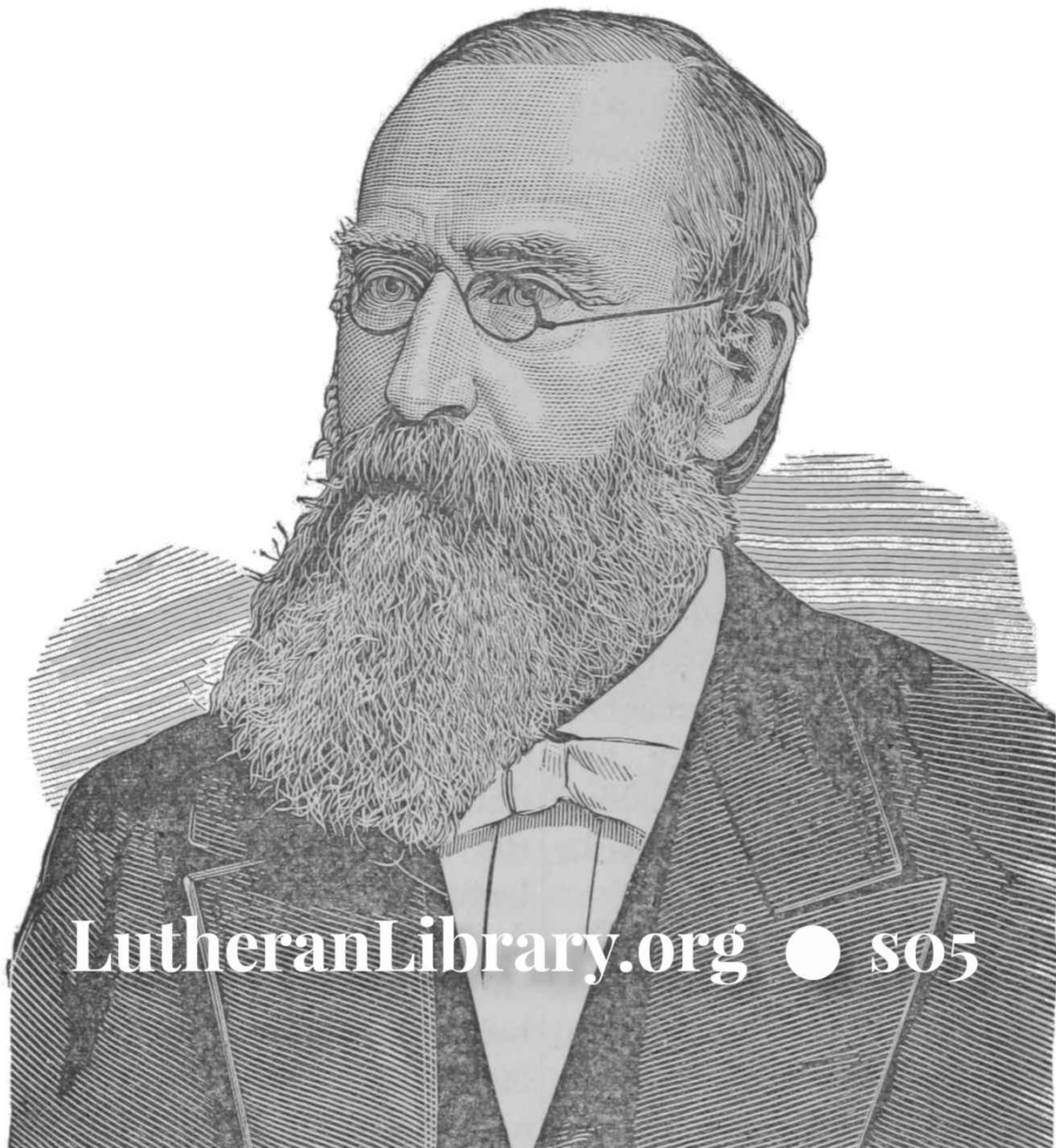


Charles Krauth

Why Study The Lutheran Confessions?



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Why Study The Lutheran Confessions?

By Charles Porterfield Krauth, D.D.

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

A giant of the faith, CHARLES PORTERFIELD KRAUTH (1823-1883) is one of the most prominent American Lutheran scholars, perhaps best known for his masterful and essential volume, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology As Represented in the Augsburg Confession and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. He served congregations in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Virginia and in the Virgin Islands, and later edited the *Lutheran and Missionary* and *Evangelical Review* journals. Rev. Krauth was instrumental in the establishment of the General Council and the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, which he led. Dr. Krauth was professor of intellectual and moral philosophy and vice-provost at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Why Study The Lutheran Confessions?

By Rev. Charles P. Krauth, A. M., of Winchester, Va.

Evangelical Review, Volume 1, Number 2, Article 4. Published July, 1849.

IT IS WITH a solemn and holy delight we have learned to traverse the venerable edifice which the hands of our fathers erected in the sixteenth century. There is none of the glitter which catches and fascinates the childish eye, but all possesses that solid grandeur which fills the soul. Every part harmonizes with the whole, and conspires in the proof that their work was not to pull down but to erect.

The spirit of the Reformation was no destroying angel, who sat and scowled with a malignant joy over the desolation which spread around. It was overshadowed by the wings of that spirit who brooded indeed on the waste of waters and the wildness of chaos, but only that he might unfold the germs of life that lay hidden there, and bring forth light and order from the darkness of the yet formless and void creation.

It is vastly more important, then, to know what the Reformation retained than what it overthrew; for the overthrow of error, though often an indispensable prerequisite to the establishment of truth, is not truth itself; it may clear the foundation simply to substitute one error for another, perhaps a greater for a less. Profoundly important, indeed, is the history of that which the Reformation accomplished against the errors of Romanism, yet it is as nothing to the history of that which it accomplished for itself. The overthrow of Romanism was not its primary object, in a certain sense was not its object at all. Its object was to establish the truth, no matter what might rise or fall in the effort.

Had the Reformation assumed the form which some who have since borne the name of Protestants would have given it, it would not even have been a splendid failure; the movement which has shaken and regenerated a world would have ended in a few miserable squabbles, a few *auto da fes*; and the record of a history, which daily makes the hearts of thousands burn within them, would have been exchanged for some such brief notice as this: that an irascible monk, named Luder, or Luther, and a few insane coadjutors, having foolishly attempted to overthrow the holy Roman See, and remaining obstinate in their pernicious and detestable heresies, were burned alive, to the glory of God and the Virgin Mary, and to the inexpressible, satisfaction of all the faithful.

The mightiest weapon which the Reformation employed against Rome was, not her errors, but her truths. It professed to make no discoveries, to find no unheard-of interpretations; but taking the scriptures in those very senses to which the greatest of her writers had assented, uncovering the law and the gospel of God which she retained, applying them as her most distinguished and most honored teachers had applied them, though she had made them of none effect by her traditions,¹ the Reformation took into its heart the life-stream of sixteen centuries, and came forth in the stature and strength of a Christianity, grown from the infancy of primitive ages to the ripened manhood of that maturer period. There was no fear of truth, simply because Rome held it, and no disposition to embrace an error, because it might be employed with advantage to her injury.

While it established broadly and deeply the right of private judgment, it did not make that abuse of it which has since been so common. From the position that the essential truths of the word of God are clear to any Christian mind that examines them properly, it did not leap to the conclusion that a thousand generations or a thousand examiners were as likely, or more likely, to be wrong than one. They allowed no authority save to the word of God, but they listened respectfully to the witness of believers of all time.

The tone which is imparted to the mind and heart by the theology of the reformation is just what we now most need. But where are we to commence, it may be asked, in the infinite variety of works that have been written about the Reformation and its theology? "Art is long and life is fleeting." And how is a clergyman of our church, in this country, to find the books, or buy them when found, or read them when bought, destitute, as he is too wont to be, alike of money and time? We reply that an immense trea-

sure lies in a narrow compass, and within the reach of every minister in our land.

By a careful study of the symbolical books of our church, commencing with the *Augsburg Confession* and its Apology, a more thorough understanding of the history, difficulties, true genius, and triumphs of the Reformation will be attained than by reading every thing that can be got, or that has ever been written about that memorable movement.

