

J L Neve

The Ausburg Confession

A Brief Review and Interpretation



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"The history of the Church confirms and illustrates the teachings of the Bible, that yielding little by little leads to yielding more and more, until all is in danger; and the tempter is never satisfied until all is lost. – Matthias Loy, *The Story of My Life*

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THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

A BRIEF REVIEW OF ITS HISTORY

AND

AN INTERPRETATION OF ITS
DOCTRINAL ARTICLES

WITH

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSIONS ON CONFSSIONAL
QUESTIONS,

By

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PREFACE

A number of years ago, when the new introduction to J. T. Mueller's "Symbolische Buecher," written by Professor Kolde, of Erlangen, appeared, giving us a bird's-eye view of the present status of research regarding the Augsburg Confession, the writer went to work and secured all the necessary source material for writing more extensively a critical introduction to the Augsburg Confession. The story which Dr. Kolde had told on thirty pages the writer wanted to tell more in detail and yet in such a way that the student of the Augsburg Confession would find all the available information without being confused. This work was finished in German at the time when the "Confessional History of the Lutheran Church" by Dr. J. W. Richard was published. Soon, also, the "Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church" by Drs. T. E. Schmauk and T. Benze appeared. These works, like the one which the writer had prepared, were written in the technical form of theological research. This kept him from publishing his work at that time.

But, on the basis of this work, is now presented a book on the Augsburg Confession that has been prepared with regard for the taste of the common reader who does not care for the more detailed investigations in the technical language of the theologians. The main stress in this book is not upon the history of the Augsburg Confession, but upon the interpretation of its text, its articles. It is prefaced by a chapter with simple talks on confessional questions, which is especially dedicated to our laymen. It is an attempt to answer a number of questions which they especially have in mind, and endeavors to interest them in the study of the confessional principles contained in the Confessions.

The second part of the book, which offers a brief history of the Augsburg Confession, confines itself to telling the story of the Confession in a readable way without

aiming at any scientific form, nor giving any of the proofs from the sources contained in the manuscript to which reference has been made. It is hoped to publish this manuscript also, which has cost so very much labor, if there should be sufficient interest in the study of the subject.

The third part, with its interpretation of the articles of the Confession, forms the main part of this book. There, also, the effort has been made to write in such a way that a layman with some education can follow the discussions. It has been difficult to carry out this intention. It would have been easy if it had been the aim merely to preach on some of the thoughts of the Confession, but the purpose was to explain each article according to its historical meaning in a connected way. If this is the plan, then it is difficult to bring these theological principles, upon which the work of the Reformation was based, within the understanding of readers who have not had the opportunity to study church history. The Augsburg Confession is different from the Catechism. It establishes doctrinal principles and rejects the positions of Unitarianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, Zwinglianism, Anabaptism, Donatism, Novatianism. Yet the writer has never in his interpretation of the articles assumed the knowledge of any of the facts of church history, but has always tried to explain them. Of course, theological subjects will sometimes dictate their own style, especially when adequate expressions are aimed at. At some places the language may not be as simple as would be desirable. But in order even here to help the lay reader as much as possible, the discussion has been put in the form of questions and answers and made more readable by presenting it in divisions and subdivisions. The aim of this book is, to repeat, to make the reader familiar with all the leading thoughts of the Confession in their connections.

For this reason, the professors of symbolics in Lutheran theological seminaries may find that they can use the book with their classes, as it is the writer's intention to do. While it aims to be a discussion of the articles

of the Augsburg Confession only, yet it reaches over into the other Confessions of the Lutheran Church, so that with some aid of the teacher, on the basis of this book, a study of the other confessional writings of the Book of Concord could be carried out.

Because of the frequent references to the other Confessions of our Church the student of this book would find it profitable to purchase a copy of the "People's Edition" of the Book of Concord, or the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated from the original languages by Dr. H. E. Jacobs. Our references follow the paging of this book which was published by the General Council Publication Board in Philadelphia, but which can be procured from any publication house of the Lutheran Church in this country.

The interpretation of the Augsburg Confession, in the third part of this book covers only the first twenty-one articles, which give the doctrinal foundations of the Lutheran Church. The last seven articles on abuses have been given in text only. Yet some of the passages of these last seven articles, that are of practical interest for the Church to-day have been treated in connection with articles of the first part. So, for instance, the passage on Sunday, in Article XXVIII, is discussed in connection with Article XV.

To make the study more practical, the aim has been always to state which denominations of to-day are holding the positions rejected at the close of each article. Thus some elements of comparative symbolics have been injected for the practical information of the reader.

Here the writer could close his introduction. But he has yet something in mind. While writing this book he has been thinking of the education of our laymen for work in the kingdom of God. The Laymen's Movement has brought our laymen to the front. The intelligent laymen of our Church, all over the land, get into touch with each other at large conventions, and so their influence will be felt in many things pertaining to the course of development of the Lutheran Church in this country. The better their religious education is, the safer

