our day finds too many Lutherans—and Christians in general—poorly catechized in fundamental Christian doctrine. This impoverished state of catechesis has been amplified in the American context, where principles of democratic expression have often trumped historic form and order in the churches, prompting ill-formed Christians to cast their votes on doctrine and practice, with the result that heresy, apostasy, and chaos abound.

Given the Biblical and Confessional nature of Lutheran orthodoxy, it is imperative that when Lutheran churches find themselves in a democratic polity, those who cast their votes on matters relative to the church, must be properly educated and formed in the standards of historic Christian doctrine and practice.

Further, those who are properly educated, must also be confirmed in their subscription to this orthodox doctrine and practice, and made to understand that their exercise of human freedom in democratic process, may never trump the Biblical, Creedal, and Confessional standards of the historic Christian faith.

This modern Enchiridion is built upon the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, with the intent of forming and examining the mature Christian for sound exercise of his duties within the Church of Christ. It is a summary of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith established by God, breathed out by His Spirit in the Holy Scriptures, and confessed in the Creeds and Confessions of orthodox Christianity. This handbook will also seek to apply the ancient truth of the Christian faith, to the contemporary issues of western modernity, so that the modern Lutheran may stand firm amidst the ravages of the evil one in our day. For the words of St. John in his day are poignant for us, as well: that fellowship with the Apostles is fellowship with Christ, whose fellowship is with the Father and the Spirit. Apart from the teaching of the Apostles, we are divided from Christ, and the blessed hope of salvation which is alone found in Him.

May the Christians of this new millenium return to the Word Made Flesh, whose Word continues to guide, inform, preserve, enliven, and absolve all who will repent and believe.

Pr. Brad Varvil

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August, 2013

THE THREE UNIVERSAL OR ECUMENICAL CREEDS

Why a Creed, and why these Creeds?

It has been argued in our day, by some of the loudest and most influential voices of contemporary Christianity, that doctrine and creeds divide the Church, and should be shelved in preference for common works of love and justice. While good works should always emerge from the hearts of the faithful, the danger hidden in such sentiments (often given in short hand as, “Deeds not Creeds,”) is that a Church which no longer knows what it believes, becomes no church at all.

A Creed, taken from the underlying Greek term which means “I believe,” attempts to set forth a declarative statement of faith, usually in the presence of controversy. Unlike the desire of our modern age to sweep truth under the proverbial rug for the sake of tranquility, the ancients of the Church recognized that Jesus is just who He says He is: The Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that there is no other Name given under heaven, whereby we may be saved from sin, death, hell, and the power of the evil one. This same Jesus told His disciples, that if they truly loved Him, they would hear and keep His Word—a Word that abides forever, saving all those who trust in it. The teaching, doctrine, and professions of the Church are not a scholarly or academic exercise. Rather, they are the attempt of the people of God in every age, to remain in fellowship with Christ through His Word, together with all who are found in Him.

These ancient Creeds, namely the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian, have similarities and differences, given the way they arose in antiquity. The Creed most universally received by Christians east and west, is the Nicene, originally composed at the

Council of Nicea in AD 325, and subsequently adjusted and affirmed by following Ecumenical Councils. It is a synopsis of the Scripture's teaching on the Persons and work of the Holy Trinity. It bears much in common with the shorter Apostles Creed, which emerged around the same time, as a Baptismal symbol in the west. The Athanasian Creed explains in longer form the explicit doctrine of the Trinity, and the Person and Work of Christ. These three ancient Creeds provide the consensus of teaching within the early Christian Church, bearing witness to the Scriptural teaching of the Prophets and Apostles, standing as an ancient guardian against the deadly heresies of the first five centuries of the Church.

Those who repudiate the ancient Creeds, repudiate the Holy Scriptures, and the God whose Spirit has breathed them out.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Creed of Athanasius

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal.

And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal. As there are not three Uncreated nor three Incomprehensibles, but one Uncreated and one Incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet they are not three Almightyies, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord, so are

we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none: neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before or after other; none is greater or less than another; But the whole three Persons are coeternal together, and coequal: so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped.

He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood; Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ: One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

Luther's Small Catechism

Why a Catechism, and why this Catechism?

A catechism is an educational document, designed to communicate basic Christian truths, and often given in a Question and Answer format. Since the time of St. Augustine's *Enchiridion*, these catechisms have taken a similar form, which include a discussion of God's Law, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Christian prayer, and life under Christ's Word and Sacraments. Such catechisms become a compilation of the teachings of Holy Scripture, and often expound upon key Biblical and Creedal texts, where confusion has emerged among the people.

Luther, in an attempt to improve the understanding of the Christians in his native Germany, composed a catechism in Six Chief Parts: The Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, Confession and Absolution, and the Eucharist. Whether from Luther's hand or a pastor under his influence, a short form for Confession and Absolution was also added, as well as a Table of Duties for Christians in various walks of life. While Luther composed both longer and shorter Catechisms, the Small Catechism has been regarded amongst Lutherans as one of the most enduring and useful of all Luther's writings. While the Large Catechism was largely designed for pastors, the Small Catechism is given with the intent of how a parent should teach his family the foundational doctrines of Holy Scripture.

Inside this short work, one will find a summary of the Law of God, and all that God demands of us; the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and all that God gives to us which we cannot earn or merit; the life of Christian prayer, framed in the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples; the means of grace in Baptism, Absolution, and Eucharist, where Jesus delivers to His people forgiveness, life, and salvation. There is no better synopsis of Christian faith, both

theological and practical, than what we find in Luther's Small Catechism.

While the study of theology does not end with the summaries given in the Catechism, it is worth noting that Luther himself thought he would never find the end of his need to meditate on these Biblical summaries of Law and Gospel. He found, as many have, that as sinful creatures, we constantly need to be reminded of the holiness of our God and His just requirements under His Law, that we never forget our desperate needs for repentance and salvation. Likewise, prone to pride or despair, he found that everyone needs constant reminding of the grace given freely through the Person and work of Jesus Christ, received by faith unto life everlasting.

If so great a theologian as Luther spent each day in meditation upon the Law and Gospel of Jesus Christ as framed in this simple Catechism, so ought we.

The Ten Commandments

The First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment.

Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment.

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not despise nor anger our parents and masters, but give them honor, serve, obey, and hold them in love and esteem.

The Fifth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse.

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business.

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

The Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of right, etc., but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

What Does God Say of All These Commandments? Answer:

He says thus (Exod. 20, 5f): I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing

mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?—Answer:

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do according to His commandments.

The Creed

The First Article: Of Creation

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?—Answer:

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; that He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil; and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I owe it to Him to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true.

The Second Article: Of Redemption

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

What does this mean?—Answer:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He

is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

The Third Article: Of Sanctification

I believe in the Holy Ghost; one holy Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean?—Answer:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?—Answer:

God would thereby tenderly urge us to believe that He is our true Father, and that we are His true children, so that we may ask Him confidently with all assurance, as dear children ask their dear father.

The First Petition

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?—Answer:

God's name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

How is this done?—Answer.

When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end help us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

The Second Petition

Thy kingdom come.

What does this mean?—Answer:

The kingdom of God comes indeed without our prayer, of itself; but we pray in this petition that it may come unto us also.

How is this done?—Answer:

When our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here in time and yonder in eternity.

The Third Petition

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

What does this mean?—Answer:

The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is this done?—Answer:

When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow the name of God nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world, and our flesh; but strengthens and keeps us steadfast in His Word and in faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.

The Fourth Petition.

Give us this day our daily bread.

What does this mean?—Answer:

God gives daily bread, even without our prayer, to all wicked men; but we pray in this petition that He would lead us to know it, and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.

What is meant by daily bread?—Answer:

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

The Fifth Petition.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look upon our sins, nor deny such petitions on account of them; for we are worthy of none of the things for which we pray, neither have we deserved them; but that He would grant them all to us by grace; for we daily sin much, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment. So will we verily, on our part, also heartily forgive and also readily do good to those who sin against us.

The Sixth Petition.

And lead us not into temptation.

What does this mean?—Answer:

God, indeed, tempts no one; but we pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us, so that the devil, the world, and our flesh may not deceive us, nor seduce us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice; and though we be assailed by them, that still we may finally overcome and gain the victory.

The Seventh Petition.

But deliver us from evil.

What does this mean?—Answer:

We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our Father in heaven would deliver us from all manner of evil, of body and soul, property and honor, and at last, when our last hour shall come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Himself into heaven.

Amen.

What does this mean?—Answer:

That I should be certain that these petitions are acceptable to our Father in heaven and heard; for He Himself has commanded us so to pray, and has promised that He will hear us. Amen, Amen; that is, Yea, yea, it shall be so.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

First: *What is Baptism?*— Answer:

Baptism is not simple water only, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's Word.

Which is that word of God?—Answer:

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Matthew: *Go ye into all the world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Secondly: *What does Baptism give or profit?*— Answer:

It works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.

Which are such words and promises of God?— Answer:

Christ, our Lord, says in the last chapter of Mark: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Thirdly: *How can water do such great things?*— Answer:

It is not the water indeed that does them, but the word of God which is in and with the water, and faith, which trusts such word of God in the water. For without the word of God the water is simple water and no baptism. But with the word of God it is a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost, as St. Paul says, Titus, chapter three: *By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying.*

Fourthly: *What does such baptizing with water signify?* Answer:

It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition and repentance, be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts, and, again, a new man daily come forth and arise; who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written? Answer:

St. Paul says Romans, chapter 6: We are buried with Christ by Baptism into death, that, like as He was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Confession and Absolution

What is Confession?—Answer:

Confession embraces two parts: the one is, that we confess our sins; the other, that we receive absolution, or forgiveness, from the confessor, as from God Himself, and in no wise doubt, but firmly believe, that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.

What sins should we confess?—Answer:

Before God we should plead guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not know, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the confessor we should confess those sins alone which we know and feel in our hearts.

Which are these?—Answer:

Here consider your station according to the Ten Commandments, whether you are a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, a man-servant or maid-servant; whether you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have grieved any one by words or deeds; whether you have stolen, neglected, or wasted aught, or done other injury.

Brief Form of Confession.

You should speak to the confessor thus: Reverend and dear sir, I beseech you to hear my confession, and to pronounce forgiveness to me for God's sake.

Proceed!

I, a poor sinner, confess myself before God guilty of all sins; especially I confess before you... For all this I am sorry, and pray for grace; I want to do better.

Then shall the confessor say:

God be merciful to thee and strengthen thy faith! Amen.

Dost thou believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?

Answer.

Yes, dear sir.

Then let him say:

As thou believest, so be it done unto thee. And by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive thee thy sins, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Depart in peace.

The Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?— Answer:

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

Where is this written?— Answer:

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus: *Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.*

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?— Answer:

That is shown us in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?—

Answer:

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. Which words are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?— Answer:

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins.* But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit; for the words *For you* require altogether believing hearts.

Table of Duties

For Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers:

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice; holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. 3, 2ff ; Titus 1, 6.