It is indeed too much the fashion now to read *about* things, to the neglect of the great original sources themselves. In general literature much is written and read about Homer and Shakespeare, until those great poets attract less attention than their critics. In theology it is the prevailing practice to have students read introductions to the Bible, and essays on various features of it, to such a degree that the Bible itself, except in an indirect form, is hardly studied at all, and the student, though often introduced to it, never fairly makes its acquaintance. All these illustrative works, if well executed, have their value; but that value presupposes such a general acquaintance with the books to which they serve as a guide, as is formed by every man for himself who carefully examines them.

The greatest value of every work of the human mind, after all, generally lies in that which needs no guide, no critic, no commentator. Their labors may display more clearly, and thus enhance, this value, and are not to be despised; but their subject is greater than themselves, and they are useful only when they lead to an accurate and critical knowledge of that with which a general acquaintance has been formed by personal examination. It is now conceded, for example, that in the order of nature the general knowledge of language must precede an accurate grammatical acquaintance with it. They may be formed indeed together, part preceding part, but if they must be separated, the general is better than the scientific. If, in a library, there were two cases, one containing all the Latin grammars and the other all the Latin classics, and one boy was kept six years to the classics and another six years to the grammars, the first would understand the language practically, the second would understand nothing, not even the grammar.

And this principle it is easy to apply as regards its bearings on those great masterly treatises which form our Symbolical books. *They are parts of the Reformation itself*: not merely witnesses in the loose sense in which histories are, but the actual results, the quintessence of the excited theological and moral elements of the time. In them you are brought into immediate

contact with that sublime convulsion itself. Its strength and its weakness, its fears and its hopes, the truths it exalted, the errors and abuses it threw down, are here presented in the most solemn and strongly authenticated form in which they gave them to posterity. They are nerves running from us, who form the extremities, back to the very seat of thought of that ancient, glorious, and immortal time. To see the force of every word, the power of every allusion, requires an intimate acquaintance with the era and the men, in forming which the student will be led delightfully into a thorough communion and profound sympathy with that second greatest period in human history. The child of our church will find occasion to exult not only in those brighter parts of our history and of our doctrines, whose luster fills every eye, but even in those particulars on which ignorance, envy, and jealousy have based their powerless attacks; will find, when he reaches a thorough understanding of them, new occasion to utter, with a heart swelling with an honorable pride, "I, too, am a Lutheran."

We are not such gross idolaters, nor so ignorant of the declarations of these great men themselves, as to imagine that, they left nothing for their posterity to do. Whether they have done it, and done it well, is, however, a very distinct question. To assume that, merely because we follow them in order of time, we have gone further than they in truth, is to lay the foundation of a principle more absurd and pernicious than the worst doctrine of the church of Rome, and is as foolish as to say that my child four years of age is a greater astronomer than Newton, because she lives in the century after him.

But while we concede that we may and ought to advance, we wish explicitly to say that we mean by advance, *progress in the same direction*. We are aware of no particular in which advance demands, or is even compatible with a desertion of the fundamental principles of our fathers. They may have made mistakes, and nothing but mistakes; they may have known nothing, and we may know every thing; but we have seen no evidence that such is the case, and until it is brought before us we must beg indulgence for our skepticism. This much we can assert safely, that those who understand best the theology of the Reformation, have most confidence in it and the strongest affection for it; to them it seems still to stand in its original glory, firm as the eternal mountains. That which strikes them painfully as they grow more and more familiar with that stout heart, whose life-blood is warming us, is that we have not advanced as we should; that though we have the shoulders

of these giants of a former world, from which, alas! a flood of infidelity and theological frivolity seems to separate us, on which to stand, there are so many things in which we do not see as far as they. It is because slothfulness or ignorance prevents us from occupying that position to which they would lift us, because taking a poor and narrow view of their labors, and measuring them by some contemptible little standard, sometimes one set up by their enemies and yet oftener by those who are more injurious than their enemies, their superficial and injudicious professed friends, we permit our minds to be prejudiced against them. A simple heart is of more value than mere science in the apprehension of religious truth; and never has there been witnessed such a union of gigantic powers with a childlike spirit as among the theologians of the sixteenth century. In vain do we increase the facilities for the attainment of knowledge, if we do not correspondingly strengthen the temper of mind and heart essential to its acquisition.

It by no means, therefore, follows, that even minds of the same order in our own day, would go beyond the point to which the Reformation was carried, because circumstances more embarrassing than those of the sixteenth century may now lie around the pathway of theological truths. Flattery is a more dangerous thing than bodily peril; a vain and superficial tendency will do more mischief than even an excess of the supernatural elements, and the spirit of the Romish church and the prejudices insensibly imbibed in her communion, are not more pernicious as a preparation for the examination of divine truth, than is a cold, self-confident and rationalizing mind.

If we do not contemptuously reject all aid in the search after truth, to whom can we go with more confidence than to the great authors of the Reformation? We know them at least to be sincere; no hireling scribblers, writing to tickle the fancy of the time; we know them to be the thorough masters of their subjects, conscious that every word would be examined and every argument fiercely assailed by their foes. Every doctrine they established by the word of God and confirmed by the witness of his church. Every objection which is now urged was then brought to bear upon the truth. Controversy has added nothing to its stores, they knew perfectly those superficial, miscalled reasons which make men now so confident in saying, that had the Reformers only lived in our time, they would have abandoned much to which they held. They knew then, but they lived and died unchanging in their adherence to what they had taught as truth.

It is a cheap and popular way of getting rid of any thing in the theology of the Reformation which is not palatable, by pretending that it is a remnant of popery, as Rationalists evade the force of Scripture declarations by saying they are accommodations to Jewish prejudices. Among these remnants of Popery, Dr. Aaron Bancroft, for instance, enumerates the doctrines of the Trinity, and the deity of Christ, of the Atonement, of Eternal punishment, in short of every thing which is distinctive of Evangelical Christianity. No position could be more violent or silly in regard to every fundamental doctrine of our Confession. They not only can be demonstrated from Scripture but can be shown to have been fully received in the church before popery had a name or a being. It would be far more natural to suppose that in the fierce and embittered strife with that gigantic system of Error, that some part of the Protestant party would be driven to deny some truths by whose abuse the church of Rome strove to maintain her power. It is a sword with a double edge, and is almost sure to wound those who handle it; it is in fact ordinarily but the sneaking refuge of a sectarian spirit, which tries to accomplish by exciting odium, what it failed to do by argument.

Do the Lutheran Confessions Have Any Value to Americans?

But are those Confessions, after all, of any value to the *American* Lutheran preacher? it may be asked. We cannot conceal our sorrow, that that term, "American," should be made so emphatic, dear and hallowed as it is to our heart. Why should we break or weaken the golden chain-which unites us to the high and holy associations of our history as a church by thrusting into a false position a word which makes a national appeal? Is there a conflict between the two, when carried to their very farthest limits? Must Lutheranism be shorn of its glory to adapt it to our times or our land? No! Our land is great, and wide, and glorious, and destined, we trust, under the sunlight of her free institutions, long to endure; but our faith is wider, and greater, and is eternal. The world owes more to the Reformation than to

America; America owes more to it than to herself. My country is my mother, but my church is her mother, the source, under God, of all that is great and good in her. Through *her*, Christianity, peace with God, redemption in Christ, immortality, have been given to me, and therefore I am first a Lutheran and then an American. In my heart they excite no conflict but blend harmoniously together. We are placed here in the midst of sectarianism, and it becomes us not lightly to consent to swell that destructive torrent of separatism which threatens the welfare of pure Christianity on our shores more than all other causes combined. We are surrounded by the children of those churches which claim an origin in the Reformation. We sincerely respect and love them'; we fervently pray that they may be increased in every labor of love, and may be won more and more to add to that precious truth which they set forth with such power, those no less precious doctrines which, in the midst of so wide ail abandonment of the faith once delivered to the saints, God has, in our Confessions, preserved to us.