their leadership will be. In the Fatherland, one of the aims of Inner Missions has been to train laymen for leadership in the Church. They have schools for training deacons ("*Bruederanstalten*"). The laymen, just as well as the pastor, should visit the sick, the poor. The laymen should be able to meet the objections of unbelief, to conduct prayer meetings, young people's meetings, Sunday schools. But to be able to do this in the spirit of their Church, an education is needed. The minister of the Gospel needs the education of the theological seminary. So the layman, as a deacon in the Church, or as a leader of any kind in the Church, needs a training in a laymen's seminary. He should study church history so that he can explain historically the churches and the religious tendencies by which our own Church is surrounded. This should be done under the guide of a text-book prepared for this special purpose, a book that should be practical in every respect. Such laymen's seminary should also offer a thorough study of Luther's Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. With regard to Biblical studies, not only should the contents of the Bible be studied, as in the men's classes of the Sunday school, but also the leading principles of interpretation should be taught. Instruction might, also, be given with regard to practical questions of the Church. A layman's seminary with such courses would enable many of the members of our congregations to do valuable work in the congregations to which they belong. In our country the situation of the Lutheran Church is peculiar. Here Lutherans do not live by themselves in states, as in Germany, but are surrounded by all the other denominations. By intermarriage, and in many other ways, the influences of the other denominations reach into our congregations. They lose their identity as Lutheran congregations and become strangers to the rich heritage of their fathers. All simply because our members have not been educated. A knowledge has been kept from them which they would appreciate so much. If in any country, then it is here in America that our laymen need a training in the faith and in the spirit of our own Church,

in order to find the path in which a healthy development of the Lutheran Church in America lies. Our laymen need a discerning eye with respect to the influences that are at work about us to break down or to push into the background the principles of the Augsburg Confession which are fundamental to the life of our Church. We cannot here go into details, but read in the third part of this book the interpretation of Articles II, on Original Sin; IV and VI, on the relation between Justification and Sanctification; V, IX, and X on the Means of Grace.

The question will be asked: How could the Church arrange for such laymen's seminaries? In localities where there are many Lutheran congregations in a neighborhood, such schools could be conducted in the form of institutes, with able pastors as teachers. Where this is impracticable, as in the West, where frequently Lutherans live far apart, the local pastor could be the teacher of such a school. With two hours the week (prayer meeting included; such schools need not be confined to men only), a great work could be done. If such a continuous instruction should go through a period of one or two years, it would mean something for the character of a congregation. When men begin to know their Church and see how Scriptural and evangelical her principles are, then they begin to love her. Such members give color and character to a church.

The book which is here presented is intended as a text-book for classes of laymen, *with the pastor teaching*. The work can be taken up in Luther League meetings; also in such laymen's seminaries. Here and there may be a paragraph that will at first reading be understood better by the teacher than by the student. This is due to the nature of the subject. But the teacher, with his knowledge of the history of the Church and the setting of the doctrines of our Church, can explain it all to his students.

May the Head of the Church guide this book on its mission!

THE AUTHOR.

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THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

PART I

(INTRODUCTORY)

Simple Talks on Confessional Questions

I. Can we think of a Church without a Creed?

This is impossible. The so-called "Christian" Church (Campbellites) uses the motto: "No creed but Christ." But when the people of this Church think that they have no creed, they deceive themselves. They have pronounced convictions on quite a number of Christian doctrines. For instance, they reject infant baptism, and they insist upon immersion as an essential thing. In this they distinguish themselves from many other denominations. Now in taking such a doctrinal position, do they not, after all, give expression to a creed? Do they not confess something in which they believe as a denomination?

Some, feeling the inconsistency of admitting that they belong to a special denomination, and yet insisting that they have no creed, have thought out another way of escaping the charge that they are believers in a creed. Let us explain this by relating a conversation which we once had with a young man on a train. We were sharing one seat and were both returning to Springfield late on a Sunday night; he from a religious meeting which he had attended in another city, we from preaching in a congregation that was vacant. Upon asking him whether he knew something of a certain congregation in the town where he had been visiting, he replied negatively and said that he was not interested in congregations and denominations, and he added: "Before I was converted I was a Methodist, but since the Lord has found me I

belong to no church." He had told us that he had been attending a religious meeting, and we now asked him why he had gone to a distant town for such a purpose. His answer was: "There I have met with brethren and sisters in Christ." We asked whether there were others in other cities with whom they harmonized and whom they acknowledged as "brethren and sisters in Christ"? He said that there were some in Chicago and some in Kansas City. "What is the name of your organization, or under what name in church statistics would you recognize those brethren and sisters in that town and in Chicago and Kansas City?" "We have no organization and no name, we simply call ourselves Christians." Then he proceeded with an overflowing heart to tell of why they had separated themselves from the world and from the denominations, with their discussion of creeds, and which were the truths for which they stood. We listened with much interest to the things which he enumerated as the principles constituting their platform. According to his speech these people held some really evangelical doctrines. He said that they rejected work-righteousness in all its forms and were basing their hope of salvation solely upon the grace of God in Jesus Christ. This part we liked especially and expressed our approval. Finally he took from his pocket a tract, and handing it said: "Here you will find what we believe." We said to him: "And this is your creed which makes you a church, a denomination, even though you labor to avoid a denominational name. The distinction between you and the other denominations is a merely theoretical one. You seem to have a creed that is truly evangelical at least in the great fundamental article of sin and grace."

Yes, we cannot think of a church, by which we understand a communion of believers (see Article VII of Augsburg Confession) without a creed, without confessions. A congregation and a denomination which has nothing to say, nothing to confess of how it interprets the Scriptures on the doctrines of God and man and the scheme of redemption and the way of salvation, is no church.