What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors:

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 9, 14. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Gal. 6, 6. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1 Tim. 5, 17. 18. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Heb. 13, 17.

Concerning Civil Government:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For the power which exists anywhere is ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom. 13, 1–4.

What Subjects Owe to the Magistrates:

Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Matt. 22, 21. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, etc. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for

conscience' sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor. Rom. 13, 1. 5ff. I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1 Tim. 2, 1f. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, etc. Titus 3, 1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, etc. 1 Pet. 2, 13f.

For Husbands:

Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. 1 Pet. 3. And be not bitter against them. Col. 3, 9.

For Wives:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Pet. 3, 6; Eph. 5, 22.

For Parents:

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6, 4.

For Children:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Eph. 6, 1–3.

For Male and Female Servants, Hired Men, and Laborers:

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph. 6, 5ff ; Col. 3, 22.

For Masters and Mistresses:

Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. Eph. 6, 9; Col. 4, 1.

For Young Persons in General:

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time. 1 Pet. 5, 5. 6.

For Widows:

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. 1 Tim. 5, 5. 6.

For All in Common:

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Herein are comprehended all the commandments. Rom. 13, 8ff. And persevere in prayer for all men. 1 Tim. 2, 1. 2.

*Let each his lesson learn with care,
and all the household well shall fare.*

Articles of the Augsburg Confession of 1530

Why a Confession, and why this Confession?

A Confession is like a Creed, but with greater explanation and scope. While the Creeds of the first five centuries of the Church answered the heretical teachings of their era, false teachers have never stopped tormenting the Church of Jesus Christ. Councils, both ecumenical and local, attempted to address these heresies from the 5th through 8th centuries, and beyond. By the time of the 16th century, so many heretical and speculative false teachings plagued the European churches, that a clear public confession of truth versus error was necessary.

Given the conflicts and controversies of the Reformation era, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V summoned the princes of the German lands to Augsburg in 1530, to explain themselves for the teachings of their theologians and churches. As Luther was under a ban by both Pope and Emperor, the task of framing the confession of the German lands fell mainly to his fellow worker, the lay theologian and professor Philip Melancthon. What emerged was called the Augsburg Confession—a document which attempted peaceful reconciliation of doctrinal points in controversy between the Germans and the Pope, and became a framework whereby other Reformation era Confessions took their shape. The summaries of Christian teaching, affirmations of historic theology and practice, curbing of abuses within the Church, and good will toward all who would preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments according Jesus' command, was and remains the most universal Confession of Lutherans around the world. It is replete with references from the ancient Church Fathers and Councils, as well as Holy Scripture. It declares a formal catholic intent among all the theologians and princes who would subscribe, and a desire

to repair rather than wound the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

The German princes offered their heads to the Emperor, rather than to surrender this Biblical and historic Confession of Faith. While the papal legates renounced the Augsburg Confession through their Confutation, Melanchthon wrote a sturdy defense entitled the Apology, which stands unrefuted to this day. These articles of faith remain a solid and faithful witness to the faith, once for all delivered to the saints, and a bold defense against apostasy and heresy.

Chief Articles of Faith

Article I: Of God.

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

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

Article II: Of Original Sin.

Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this *disease*, or *vice of origin*, is truly sin, even now condemning

and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost.

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

Article III: Of the Son of God.

Also they teach that *the Word*, that is, *the Son of God*, did assume *the human nature* in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men. He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit at the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort, and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

Article IV: Of Justification.

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

Article V: Of the Ministry.

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

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

Article VI: Of New Obedience.

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

Article VII: Of the Church.

Also they teach that *one holy Church* is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.

Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike, as Paul says: *One faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all*, etc. Eph. 4, 5. 6.

Article VIII: What the Church Is.

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

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

Article IX: Of Baptism.

Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary to salvation, and that through Baptism is offered the grace of God, and that children are to be baptized who, being offered to God through Baptism are received into God's grace.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children, and say that children are saved without Baptism.

Article X: Of the Lord's Supper.

Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who

eat the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise.

Article XI: Of Confession.

Of Confession they teach that Private Absolution ought to be retained in the churches, although in confession an enumeration of all sins is not necessary. For it is impossible according to the Psalm: *Who can understand his errors?* Ps. 19, 12.

Article XII: Of Repentance.

Of Repentance they teach that for those who have fallen after Baptism there is remission of sins whenever they are converted and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance. Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors. Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

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

Article XIII: Of the Use of the Sacraments.

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

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

Article XIV: Of Ecclesiastical Order.

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

Article XV: Of Ecclesiastical Usages.

Of Usages in the Church they teach that those ought to be observed which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquility and good order in the Church, as particular holy days, festivals, and the like. Nevertheless, concerning such things men are admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation. They are admonished also that human traditions instituted to propitiate God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sins, are opposed to the Gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats and days, etc., instituted to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

Article XVI: Of Civil Affairs.

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

They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians. They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the State or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5, 29.

Article XVII: Of Christ's Return to Judgment.

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

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

take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.

Article XVIII: Of Free Will.

Of Free Will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word. These things are said in as many words by Augustine in his *Hypognosticon*, Book III: *We grant that all men have a free will, free, inasmuch as it has the judgment of reason; not that it is thereby capable, without God, either to begin, or, at least, to complete aught in things pertaining to God, but only in works of this life, whether good or evil. "Good" I call those works which spring from the good in nature, such as, willing to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry a wife, to raise cattle, to learn divers useful arts, or whatsoever good pertains to this life. For all of these things are not without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their being. "Evil" I call such works as willing to worship an idol, to commit murder, etc.*

They condemn the Pelagians and others, who teach that without the Holy Ghost, by the power of nature alone, we are able to love God above all things; also to do the commandments of God as touching "the substance of the act." For, although nature is able in a manner to do the outward work, (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder,) yet it cannot produce the inward

motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

Article XIX: Of the Cause of Sin.

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

Article XX: Of Good Works.

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

Forasmuch, therefore, *as the doctrine concerning faith*, which ought to be the chief one in the Church, has lain so long unknown, as all must needs grant that there was the deepest silence

in their sermons concerning the righteousness of faith, while only the doctrine of works was treated in the churches, our teachers have instructed the churches concerning faith as follows:—

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

This doctrine concerning faith is everywhere treated by Paul, Eph. 2, 8: *By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your selves; it is the gift of God, not of works,* etc. And lest any one should craftily say that a new interpretation of Paul has been devised by us, this entire matter is supported by the testimonies of the Fathers. For Augustine, in many volumes, defends grace and the righteousness of faith, over against the merits of works. And Ambrose, in his *De Vocatione Gentium*, and elsewhere, teaches to like effect. For in his *De Vocatione Gentium* he says as follows: *Redemption by the blood of Christ would become of little value, neither would the preeminence of man's works be superseded by the mercy of God, if justification, which is wrought through grace, were due to the merits going before, so as to be, not the free gift of a donor, but the reward due to the laborer.*

But, although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, nevertheless God-fearing and anxious consciences find by experience that it brings the greatest consolation, because consciences cannot be set at rest through any works, but only by

faith, when they take the sure ground that for Christ's sake they have a reconciled God. As Paul teaches Rom. 5, 1: *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* This whole doctrine is to be referred to that conflict of the terrified conscience, neither can it be understood apart from that conflict. Therefore inexperienced and profane men judge ill concerning this matter, who dream that Christian righteousness is nothing but civil and philosophical righteousness.

Heretofore consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works, they did not hear the consolation from the Gospel. Some persons were driven by conscience into the desert, into monasteries hoping there to merit grace by a monastic life. Some also devised other works whereby to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. Hence there was very great need to treat of, and renew, this doctrine of faith in Christ, to the end that anxious consciences should not be without consolation but that they might know that grace and forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith in Christ.

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

Now he that knows that he has a Father gracious to him through Christ, truly knows God; he knows also that God cares for him, and calls upon God; in a word, he is not without God, as the heathen. For devils and the ungodly are not able to believe this article: the forgiveness of sins. Hence, they hate God as an enemy, call not upon Him, and expect no good from Him. Augustine also

admonishes his readers concerning the word “faith,” and teaches that the term “faith” is accepted in the Scriptures not for knowledge such as is in the ungodly but for confidence which consoles and encourages the terrified mind.

Furthermore, it is taught on our part that it is necessary to do good works, not that we should trust to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins is apprehended, and that, for nothing. And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. For Ambrose says: *Faith is the mother of a good will and right doing.* For man’s powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God’s sight. Besides, they are in the power of the devil who impels men to divers sins, to ungodly opinions, to open crimes. This we may see in the philosophers, who, although they endeavored to live an honest life could not succeed, but were defiled with many open crimes. Such is the feebleness of man when he is without faith and without the Holy Ghost, and governs himself only by human strength.

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

*Lacking Thy divine favor,
There is nothing found in man,
Naught in him is harmless.*

Article XXI: Of the Worship of the Saints.

Of the Worship of Saints they teach that the memory of saints may be set before us, that we may follow their faith and good works, according to our calling, as the Emperor may follow the example of David in making war to drive away the Turk from his country. For both are kings.

But the Scripture teaches not the invocation of saints or to ask help of saints, since it sets before us the one Christ as the Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and has promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all, to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon, 1 John 2, 1: *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, etc.

This is about the Sum of our Doctrine, in which, as can be seen, there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures, or from the Church Catholic, or from the Church of Rome as known from its writers. This being the case, they judge harshly who insist that our teachers be regarded as heretics. There is, however, disagreement on certain Abuses, which have crept into the Church without rightful authority. And even in these, if there were some difference, there should be proper lenity on the part of bishops to bear with us by reason of the Confession which we have now reviewed; because even the Canons are not so severe as to demand the same rites everywhere, neither, at any time, have the rites of all churches been the same; although, among us, in large part, the ancient rites are diligently observed.

For it is a false and malicious charge that all the ceremonies, all the things instituted of old, are abolished in our churches. But it has been a common complaint that some abuses were connected with the ordinary rites. These, inasmuch as they could not be approved with a good conscience, have been to some extent corrected.

Articles in which are reviewed the abuses which have been corrected

Inasmuch, then, as our churches dissent in no article of the faith from the Church Catholic, but only omit some abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by the corruption of the times, contrary to the intent of the Canons, we pray that Your Imperial Majesty would graciously hear both what has been changed, and what were the reasons why the people were not compelled to observe those abuses against their conscience. Nor should Your Imperial Majesty believe those who, in order to excite the hatred of men against our part, disseminate strange slanders among the people. Having thus excited the minds of good men, they have first given occasion to this controversy, and now endeavor, by the same arts, to increase the discord. For Your Imperial Majesty will undoubtedly find that the form of doctrine and of ceremonies with us is not so intolerable as these ungodly and malicious men represent. Besides, the truth cannot be gathered from common rumors or the revilings of enemies.

But it can readily be judged that nothing would serve better to maintain the dignity of ceremonies, and to nourish reverence and pious devotion among the people than if the ceremonies were observed rightly in the churches.

Article XXII: Of Both Kinds in the Sacrament.