No Self-Respecting Church Can Be Ashamed Of Her History

But how shall we make ourselves worthy of their respect and lift ourselves out of the sphere of that pitiful little sectarianism which is crawling over us and biting us continually? We must begin by knowing ourselves, and being true to that knowledge. Let us not, with our rich coffers, play the part of beggars, and ask favors where we have every ability to impart them. No church can maintain her self-respect or inspire respect in others, who is afraid or ashamed of her own history, and who rears a dubious fabric on the ignorance of her ministry and of her members. Whatever flickerings of success may play around her, she will yet sink to rise no more, and, worse than this, no honest man will lament her fall, for however such moral dishonesty may be smoothed over, every reflecting man sees that such a church is an organized lie, with a ministry, congregations, churches and societies united to sustain a lie.

Lutheran Identity and The Language Issue

From this feeling a gracious Providence has almost wholly preserved our church in this country. To whatever extent want of information or the pressure of surrounding denominations may have produced the practical departure of individuals from some of the principles of our church, our common origin and our glorious annals have formed a bond of sympathy. Struggling against difficulties which would have crushed a church with less vitality, the Lutheran Communion in this country has always preserved some honorable feeling of her own dignity and proper value. *The salt which has preserved her is Germanic.* On these shores she has yet properly no history; when she looks toward the realm of her might and glory she must cast her eye over the Atlantic wave, and roll back her thoughts over the lapse of two centuries. She has been, and is yet, passing through a period of transition from one language and one national bond to another. The question of language has interest only so far as it concerns the question of church life, and in its bearings on this should be watched with a tender and trembling interest. No doubt there were cases in which the opposition of the earlier Lutherans in this country to the introduction of the English language in our church arose from narrow views and feelings simply as Germans, but in yet more instances did it spring from fears, which our subsequent history has shown not to be wholly groundless, that Lutheranism itself—our life, our doctrines and our usages,—so dear to their hearts, might be endangered by the change.

Whatever, then, may be our sentiments as to the judgment they displayed, let us do honor at least to their motives. They saw that the language of our land contained no Lutheran literature, no history just to the claims of our church, no spirit which, on the whole, could be said fully to meet the genius of our church. They feared that, under these circumstances, Lutheranism would melt away, or become the mere creature of the influences with which it was surrounded. They clung to their language, therefore, as a rampart which could shut out for a time the flood which was

breaking upon them each day with increasing force. For what, then, do we blame them? Not for their intense love to the church, or their ardent desire to preserve it in its purity, nor that sensitive apprehension which is always the offspring of affection; not, in a word, that they were Lutherans indeed. If we blame these venerable men at all, it is that they *were not Lutheran enough*; that is, that, with all their devotion to the church, they had not that inspiring confidence which they should have had in the power of her principles to triumph eventually over every obstacle. Would that they could have realized what we believe most firmly, (though part of it yet lies in the future,) that, after all the changes of national existence, and of language, all pressure from the churches and the people around us, our holy faith would come forth in all her purity and power, eventually to perform, in the great drama in our western realm, a part as important as that which she bore in her original glory in the history of the world.

And having spoken thus freely in regard to a misapprehension on one side of this question, we shall be equally candid in speaking the truth upon the other.

It is evident that our American fathers clung to the German language from no idea that there was any connexion between Lutheranism and that language as such — some mysterious coherence between its sounds and inflections, and the truths of our church; so that, in the very nature of the case, and by an essential necessity, the English language and Lutheranism could not harmonize together. It is fanaticism to attempt to narrow our great church into an English sect or a German one. Lutheranism is neither English nor German; and though both should cease to be the tongues of living men, it cannot pass away. The greatest works of her original literature, some of her symbols, part of her church service and hymns, were in the Latin language; and surely if she can live in a dead language she can live in any living one. She has achieved some of her most glorious victories where other languages are spoken. She sought at an early period to diffuse her principles among the oriental churches, and we will add that she is destined, on these shores, in a language which her fathers knew not, to illustrate more gloriously, because in a more unfettered form, her true life and spirit, than she has done since the Reformation.

Why Review Our Lutheran Doctrinal Standards?

But, waiving now all further discussion of questions suggested by our Confessional history, we shall compress into a brief compass our apology (if indeed we need one) for offering the first of a series of sketches connected with the history of our great doctrinal standards. If the question may be mooted; How far shall we *adopt* the principles of the Reformation, and of our earlier church: *this* admits of no discussion; Whether we should make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with those principles; — for the rejection even of error, unless it result from an enlightened judgment, and a mature intelligent conviction, has no value whatever—nay, is in itself a worse error than any which it can possibly reject, for it rests itself on the foundation on which almost all moral falsehood has arisen. Let our ministry enter upon a profound study of the history and of the principles of our church, and if the result of a ripe judgment shall be any other than an increased devotion to the first, and an ardent embracing of the second, we shall feel ourselves bound to reexamine the grounds on which such an examination has led us to repose with the confidence of a child on that maternal bosom where so many whose names are bright on earth and in Heaven, have rested their dying heads, and experienced that what she taught them was sufficient not only to overcome every trial of life, but every terror of the grave.

Freedom and the Augsburg Confession

“The Confession of Augsburg,” says D’Aubigne, “will ever remain one of the masterpieces of the human mind enlightened by the spirit of God.”

The man of the world should feel a deep interest in a document which bears to the whole cause of freedom as close a relation as the “Declaration of Independence” does to our own as Americans. The philosopher should examine what has formed the opinions and affected the destinies of millions of our race. To the Christian it presents itself as the greatest work, regarded in historical relations, in which pure religion has been sustained by human hands. The theologian will find it a key to a whole era of fervent, yet profound thought, and the Lutheran, to whom an argument on its value to him must be presented, is beyond the reach of argument. It is our shield and our sword, our ensign and our arming, the constitution of our state, the life of our body, the germ of our being. It is the bond of our union throughout; the world, and by it, and with it, our church, as a distinct organization, must stand or fall. Her life began, indeed, before it, as the vital point of the embryo exists before the heart and brain are formed, but having once evoked the Confession into which her own life flowed—they live or perish together, as that embryo grows or dies, as the vital organs expand in life or shrink in death.

In the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran church the first place, indeed, is justly held by those general Confessions in which the pure church has united in every age since their formation and in which, throughout the world, it now concurs. These are the Apostles’, the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan, and Athanasian creeds. She thus vindicates her true catholicity and antiquity, and declares that the name Lutheran does not define her essence, but simply refers to one grand fact in her history. The most splendid phase of that portion of her annals is to be found in the diet of Augsburg, and the “good Confession” which she then “witnessed” before the mighty of the world. The city of Augsburg has not been wanting in historical associations of high interest, but they are dim before its chief glory. Its ancient spires on which the soft light of many a sinking sun had rested were then illumined by a milder radiance which shall never set. It slopes toward two considerable rivers, between which it lies embosomed, but never had that “river which makes glad the city of God,” so poured through it, its stream of life as on that eventful day. Thrice since that period the thunder of artillery and the clash of arms have sounded around and within it — but it is our heroes whose glory still keeps its name fresh in the memories of men, and shall

keep it when its palaces have crumbled into dust and time has gathered over its very ruins the mold which at once completes and hides the desolation.

Why It Was Written

The two grounds on which our Confession was written and presented, were, first, the wish of the emperor Charles V., who desired by this means to remove the religious dissensions which were rending the Germanic empire; and secondly, to refute the serious slanders which were uttered against the holy cause of the truth which was in the course of restoration to its original purity. To detail with minuteness every circumstance connected with its origin, would be a work of labor and of great extent. It is sufficient for our purpose to present a cursory outline.

The Roman Pontiff having refused to listen to the request of the Emperor Charles V. to call a general council, at which the great religious questions which were agitating so many bosoms, might be settled, the Emperor dispatched letters to Germany, written on the 21st of January, 1530, summoning the Electors and the other princes of the empire, to appear at Augsburg to deliberate on the great question of religion, and to provide also against the impending danger of war on the part of the Turks. He directed as a preliminary to the former and more important portion of their work, that a statement of doctrine, or a Confession of their faith should be presented to the Diet. In the copy of these letters of the Emperor which was sent to the Elector of Saxony, and which Müller preserves in his *History of the Protestation and Confession made at Augsburg by the Evangelical States*, (in German,) he declares that it is his desire that the varying opinions on religious subjects might be examined in the spirit of love and of truth.