II. What would be the Dangers of a Church without a Creed?

After having just tried to make the point that we cannot think of a church without some kind of a creed, it might seem illogical now to ask the question what the dangers of a church without a creed would be? But while it is true that a church necessarily will have something for which it stands, yet there are to-day so many churches with an attitude of great indifference to a creed, or a confessional standard, as meaning a real obligation for teaching. There is in the atmosphere to-day among the churches a dislike for "confessionalism." Individuals and churches must be "broad." This means with most people that there must be no positive convictions along doctrinal lines. The things in which churches differ are matters of indifference. Never should we quote Scripture in support of our denominational positions. If the confessions of our Church should teach a certain doctrine on the basis of the Scriptures, and another denomination rejects it and opposes to it a doctrine which is the reverse of it, then both should be considered as right, or perhaps better, as doubtful, because back of the confessions stands truth as an unknown quantity. This would be about a fair interpretation of what people now mean by "broad." Churches so broad are, after all, practically churches without a creed. Now let us ask the question: What is the danger of a church without a creed?

Such a church is a playground for all kinds of teachers. The members of such churches do not know where they stand and what preaching they can expect in their pulpits. One simply cannot tell into which of the great variety of isms and errors a church without a creed may fall. The errors in the direction of false subjectivism or unsound enthusiasm are so many. *Word and Sacraments as means of grace are despised*, and all is expected of an immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. So much undue emphasis is laid upon man's free will in spiritual matters and upon his doings as a condition of salvation that *the doctrine of divine grace is lost*. If Lutherans become indifferent to their confessions then these forms of error

are likely to come in from all sides. A danger especially threatening a church without a creed, or, let us say, a church that has no appreciation of the doctrinal principles of its creed, is *liberalism or rationalism*, a teaching that rejects everything that cannot be perceived by man's reason. No amount of piety that may permeate a congregation at a given time would prove a sufficient safeguard for the future against rationalistic influences. Here church history has given us an object-lesson. The pietistic university of Halle was the first to open its doors to rationalism when that movement swept Germany in the eighteenth century. The father of rationalism, Semler, professor in Halle, who spent a long life in the work of undermining the Christian faith, was at the same time a pietist, and, for instance, never neglected family worship. There is a point where pietism and rationalism can meet on a common ground. This common ground is indifference to the confessions of the Church, indifference to doctrine. Men with real interest in the creed of their church are never rationalists.

III. But when only can our Confessions offer us a Safeguard against Errors?

We must get acquainted with the Confessions. We should study their principles. This is especially true of the ministry. The preachers of the Word need these confessional principles as an aid and a guide for rightly dividing the Word of truth. But our laymen also need to be familiar at least with the leading principles of the faith which their church confesses. Some of our laymen are expected to fill positions in the church council where they not infrequently have to decide matters involving doctrinal questions. Many of our laymen have to serve as teachers and speakers in Sunday school and young people's meetings. For such work they need to be guided by doctrinal principles that have been tried out by the experience of the Church. Of course, laymen cannot be expected to master Melancthon's Apology, Luther's Smalcald Articles, the Form of Concord. But they should be thoroughly at home in the Small Catechism.

Laymen who want to be intelligent Lutherans should never cease studying Luther's Catechism. Let me here give a suggestion how that can be done in a most successful way. You know that each Synod has prepared its own Catechism. And many gifted teachers of the Church have also published an interpretation of Luther's Catechism. In all these Catechisms the words from Luther are the same, but in the exposition of Luther's words there is great variety in form and thought. Now the laymen of our Church, aiming at an education in the doctrinal teaching of their Church, should try to get, through their publication house, a collection of all these Catechisms. A comparative study of them of which the one and the other may be chosen for family worship would wonderfully aid our laymen in building up and enriching their knowledge of the principles so fundamental to a successful teaching in Sunday school and the societies of the Church. But here let us take a step further and say: Not only the Catechism, but also the Augsburg Confession should be studied by our laymen. We carry the Augsburg Confession in our Hymn Books, thus indicating that it should be used by laymen as well as ministers. Our laymen should be familiar with the doctrinal principles, at least of the first twenty-one articles, so that they can make use of them in teaching and apply them as cases may arise in the practical life of the congregation. A laity so grounded in Scripture truth would be a real bulwark against the errors threatening the life of the Church. Here we have spoken as if to be grounded in the Confessions is equal to being grounded in the Scriptures. This suggests another question:

IV. What is the Relation of the Confessions to the Scriptures?

We would, of course, not be justified in making confessions equal to the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the absolute source of truth, the absolute rule of faith. The Confessions are mere witnesses of what the Church or what the individual as a member of the Church,

believes to be the meaning of the Scriptures in things fundamental. Our Confessions aim at reducing the leading truths of Scripture to practical principles. Whether a certain Confession, say, for instance, the Augsburg Confession, has succeeded in expressing what the Scriptures actually teach, is for us to examine and to say. If, after such examination of the Augsburg Confession, we should feel satisfied that it is in harmony with Scripture truth, then we are Lutherans of conviction. If in time we should arrive at a different conviction and believe that the principles of this Confession are in conflict with the Scriptures—a conviction to which we would have a perfect right—then we would, of course, cease to be Lutherans. May be that in such case our doubt would pertain to just one point, and only in this one point we would feel that we are in harmony with some other church. Then we would be un-Lutheran in this one point. But in such case there is usually some self-deception. Lutheranism, like Calvinism and Catholicism, is a system. One point of doctrine is an inseparable part of the whole doctrinal structure. It takes some study to see that. So it may be that a man who finds himself in conflict with the Lutheran Church in one doctrine is out of joint with Lutheranism altogether. It may also be that he simply misunderstands. If he would be led to see what the Scriptures here teach and what the meaning of the Confession in this point is, then there might be no difficulty.