To the laity are given *Both Kinds in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, because this usage has the commandment of the Lord in Matt. 26, 27: *Drink ye all of it*, where Christ has manifestly commanded concerning the cup that all should drink.

And lest any man should craftily say that this refers only to priests, Paul in 1 Cor. 11, 27 recites an example from which it

appears that the whole congregation did use both kinds. And this usage has long remained in the Church, nor is it known when, or by whose authority, it was changed; although Cardinal Cusanus mentions the time when it was approved. Cyprian in some places testifies that the blood was given to the people. The same is testified by Jerome, who says: *The priests administer the Eucharist, and distribute the blood of Christ to the people*. Indeed, Pope Gelasius commands that the Sacrament be not divided (dist. II., *De Consecratione, cap. Comperimus*).

Only custom, not so ancient, has it otherwise. But it is evident that any custom introduced against the commandments of God is not to be allowed, as the Canons witness (dist. III., cap. Veritate, and the following chapters). But this custom has been received, not only against the Scripture, but also against the old Canons and the example of the Church. Therefore, if any preferred to use both kinds of the Sacrament, they ought not to have been compelled with offense to their consciences to do otherwise. And because the division of the Sacrament does not agree with the ordinance of Christ, we are accustomed to omit the procession, which hitherto has been in use.

Article XXIII: Of the Marriage of Priests.

There has been common complaint concerning the examples of priests who were not chaste. For that reason also Pope Pius is reported to have said that there were certain causes why marriage was taken away from priests, but that there were far weightier ones why it ought to be given back; for so Platina writes. Since, therefore, our priests were desirous to avoid these open scandals, they married wives, and taught that it was lawful for them to contract matrimony.

First, because Paul says, 1 Cor. 7, 2. 9: *To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.* Also: *It is better to marry than to burn.* Secondly Christ says, Matt. 19, 11: *All men cannot receive this saying,* where He teaches that not all men are fit to lead a single life; for God created man for procreation, Gen. 1, 28. Nor is it in man's power, without a singular gift and work of God, to alter this creation. For it is manifest, and many have confessed that no good, honest, chaste life, no Christian, sincere, upright conduct has resulted from the attempt, but a horrible, fearful unrest and torment of conscience has been felt by many until the end.

Therefore, those who are not fit to lead a single life ought to contract matrimony. For no man's law, no vow, can annul the commandment and ordinance of God. For these reasons the priests teach that it is lawful for them to marry wives.

It is also evident that in the ancient Church priests were married men. For Paul says, 1 Tim. 3, 2, that *a bishop should be chosen who is the husband of one wife.* And in Germany, four hundred years ago for the first time, the priests were violently compelled to lead a single life, who indeed offered such resistance that the Archbishop of Mayence, when about to publish the Pope's decree concerning this matter, was almost killed in the tumult raised by the enraged priests. And so harsh was the dealing in the matter that not only were marriages forbidden for the future, but also existing marriages were torn asunder, contrary to all laws, divine and human, contrary even to the Canons themselves, made not only by the Popes, but by most celebrated Synods. Moreover, many God-fearing and intelligent people in high station are known frequently to have expressed misgivings that such enforced celibacy and depriving men of marriage (which God Himself has instituted and left free to men) has never produced any good

results, but has brought on many great and evil vices and much iniquity. Seeing also that, as the world is aging, man's nature is gradually growing weaker, it is well to guard that no more vices steal into Germany.

Furthermore, God ordained marriage to be a help against human infirmity. The Canons themselves say that the old rigor ought now and then, in the latter times, to be relaxed because of the weakness of men; which it is to be wished were done also in this matter. And it is to be expected that the churches shall at some time lack pastors if marriage is any longer forbidden.

But while the commandment of God is in force, while the custom of the Church is well known, while impure celibacy causes many scandals, adulteries, and other crimes deserving the punishments of just magistrates, yet it is a marvelous thing that in nothing is more cruelty exercised than against the marriage of priests. God has given commandment to honor marriage. By the laws of all well-ordered commonwealths, even among the heathen, marriage is most highly honored. But now men, and that, priests, are cruelly put to death, contrary to the intent of the Canons, for no other cause than marriage. Paul, in 1 Tim. 4, 3, calls *that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage*. This may now be readily understood when the law against marriage is maintained by such penalties.

But as no law of man can annul the commandment of God, so neither can it be done by any vow. Accordingly, Cyprian also advises that women who do not keep the chastity they have promised should marry. His words are these (Book I, Epistle XI): *But if they be unwilling or unable to persevere, it is better for them to marry than to fall into the fire by their lusts; they should certainly give no offense to their brethren and sisters*. And even

the Canons show some leniency toward those who have taken vows before the proper age, as heretofore has generally been the case.

Article XXIV: Of the Mass.

Falsely are our churches accused of abolishing *the Mass*; for the Mass is retained among us, and celebrated with the highest reverence. Nearly all the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone that the unlearned be taught what they need to know of Christ. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the church a language understood by the people 1 Cor. 14, 2. 9, but it has also been so ordained by man's law.

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

But it is evident that for a long time this also has been the public and most grievous complaint of all good men that Masses have been basely profaned and applied to purposes of lucre. For it

is not unknown how far this abuse obtains in all the churches by what manner of men Masses are said only for fees or stipends, and how many celebrate them contrary to the Canons. But Paul severely threatens those who deal unworthily with the Eucharist when he says, 1 Cor. 11, 27: *Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*

When, therefore our priests were admonished concerning this sin, Private Masses were discontinued among us, as scarcely any Private Masses were celebrated except for lucre's sake. Neither were the bishops ignorant of these abuses, and if they had corrected them in time, there would now be less dissension. Heretofore, by their own connivance, they suffered many corruptions to creep into the Church. Now, when it is too late, they begin to complain of the troubles of the Church, while this disturbance has been occasioned simply by those abuses which were so manifest that they could be borne no longer.

There have been great dissensions concerning the Mass, concerning the Sacrament. Perhaps the world is being punished for such long-continued profanations of the Mass as have been tolerated in the churches for so many centuries by the very men who were both able and in duty bound to correct them. For in the Ten Commandments it is written, Ex. 20, 7: *The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.* But since the world began, nothing that God ever ordained seems to have been so abused for filthy lucre as the Mass.

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal. From

this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. With this work men wished to obtain from God all that they needed, and in the mean time faith in Christ and the true worship were forgotten.

Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the passion of Christ. For Christ's passion was an oblation and satisfaction, not for original guilt only, but also for all other sins, as it is written to the Hebrews, 10, 10: *We are sanctified through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all.* Also, 10, 14: *By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*

It is an unheard-of innovation in the Church to teach that Christ by His death made satisfaction only for original sin and not likewise for all other sin. Accordingly it is hoped that everybody will understand that this error has not been reprov'd without due reason.

Scripture also teaches that we are justified before God through faith in Christ, when we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Now if the Mass takes away the sins of the living and the dead by the outward act, justification comes of the work of Masses, and not of faith, which Scripture does not allow.

But Christ commands us, Luke 22, 19: *This do in remembrance of Me*; therefore the Mass was instituted that the faith of those who use the Sacrament should remember what benefits it receives through Christ, and cheer and comfort the anxious conscience. For to remember Christ is to remember His

benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us. Nor is it enough only to remember the history; for this also the Jews and the ungodly can remember.

Wherefore the Mass is to be used to this end, that there the Sacrament may be administered to them that have need of consolation; as Ambrose says: *Because I always sin, I am always bound to take the medicine.* Therefore this Sacrament requires faith, and is used in vain without faith.

Now, forasmuch as the Mass is such a giving of the Sacrament, we hold one communion every holy-day, and, if any desire the Sacrament, also on other days, when it is given to such as ask for it. And this custom is not new in the Church; for the Fathers before Gregory make no mention of any private Mass, but of the common Mass they speak very much. Chrysostom says *that the priest stands daily at the altar, inviting some to the Communion and keeping back others.*

And it appears from the ancient Canons that some one celebrated the Mass from whom all the other presbyters and deacons received the body of the Lord; for thus the words of the Nicene Canon say: *Let the deacons, according to their order, receive the Holy Communion after the presbyters, from the bishop or from a presbyter.* And Paul, 1 Cor. 11, 33, commands concerning the Communion: *Tarry one for another,* so that there may be a common participation.

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since public ceremonies, for the most part like those hither to in use, are retained; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of

very great and manifest abuses doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the *Tripartite History* (Book 9, chap. 33) testifies: *Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except the solemn rite of Communion.*

Article XXV: Of Confession.

Confession in the churches is not abolished among us; for it is not usual to give the body of the Lord, except to them that have been previously examined and absolved. And the people are most carefully taught concerning faith in the absolution, about which formerly there was profound silence. Our people are taught that they should highly prize the absolution, as being the voice of God, and pronounced by God's command. The power of the Keys is set forth in its beauty and they are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences, also, that God requires faith to believe such absolution as a voice sounding from heaven, and that such faith in Christ truly obtains and receives the forgiveness of sins. Aforetime satisfactions were immoderately extolled; of faith and the merit of Christ and the righteousness of faith no mention was made; wherefore, on this point, our churches are by no means to be blamed. For this even our adversaries must needs concede to us that the doctrine concerning repentance has been most diligently treated and laid open by our teachers.

But *of Confession* they teach that an enumeration of sins is not necessary, and that consciences be not burdened with anxiety to enumerate all sins, for it is impossible to recount all sins, as the Psalm 19, 13 testifies: *Who can understand his errors?* Also Jeremiah, 17, 9: *The heart is deceitful; who can know it?* But if no sins were forgiven, except those that are recounted, consciences

could never find peace; for very many sins they neither see nor can remember. The ancient writers also testify that an enumeration is not necessary. For in the Decrees, Chrysostom is quoted, who says thus: *I say not to you that you should disclose yourself in public, nor that you accuse yourself before others, but I would have you obey the prophet who says: "Disclose thy way before God." Therefore confess your sins before God, the true Judge, with prayer. Tell your errors, not with the tongue, but with the memory of your conscience, etc.* And the Gloss (*Of Repentance, Distinct. V, Cap. Consideret*) admits that Confession is of human right only, not commanded by Scripture, but ordained by the Church. Nevertheless, on account of the great benefit of absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience, Confession is retained among us.

Article XXVI: Of the Distinction of Meats.

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

First, the doctrine of grace and of the righteousness of faith has been obscured by it, which is the chief part of the Gospel, and ought to stand out as the most prominent in the Church, in order that the merit of Christ may be well known, and faith, which believes that sins are forgiven for Christ's sake be exalted far

above works. Wherefore Paul also lays the greatest stress on this article, putting aside the Law and human traditions, in order to show that Christian righteousness is something else than such works, to wit, the faith which believes that sins are freely forgiven for Christ's sake. But this doctrine of Paul has been almost wholly smothered by traditions, which have produced an opinion that, by making distinctions in meats and like services, we must merit grace and righteousness. In treating of repentance, there was no mention made of faith; only those works of satisfaction were set forth; in these the entire repentance seemed to consist.