The Emperor repeated the same sentiments on the assembling of the Diet, calling on both parties, says the Preface to the *Augsburg Confession*, “to act with charity and mutual forbearance, to ponder on what was advanced, to confine themselves strictly to the matter in debate, and to agree in Christian concord on the simple truth.” In order properly to carry out this command, those who professed the Evangelical doctrine made arrange-

ments for the preparation and presentation of a Confession to the Emperor before the Diet. To this fact they refer in the Preface when they say: "It is in obedience to the wish of your Imperial Majesty that we present a Confession of our faith whose doctrines have been set forth by our preachers from the Holy Scriptures, in the churches of our provinces, dukedoms, shires and cities we find also in the *conclusion* of the Confession these words:

"We have desired to exhibit the preceding articles in accordance with the command of your majesty, in which we have presented our Confession and a summary of the doctrine of those who teach among us."

But the grand reason for the preparation of the Confession was that the charges brought against the doctrines of the Reformation and their adherents might be repelled, and that all candid men might be convinced that nothing was taught which was not in accordance with the word of God.

We could scarcely believe to what extremes the impudence of these calumniators carried them, were it not that our church still continues to receive the attacks of those who rival them in effrontery, in ignorance and in disregard of truth, for Lutheranism has continued to be the terror of everything false, of pseudo-Protestantism as well as of pseudo-Catholicism. Alphonsus Valdesius, Secretary of the Emperor, a few days before the Confession was presented to the Diet, told Melanchthon,

"that the Spaniards were persuaded, that the Lutherans did not believe in God or in the Holy Trinity, and that they made light of Christ the Savior of the world and of the Virgin Mary, so that they felt no doubt that to slay a Lutheran was to do God a more acceptable service than to kill a Turk."

— COELESTINUS. *HISTORY OF THE DIET AT AUGSBURG.*

Luther himself, in his *Preface to the Smalcald Articles*, mentions that there was at Wittenberg a certain doctor sent from France who openly declared that the king of France believed

"that the Lutherans had neither church, magistracy, nor rites of marriage, but herded together promiscuously like cattle."

And that such was the fact, may be gathered from Raemund, Chancellor of the King of France at Bordeaux, who in his *History of the rise, progress and ruin of the heresies of this age*, writes thus:

“It was very easy for Luther, a man of much reading and of great industry, to follow in the footsteps of the ancient and modern heretics, to acquire their arts, to emulate their subtlety, and again to prop up, with new strength, their arguments, though often completely overthrown by the holy fathers;”

and a little after:

“...besides, in the construction of his church, Luther had borrowed the greater part of his materials from the ancient heretics, long ago reprobated by councils and blasted with the infamy of rebellion against God and of treason against man.”

Cyprian, in his *History of the Augsburg Confession* has preserved many instances of this kind, of a public character. The proposition of the Emperor seemed, therefore, a providential opening which our Confessors gladly employed to defend themselves and the truth they had espoused.

The Noble Prince John, Elector of Saxony

It is to John Elector of Saxony, more than to any other prince, that the world is indebted for the *Augsburg Confession*. There is not a nobler prince than he commemorated on the pages of history (hardly one so eminently Christian). His exalted firmness conferred on him the title of the Constant, and never was it more admirably displayed than in connection with the Confession which was prepared under his auspices, and by his command. The letters patent of the Emperor summoning a Diet at Augsburg reached him in Torgau, and thence he immediately addressed letters to Luther, Pomeranus, Justus Jonas, and Philip Melancthon, at Wittenberg, in which

he gave directions, that, “as there was about to be a national Synod composed of the orders of the empire, they should lay aside all other matters to consult together on the points in controversy, whether they had reference to matters of faith, or to rites and ceremonies; and that having digested a Confession they should, by the third Sunday in Lent (*dominica oculi*) present themselves in Torgau.” When these letters had been received by the Theologians at Wittenberg, and Justus Jonas, who happened to be absent, had been apprised of their contents by Luther, they determined at once to execute the will of the Elector, which they concluded could not be done in a more satisfactory way than by entrusting the entire matter to Luther. In consequence, it is generally supposed that Luther drew up the seventeen articles called the *Torgau Articles*.

The Torgau Articles

They treat of God and the Trinity, of the incarnation of Christ, of his passion, of original sin, of justification, of the nature of justifying faith, of the Gospel, of the Sacraments, of Baptism, of the Eucharist, of Confession, the Catholic church, the final judgment, of the magistracy, of the prohibition of marriage and eating of meats, of the abrogation of the mass, and of ceremonies. These Articles are extant in German in Luther’s works, and in the various histories of the *Augsburg Confession*, by Chytraeus, Müller, and Cyprian; and in Latin in the *History of the Diet*, by Coelestinus, and in Pfaff’s *Appendix to the Symbolical Books*. They were made public in a separate form in the Latin language at Leipsic, under the title: *First delineation of the Augsburg Confession*, by Martin Luther. It appeared also in German at Wittenberg, 1530, and at Coburg, in the same year.

These Articles which first appeared without the knowledge of Luther, were attacked by Wimpina, Mensingius, Redoerfferus and Egersma in behalf of the papacy, to whom Luther responded in his Answer to the outcry of certain Papists against the seventeen Articles, and at the same time appended the articles themselves. The answer of Luther is so elegant and em-

braces so much worthy of perusal that Schlegel (in *vita Joann. Langerii*) and Cyprian in his *History* have presented it entire.

Though the basis of the AUGSBURG CONFESSION is generally supposed to be in the *Torgau Articles*, yet there have been men of learning who contended that it was rather to be sought in those of Schwabach. It is certain that in the year 1530 a convention for religious and ecclesiastical purposes was held at Schwabach, a town not far from Nuremberg, under the auspices and in the name of George, Marquis of Brandenburg and Nuremberg. It is affirmed that in this very convention those seventeen articles were presented, which are entitled the Articles of Schwabach, composed according to some by Andrew Osiander, or according to others, by John Rurer, or some other hand. These it is asserted were sent by George of Brandenburg to John, Elector of Saxony, and to Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, and having met with the approval of their theologians were then placed by them as the first foundation of the *Augsburg Confession*. Such is the opinion of Durrius, and, among others, especially of Rentschius. But this opinion Layritius has attempted to overthrow and has presented various reasons against the claim of the convention at Schwabach in 1528 to those articles attributed to Luther, and employed by Melancthon in the preparation of the Confession. He observes that many are of the opinion that no copies of the articles of that convention are to be found in the Registry of the Marches of Brandenburg, or of the State of Nuremberg, or of those churches on which they are imagined to have been imposed. Nor was there any need, he adds, of a new doctrinal formula of this kind, as the whole plan and purpose of the ecclesiastical visitation then entered into will show, and declares finally that the whole mistake has arisen from confounding the former convention at Schwabach with a later one which took place in October 1529, for the seventeen articles recited at this later convention were subsequently falsely ascribed to the theologians of Brandenburg and Nuremberg, who had been called to the first convention in June 1528.

In a subsequent dissertation Layritius pursuing the same general idea endeavors to establish the following facts; that the second convention of Schwabach was held for the purpose of confederating the several Protestant orders of the empire, and that the object of the introduction of the seventeen Articles was the exclusion of those who did not approve of the Evangelical doctrines; he declares, moreover, that these Articles do not differ from those of Torgau, except in a few verbal alterations or modes of expression, the re-

sult, probably, of a subsequent revision. He appeals to a copy of the Articles of Schwabach in the registry at Ulm, which has this inscription: "Articles of Faith of the Elector of Saxony." In view of these facts, he declares it as his opinion that beyond all doubt Luther was the author of these Articles, since the Elector of Saxony gave the summary which they contain, to his legates to Schwabach, for they would naturally be the work of a theologian of Saxony, and of no one so probably as of Luther, without whose aid and counsel he did nothing of this kind. These very Articles, then, carefully revised, under the orders of the Elector, by Luther and the other theologians of Saxony, were transmitted to him at Torgau, previous to his departure for the Diet.