We have said that as Lutherans we should examine the Augsburg Confession and reach a conclusion as to its agreement with the Scriptures. It is our good right, as sons and daughters of the Reformation, to do this. We should not say that we are Lutherans simply because our fathers were Lutherans. Our real reason should be this, that we believe the Confessions of the Lutheran Church to be Scriptural. Laymen as well as ministers can form a judgment on this question. There is the doctrine of justification by faith as contained in Article IV of the Augsburg Confession. He who is at home in the Epistles of St. Paul, especially in his letters to the

Galatians and the Romans, can soon form an opinion as to whether the doctrine of this article is Scriptural or not. There is in Article VI of the Confession the doctrine of the New Obedience, or of sanctification. A layman can find, from studying Paul and others of the sacred writers, whether this peculiarly Lutheran setting, namely, justification on account of the merits of Christ, through faith, as the source, and good works or sanctification as the stream from the source, is Scriptural or not. So you can take one article after the other, and, in many cases, aided by your Catechism, you can carry out an examination of the Augsburg Confession which will lead you to very definite results. We predict that when you in your investigation keep close to the Scriptures and in your interpretation are willing to be guided by the Gospel in the Scriptures (the analogy of faith), then you will find yourselves in complete harmony with the Augsburg Confession. And the longer you study the more you will become convinced that even the doctrines more remote from the centre are doctrines of the Scriptures and that in our great Augsburg Confession they have been formulated in entire agreement with the central doctrine of justification by faith. But now let us take up another question.

V. Is our Lutheran Church right in making the Augsburg Confession, which was written in the Sixteenth Century, the Guide for Men who live in the Twentieth Century?

Opponents to creeds when they make this point seem to be sure of almost general applause. But do not be deceived. Stop and think a little before you join. Each one of our creeds marks a certain experience which the Church of Christ has had under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We shall discuss this thought more connectedly in the following paragraph (under question VI). Here we have reference only to the Augsburg Confession. We are Lutherans. Let us consider for a moment the conditions that called into existence the Lutheran Church and its great Confession. We cannot help but see God's

hand in the shaping of the circumstances. Centuries of the most providential preparation had been going before. There was a longing for the Gospel. The voices of Savonarola, Wickliffe and Huss had been heard as prophets. Then, at the darkest hour, one may say, Luther came, a man such as the age needed. He had experienced the Reformation in his own heart. The old Pauline doctrine of justification by faith was discovered. He was a religious genius in preaching and writing, and endowed with creative powers in every direction. While Melancthon wrote the Augsburg Confession, it is the theology, the religion of Luther, a religion born out of the struggles of his conscience for the forgiveness of sins! Now, dear reader, appealing to what you and everyone would understand of history, can you imagine that such a religious discovery, divinely prepared for centuries, should have nothing but a passing significance? Think of the time when the Augsburg Confession was written, 1530. It was prepared as the common Confession of almost all the Protestants of Germany. It was an age that was literally pregnant with the great evangelical idea. Creed making was the most natural thing. Our age, with its superior learning, can create nothing like the Augsburg Confession or Luther's Small Catechism. The leading thoughts of our age are of such a conflicting nature as to their relation to each other that there is absolutely no unifying idea in sight. Luther was the mouthpiece of a great controlling idea; it was his answer to the question: What shall I do to be saved? It was a creed-producing age. Luther wrote to relieve the ignorance of the ministers in teaching their catechumens, and the result was his Large Catechism. Then he wrote to place in their hands a book that might be used as a guide for catechetical instruction, and the result was his Small Catechism. Wherever Luther and Melancthon met among themselves or with others, articles of faith were formulated, and these articles were of such a nature that they are published even in our day. There are the Torgau Articles, the Marburg Articles, the Schwabach Articles. The creative powers of the

Church of Christ were raised to the highest potentiality. That was the case especially during those memorable days in May and June, in Augsburg (1530), when the new Church was called upon to state before the Emperor and all the Estates of Germany and the representatives of the Pope what it believed. Again the question: Can you believe that this Augsburg Confession, which came into existence under such circumstances, the Confession with which the Lutheran Church as a Church was born, should now be obsolete and give place to something new? No, and again no! You cannot reject the doctrinal principles of this Confession without giving up the Lutheran Church itself.

When we thus speak, then we have something of an experience back of us. The Augsburg Confession has been tested for a period of almost four hundred years. All kinds of modifications have been suggested, some in one article, some in another. But we have not yet found the courage to make any changes. Some suggestions came from the camp of the Reformed churches. But to-day we are more sure than ever that any concession in this direction would have been a mistake. Most of the suggestions to modify the principles of the Augustana, of which we hear to-day, come from the Socinian camp, from the men of modern theology. They think that the conception of the Trinity as contained in Article I of our Confession, which is the same as that of the Nicene Creed, needs modification. In Article II they do not like the doctrine of man's total depravity, nor the doctrine of Article XVIII that man cannot be saved by powers of his own. With reference to Article III (the Son of God) we are admonished at least to strike out the thought that Christ should "reconcile the Father unto us," and be a sacrifice; and in the same way in Article IV (Justification) to do away with the idea of Christ's death being a "satisfaction for our sins," as also with the idea of an imputed righteousness. If we consider the source of the present-day objections against the Augsburg Confession as a creed for men of the twenti-

eth century, then there will be no inclination for us to make concessions—not as long as we are Lutherans.