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

Thirdly, traditions brought great danger to consciences; for it was impossible to keep all traditions, and yet men judged these observances to be necessary acts of worship. Gerson writes that many fell into despair, and that some even took their own lives, because they felt that they were not able to satisfy the traditions,

and they had all the while not heard any consolation of the righteousness of faith and grace. We see that the summists and theologians gather the traditions, and seek mitigations whereby to ease consciences, and yet they do not sufficiently unfetter, but sometimes entangle, consciences even more. And with the gathering of these traditions, the schools and sermons have been so much occupied that they have had no leisure to touch upon Scripture, and to seek the more profitable doctrine of faith, of the cross, of hope, of the dignity of civil affairs of consolation of sorely tried consciences.

Hence Gerson and some other theologians have grievously complained that by these strivings concerning traditions they were prevented from giving attention to a better kind of doctrine. Augustine also forbids that men's consciences should be burdened with such observances, and prudently advises Januarius that he must know that they are to be observed as things indifferent; for such are his words.

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

Thus, therefore, they have taught that by the observance of human traditions we cannot merit grace or be justified, and hence we must not think such observances necessary acts of worship. They add hereunto testimonies of Scripture. Christ, Matt. 15, 3, defends the Apostles who had not observed the usual tradition,

which, however, evidently pertains to a matter not unlawful, but indifferent, and to have a certain affinity with the purifications of the Law, and says, 15, 9: *In vain do they worship Me with the commandments of men.* He, therefore, does not exact an unprofitable service. Shortly after He adds: *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man.* So also Paul, Rom. 14, 17: *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.* Col. 2, 16: *Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the Sabbath-day;* also: *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances: Touch not, taste not, handle not!* And Peter says, Acts 15, 10: *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.* Here Peter forbids to burden the consciences with many rites, either of Moses or of others. And in 1 Tim. 4, 1. 3 Paul calls the prohibition of meats *a doctrine of devils;* for it is against the Gospel to institute or to do such works that by them we may merit grace, or as though Christianity could not exist without such service of God.

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

Moreover, they teach that every Christian ought to train and subdue himself with bodily restraints, or bodily exercises and labors that neither satiety nor slothfulness tempt him to sin, but not that we may merit grace or make satisfaction for sins by such

exercises. And such external discipline ought to be urged at all times, not only on a few and set days. So Christ commands, Luke 21, 34: *Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting*; also Matt. 17, 21: *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting*. Paul also says, 1 Cor. 9, 27: *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*. Here he clearly shows that he was keeping under his body, not to merit forgiveness of sins by that discipline, but to have his body in subjection and fitted for spiritual things, and for the discharge of duty according to his calling. Therefore, we do not condemn fasting in itself, but the traditions which prescribe certain days and certain meats, with peril of conscience, as though such works were a necessary service.

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

Article XXVII: Of Monastic Vows.

What is taught on our part *concerning Monastic Vows*, will be better understood if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine's time they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison.

Gradually, many other observances were added besides vows. And these fetters were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to the Canons. Many also entered into this kind of life through ignorance, being unable to judge their own strength, though they were of sufficient age. Being thus ensnared, they were compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the kind provision of the Canons. And this was more the case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex.

This rigor displeased many good men before this time, who saw that young men and maidens were thrown into convents for a living. They saw what unfortunate results came of this procedure, and what scandals were created, what snares were cast upon consciences! They were grieved that the authority of the Canons in so momentous a matter was utterly set aside and despised. To these evils was added such a persuasion concerning vows as, it is well known, in former times displeased even those monks who were more considerate. They taught that vows were equal to Baptism; they taught that by this kind of life they merited forgiveness of sins and justification before God. Yea, they added that the monastic life not only merited righteousness before God but even greater things, because it kept not only the precepts, but also the so-called "evangelical counsels."

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

What, then, came to pass in the monasteries? Aforetime they were schools of theology and other branches, profitable to the Church; and thence pastors and bishops were obtained. Now it is another thing. It is needless to rehearse what is known to all. Aforetime they came together to learn; now they feign that it is a kind of life instituted to merit grace and righteousness; yea, they preach that it is a state of perfection, and they put it far above all other kinds of life ordained of God. These things we have rehearsed without odious exaggeration, to the end that the doctrine of our teachers on this point might be better understood.

First, concerning such as contract matrimony, they teach on our part that it is lawful for all men who are not fitted for single life to contract matrimony, because vows cannot annul the ordinance and commandment of God. But the commandment of God is 1 Cor. 7, 2: *To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife.* Nor is it the commandment only, but also the creation and ordinance of God, which forces those to marry who are not excepted by a singular work of God, according to the text Gen. 2, 18: *It is not good that the man should be alone.* Therefore they do not sin who obey this commandment and ordinance of God.

What objection can be raised to this? Let men extol the obligation of a vow as much as they list, yet shall they not bring to pass that the vow annuls the commandment of God. The Canons teach that the right of the superior is excepted in every vow; much

less, therefore, are these vows of force which are against the commandments of God.

Now, if the obligation of vows could not be changed for any cause whatever, the Roman Pontiffs could never have given dispensation for it is not lawful for man to annul an obligation which is simply divine. But the Roman Pontiffs have prudently judged that leniency is to be observed in this obligation, and therefore we read that many times they have dispensed from vows. The case of the King of Aragon who was called back from the monastery is well known, and there are also examples in our own times. Now, if dispensations have been granted for the sake of securing temporal interests, it is much more proper that they be granted on account of the distress of souls.

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

Most canonical laws rescind vows made before the age of fifteen; for before that age there does not seem sufficient judgment in a person to decide concerning a perpetual life. Another Canon, granting more to the weakness of man, adds a few years; for it forbids a vow to be made before the age of eighteen. But which of

these two Canons shall we follow? The most part have an excuse for leaving the monasteries, because most of them have taken the vows before they reached these ages.

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

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

But it is evident that monks have taught that services of man's making satisfy for sins and merit grace and justification. What else is this than to detract from the glory of Christ and to obscure and deny the righteousness of faith? It follows, therefore, that the vows thus commonly taken have been wicked services, and, consequently, are void. For a wicked vow, taken against the commandment of God, is not valid; for (as the Canon says) no vow ought to bind men to wickedness. Paul says, Gal. 5, 4: *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from grace*. To those, therefore, who want to be

justified by their vows Christ is made of no effect, and they fall from grace. For also these who ascribe justification to vows ascribe to their own works that which properly belongs to the glory of Christ.

Nor can it be denied, indeed, that the monks have taught that, by their vows and observances, they were justified, and merited forgiveness of sins, yea, they invented still greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works. If any one should be inclined to enlarge on these things with evil intent, how many things could he bring together whereof even the monks are now ashamed! Over and above this, they persuaded men that services of man's making were a state of Christian perfection. And is not this assigning justification to works? It is no light offense in the Church to set forth to the people a service devised by men, without the commandment of God, and to teach that such service justifies men. For the righteousness of faith, which chiefly ought to be taught in the Church, is obscured when these wonderful angelic forms of worship, with their show of poverty, humility, and celibacy, are cast before the eyes of men.

Furthermore, the precepts of God and the true service of God are obscured when men hear that only monks are in a state of perfection. For Christian perfection is to fear God from the heart, and yet to conceive great faith, and to trust that for Christ's sake we have a God who has been reconciled, to ask of God, and assuredly to expect His aid in all things that, according to our calling, are to be done; and meanwhile, to be diligent in outward good works, and to serve our calling. In these things consist the true perfection and the true service of God. It does not consist in celibacy, or in begging, or in vile apparel.

But the people conceive many pernicious opinions from the false commendations of monastic life. They hear celibacy praised above measure; therefore they lead their married life with offense to their consciences. They hear that only beggars are perfect; therefore they keep their possessions and do business with offense to their consciences. They hear that it is an evangelical counsel not to seek revenge; therefore some in private life are not afraid to take revenge, for they hear that it is but a counsel, and not a commandment. Others judge that the Christian cannot properly hold a civil office or be a magistrate.

There are on record examples of men who, forsaking marriage and the administration of the Commonwealth, have hid themselves in monasteries. This they called fleeing from the world, and seeking a kind of life which would be more pleasing to God. Neither did they see that God ought to be served in those commandments which He Himself has given and not in commandments devised by men. A good and perfect kind of life is that which has for it the commandment of God. It is necessary to admonish men of these things.

And before these times, Gerson rebukes this error of the monks concerning perfection, and testifies that in his day it was a new saying that the monastic life is a state of perfection. So many wicked opinions are inherent in the vows, namely, that they justify, that they constitute Christian perfection, that they keep the counsels and commandments, that they have works of supererogation. All these things, since they are false and empty, make vows null and void.

Article XXVIII: Of Ecclesiastical Power.

There has been great controversy concerning the *Power of Bishops*, in which some have awkwardly confounded *the power of the Church* and the *power of the sword*. And from this confusion very great wars and tumults have resulted, while the Pontiffs, emboldened by the power of the Keys, not only have instituted new services and burdened consciences with reservation of cases and ruthless excommunications, but have also undertaken to transfer the kingdoms of this world, and to take the Empire from the Emperor. These wrongs have long since been rebuked in the Church by learned and godly men. Therefore our teachers, for the comforting of men's consciences, were constrained to show the difference between the power of the Church and the power of the sword, and taught that both of them, because of God's commandment, are to be held in reverence and honor, as the chief blessings of God on earth.

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

This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to their calling either to many or to individuals. For thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things, as eternal righteousness, the Holy Ghost, eternal life. These things cannot come but by the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, as Paul says, Rom. 1, 16: *The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that*

believeth. Therefore, since the power of the Church grants eternal things, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government; no more than the art of singing interferes with civil government.

For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.

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

If bishops have any power of the sword, that power they have, not as bishops, by the commission of the Gospel, but by human law having received it of kings and emperors for the civil administration of what is theirs. This, however, is another office than the ministry of the Gospel. When, therefore, the question is concerning the jurisdiction of bishops, civil authority must be

distinguished from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Again, according to the Gospel or, as they say, by divine right, there belongs to the bishops as bishops, that is, to those to whom has been committed the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, no jurisdiction except to forgive sins, to judge doctrine, to reject doctrines contrary to the Gospel, and to exclude from the communion of the Church wicked men, whose wickedness is known, and this without human force, simply by the Word. Herein the congregations of necessity and by divine right must obey them, according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. But when they teach or ordain anything against the Gospel, then the congregations have a commandment of God prohibiting obedience, Matt. 7, 15: *Beware of false prophets*; Gal. 1, 8: *Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed*; 2 Cor. 13, 8: *We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth*. Also: *The power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction*. So, also, the Canonical Laws command (II. Q. VII. Cap., *Sacerdotes*, and Cap. *Oves*). And Augustine (*Contra Petilianum Epistolam*): *Neither must we submit to Catholic bishops if they chance to err, or hold anything contrary to the Canonical Scriptures of God*.