This, then, may be affirmed, if these facts be regarded as duly substantiated, that the Elector having ordered the Wittenberg theologians to draw up a summary, Luther having revised, retouched, and improved the Articles which he had furnished for the Convention at Schwabach, presented them in their new form to the Elector of Saxony. We may draw, in some sense, a distinction, then, between the Articles of Schwabach and those of Torgau, and in answer to the question, in which of them the basis of the *Augsburg Confession* is to be sought? reply, that in a certain sense we look for it in those of Schwabach, which furnished the remote material, but immediately in those of Torgau. Yet this conclusion seems to be in conflict with the fact stated by Von Der Lith, who discovered in the registry of Anspach, a village near Nuremberg, what he supposed to be the true Articles of Schwabach, with the inscription: "Parochial visitation in 1528," with the addition of these words:

"These doctrinal Articles were composed at Nuremberg and accepted and approved at Schwabach."

In this copy the Articles are twenty-three, not seventeen in number, and in the Articles themselves there is a variation from those which are commonly called the Articles of Schwabach, from which Van Der Lith infers that they were not employed in the preparation of the *Augsburg Confession*. He thinks, moreover, that these Articles were written by Andrew Osiander. These conflicting opinions Zeltner endeavors, to some extent, to reconcile by the supposition that the Articles which were framed at the first Convention of Schwabach, were employed also at the subsequent one, though in some respects changed and emended, and that in this approved form they

became the foundation of the *Augsburg Confession*. This illustrious theologian set forth this view in a particular treatise published in 1730, under the title: "*A more careful examination of the way in which the Augsburg Confession originated in the so-called Articles of Schwabach.*"

The preparations for his journey having been completed, the Elector, John of Saxony, left Torgau on the third day of April 1530, taking with him, his son, John Frederick, Francis, Duke of Luneburg, Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, and, not to enumerate the counts, barons and other nobles, his theologians, Martin Luther, George Spalatine, Justus Jonas, Philip Melanchthon and John Agricola, the last named being in the train of Albert, Count of Mansfeld. Having reached Coburg, and having remained some days, he left Luther there, lest by his presence he should exasperate his enemies and expose himself to their snares; Melanchthon now began to apply himself to the preparation of the Confession. Before leaving Coburg for Augsburg he wrote among other things the Preface; which he afterwards, however, improved in some respects at Augsburg, as may be gathered from some words in a letter addressed by him to Luther: "I have made the Preface of our Apology which I wrote at Coburg somewhat more finished in style." Some have imagined without the least reason that Melanchthon wrote not "Apology," but "Confession". Melanchthon employed this term because it was their original intention to present at the Diet a document under the name of "Apology," using that word in its theological sense, a formal defense. Afterwards, however, the term Confession was preferred. Melanchthon writes thus to Luther;

"I send you our Apology, though it is in fact a Confession: for the emperor has no leisure to be listening to prolix disputations;"

In another epistle he says:

we are daily making many changes in our Apology."

After he reached Augsburg, Melanchthon entered on the province which had been assigned him, devoting his attention to perfecting the Confession, and having before him not only the seventeen *Articles of Torgau*: but other outlines of the chief points of the Evangelical doctrine. For, in addition to the Elector of Saxony, the other Evangelical princes and orders had caused

formulas to be written by their theologians, which, by their permission, were consigned to Melancthon, that after a careful perusal of them, he might finish the Confession to be presented to the Diet. This fact is mentioned by Camerarius: “a number of sketches,” he says, “were offered, some of them very verbose. For, every one of those who were united in this matter, had directed his theologians to draw up something. These were to be thoroughly examined by Melancthon.”

Luther the Primary Author of The Confession

Before the Confession was presented it was communicated to the other theologians, whom the princes and the legates of those who were absent had brought with them, to Justus Jonas, George Spalatin, Erh. Schnepf, Jo. Brent, Andrew Osiander, Jo. Agricola and others. In an assembly also of the orders who subscribed it, all its heads were pondered and confirmed, a fact mentioned by Erhard Schnepf in his “*confession*” on the holy supper which he put forth in 1550. “It is well known,” he says,

“to all who were present at that deliberation in Augsburg, in 1530, that the Confession which had just been written, before it was offered to Charles V., the Roman Emperor, was subjected to the judgment of the principal theologians, and of the Counsellors of our princes, and to the legates of the two cities, for which reason it pleased them at that time to employ only the adverb *vere* (truly) as an ambiguous one, on account of the disputes of many: since not one of those who united in the *Augsburg Confession*, and were admitted to this deliberation thought with the Zwinglians. I also was present and bore a part, though for no merit of mine: which I mention lest any one should imagine that I speak from mere hearsay, and should on that account endeavor to detract from the weight of my testimony.”

The same fact is confirmed by the Wittenbergians in the *Acts of the Altenburg Colloquy*. Thus recognized and approved by the suffrages of all, the Confession was again transmitted to Luther, that if any thing yet remained which he desired to advise, he might now suggest it, at which time and on

which occasion Marbach declares that he added the words to the tenth Article: “*and disapprove of those who teach otherwise,*” a statement contradicted by others who declare that these words stood in the very earliest copies that were written.

From the facts we have presented, it is very clear, that those who attribute more in the authorship of this Confession to Melanchthon than to Luther do so in the face of the facts. Yet there are some among the Romanists as well as among the Reformed who speak as though Luther and the other theologians had contributed little or nothing to it, and that all, or at least the principal parts, were to be ascribed to Melanchthon. There are some who speak of him simply by the title, “Author of the *Augsburg Confession,*” and call the Confession itself “the *Confession of Philip Melanchthon.*” Daniel Chamierus uses this language: “Certainly these words are in the *Augsburg Confession,* of which Melanchthon was the author, and which was approved by Luther.” Florimund Raemund says: “It was Melanchthon who, at the request of certain German princes, wrote the *Augsburg Confession,* in which, as Sturmius declares, they desired Luther to have no hand.” David Pareus says: “It is well known that Philip Melanchthon was the author of the *Augsburg Confession.*”

But, although Melanchthon performed the great labor in writing and imparting a finish to the Confession, he is neither to be regarded as its sole author, nor as superior in his merits in the matter, to Luther. For since the authority of the Confession is derived not from its arrangement or its style, so much as from its matter, the larger part of which was furnished by Luther, he deserves the praise as its chief author. For, in the first place, he laid its foundation in the seventeen *Articles of Torgau,* and afterwards, as the various heads were digested and expressed in Latin, they were committed to Luther for his judgment and to the other theologians and the princes for their opinions. Whilst to Melanchthon, therefore, belongs the high honor of having digested, arranged and written it in his elegant Latin; yet a greater than he appears in the whole transaction and acting a more important part.

Augsburg

Before we proceed to narrate the circumstances connected with the public recitation of the Confession, it may be well, for the sake of distinctness, to touch upon the associated facts previous to its presentation.

Augsburg, known also by the titles, *Augusta Vindelicorum*, and *Damasia*, was an imperial and episcopal city of Germany, and stands on a slight elevation between the Lech and the Wertach, surrounded with fertile plains and forests abounding in game. Into this place the Emperor Charles V. made his entrance June 15th, with every circumstance of magnificence which could mark the greatest monarch of his age. On the second day after his advent the Eucharist was to be celebrated after the rites of the church of Rome, at which, in spite of the desire and command of the Emperor, the Protestant princes refused to be present. When king Ferdinand, the brother of the Emperor, again vehemently made this demand, George, Marquis of Brandenburg, who spoke in the name of the others, placed his hand on his neck, and among other things said,

“That he would rather, with knees bent before the Emperor, at once offer his neck to the executioner, than deny God and his ever sacred Gospel, and receive and approve erroneous doctrine.”

When these words were subsequently related to the Emperor, he replied that this was no matter to peril a man’s head. Nevertheless, he desired, and again urged that they might be present at these solemnities, but the Protestants remained unshaken in their purpose, regarding this as a matter in which God was to be obeyed rather than man.

A difficulty also arose, previous to the transaction of the business of the Diet, in regard to preaching. The Protestant princes who came to Augsburg had caused the theologians who accompanied them to preach constantly. The Emperor wrote, as soon as he heard this, to Oenipont, and ordered that these sermons should be discontinued till the Diet had given its sanction to the arrangements in religious matters. Upon this the princes consulted with the theologians, and presented to the Emperor on his arrival their reasons for thinking that these sermons should be continued. But their reasons did not secure what they desired; yet, after a considerable dispute, the matter was so far compounded, that the Protestants declared that they desired to guide themselves by the Emperor’s wishes, and begged him to appoint

preachers to whom they might, with clear consciences, listen, which the Emperor consented to do.