With this we do not want to say that the Augsburg Confession is a complete presentation of Christian doctrines for all times. We do not even want to say that this Confession is in all instances the best possible formulation of the doctrines presented. What we insist upon is that its doctrines are Scriptural, and for this reason cannot be overthrown. We may, by elucidation and by the use of comprehensive definitions, succeed in making the truth clearer and more fitting to meet the peculiar errors of our age. We may also be able to add something of importance, something that the Church of Christ has learned since the formulation of the Confession. Much valuable truth of this kind is found in the Formula of Concord. And many resolutions adopted by Synods and conventions in crises of the Church's history are also of value. The time may come when in view of the assaults of modern theology upon the Bible the Church will be called upon, and will be ready to formulate a new Confession covering the points that are especially in controversy between the adherents of the old and the new faith. But such twentieth or twenty-fifth century creed would not reject the Augsburg Confession, but it would build upon its foundations. When our fathers in Augsburg formulated their Confession they did not first tear down the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, but they built upon these foundations. (Read what Articles III and I of the Augsburg Confession have to say on that subject.) Our Confession was not a "modification" of the ancient creeds, but rather a development and an amplification of them. There is reason to fear that the men who are always laboring to hold the way open for a reconstruction, or a modification of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession will soon feel that the Nicene Creed has to go also. The aim is in the last analysis at the divinity of Christ. It goes against the doctrine that Jesus is "of the same essence and power," "co-eternal" with the Father (Article I). All this talk that the Augsburg Confession does not fit

any longer for the man of the twentieth century, is Socinian or rationalistic in tendency. Here we can make no concessions. If we have to strike out of our creed the full divinity of Christ and the substitutional character of His atoning death upon Calvary; if we cannot believe any more that man in his natural condition has suffered a depravity as described in Article II of the Confession, then all our preaching will be a constant detraction from the merits of Christ. The ground from beneath the article of justification by faith is gone. Then we may quit preaching, because we would have no message any more to a world lost in sin.

VI. How do the Confessions appear when we consider the Causes which brought them into Existence and the Conditions which led to their Adoption?

Many people look upon creeds as the product of minds that had a fondness for speculation. They forget the historical necessity back of the creeds. The fact is that each one of them marks an important epoch in the Church's experience of religious truth.

When our Lord was about to leave His disciples they were in sorrow, because they did not know who should teach and lead them. But He gave them the promise of the Holy Spirit who should guide them into all truth. (John 16: 13.) Each one of our Confessions marks a fulfilment of this promise.

There is the Apostles' Creed. This Creed, in the form we have it in our Catechism and use it in our churches, was not written by the Apostles before leaving Jerusalem, each of them contributing a sentence, as a legend of the Roman Catholic church has it. No, this creed represents a gradual growth. It grew out of the need of the Church to have a confessional formula around which the instruction of the catechumens might cluster. At the same time it was needed as a bulwark against the influences of heretical teachers, (Ebionites, Gnostics). It must have been very brief at first. Our New Testament scholars hold that we have references to it in the following passages in the epistles of Paul and John:

Gal. 1:9; Romans 10:9 and 10; 1 Cor. 15:1; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 John 4:2 and 3. This creed represented the "Gospel" in a nutshell. In the course of time one sentence after the other was added. It became the "Baptismal Formula" by which Christians would know each other. The more elaborate form in which we now have it in our churches dates from the seventh century.

A confession which is a little more theological in character is the Nicene Creed. A study of the history of this creed especially can show us that our confessions have come into existence not as the result of fruitless speculation, but in response to a deep need in the Church. The time had come in the history of the Church when the divinity of our Lord and Saviour was seriously at stake. Arius, a man with a great following, taught that Christ was not co-eternal with the Father, but that He had been created in time. While Arius regarded Christ as superior to all of us, yet He was after all only a creature of God. Can a created being, even if He is superior to His fellow-creatures, save us from guilt and the curse of sin? Here the controversy began. Athanasius, whom church history has honored with the name "father of orthodoxy," fought for the phrases which at the first great synod at Nicea (325) were incorporated in the creed: "Begotten of His Father, before all Worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one Substance with the Father." A great struggle between Nicene Christianity and Arianism, lasting through six decades, followed. It tried the life of the Church, until finally, under the Emperor Theodosius, the Great, at the second ecumenical council, held in Constantinople in 381, the Nicene creed gained the victory. This was in the Roman empire. But meanwhile Arianism had spread among the new Germanic peoples: the Goths, the Vandals, the Burgunds, the Sueves, the Longobards. For a long time it seemed as if these with their great future before them would after all decide the overthrow of Nicene Christianity. But God in His providence interfered. The conversion of the Franks (after 496) and their adoption of the Nicene Creed

turned the tide, and soon these peoples also have the Athanasian or Nicene form of Christianity. Our purpose is to show that there was something at stake in connection with the adoption of the Nicene Creed. It was about the divinity of Christ. What would Christianity have been to-day, if Arianism had succeeded in maintaining itself?

Up to this time the chief interest of the Church had been centered in the doctrines of the Trinity and the person of Christ. Our Lutheran Confessions have accepted the decisions of the old Catholic Church in these questions, as can be seen from Articles I and III of the Augsburg Confession. Of these two great fundamental doctrines, "the chief articles concerning the Divine Majesty," as Luther wrote in the First Part of the Smalcald Articles, "there is no contention or dispute, since we on both sides confess them." But now another question came into the foreground; it was the great practical question: What shall I do to be saved? The problems discussed were these: What influence has the fall of Adam had upon man's spiritual nature? Does sin consist merely in the sinful acts, or does it also include his natural inclination to sinning? What spiritual powers are left in man? Can he himself effect his regeneration and conversion in any degree, or does he here wholly depend upon the Holy Spirit? How are "good works" to be valued, as meritorious and preparing the way for justification, or what is the relation between justification and sanctification? The answer to these and related questions, that was given during the mediæval age, it is what we to-day understand by Romanism. There was an exceedingly superficial conception of sin. Only the outbreaks of sinful nature were regarded as real sins. The condition of man's heart, the evil desire, was regarded as something indifferent. Man's spiritual powers, while they may have been weakened in consequence of the fall, are not affected to such an extent that he, with the powers of his own free will and the Holy Spirit merely assisting him, could not bring about the change of his heart. Good works were regarded as meritoriously