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

Moreover, it is disputed whether bishops or pastors have the right to introduce ceremonies in the Church, and to make laws concerning meats, holy-days and grades, that is, orders of ministers, etc. They that give this right to the bishops refer to this testimony John 16, 12, 13: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of*

Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. They also refer to the example of the Apostles, who commanded to abstain from blood and from things strangled, Acts 15, 29. They refer to the Sabbath-day as having been changed into the Lord's Day, contrary to the Decalogue, as it seems. Neither is there any example whereof they make more than concerning the changing of the Sabbath-day. Great, say they, is the power of the Church, since it has dispensed with one of the Ten Commandments!

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

Again, the authors of traditions do contrary to the command of God when they find matters of sin in foods, in days, and like things, and burden the Church with bondage of the law, as if there ought to be among Christians, in order to merit justification a service like the Levitical, the arrangement of which God had committed to the Apostles and bishops. For thus some of them write; and the Pontiffs in some measure seem to be misled by the

example of the law of Moses. Hence are such burdens, as that they make it mortal sin, even without offense to others, to do manual labor on holy-days, a mortal sin to omit the Canonical Hours, that certain foods defile the conscience, that fastings are works which appease God, that sin in a reserved case cannot be forgiven but by the authority of him who reserved it; whereas the Canons themselves speak only of the reserving of the ecclesiastical penalty, and not of the reserving of the guilt.

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

But there are clear testimonies which prohibit the making of such traditions, as though they merited grace or were necessary to salvation. Paul says, Col. 2, 16–23: *Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days. If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not, which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men, which things have indeed a show of wisdom.* Also in Titus 1, 14 he openly forbids traditions: *Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth.* And Christ, Matt. 15, 14, 13, says of those who require traditions: *Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind;* and He rejects such services: *Every plant which My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be plucked up.*

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

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

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

It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of love and tranquility, so far that one do not offend another, that all things be done in the churches in order, and without confusion, 1 Cor. 14, 40; comp. Phil. 2, 14; but so that consciences be not burdened to think that they are necessary to salvation, or to judge that they sin when they break them without

offense to others; as no one will say that a woman sins who goes out in public with her head uncovered provided only that no offense be given.

Of this kind is the observance of the Lord's Day, Easter, Pentecost, and like holy-days and rites. For those who judge that by the authority of the Church the observance of the Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath-day was ordained as a thing necessary, do greatly err. Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath-day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church designated the Lord's Day for this purpose; and this day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping neither of the Sabbath nor of any other day is necessary.

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

The Apostles commanded Acts 15, 20 *to abstain from blood*. Who does now observe it? And yet they that do it not sin not; for not even the Apostles themselves wanted to burden consciences with such bondage; but they forbade it for a time, to avoid offense. For in this decree we must perpetually consider what the aim of the Gospel is.

Scarcely any Canons are kept with exactness, and from day to day many go out of use even among those who are the most zealous advocates of traditions. Neither can due regard be paid to consciences unless this mitigation be observed, that we know that the Canons are kept without holding them to be necessary, and that no harm is done consciences, even though traditions go out of use.

But the bishops might easily retain the lawful obedience of the people if they would not insist upon the observance of such traditions as cannot be kept with a good conscience. Now they command celibacy; they admit none unless they swear that they will not teach the pure doctrine of the Gospel. The churches do not ask that the bishops should restore concord at the expense of their honor; which, nevertheless, it would be proper for good pastors to do. They ask only that they would release unjust burdens which are new and have been received contrary to the custom of the Church Catholic. It may be that in the beginning there were plausible reasons for some of these ordinances; and yet they are not adapted to later times. It is also evident that some were adopted through erroneous conceptions. Therefore it would be befitting the clemency of the Pontiffs to mitigate them now, because such a modification does not shake the unity of the Church. For many human traditions have been changed in process of time, as the Canons themselves show. But if it be impossible to obtain a mitigation of such observances as cannot be kept without sin, we

are bound to follow the apostolic rule, Acts 5, 29, which commands us *to obey God rather than men*.

Peter, 1 Pet. 5, 3, forbids bishops to be lords, and to rule over the churches. It is not our design now to wrest the government from the bishops, but this one thing is asked, namely, that they allow the Gospel to be purely taught, and that they relax some few observances which cannot be kept without sin. But if they make no concession, it is for them to see how they shall give account to God for furnishing, by their obstinacy, a cause for schism.

Conclusion.

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

Summary Affirmations from the Formula of Concord

Why a Formula, and why this one?

After the death of Fr. Martin Luther, the vacuum of his charisma and teaching authority was quickly filled by lesser men, who created divisions and schisms amongst the theologians of the Augsburg Confession through false teaching and unhealthy speculations. By the end of the 16th century, it appeared that the churches of the Augsburg Confession would slip away into other Reformation movements, heretical sects, or back into the grip of Rome.

Into this dark time, a theologian often called “The Second Martin,” came to the fore: Martin Chemnitz. He rallied the orthodox theologians of the Augsburg Confession, and helped author a Formula of Concord regarding the many disputed points emerging in their lands. This Formula succinctly presented the question under consideration, the Biblical answer to the question, and then a refutation of unbiblical answers. It was framed as both an Epitome (a short summary of the questions, answers, and refutations,) and a Solid Declaration (a longer exposition of the questions, answers, and refutations.) The Epitome makes for a good summary of sound doctrine, and provides a springboard into the deeper analysis of the Solid Declaration.

As important as the resolution of these doctrinal questions were (the affirmations of sound doctrine having been excerpted below,) the method for resolving such questions, both for their time and for posterity, was perhaps of even greater worth. From the outset, the Formula of Concord sought to clearly articulate the question at hand, and resolve it entirely under the guidance of Holy Scripture, with the reflected light of the ancient Creeds,

Confessions, and Church Fathers to aid them. This approach to doctrinal controversy, in essence to ask “What does Scripture say to this question?” affords the modern church a sound methodology for dealing with controversial questions in our day, as well. It allows for clear, concise, and honest deliberation, with an end point that calls all to either remain in harmony with the Prophets and Apostles and the Church Historic, or to depart into schism and error. The Formula of Concord, by this function, establishes a Confession, whereby those who embrace Truth and those who embrace error, may be clearly distinguished.

May we all learn from this ancient pattern of doctrinal debate, affirming the Word of God above all things, and calling for a clear confession in our times.

Of the summary content, rule, and standard according to which all dogmas should be judged, and the erroneous teachings that have occurred should be decided and explained in a Christian way.

1. We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Ps. 119, 105: *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.* And St. Paul: *Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed,* Gal. 1, 8.

Other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever name they bear, must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them, and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses, which are to show in what manner after the time of the apostles, and at what places, this doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved.

2. And because directly after the times of the apostles, and even while they were still living, false teachers and heretics arose, and symbols, *i.e.*, brief, succinct confessions, were composed against them in the early Church, which were regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith and confession of the orthodox and true Church, namely, *the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed*, we pledge ourselves to them, and hereby reject all heresies and dogmas which, contrary to them, have been introduced into the Church of God.

3. As to the schisms in matters of faith, however, which have occurred in our time, we regard as the unanimous consensus

and declaration of our Christian faith and confession, especially against the Papacy and its false worship, idolatry, superstition, and against other sects, as the symbol of our time, *the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession*, delivered to the Emperor Charles V at Augsburg in the year 1530, in the great Diet, together with its *Apology*, and the *Articles* composed at *Smalcald (including the Power and Primacy of the Pope—ed.,)* in the year 1537, and subscribed at that time by the chief theologians.

And because such matters concern also the laity and the salvation of their souls, we also confess the *Small and Large Catechisms* of Dr. Luther, as they are included in Luther's works, as the Bible of the laity, wherein everything is comprised which is treated at greater length in Holy Scripture, and is necessary for a Christian man to know for his salvation.

To this direction, as above announced, all doctrines are to be conformed, and what is, contrary thereto is to be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith. In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved, and the Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard, according to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas shall and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong.

But the other symbols and writings cited are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a testimony and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those then living, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned.

I. OF ORIGINAL SIN.

The Principal Question in This Controversy.

Whether original sin is properly and without any distinction man's corrupt nature, substance, and essence, or at any rate the principal and best part of his essence, namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers; or whether, even after the Fall, there is a distinction between man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and original sin, so that the nature is one thing, and original sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, another.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. We believe, teach, and confess that there is a distinction between man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin, but also as we have it now after the Fall, namely, between the nature, which even after the Fall is and remains a creature of God, and original sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.

2. We believe, teach, and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because this doctrine, that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin, conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith concerning creation, redemption, sanctification, and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.

For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after the Fall,

notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as His work, as it is written Job 10, 8: *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about.* Deut. 18; Is. 45, 9ff; 54, 5; 64, 8; Acts 17, 28; Job 10, 8; Ps. 100, 3; 139, 14; Eccl. 12, 1.

Moreover, the Son of God has assumed this human nature, however, without sin, and therefore not a foreign, but our own flesh, into the unity of His person, and according to it is become our true Brother. Heb. 2, 14: *Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.* Again, 16; 4, 15: *He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, yet without sin.* In like manner Christ has also redeemed it as His work, sanctifies it as His work, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the corruption which infects the nature and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.

3. But, on the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings:

*Through Adam's fall is all corrupt,
Nature and essence human.*

This damage is unspeakable, and cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word. And we affirm that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally without original sin and separated and sundered from it, as it is written Job 19, 26: *I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold.*

II. OF FREE WILL.

The Principal Question in This Controversy.

Since the will of man is found in four unlike states, namely: 1) before the Fall; 2) since the Fall; 3) after regeneration; 4) after the resurrection of the body, the chief question is only concerning the will and ability of man in the second state, namely, what powers in spiritual things he has of himself after the fall of our first parents and before regeneration, and whether he is able by his own powers, prior to and before his regeneration by God's Spirit, to dispose and prepare himself for God's grace, and to accept or not, the grace offered through the Holy Ghost in the Word and holy Sacraments.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. Concerning this subject, our doctrine, faith, and confession is, that in spiritual things the understanding and reason of man are blind, and by their own powers understand nothing, as it is written 1 Cor. 2, 14: *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them when he is examined concerning spiritual things.*

2. Likewise we believe, teach, and confess that the unregenerate will of man is not only turned away from God, but also has become an enemy of God, so that it only has an inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written Gen. 8, 21: *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* Also Rom. 8, 7: *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither, indeed, can be.* Yea, as little as a dead body can quicken itself to bodily, earthly life, so little can man, who by sin is spiritually dead, raise himself to spiritual life, as it is written Eph. 2, 5: *Even when we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ;* 2 Cor. 3, 5: *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything good as of ourselves, but that we are sufficient is of God.*

3. God the Holy Ghost, however, does not effect conversion without means, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written Rom. 1, 16: *The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.* Also Rom. 10, 17: *Faith cometh by hearing of the Word of God.* And it is God's will that His Word should be heard, and that man's ears should not be closed. Ps. 95, 8. With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia in Acts 16, 14, are attentive to it, and are thus converted alone through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose work alone the conversion of man is. For without His grace, and if He do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing, and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says John 15, 5: *Without Me ye can do nothing.* With these brief words He denies to the free will its powers, and ascribes everything to God's grace, in order that no one may boast before God. 1 Cor. 1, 29; 2 Cor. 12, 5; Jer. 9, 23.

III. OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH BEFORE GOD.

The Principal Question In This Controversy.

Since it is unanimously confessed in our churches, in accordance with God's Word and the sense of the Augsburg Confession, that we poor sinners are justified before God and saved alone by faith in Christ, and thus Christ alone is our Righteousness, who is true God and man, because in Him the divine and human natures are personally united with one another, Jer. 23, 6; 1 Cor. 1, 30; 2 Cor. 5, 21, the question has arisen: *According to which nature is Christ our Righteousness?* Thus two contrary errors have arisen in some churches.

For the one side has held that Christ according to His divinity alone is our Righteousness, if He dwell in us by faith; contrasted with this divinity, dwelling in us by faith, the sins of all men must be regarded as a drop of water compared to the great ocean. Others, on the contrary, have held that Christ is our Righteousness before God according to the human nature alone.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. Against both the errors just recounted, we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that Christ is our Righteousness neither according to the divine nature alone nor according to the human nature alone, but that it is the entire Christ according to both natures, in His obedience alone, which as God and man He rendered to the Father even unto death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: *As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous*, Rom. 5, 19.

2. Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God is that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit, or worthiness of ours preceding, present, or following, that He presents and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ's obedience, on account of which righteousness we are received into grace by God, and regarded as righteous.

3. We believe, teach, and confess that faith alone is the means and instrument whereby we lay hold of Christ, and thus in Christ of that righteousness which avails before God, for whose sake this faith is imputed to us for righteousness, Rom. 4, 5.

4. We believe, teach, and confess that this faith is not a bare knowledge of the history of Christ, but such a gift of God by which we come to the right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in Him that for the sake of His obedience alone we have, by grace, the forgiveness of sins, are regarded as holy and righteous before God the Father, and eternally saved.

5. We believe, teach, and confess that according to the usage of Holy Scripture the word *justify* means in this article, to absolve, that is, to declare free from sins. Prov. 17, 15: *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are abomination to the Lord.* Also Rom. 8, 33: *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.*

And when, in place of this, the words *regeneratio* and *vivificatio*, that is, regeneration and vivification, are employed, as in the Apology, this is done in the same sense. By these terms, in other places, the renewal of man is understood, and distinguished from justification by faith.

6. We believe, teach, and confess also that notwithstanding the fact that many weaknesses and defects cling to the true believers and truly regenerate, even to the grave, still they must not on that account doubt either their righteousness which has been imputed to them by faith, or the salvation of their souls, but must regard it as certain that for Christ's sake, according to the promise and Word of the holy Gospel, they have a gracious God.

7. We believe, teach, and confess that for the preservation of the pure doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith before God it is necessary to urge with special diligence the *particulae exclusivae*, that is, the exclusive particles, *i.e.*, the following words of the holy Apostle Paul, by which the merit of Christ is entirely separated from our works, and the honor given to Christ alone, when the holy Apostle Paul writes: *Of grace, without merit, without Law, without works, not of works*. All these words together mean as much as that we are justified and saved alone by faith in Christ. Eph. 2, 8; Rom. 1, 17; 3, 24; 4, 3ff.; Gal. 3, 11; Heb. 11.

8. We believe, teach, and confess that, although the contrition that precedes, and the good works that follow, do not belong to the article of justification before God, yet one is not to imagine a faith of such a kind as can exist and abide with, and alongside of, a wicked intention to sin and to act against the conscience. But after man has been justified by faith, then a true living faith worketh by love, Gal. 5, 6, so that thus good works always follow justifying faith, and are surely found with it, if it be true and living; for it never is alone, but always has with it love and hope.

IV. OF GOOD WORKS.

The Principal Question In the Controversy Concerning Good Works.

Concerning the doctrine of good works two divisions have arisen in some churches:

1. First, some theologians have become divided because of the following expressions, where the one side wrote: *Good works are necessary for salvation. It is impossible to be saved without good works.* Also: *No one has ever been saved without good works.* But the other side, on the contrary, wrote: *Good works are injurious to salvation.*

2. Afterwards a schism arose also between some theologians with respect to the two words *necessary* and *free*, since the one side contended that the word *necessary* should not be employed concerning the new obedience, which, they say, does not flow from necessity and coercion, but from a voluntary spirit. The other side insisted on the word *necessary*, because, they say, this obedience is not at our option, but regenerate men are obliged to render this obedience.

From this disputation concerning the terms a controversy afterwards occurred concerning the subject itself; for the one side contended that among Christians the Law should not be urged at all, but men should be exhorted to good works from the Holy Gospel alone; the other side contradicted this.

AFFIRMATIVA.

For the thorough statement and decision of this controversy our doctrine, faith, and confession is:

1. That good works certainly and without doubt follow true faith, if it is not a dead, but a living faith, as fruits of a good tree.

2. We believe, teach, and confess also that good works should be entirely excluded, just as well in the question concerning salvation as in the article of justification before God, as the apostle testifies with clear words, when he writes as follows: *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*, Rom. 4, 6ff And again: *By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast*, Eph. 2, 8. 9.

3. We believe, teach, and confess also that all men, but those especially who are born again and renewed by the Holy Ghost, are bound to do good works.

4. In this sense the words *necessary*, *shall*, and *must* are employed correctly and in a Christian manner also with respect to the regenerate, and in no way are contrary to the form of sound words and speech.

5. Nevertheless, by the words mentioned, *necessitas*, *necessarium*, *necessity* and *necessary*, if they be employed concerning the regenerate, not coercion, but only due obedience is to be understood, which the truly believing, so far as they are regenerate, render not from coercion or the driving of the Law, but from a voluntary spirit; because they are no more under the Law, but under grace, Rom. 6, 14; 7, 6; 8, 14.

6. Accordingly, we also believe, teach, and confess that when it is said: The regenerate do good works from a free spirit, this is not to be understood as though it is at the option of the regenerate man to do or to forbear doing good when he wishes, and

that he can nevertheless retain faith if he intentionally perseveres in sins.

7. Yet this is not to be understood otherwise than as the Lord Christ and His apostles themselves declare, namely, regarding the liberated spirit, that it does not do this from fear of punishment, like a servant, but from love of righteousness, like children, Rom. 8, 15.

8. Although this voluntariness in the elect children of God is not perfect, but burdened with great weakness, as St. Paul complains concerning himself, Rom. 7, 14–25; Gal. 5, 17;

9. Nevertheless, for the sake of the Lord Christ, the Lord does not impute this weakness to His elect, as it is written: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. 8, 1.

10. We believe, teach, and confess also that not works maintain faith and salvation in us, but the Spirit of God alone, through faith, of whose presence and indwelling good works are evidences.

V. OF THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL.

The Principal Question In This Controversy.

Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel is properly not only a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance and reproof, rebuking unbelief, which, they say, is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reproves everything that is sin and contrary to God's will.

3. For this reason, then, everything that reproves sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the Law.

4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, is to believe, namely, that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his, forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

5. But since the term *Gospel* is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach, and confess that if by the term Gospel is understood the entire doctrine of Christ which He proposed in His ministry, as also did His apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1, 15; Acts 20, 21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.

6. But if the Law and the Gospel, likewise also Moses himself as a teacher of the Law and Christ as a preacher of the Gospel are contrasted with one another, we believe, teach, and

confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but comforts consciences against the terrors of the Law, points alone to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the lovely preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.

7. As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright, but either become presumptuous hypocrites as the Pharisees, or despair like Judas, Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually, Matt. 5, 21ff ; Rom. 7, 14. And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners [Rom. 1, 18], how great it is; by this means they are directed to the Law, and then first learn from it to know aright their sins—a knowledge which Moses never could have forced out of them.

Accordingly, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are first led into the Law aright, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in His Law requires of us, none of which we can observe, and therefore are to seek all our righteousness in Christ.

8. Yet as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a foreign work of Christ, by which He arrives at His proper office, that is, to preach grace, console, and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

VI. OF THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW.

The Principal Question In This Controversy.

Since the Law was given to men for three reasons: first, that thereby outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient men; secondly, that men thereby may be led to the knowledge of their sins; thirdly, that after they are regenerate and the flesh notwithstanding cleaves to them, they might on this account have a fixed rule according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life, a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning the third use of the Law, namely, whether it is to be urged or not upon regenerate Christians. The one side has said, Yea; the other, Nay.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. We believe, teach, and confess that, although men truly believing in Christ and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law, they nevertheless are not on this account without Law, but have been redeemed by the Son of God in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night, Ps. 119. For even our first parents before the Fall did not live without Law, who had the Law of God written also into their hearts, because they were created in the image of God, Gen. 1, 26f.; 2, 16ff; 3, 3.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be urged with diligence, not only upon the unbelieving and impenitent, but also upon true believers, who are truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.

3. For although they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, yet in the present life this regeneration and renewal is not complete, but only begun, and believers are, by the spirit of their mind, in a constant struggle against the flesh, that is, against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death. On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, the will, and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine before them, in order that they may not from human devotion institute wanton and self-elected cults; likewise, that the old Adam also may not employ his own will, but may be subdued against his will, not only by the admonition and threatening of the Law, but also by punishments and blows, so that he may follow and surrender himself captive to the Spirit, 1 Cor. 9, 27; Rom. 6, 12, Gal. 6, 14; Ps. 119, 1ff ; Heb. 13, 21 (Heb. 12, 1).

4. Now, as regards the distinction between the works of the Law and the fruits of the Spirit, we believe, teach, and confess that the works which are done according to the Law are and are called works of the Law as long as they are only extorted from man by urging the punishment and threatening of God's wrath.

5. Fruits of the Spirit, however, are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and which are done by believers so far as they are regenerate, as though they knew of no command, threat, or reward; for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, which St. Paul in his epistles calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind, Rom. 7, 25; 8, 7; Rom. 8, 2; Gal. 6, 2.

6. Thus the Law is and remains both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate men, one Law,

namely, the immutable will of God; and the difference, so far as concerns obedience, is alone in man, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does for the Law out of constraint and unwillingly what it requires of him (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the believer, so far as he is regenerate, does without constraint and with a willing spirit that which no threatenings of the Law could ever extort from him.

VII. OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Although the Zwinglian teachers are not to be reckoned among the theologians who affiliate with the Augsburg Confession, as they separated from them at the very time when this Confession was presented, nevertheless, since they are intruding themselves and are attempting, under the name of this Christian Confession, to spread their error, we intend also to make a needful statement concerning this controversy.

Chief Controversy Between Our Doctrine and That of the Sacramentarians Regarding This Article.

Whether in the Holy Supper the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly and essentially present, are distributed with the bread and wine, and received with the mouth by all those who use this Sacrament, whether they be worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving; by the believing for consolation and life, by the unbelieving for judgment?