These events occurred previous to the actual business of the Diet. This commenced on the *20th of June*, when, by order of the Emperor, the Elector of Saxony, high marshal of the Empire, summoned in due form the various orders, who attended the Emperor to the Cathedral church, whither he repaired for the celebration of mass. The Elector of Saxony bore a sword before him, under advice of the theologians, who regarded him not as participating in divine worship, but as simply performing a civil act in his official character.

Vincentius Pimpinellus, the legate of the pope, then pronounced an oration elegantly written, but displaying a bitter and malevolent disposition toward those who favored the Evangelical doctrines. These solemnities having been engaged in, they repaired to the palace of the Senate of Augsburg, where Frederick, count palatine, presented, in the name of the Emperor, a summary of the matters on which the Diet was to deliberate and act, in which the two great features were the war with the Turks and the state of religion.

On the 20th day of June, the Elector of Saxony, with the most fervent prayers, committed to God the cause of the heavenly doctrines, and amongst other advice, charged his associates, after Pontanus had again read to them the imperial proposition, that they should carefully reflect on what was most proper to be done and should present their advice on the following day. When the Elector of Mentz, high Arch-chancellor of the Empire, announced that the Emperor referred it entirely to the will of the orders, whether they should commence their deliberations with the Turkish war or with the religious controversies, it was decreed by the unanimous consent, not only of the Evangelical orders, but also of the papists, that the questions concerning religion should first be discussed. This purpose they signified on the 22nd of June, to which the Emperor offered no objection, but he again demanded of the Protestants that on the 24th of June they should exhibit their Confession of faith. Short as was the time allowed they could not obtain even an additional day. Yet that they might act in conformity with the will of the Emperor, they at once acquiesced, and employed all the time that remained in digesting a Confession which was recited in the presence of the Evangelical orders, whom the Elector of Saxony had convened, on the 22nd of June, and was approved by them. The subscription to it seems to have

been made on the same day, a point on which we shall hereafter speak more at large; but it cannot be determined whether it was sealed at the same time. Melancthon believed that the Confession would, with more propriety, be put forth in the name of the theologians than of the princes, but his opinion did not secure general approval. On this point Camerarius² says:

“Philip would have preferred that it should be put forth not in the name of the princes and of those associated with them, but of the teachers who are called theologians. For he judged that it was more fit that they should dispute on points of this kind, and that it would be better that the authority of power should be reserved unrestrained. But this he could not obtain, because it was thought that by the subscription of their names the action would be rendered more splendid and impressive. Other reasons, also, were assigned for the expediency of this course.”

On the day prescribed, June 24th, sacred to the memory of John the Baptist, the Protestants were present, in the hope and confidence that the Confession would be publicly read. But when, through Pontanus, the demand was made, that it might be recited, the Emperor said, that the brief time, of which the greater part had been consumed in orations and other deliberations, would not allow of hearing it, and desired that it might be presented to him in writing. In consequence of this a deep solicitude was excited in the mind of the Protestant princes. They insisted that the Confession should be publicly heard, as in their view this was a matter which had an important bearing on their fortunes, their blood and their lives, nay, on the very salvation of their souls. After the Evangelical party had overcome a considerable opposition, and the Emperor had so far yielded as to appoint the next day, Saturday, for the public recitation of the Confession, he yet insisted that the copy of it should be presented to him. This demand the Protestants submissively deprecated, and finally obtained permission to retain the Confession until it had been publicly heard.³

Whatever had as yet been done in the Diet was carefully made known to Luther by letters from John, Elector of Saxony, Justus Jonas and others, to which Luther replied, elevating and strengthening their courage and especially that of Melancthon, when, in accordance with the temperament and constitution of his mind, he had begun to tremble.⁴ It is evident, also, that the assertion of the papists, that the *Augsburg Confession* was written suddenly and in the greatest precipitation, is a most impudent falsehood.⁵ Four months, in fact, had passed in its preparation, and every part had been

drawn up with the extremest care. It is true, that if the Diet had convened on the eighth day of April, as was originally intended, every thing must have been attended to in the most hurried manner. But, by a special Providence, it happened that the Diet was put off to June, so that no time might be wanting to the princes and their theologians of carefully framing and setting forth all the heads of the Confession.⁶

The Reading of the Confession

Finally, by the peculiar grace of God, that day arose, to wit, June 25th, on which the Confession was to be publicly read and presented. This was done at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, not in the court of the city of Augsburg, but in an inner chamber of the bishop's palace, designed by the Emperor for his household officers. When, by order of the Emperor, King Ferdinand, and all the other electors, princes and orders of the empire had there come together, the supporters of the Confession with countenances exhibiting the readiness, courage and strength of their minds presented that noble document. They consisted of John, Elector of Saxony, with his son, John Frederick, George, Marquis of Brandenburg, Francis and Ernest, Dukes of Luneburg and Brunswick, Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, and the Magistrates of the two imperial cities, Nuremberg and Reutlingen. The Elector of Saxony and his associates desired to stand during the act of presentation; but were immediately commanded by the Emperor to seat themselves. George Pontanus and Christian Baier, therefore, stepped forth, the former with the Latin, the latter with the German copy in his hand. The Emperor desired the Latin one to be read; but when the Elector observed, that as they were in Germany, he hoped that the Emperor would permit the German language to be used, he readily assented. Upon this, Baier read the German copy, in doing which nearly two hours were consumed. He recited it in so clear and sonorous a voice that it could be perfectly heard beyond the dining room and in the lower court of the Episcopal palace.⁷ In regard to this matter Spalatine⁸ says:

“When the Emperor had deprived our poor preachers of the right of preaching, the Elector of Saxony was in such a frame of mind and spirit, that, in the very largest assemblage of princes and bishops, who in their whole lives had never heard the word of God in purity, he performed, in a manner, the functions of a preacher,” by means of that glorious Confession to the presentation of which he had so greatly contributed.

Such was the ardor of Pontanus, that in the presence of the Emperor and the nobles of the empire he exclaimed: “If the divine grace cooperate and God sustains his own cause, this Confession shall prevail against the very gates of hell.”⁹ It was manifest from the movements of some of the princes that they impatiently waited for the end of the reading, but the Emperor himself, King Ferdinand, and some of the bishops paid close attention to the Confession. When the Confession had been read, Christopher Stadion, bishop of Augsburg, said:

“The things that have been read are pure truth, nothing but truth, we cannot deny them.”

At this reading neither Melancthon nor any one of our theologians was present.

After the Protestants had returned thanks to the Emperor for the permission publicly to read their Confession, Pontanus was about to hand both the German and Latin copy to Alexander Schweiss, private Secretary of Charles V.; but the Emperor received them with his own hand, and delivered the German copy to the Elector of Mentz, Chancellor of the empire, to be preserved in the imperial Registry, the Latin one he retained. The Emperor then benignly dismissed the assembly with an assurance that he would give to a matter encompassed with so many difficulties, a thorough examination, and would make known the conclusion to which he might come.

From Latin To German

The translation from the Latin into the German had been made by Justus Jonas. The persons who subscribed each copy with their own hand, were

John, Duke and Elector of Saxony, George, Marquis of Brandenburg, Ernest, Duke of Luneburg, Philip, Land-grave of Hesse, Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt, and, in addition, the cities of Nuremberg and Reutlingen. There are copies of the Confession in which the names of two other princes are inserted before those of the cities, John Frederick, Duke of Saxony, and Francis, Duke of Luneburg; but Müller has shown that these princes did not subscribe their names. Shortly after, the names of four other cities were added to those of Nuremberg and Reutlingen; these were Weissenberg, Heilbrun, Kempten and Winsheim, whose ambassadors were consequently recognized and permitted to take part in the proceedings of the Diet which had reference to religion.