preparing the way for justification, a process that was ever to go on, and to be aided by the Sacraments as a means of power in the hands of an hierarchically organized Church. This Romanism as we have here characterized it was the source of all the evils and abuses under which the Church was suffering when the age of the Reformation was approaching. Against this system of work-righteousness the Scriptural doctrine of grace had to be opposed. This was done through Luther and others who followed him. The best exposition of this new evangelical faith we have in the Augsburg Confession. God had led His Church to a new religious experience by which there should be given to multitudes the vision of a way to a real assurance of the forgiveness of sins.

What now is the result of our investigation again at the close of this paragraph? This: No one familiar with the history of our Confessions will want to look at these documents as something artificially gotten up, as the products of minds fond of speculation; but he will see in them the hand of the Head of the Church, who steered the ship of the Church through all errors, so that the Church could arrive, step by step, at a clear understanding of what the Scriptures intended to teach as eternal truth.

VII. Does the Appreciation and the Study of Creeds Interfere with a truly Religious Life of Individuals and Churches?

This is a question which has been answered in the affirmative by many who meant well in promoting the cause of spirituality in the Church of Christ.

Of course, we have observed that there is such a thing as knowing of Christ and not having Him in the heart. We have met men who knew the doctrines of their Church and were zealous in defending them, but there seemed to be about them no symptoms of real religious life. And we know of periods in the Church's history when there was an over-emphasis upon the intellectual in religion

coupled with a lack of true godliness in the life of the professors of religion.

We do not want to close our eyes to dangers of any kind. As there have always been men and women in the Church who permitted themselves to live too much in the sphere of the emotional, so there have also been those who made the other mistake of being satisfied with what appealed to the intellect, delighting in doctrinal definitions and overlooking the claims of religion upon the heart.

But would we be justified on account of this now to depreciate the creeds? That would be very foolish. It will always remain an indisputable fact, as we have seen, that the confessions have grown, with an inner necessity, out of the life of the Church of Christ. If they are not used right, then the fault lies with the individual who permits himself to become interested in the Confessions and to become defenders of them before there has been a religious experience in the heart. The creed should be an expression of the religious life of the Christian. As we read in Paul to the Romans (10:10): "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." And in 1 Peter 3:15, "Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you."

When we use the Apostles' Creed in our worship on Sundays, and the Nicene Creed at the great festivals of the Church Year, then we feel that the Confession of our creed has a rightful place in our religious life. And not only the great and the simple creeds of the ancient Church, but also the special Confessions of our Lutheran Church should be used by us as expressions of our faith. Because, as we have seen, they cover a special experience of the Church, a more advanced experience as compared with the ancient creeds. Our Small Catechism especially is full of that deeply spiritual element which fits it as an expression of the inner religious life. Let me illustrate this: A girl of about ten years of age was to undergo a serious operation, and the surgeon before

beginning his work asked whether she had something to say. She folded her hands and repeating Luther's explanation of the second article of the Apostles' Creed, which she had learned by heart, said: "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, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness: even as He is risen from the dead, and lives and reigns in all eternity. This is most certainly true." And after she had finished she said: "This I believe." Yes, dear friends, after such a quotation we feel that it will not do for us always almost instinctively to associate the creeds with men of dead orthodoxy or a petrified Christianity. By doing this we deceive ourselves and neglect the use of a rich fountain of blessing. Pastor Loehe, one of the fathers of Inner Missions in Germany, said that at night he could lie for hours on his bed, and, with the joy of salvation in his heart, repeat one part of Luther's Catechism after the other.

The Augsburg Confession is necessarily more theological than Luther's Catechism. And yet these simple statements of Scripture truths, as our Augsburg Confession has them, are well adapted as confession of what "man believeth unto righteousness." Take, for instance, the following words of Article V: "That we may obtain this faith, the office of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justified those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake." The fact is that our creeds deal with

the fundamentals of our religion. It is the principles of our Confessions that give frame and system to what we believe of Scripture truth. Without these principles our religion is nothing but vacillating sentiment, nothing but a conglomeration of thoughts without leading ideas.

Let us again ask the question with which we started: Is the appreciation and the study of creeds irreconcilable with true spirituality? Study the life of the Church fathers. What a devotion to the Master there was in men like Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Basilus, Augustine! A very great part of the energies of these men was taken up with struggles against the doctrinal errors of their age. They watched with zealousness over the faith delivered unto the saints. And yet about the devotional expressions and productions of these men there is a wonderful charm. Read the "Confessions" of Augustine, and you will see how spiritually-minded a man can be who with all the mighty powers of his thinking labored to develop the doctrines of the Church. And of the Reformation age take men like Luther and Melancthon who gave to us the Confessions which distinguish the Church to which we belong. Personal piety and interest in doctrines are with Luther and Melancthon and Lazarus Spengeler, and so many others, not two separate strains, running parallel and never touching, but they are together in a union like body and soul. Piety with these men can have no existence without pure doctrine. So it ought to be. So it was even yet in men like Martin Chemnitz, Johann Gerhard, in Starck and Arndt, in Paul Gerhardt and in the great Lutheran hymn writers of the first period. The separation of these two factors in modern Christians is a deplorable symptom.