The Sacramentarians say, No; we say, Yes.

For the explanation of this controversy it is to be noted in the beginning that there are two kinds of Sacramentarians. Some are gross Sacramentarians, who declare in plain, clear words as

they believe in their hearts, that in the Holy Supper nothing but bread and wine is present, and distributed and received with the mouth. Others, however, are subtle Sacramentarians, and the most injurious of all, who partly speak very speciously in our own words, and pretend that they also believe a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, however, that this occurs spiritually through faith. Nevertheless they retain under these specious words precisely the former gross opinion, namely, that in the Holy Supper nothing is present and received with the mouth except bread and wine. For with them the word *spiritually* means nothing else than the Spirit of Christ or the power of the absent body of Christ and His merit, which is present; but the body of Christ is in no mode or way present, except only above in the highest heaven, to which we should elevate ourselves into heaven by the thoughts of our faith, and there, not at all, however, in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, should seek this body and blood of Christ.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, and are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood otherwise than as they read, according to the letter, so that the bread does not signify the absent body and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that, on account of the sacramental union, they are truly the body and blood of Christ.

3. Now, as to the consecration, we believe, teach, and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister produces

this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this is to be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. But at the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unanimously that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of the institution of Christ should in no way be omitted, but should be publicly recited, as it is written 1 Cor. 10, 16: *The cup of blessing which we bless*, etc. This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ.

5. The grounds, however, on which we stand against the Sacramentarians in this matter are those which Dr. Luther has laid down in his Large Confession concerning the Lord's Supper.

The first is this article of our Christian faith: Jesus Christ is true, essential, natural, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

The second: That God's right hand is everywhere; at which Christ is placed in deed and in truth according to His human nature, being present, rules, and has in His hands and beneath His feet everything that is in heaven and on earth, where no man else, nor angel, but only the Son of Mary is placed; hence He can do this.

The third: That God's Word is not false, and does not deceive.

The fourth: That God has and knows of various modes of being in any place, and not only the one which philosophers call *localis* (local) for circumscribed.

6. We believe, teach, and confess that the body and blood of Christ are received with the bread and wine, not only spiritually

by faith, but also orally; yet not in a Capernaitic, but in a supernatural, heavenly mode, because of the sacramental union; as the words of Christ clearly show, when Christ gives direction to take, eat, and drink, as was also done by the apostles; for it is written Mark 14, 23: *And they all drank of it.* St. Paul likewise says, 1 Cor. 10, 16: *The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* that is: He who eats this bread eats the body of Christ, which also the chief ancient teachers of the Church, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, unanimously testify.

7. We believe, teach, and confess that not only the true believers and the worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelievers, receive the true body and blood of Christ; however, not for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent, 1 Cor. 11, 27. 29. For although they thrust Christ from themselves as a Savior, yet they must admit Him even against their will as a strict Judge, who is just as present also to exercise and render judgment upon impenitent guests as He is present to work life and consolation in the hearts of the true believers and worthy guests.

8. We believe, teach, and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests, namely, those who do not believe, concerning whom it is written John 3, 18: *He that believeth not is condemned already.* And this judgment becomes greater and more grievous, being aggravated, by the unworthy use of the Holy Supper, 1 Cor. 11, 29.

9. We believe, teach, and confess that no true believer, as long as he retains living faith, however weak he may be, receives the Holy Supper to his judgment, which was instituted especially

for Christians weak in faith, yet penitent, for the consolation and strengthening of their weak faith [Matt. 9, 12; 11, 5. 28].

10. We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of the guests of this heavenly feast is and consists in the most holy obedience and perfect merit of Christ alone, which we appropriate to ourselves by true faith, and whereof we are assured by the Sacrament, and not at all in our virtues or inward and outward preparations.

VIII. OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

From the controversy concerning the Holy Supper a disagreement has arisen between the pure theologians of the Augsburg Confession and the Calvinists, who also have confused some other theologians, concerning the person of Christ and the two natures in Christ and their properties.

Chief Controversy In This Dissension.

The chief question, however, has been whether, because of the personal union, the divine and human natures, as also their properties, have *realiter*, that is, in deed and truth, a communion with one another in the person of Christ, and how far this communion extends.

The Sacramentarians have asserted that the divine and human natures in Christ are united personally in such a way that neither has *realiter*, that is, in deed and truth, in common with the other that which is peculiar to either nature, but that they have in common nothing more than the name alone. For *unio*, they plainly say, *facit communia nomina, i. e.*, the personal union makes nothing more than the names common, namely, that God is called

man, and man God, yet in such a way that God has nothing *realiter*, that is, in deed and truth, in common with humanity, and humanity nothing in common with divinity, its majesty and properties. Dr. Luther, and those who held with him, have contended for the contrary against the Sacramentarians.

AFFIRMATIVA.

To explain this controversy, and settle it according to the guidance of our Christian faith, our doctrine, faith, and confession is as follows:

1. That the divine and human natures in Christ are personally united, so that there are not two Christs, one the Son of God, the other the Son of man, but that one and the same is the Son of God and Son of man, Luke 1, 35; Rom. 9, 5.

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor the one changed into the other, but that each retains its own essential properties, which never become the properties of the other nature.

3. The properties of the divine nature are: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and to be, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, of itself, everywhere present, to know everything, etc.; which never become properties of the human nature.

4. The properties of the human nature are: to be a corporeal creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and circumscribed, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like; which never become properties of the divine nature.

5. As the two natures are united personally, *i.e.*, in one person, we believe, teach, and confess that this union is not such a copulation and connection that neither nature has anything in common with the other personally, *i.e.*, because of the personal union, as when two boards are glued together, where neither gives anything to the other or takes anything from the other. But here is the highest communion, which God truly has with the assumed man, from which personal union, and the highest and ineffable communion resulting therefrom, there flows everything human that is said and believed concerning God, and everything divine that is said and believed concerning the man Christ; as the ancient teachers of the Church explained this union and communion of the natures by the illustration of iron glowing with fire, and also by the union of body and soul in man.

6. Hence we believe, teach, and confess that God is man and man is God, which could not be if the divine and human natures had in deed and truth absolutely no communion with one another. For how could the man, the son of Mary, in truth be called or be God, or the Son of God the Most High, if His humanity were not personally united with the Son of God, and He thus had *realiter*, that is, in deed and truth, nothing in common with Him except only the name of God?

7. Hence we believe, teach, and confess that Mary conceived and bore not a mere man and no more, but the true Son of God; therefore she also is rightly called and truly is the mother of God.

8. Hence we also believe, teach, and confess that it was not a mere man who suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to the majesty and almighty power of God for us, but a man whose

human nature has such a profound, ineffable union and communion with the Son of God that it is one person with Him.

9. Therefore the Son of God truly suffered for us, however, according to the property of the human nature which He assumed into the unity of His divine person and made His own, so that He might be able to suffer and be our High Priest for our reconciliation with God, as it is written 1 Cor. 2, 8: *They have crucified the Lord of glory.* And Acts 20, 28: *We are purchased with God's blood.*

10. Hence we believe, teach, and confess that the Son of Man is *realiter*, that is, in deed and truth, exalted according to His human nature to the right hand of the almighty majesty and power of God, because He was assumed into God when He was conceived of the Holy Ghost in His mother's womb, and His human nature was personally united with the Son of the Highest.

11. This majesty He always had according to the personal union, and yet He abstained from it in the state of His humiliation, and on this account truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and men; therefore He exercised this majesty, not always, but when it pleased Him, until after His resurrection He entirely laid aside the form of a servant, but not the human nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation, and declaration of the divine majesty, and thus entered into His glory, Phil. 2, 6ff, so that now not only as God, but also as man He knows all things, can do all things, is present with all creatures, and has under His feet and in His hands everything that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth, as He Himself testifies Matt. 28, 18; John 13, 3: *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.* And St. Paul says Eph. 4, 10: *He ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.* And this His power, He, being present, can exercise

everywhere, and to Him everything is possible and everything is known.

12. Hence He also is able and it is very easy for Him to impart, as one who is present, His true body and blood in the Holy Supper, not according to the mode or property of the human nature, but according to the mode and property of the right hand of God, as Dr. Luther says in accordance with our Christian faith for children, which presence (of Christ in the Holy Supper] is not earthly, nor Capernaitic; nevertheless it is true and substantial, as the words of His testament read: *This is, is, is My body*, etc.

By this our doctrine, faith, and confession the person of Christ is not divided, as it was by Nestorius, who denied the *communicatio idiomatum*, that is, the true communion of the properties of both natures in Christ, and thus divided the person, as Luther has explained in his book *Concerning Councils*. Neither are the natures together with their properties confounded with one another into one essence (as Eutyches erred); nor is the human nature in the person of Christ denied or annihilated; nor is either nature changed into the other; but Christ is and remains to all eternity God and man in one undivided person, which, next to the Holy Trinity, is, as the Apostle testifies, 1 Tim. 3, 16, the highest *mystery*, upon which our only consolation, life, and salvation depends.

IX. OF THE DESCENT OF CHRIST TO HELL.

Chief Controversy concerning This Article.

It has also been disputed among some theologians who have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession concerning this

article: When and in what manner the Lord Christ, according to our simple Christian faith, descended to hell: whether this was done before or after His death; also, whether it occurred according to the soul alone, or according to the divinity alone, or with body and soul, spiritually or bodily; also, whether this article belongs to the passion or to the glorious victory and triumph of Christ.

But since this article, as also the preceding, cannot be comprehended by the senses or by our reason, but must be grasped by faith alone, it is our unanimous opinion that there should be no disputation concerning it, but that it should be believed and taught only in the simplest manner; according as Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, in his sermon at Torgau in the year 1533 has explained this article in an altogether Christian manner, separated from it all useless, unnecessary questions, and admonished all godly Christians to Christian simplicity of faith.

For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell. But how this occurred we should reserve until the other world, where not only this point, but also still others will be revealed, which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason.

X. OF CHURCH RITES: Which are Called Adiaphora or Matters of Indifference.

Concerning ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been introduced into the Church for the sake of good order and

propriety, a dissension has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession.

Chief Controversy Concerning This Article.

The chief question, however, has been, whether, in time of persecution and in case of confession, even if the enemies of the Gospel have not reached an agreement with us in doctrine, some abrogated ceremonies, which in themselves are matters of indifference and are neither commanded nor forbidden by God, may nevertheless, upon the pressure and demand of the adversaries, be reestablished without violence to conscience, and we may thus have conformity with them in such ceremonies and adiaphora. To this the one side has said Yea, the other, Nay.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. For settling also this controversy we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no divine worship, nor even a part of it. *Matt. 15, 9: In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

2. We believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the congregation of God.

3. Nevertheless, that herein all frivolity and offense should be avoided, and special care should be taken to exercise forbearance towards the weak in faith. 1 Cor. 8, 9; Rom. 14, 13.