The German copy of the Confession was placed in the archives of Mentz, and the Latin copy was finally deposited by the Emperor in the registry at Brussels; the ultimate fate of both copies is now disputed, some uncertainty resting on the question whether they still remain in the places of their original deposit. It is certain that when the *Formula Concordiae* was issued, (1580) the copy deposited at Mentz still remained and was carefully collated with those in the possession of the Protestant states and princes, as they expressly tell us in the Preface of the Concordia. It is not easy to believe that it was afterwards taken away. Yet to this opinion, which is the one generally received, seems to be opposed what is stated by the illustrious Pfaff, that the authentic German and Latin copies are no longer to be found in the archives of Mentz and Brussels; though when he was searching for these copies he was informed by those whose word could be relied on, that they knew nothing of this kind, except a German copy embraced in the Imperial Protocol for 1530. This copy was examined by Pfaff, at Mentz. He adds that it seems highly probable that the originals are no longer to be found, when we remember the various injuries to which the Archives at Brussels were exposed in time of war, and that the larger part had been transferred to Antwerp and the islands; that the original had been so often lent, and that the Archives of Mentz had, in time of war, been removed to another place.¹⁰

After The Reading

When the Confession had been publicly read and presented, many began to entertain a more favorable judgment in regard to the features of our doctrines; but its adversaries at once began to turn their thoughts to the discovery of the best means of alienating the mind of the Emperor completely from the Protestants and of extirpating our holy faith. They immediately drew up a refutation of the Confession, which, though publicly recited and approved by the Emperor, was not able to accomplish any thing against the cause of God and of truth.

After the Confession had been publicly read and presented, many of the great lords of the Empire, who had given close attention, felt the power of truth, and ceased to entertain the harsh opinions with which they had been prepossessed. We are told that the Emperor himself said, “the Protestants do not err in the articles of faith” and afterwards, “if the priests had done their duty, there would have been no need of Master Luther.”

This much is certain, that although previous to the reading of the Confession he had exhibited great moderation in the matter, yet after hearing it he became still more gracious—appeared to incline more and more to the Protestant side, and intimated, in no obscure manner, his favorable feeling toward John, Elector of Saxony. Other princes acted in the same way, of which, among other proofs, we have a letter of Luther to Hausmann, in which he writes: “Mentz is said to be extremely pacific. Duke Henry of Brunswick, who gave Philip a sociable invitation to supper, declared, that he could not deny the Articles on the reception of the Lord’s Supper in both kinds, on the marriage of priests, and on the indifference of meats. They say that nothing could go beyond the mildness of our Emperor throughout the whole Diet. So the thing begins. The Emperor treats our prince not only kindly, but almost reverently. So Philip writes:”I should not wonder, as every one seems to be full of an enthusiastic affection for the Emperor, if God please, that as the first Caesar was the worst, this last one should prove the best.”

Efforts to Alienate the Emperor From The Truth

But the enemies of a pure faith employed every means which hate and cunning could suggest to alienate the mind of the Emperor from the truth, and with such success that in the Diet, at least, the Emperor began to favor the cause of the papists. Various were the views and plans suggested as to the course proper in this emergency. Some thought that the Edict of Worms should be enforced, by putting the Lutherans to the sword; others, inclining to milder measures, thought the Confession should be put into the hands of good and able men who had not taken sides with either party, that they might express a judgment upon it; others, in fine, desired that a confutation of the Confession might be drawn up, and that the whole matter should be left to the judgment and will of the Emperor, that by his command every thing might be restored to its former position, till a legitimate adjudication of all the points in controversy might take place in a general council. On this matter Melanchthon wrote thus to Luther:

“Our Confession having been set forth, resolutions of three kinds were suggested in the body of the princes. The first was most atrocious: that the Emperor should simply compel all the princes and their people to conform to the Edict of Worms. The second was milder, that our Confession should be committed to good, learned, and impartial men, and that the Emperor should afterwards pronounce sentence. This was introduced by king Ferdinand. The third now appears likely to prevail, that a confutation of our Confession should be recited to us.”

This last opinion did, in fact, secure the approval of a majority of the Diet, on discovering which, John, Elector of Saxony, wrote to Luther and enquired, whether, and to what extent, the question of religion might be submitted to the Emperor. Luther replied, that the Elector could say, that he admitted and desired to receive the judgment of the Emperor on every point connected with this matter, provided he determined nothing contrary to the word of God.

It was determined, therefore, that the papal theologians should examine our Confession and prepare a reply to it. Those who took part in this confutation were most bitter enemies to Luther. The most prominent among them incited by munificent rewards, and urged on by the legate and the other papal nuncios, by Pimpinellus and Peter Paul Verger, exerted themselves to the utmost in writing this confutation. There were nineteen or twenty of them in all. The most eminent among them were Jo. Faber, who is said to have been the composer, J. Eck, Jo. Cochlaeus, Conrad Wimpina, Arnold de

Yesalia, Jo. Mensing, and others. Whilst these theologians were engaged in their work, and, doubtless, at their suggestion, the Emperor ordered the question to be put to the Elector of Saxony and his associates: whether the Articles of the Confession contained all their views, or whether they wished to propose more? This question, after consultation with the legates of the cities, they looked upon as insidious, and replied, that, although they were aware of more abuses both in doctrine and discipline, they had yet thought that to set them forth more fully, would not be in keeping with the desire, expressed by the Emperor in calling the Diet, that mutual love and forbearance should be exhibited; that hence, also, they desired to make no additions, since in the summary of their doctrine they had sufficiently shown how far they were removed from those most important errors with which they were reproached by their enemies.

The Confutation

The confutation was at length drawn up; but as it was extended to an immoderate length, and was full of reproaches, they were ordered to abridge it, and to exhibit more moderation, in order that no new matter might be furnished to embitter the opposing parties. Though this order was not relished by them, they were compelled to obey and give to their confutation a new form. After six weeks had thus passed, it was presented, and by command of the Emperor read in the German language, by Alexander Schweiss, in the same conclave in which our Confession had been presented. After the reading had been finished, it was announced by Count Frederick, Elector Palatine, and the associated princes, that the Emperor entirely approved of this confutation, and desired that the Protestants should give their assent and support to the doctrine contained in it. The Protestants begged the Emperor for a copy of this writing, a petition with which he professed to be willing to comply, if they would promise neither to refute it, nor to put forth any thing on the subject; a condition which they felt themselves compelled to reject. There is a difference of opinion as to the reasons which induced the Emperor to deny this request. Sleidan says:

“On the second day, the Emperor, after considerable deliberation, said that he would give it to them, but on this condition, that no part of it should be divulged or printed: that he was unwilling to allow any more disputing, and wished them to come over to his views; they signified that on such conditions they could not receive it.”

Spalatine says:

“God doth his own work best, and our enemies were so confounded by our Confession, that six weeks passed before they brought forth their answer, to which it would be hard to give a name: certainly it was filled with the merest trash, so that when they were besought most earnestly to give to our side a copy of it they were ashamed to do so.”

During the reading, however, of the confutation, our theologians had taken notes of the most important points, so that Melanchthon had all that was necessary in the preparation of the “*Apology for the Augsburg Confession*,” in which he explains and defends in so masterly a manner the great symbol of our church.

The confutation by the papists was first made public in the year 1573, by Andrew Fabricius, in his “*Harmonia Confessionis Augustanae*,” etc. It forms also a part of the Prolegomena to Hase’s edition of the *Libri Symbolici*. It is only necessary to read this production to be satisfied how empty and pointless were the arguments with which it was attempted to overthrow our doctrine. Yet though their attack was so destitute of real force, they claimed the victory over a Confession resting on the unshakable foundation of God’s word. Previous to the appearance of this confutation, various writings, in which Luther and his doctrines were attacked, had been exhibited to the Emperor, among which are the following:

Brief answer to each head of the Confession of the Protestant princes, written privately at Augsburg, by Arnold of Weselia, and John Cochlaeus, conjointly.