VIII. How will the knowledge of and the adherence to the Principles of a Creed aid a Preacher and a Teacher of the Christian Religion?

In the first place, *it will help him to be clear in his presentations.* And what he says will be retainable. Here is a shortcoming on the part of many preachers and

teachers who have little or no interest in the principles of their creed. A preaching and a teaching that does not rest upon doctrinal principles is, as a rule, lacking in clearness, and, for this reason, tires the hearers. No wonder, because there is no frame to the thoughts, no system in the presentation. In the Confessions of our Church we have, in clear outlines, the plan of salvation, the need of salvation, its conditions, its consequences for the individual and for the congregation of believers. One requirement of a good teacher is that his viewpoints are well taken. Our Confessions will furnish a preacher and a teacher with viewpoints that are in harmony with the leading thoughts of the Holy Scriptures. This will materially aid him to be clear and lucid in his presentations.

Secondly, *it will make him a reliable teacher.* His teaching comes not in the form of subjective notions, but in the form of doctrines tested by the experience of the Church of Christ. His teaching, then, will be in harmony with the Word of God. So it should be. In 1 Peter 4: 11, we read: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." In teaching in the Church no one of us, be he pastor or layman, has the right to teach human wisdom, but he must teach the Word of God, the "oracles of God." Have you ever thought of this, that in teaching in the Church you are not only to teach on the basis of God's Word, but in such a way that your own teaching, your interpretation of the Scriptures is like "the oracles of God"? That is what this passage, quoted from St. Peter, means. Yes, preaching and teaching in the Church of Christ is a most serious thing. James (3: 1) therefore, admonishes: "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment." But, my friends, instead of advising you to abstain from teaching, let me show you how you can become reliable teachers of the divine Word. Study the Confessions of your Church, especially Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. As we have already said, here you are furnished with the true viewpoints; here you find the keys for understanding the

Scriptures; here you have, as we would say in a theological term, the analogy of faith, or, as Paul, in the translation of King James' version, says, in his letter to the Romans (12:6), the "proportion of faith." For teaching God's Word we need in our minds, to begin with, a setting of divine truths, where the fundamentals of our Christian religion are placed in the right relations to each other. This we have in our Confessions. If we follow them as a guide, the Bible will be to us something altogether different from what it would be, if we start out independently, ignorant of what our Church has summed up as fundamental truths. Now we will find the scheme of redemption running through the whole Bible. Without such a guide the Bible, in its largest part, will appear to us as a mass of disconnected moral requirements. We must so study the Bible that we can find the Saviour even in the Old Testament.

Thirdly, if you do your teaching of the divine Word under the guide of the Confessions *then you can have a good conscience*. You are in harmony with the doctrinal experiences of the Church of Christ. You do not ignore what the Church has learned in the school of the Holy Spirit. He who ignores the Confessions as a guide in teaching in the Church may some day find that he has been teaching notions instead of eternal truth. At the foundation of his teaching there is not the Biblical way of salvation as it stands out so clearly in the Confessions of our Church. "To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this Word, surely there is no morning for them." (Isaiah 8:20.) As an illustration of this the people of the Fatherland have recently had a remarkable experience. You may have heard of the fellowship movement (*Gemeinschaftsbewegung*) in Germany. It aims at gathering into societies the spiritually alive Christians all over the land for the purposes of Christian fellowship among each other and evangelization of the world. This movement began about thirty-five years ago and has had a marvelous development. At their annual conventions at Gnadau, Blankenburg and Eisenach these people assemble by the thousands. With

their many houses of worship, with their host of evangelists and workers, with their press they have exercised a remarkable influence. But from the beginning the movement was out of harmony with so many essentials of Lutheran doctrine. It was greatly influenced by the Oxford movement in England, especially by Pearsall Smith, of Philadelphia, who visited Germany in 1875 preaching his new gospel to many thousands in the leading cities of the Fatherland. The emphasis was upon perfect holiness which, he said, every one simply giving himself to Jesus can attain now. The motto was: "Jesus saves me now." As doctrinal ground the thought was emphasized that in the death of Christ our sin has been annihilated. This is our salvation through the Christ *in us*. The doctrine of the forgiveness of sins through justification by faith in the atoning power of the blood of Christ (the Christ *for us*) was pushed aside. But the man who brought this doctrine into a system for the people of the fellowship movement in Germany was Pastor Th. Jellinghaus. Through Bible schools which he conducted and through many publications which have had a wide circulation he has labored for a life time to formulate and to systematize, to elucidate and to give foundations to this doctrine. He was the acknowledged doctrinal leader, the "dogmatician" of the fellowship movement. We knew him personally. We heard him teach at the Eisenach conference and at Meiningen and sat with him at table (1902). He was a man of piety and of a beautiful character. But now comes what we wanted to say of the good conscience in teaching in the Church. A few years ago (1905-06) Pastor Jellinghaus while working on a Bible Commentary which was to give the Scripture ground for his teaching became convinced that his new system of doctrines was in conflict with the Scriptures. More and more the conviction grew upon him that his conception of sin had been too superficial; that he had not taken the holiness, the justice and the wrath of God seriously enough; that his rejection of the vicarious atonement of Christ, of the substitutional character of His death, was in conflict