4. We believe, teach, and confess that in time of persecution, when a plain confession is required of us, we should not yield to the enemies in regard to such adiaphora, as the apostle has written Gal. 5, 1: *Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage.* Also 2 Cor. 6, 14: *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, etc. For what concord hath light with darkness?* Also Gal. 2, 5: *To whom we gave place, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you.* For in such a case it is no longer a question concerning adiaphora, but concerning the truth of the Gospel, concerning Christian liberty, and concerning sanctioning open idolatry, as also concerning the prevention of offense to the weak in the faith; in which we have nothing to concede, but should plainly confess and suffer on that account what God sends, and what He allows the enemies of His Word to inflict upon us.

5. We believe, teach, and confess also that no Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine and all its articles, as also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: *Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei*, Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith.

XI. OF GOD'S ETERNAL FOREKNOWLEDGE [PREDESTINATION] AND ELECTION.

Concerning this article no public dissension has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. But since it is a consolatory article, if treated properly, and lest offensive

disputations concerning the same be instituted in the future, it is also explained in this writing.

AFFIRMATIVA.

1. To begin with, the distinction between *praescientia et praedestinatio*, that is, between God's foreknowledge and His eternal election, ought to be accurately observed.

2. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written Dan. 2, 28: *There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.*

3. This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin, namely, of doing what is wrong (which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man), nor of their ruin, for which they themselves are responsible; but it only regulates it, and fixes a limit to it, how long it should last, and all this to the end that it should serve His elect for their salvation, notwithstanding that it is evil in itself.

4. The predestination or eternal election of God, however, extends only over the godly, beloved children of God, being a cause of their salvation, which He also provides, as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it. John 10, 28; Matt. 16, 18.

5. This is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.

6. But the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected that are to be saved in eternity, as it is written Eph. 1, 4: *He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.*

7. This Christ calls to Himself all sinners and promises them rest, and He is in earnest that all men should come to Him and suffer themselves to be helped, to whom He offers Himself in His Word, and wishes them to hear it and not to stop their ears or despise the Word. Moreover, He promises the power and working of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation.

8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which lead us either into a reckless, dissolute, Epicurean life or into despair, and excite pernicious thoughts in the hearts of men, for they cannot, as long as they follow their reason, successfully refrain from thinking: If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, no matter what I do; and again: If I am not elected to eternal life, it is of no avail what good I do; it is all in vain anyway.

9. But the true judgment concerning predestination must be learned alone from the holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that *God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all, and that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and believe in the Lord Christ.* Rom. 11, 32; Ezek. 18, 23; 33, 11; 2 Pet. 3, 9; 1 John 2, 2.

10. Whoever, now, is thus concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul

has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, to knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, to him this doctrine is useful and consolatory.

11. However, that *many are called and few chosen*, Matt. 22, 14, does not mean that God is not willing to save everybody; but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but willfully despise it, stop their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that He cannot perform His work in them, or, when they have heard it, make light of it again and do not heed it, for which not God or His election, but their wickedness, is responsible. [2 Pet. 2, 1ff ; Luke 11, 49. 52; Heb. 12, 25f.]

12. Thus far a Christian should occupy himself with the article concerning the eternal election of God, as it has been revealed in God's Word, which presents to us Christ as the Book of Life, which He opens and reveals to us by the preaching of the holy Gospel, as it is written Rom. 8, 30: *Whom He did predestinate, them He also called*. In Him we are to seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe on Him. Other thoughts are to be banished, as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of the Evil Foe, whereby he attempts to weaken or entirely to remove from us the glorious consolation which we have in this salutary doctrine, namely, that we know that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life, and that no one can pluck us out of His hand; as He has not only promised this gracious election with mere words, but has also certified it with an oath and sealed it with the holy Sacraments, which we can call to mind in our most severe

temptations, and take comfort in them, and therewith quench the fiery darts of the devil.

13. Besides, we should use the greatest diligence to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes, 2 Pet. 1, 10, *make our calling sure*, and especially adhere to the revealed Word: that can and will not fail us.

14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God His glory is entirely and fully given to God, that out of pure mercy alone, without all merit of ours, He saves us according to the purpose of His will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or a vulgar, wild life.

(XII.) OF OTHER FACTIONS AND SECTS: Which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession.

In order that such heresies and sects may not silently be ascribed to us, because, in the preceding explanation, we have made no mention of them, we intend at the end of this writing simply to enumerate the mere articles wherein they err and teach contrary to our Christian faith and confession to which we have often referred.

Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists.

The Anabaptists are divided among themselves into many factions, as one contends for more, another for less errors; however, they all in common propound such doctrine as is not to be tolerated or allowed neither in the Church, nor in the commonwealth and secular government, nor in domestic life.

Articles that Cannot be Tolerated in the Church.

1. That Christ did not assume His body and blood from the Virgin Mary, but brought them with Him from heaven.

2. That Christ is not true God, but only has more gifts of the Holy Ghost than any other holy man.

3. That our righteousness before God consists not in the sole merit of Christ alone, but in renewal, and hence in our own godliness in which we walk. This is based in great part upon one's own special, self-chosen and humanly devised spirituality, and in fact is nothing else than a new sort of monkery.

4. That children who are not baptized are not sinners before God, but righteous and innocent, who in their innocence, because they have not yet attained their reason, are saved without Baptism (which, according to their assertion, they do not need). Therefore they reject the entire doctrine concerning original sin and what belongs to it.

5. That children are not to be baptized until they have attained their reason, and can themselves confess their faith.

6. That the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and children of God even without and before Baptism; and for this reason they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of God's promise which pertains only to those *who keep His covenant and do not despise it*. Gen. 17, 7ff

7. That that is no true Christian congregation in which sinners are still found.

8. That no sermon is to be heard nor attended in those churches in which formerly papal masses have been celebrated and said.

9. That one must not have anything to do with the ministers of the Church who preach the Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession, and rebuke the sermons and errors of the Anabaptists; also that he is neither to serve nor in any way to labor for them, but to flee from and shun them as perverters of God's Word.

Articles that Cannot be Tolerated in the Government.

1. That under the New Testament the magistracy is not an estate pleasing to God.

2. That a Christian cannot with a good, inviolate conscience hold or discharge the office of magistrate.

3. That a Christian cannot without injury to conscience use the office of the magistracy against the wicked in matters as they occur, nor that subjects may invoke for their protection and defense the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God.

4. That a Christian cannot with a good conscience take an oath, nor with an oath do homage to the hereditary prince of his country or sovereign.

5. That under the New Testament magistrates cannot, without injury to conscience, inflict capital punishment upon malefactors.

Articles that Cannot be Tolerated in Domestic Life.

1. That a Christian cannot with a good conscience hold or possess property, but is in duty bound to devote it to the common treasury.

2. That a Christian cannot with a good conscience be an innkeeper, merchant, or maker of arms.

3. That the married may be divorced on account of faith, and the one may abandon the other and be married to another person who is of his faith.

Erroneous Articles of the Schwenkfeldians.

1. That all those have no true knowledge of Christ as reigning King of heaven who regard Christ according to the flesh as a creature.

2. That the flesh of Christ by His exaltation has assumed all divine properties in such a manner that Christ as man is in might, power, majesty, and glory altogether, as regards degree and position of essence equal to the Father and to the Word, so that now there is only one essence, property, will, and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of the Holy Trinity.

3. That the ministry of the Church, the Word preached and heard, is not a means whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them the saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith, and new obedience.

4. That the water of Baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals the adoption of sons and works regeneration.

5. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means through and by which Christ distributes His body and blood.

6. That a Christian who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can perfectly observe and fulfill the Law of God in this life.

7. That it is not a true Christian congregation in which no public excommunication or no regular process of the ban is observed.

8. That the minister of the church who is not on his part truly renewed, regenerate, righteous, and godly cannot teach other men with profit or distribute genuine, true Sacraments.

Error of the New Arians.

That Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal, divine essence with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, but is only adorned with divine majesty inferior to and alongside of God the Father.

Error of the Anti-Trinitarians.

This is an entirely new sect, not heard of before in Christendom, who believe, teach, and confess that there is not one only, eternal, divine essence of the Father Son, and Holy Ghost, but as God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons, so each person has its essence distinct and separate from the other persons of the Godhead; and that nevertheless they are either all three of equal power, wisdom, majesty, and glory, just as otherwise three men are distinct and separate from one another in their essence, or unequal with one another in essence and properties, so that the Father alone is properly and truly God.

These and similar articles, one and all, with whatever other errors depend upon and follow from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, contrary to the Word of God, the three

Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and Luther's Catechisms, against which all godly Christians of both high and low station are to be on their guard as they love the welfare and salvation of their souls.

Considerations for our time and place

In 21st century America, the Christian and social landscape is significantly different than it has been in much of human history. The world is globally connected in ways unforeseeable by past generations, and information (true or erroneous) not only flows at the speed of light to and from all corners of the earth, but sits in repositories that would make the great libraries of antiquity seem small and quaint.

In this our time, the profusion of information has not only made the task of communicating truth more speedy, but it has also confused the communication with inundation of error and deception. Not only can one use modern means to access the great works of ancient and modern thinkers, but just as easily, the spurious and vapid works of the ignorant and evil. With the deluge of information, discernment of truth from error becomes difficult.

Since this is to be a handbook rather than a library, I will not attempt to summarize the great works of the Fathers and the intellectual giants upon whose shoulders we now stand. However, I will attempt to provide a bibliography, directed at the questions of our day, and answering some of the more pointed challenges to Christian truth. My hope is that this small Enchiridion is a work in progress, to which others may add or adjust, as times and places and circumstances change. While the eternal truth of Holy Scripture never changes, and the faithful witness of Christian martyrs, confessors, and doctors remain lights for all generations, the application of truth to the designs and deceptions of the evil one, require adaptation in every age. May the student of this Enchiridion find here the help they need to navigate our stormy seas of modernity, and hand on to their posterity revised helps for the navigation of seas yet uncharted. To God be the Glory. Amen.

A Recommended Reading List for:

Historicity and Reliability of Holy Scripture

By Dr. Paul L. Maier:

Pontius Pilate

First Christmas: The True and Unfamiliar Story in Words and Pictures

First Easter: The True and Unfamiliar Story in Words and Pictures

First Christians: Pentecost and the Spread of Christianity

The Flames of Rome

Josephus, the Essential Writings: A Condensation of Jewish Antiquities and the Jewish War

In the Fullness of Time: A Historian looks at Christmas, Easter and the Early Church

A Skeleton in God's Closet

Eusebius - The Church History: A new translation with commentary

More Than A Skeleton: It was one man against the world

The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction?

Regarding Confessional and Systematic Theology

Theodore G. Tappert, *Book of Concord*

CFW Walther, *Law and Gospel*

John T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*

Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent; Enchiridion; Loci Theologici*

Philip Melancthon, *Loci Theologici*

Regarding the History and Contributions of the Church

Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Church Fathers

Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*

Regarding Natural Law

Robert C. Baker, *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*

Regarding Darwinism, Secularism, Atheism, and Evolution

John W. Klotz, *Genes, Genesis, and Evolution*

Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity; The Great Divorce; The Screwtape Letters*