Antilogiarum, that is, Babel of Contradictions in Martin Luther, taken from the writings of that Apostate, by D. Jo. Faber: Heresies and Errors, collected together from various books of M. Luther:

*Monstrous Sects sprung from Luther and the Lutherans, and various others, principally composed by John Cochlaeus.*¹¹

When the confutation by the papists had been presented, various deliberations on the mode of settling the religious difficulties took place, all of which proved to be vain. The Emperor employed various methods of recon-

ciling the conflicting views and parties. Among other plans seven men were chosen on each side, who were to settle on a mode of union. On the side of the papal party were Christopher von Stadion, Bishop of Augsburg, Henry of Brunswick, in whose place (after he had left as legate from the Emperor to the Landgrave) George, duke of Saxony, was put: from the lawyers were selected the Chancellors Bernard Hagen, of Cologne, and Jerome Vehus, of Baden, whose work it was to offer propositions; on the part of the theologians appeared Jo. Eck, Conrad Wimpina, and Jo. Cochlaeus. On the Protestant side the pacificators were George, Marquis of Brandenburg, John Frederick, duke of Saxony, son of the Elector, Gregory Fontanus, and Sebastian Heller; from the theologians, Melanchthon, John Brent, and Erhard Schnepf. The disputes between the parties were protracted, and though there were points in which they seemed to agree, they appeared to make no approach to the end at which they were aiming. In the hope of facilitating that concord for which they were striving, they reduced the number on each side to three. On the part of the Romish church were John Eck and the Chancellors of Baden and Cologne, whom we have mentioned; on our behalf, Pontanus, Heller and Melanchthon.

The result was what every man of experience might have expected. The time was consumed in empty disputations which brought them no nearer the conclusion, which they fondly hoped might be reached. Such extravagant concessions were demanded on the part of the Romanists that it was impossible for the representatives of our church for a moment to entertain them. Whilst this fruitless effort was progressing the Elector of Saxony was making preparations for his departure, and begged of the Emperor permission to leave. It was at once intimated to him that his intention was not regarded with favor by Charles. The Emperor intimated his desire that the Elector should remain until the Diet was brought to a close, and although he pointed out very strong reasons why he could not comply with Charles' wish, he was still strongly urged to delay his departure at least for several days. A decree was finally put forth by the Emperor, in which he commanded the Protestants to acquiesce in the pontifical confutation.

Against this most unjust and absurd demand, it is hardly necessary to say, they presented an unflinching determination to maintain the great truths of the Gospel they had confessed. In the consultation on the composition of this decree, the Electors of Mentz and Brandenburg, the Bishops of Salzburg, Spire and Strasburg, and Dukes George of Saxony, William of

Bavaria, and Henry of Brunswick, were selected to take part. It was made public, September 22nd, about dusk, at the lodgings of the Emperor. The following is a summary of its contents:

“That the Elector of Saxony and his associates in doctrine had exhibited their Confession, which was afterwards confuted by evidence of Holy Writ; that subsequently, with great difficulty, they were led to renounce some of their doctrines. In order that they might discover how earnest was the desire of the Emperor to promote concord, and how unwilling he was, rashly to do any thing which might preclude the hope of bringing it about, he had determined to exercise his royal benignity in granting them to the fifteenth day of April an opportunity for deliberation, in the hope that on mature reflection they would be led to embrace the rest of the doctrines received by the Pope, the Emperor himself, and the whole Christian world.”

Having maturely deliberated on this decree, the Elector of Saxony and his associates, made another answer through Gregory Pontanus, that they utterly denied that their Confession had been refuted by the papists from the Holy Scriptures, and although they had been unable to obtain a copy of the confutation, they had yet prepared an answer to such parts as were remembered and noted down during the reading. They begged that they might be allowed to present their Apology. The Emperor received it; but immediately, at the instigation of king Ferdinand, returned it. The decree was repeated when the Recess was published, November the nineteenth; the Elector of Saxony had left, September the twenty-third, and reached Torgau October eleventh.

The history of the *Apology for the Confession* would here naturally be introduced, and may, at some future period, be honored with a place on the pages of our *Review*.

[Please contact LutheranLibrary.org if you would like to have a reprint of Krauth's article on the *Apology*.]

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The historical part of this article is on the basis of

1. Jo. Georgii Walchii *Introductio in Libros Ecclesiae Lutheranae Symbolicos, observationibus historicis et theologicis illustrata*. Jena: 1732. 4to. pp. 1096. from p, 157 to 185.

The following works have been consulted, though the limited space of a *Review* has allowed little use to be made of the materials collected from them.

2. Carpzovii *Isagoge in Libros Ecclesiarum Lutheranarum Symbolicos etc.* Lipsiae, 1675. 4to. pp. 2058.
3. Salig.s *Vollständige Historie der Augspurgischen Confession, und derselben Apologie, etc.* Halle, 1730. 4to. vol. I. pp. 856.
4. *Historia der Augspurgischen Confession—aus denen Original Acten beschrieben von E. S. Cyprian.* Gotha, 1730. 4to. pp. 307.
5. *Confessio, 8cc. — Nützliche Beylagen zur Historia der Augsp. Conf.* Gotha, 1730. 4to. pp. 240.
6. *Gen'auere Untersuchung wie es mit den sogenannten Schwobacher—Artickeln als dem Anfang der Augspurgischen Confess, beschatfen, See. von G. G. Zeltner.* JNurnberg, 1730. 4to. pp. 75.
7. *Seckendorfs Historia Lutheranismi.* Francofurti et Lipsiae, 1692. Folio.
8. *Buddei Isagoge ad Theologiam Universam.* 4to. The ordinary English works on the history of the Reformation, it is not necessary to enumerate.

I have found the greatest service in regard to the geography of the Reformation, and indeed in every department of historical Geography, from the “*Dictionnaire Universel des Geographes Physique, Commerciale, Historique et Politique du monde Ancien, du Moyen-age et des temps modernes, comparus, etc.* Par J. G. Masselin. Paris, 1843.” 2 vols. Svo. pp. 28:702 8c S14. The editions of the Symbolical books I have used are, for the Latin Hase’s (Lipsiae, 1S27), and for the German the original Edition (Dresden, 1580.) Folio.

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1. “Haec fere sumina est doctrinse apud nos, in qua cerni potest, nihil inesse, quod discrepat a scripturis, vel ab Ecclesia Catholica, vel ab

Ecclesia Romana. quatenus ex scriptoribus nota est.” Conf. Aug. Art. xxi.

The same sentiment is repeated in the Epilogue of the Confession. “Nihil esse receptum contra Scripturam aut Ecclesiam Catholicam, quia manifestum est, nos diligentissime cavisse, ne qua nova et impia dogmata in Ecclesias nostras serperent.” “New,’ and”impious” they seemed to regard as essentially the same. “Luther,” says D’Aubigne, “did not build for his own age an Edifice that had no associations with the past.”↵

2. Joachimus Camerarius in *vita Melanchthonis*, p. 125.↵
3. See Joannem Sleidanum. *Comment, de statu religion, et reipublic*. Lib. vii. p. 172. Georgium Coelestinum in *histor. comitior. Augustan*, tom. I. p. 133. David. Chj’traeum in *der Historia der Augspurgischen Confession*, p. 54.↵
4. These are presented by Christian Augustus Salig in the complete History of the *Augsburg Confession*, (in German), lib. II. Chap. 4. § 20. sqq. p. 201.↵
5. This assertion is made among others by Laurentius Forrer, in *dem Ueberschlag über den star-sichtigen Aug-Apffels*. p. 196.↵
6. This is demonstrated in opposition to the papists by many facts in Jo. Schmid’s *Dissert, de August. Confession is nomine, occasione, auctoribus, oblatione. acceptatione*, § xxviii. p. 54. and in *der Haupt-Vertheidung des Aug. apffels* Cap. ix. p. 55.↵
7. See Vitum Ludovicum a Seckendorf in *Historia Lutheranismi*, lib. ii. Sect. 29. § 65. p. 170.↵
8. In *vitis aliquot electorum et ducum Saxoniae*.↵
9. Seckendorf thinks it more probable that these words were uttered towards the close of the Diet.↵
10. See Walchii *Introd. in Libros Symb.* p. 17S. Buddei *Isagoge*, Lib. II. Cap. 2. § 7. p. 427. and Hase *Prolegomena*, § 2.↵
11. *Walchii Introductio*, p. 178—1S3. Seckendorf *Historia Lutheranismi*, Lib. II. p. 173. Hase.↵

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