with the Scriptural significance of Christ's death as the means of our salvation; that his conceptions of repentance and faith contained many erroneous elements. Finally, that his doctrine of holiness as an immediate experience was in conflict with the actual experiences of Christians and had no foundation in the Scriptures. The thought that he had for a lifetime been teaching doctrines in conflict with the Scriptures, and the other thought that he had had such a great following and that many had been misled through him, so tortured his conscience that he broke down in his nerves and for a time had to be confined to an asylum. But he recovered again and was dismissed. While living with his son-in-law, a pastor, who with many others testifies to the normal condition of his mind, he published a "Declaration on my Doctrinal Errors" (*Erklaerung ueber meine Lehrirrun-gen, Verlag von Prack & Co., in Lichtenrade, 60 Pfennige*), in which he confesses before the world the mistakes of his life, with the prayer and the hope that the harm which he has done to the Church may again be rectified as much as possible. He again returns to the doctrinal positions of the Lutheran Church. This certainly has been a remarkable experience. It can teach all of us a serious lesson. When we undertake to teach in the Church of Christ we take upon ourselves a great responsibility. God will one day take us to account. The question will then not be: How did you succeed in entertaining your audiences and your classes? but: How did your teaching conform to the Scriptures as the rule of faith? Let us quote in this connection what Paul says, 1 Cor. 3: 11-15: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try any man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; yet so as by fire." God grant that our work may be of the

permanent kind. Let us not despise the good guide which we have in the Confessions of our Church. There we are on Scriptural ground, and with a Scriptural message only we can have a good conscience.

IX. Why is the Apostles' Creed not enough?

It is not always easy for laymen to arrive at an appreciation of the doctrinal principles of the Augsburg Confession. Many of these principles look to them as being of no fundamental significance. They observe that there are good Christians among those who do not obligate themselves to this Confession. At the same time they would not want to go as far as to be opposed to any kind of a creed. But they think it would be enough if such a creed would cover just "the fundamentals." The Apostles' Creed appeals to them as such a statement on the fundamentals, and they think that should be enough.

Let me ask you again to read what we discussed under VI. A study of Church history, of the causes which produced the later Confessions, will lead us to look at this question in an altogether different light. If you are tempted to depreciate the creeds of our Church, then read John 16: 13. Our creeds are monuments of how Christ has kept the promise that His Holy Spirit shall lead us in all truth. With each new creed the Church of Christ has had a new experience of truth. As we have seen, the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed represent experiences which the Church has had with reference to the doctrines of Trinity and Christology only. At the time of the Reformation, the Church had grown so much that it was now ready to give expression to doctrines of an altogether different kind, the doctrine of sin and grace, of how salvation is appropriated, of the Scriptural relation between forgiveness of sins and holiness of life, of the Sacraments and the conception of the Church. Let us ask again: Why is the Apostles' Creed not enough? If we consider this question in the light of the experiences which the Church has had under the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit and which have been expressed in the Augsburg Confession, then

we know what we have to answer. The Apostles' Creed is not enough. It does not by far cover all the fundamentals. It covers only a part of the doctrinal experiences of the Church. If we now, after all these valuable experiences, should want to go back to the Apostles' Creed and should demand that on this basis the various denominations unite, would not that be equal to compelling the full grown man to return again to the state of development of the child? Here was the mistake of Syncretism. Let us not ignore what we have been taught in the period of the Reformation. The principles of Romanism, of Anabaptism, of Pelagianism, of Zwinglianism, in opposition to which the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession have been formulated, are standing out to-day as types of religion essentially different from the faith of our Church. This observation can confirm us in the conviction that our Augsburg Confession has given expression to principles that had a right to be recorded as experiences of the Church of the pure Word.

X. Why is Luther's Small Catechism not Enough?

This is another question that might be asked by laymen. Here we could not reply as in the case of the Apostles' Creed. We could not say that Luther's Small Catechism does not treat of the questions dealing with the way of salvation. Luther's treatment of the Ten Commandments, his exposition of the second and third articles of the Apostles' Creed belong to the most beautiful gems in the confessional literature of the Church. And what the Catechism writes on the Sacraments is even more explicit than what the Augsburg Confession has on that subject.

And yet there must be a reason why so many Lutheran bodies have published the Augsburg Confession in their hymn books, thus indicating their conviction that this Confession also should be placed into the hands of our laymen. Let us here refer to something that Prof. Kahnis of the Leipzig University wrote in his book "Luthertum und Christentum." Of Luther's Small Catechism he says (p. 136): "In evangelical truth and conse-

eration as well as in popular simplicity, clearness and power, it surpasses anything that has ever been written in this respect. None of our Confessions have been so written in the spirit of God as must be said of the Small Catechism. And next to the Scriptures no other book has so impressed the hearts of men." But then Kahnis goes on to say: "But as symbolical writings both Catechisms cannot claim the authority of the Augsburg Confession." He gives two reasons: (1) Because they were not direct testimonies of the Church. (2) According to their purpose, they did not give complete expression to the doctrinal character of Lutheranism.

Here, then, are two points of difference between Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. In the Catechism we have one of the most excellent *private* writings of Luther. But the Augsburg Confession was prepared as a *public* document of the Lutheran Church. It was as such signed by the political representatives of the young Church. And in this Confession, more particularly in the first twenty-one articles, pains have been taken "to give complete expression to the doctrinal character of Lutheranism."

The Catechism does not aim at completeness. As instances let us mention a few things. While the Catechism in the Ten Commandments leads us to see our sins, it does not give such a carefully guarded definition of original sin as the source of individual sins as we have in Article II of the Augsburg Confession. While the teaching of the Catechism on the forgiveness of sins rests upon the central doctrine of justification, yet there is nowhere in the Catechism such clear and definite statement of this great doctrine as we have it in Article IV of the Confession. Neither do we find in the Catechism such statements of the relation between justification and sanctification as they are given in Articles VI and XX of the Augsburg Confession. The Catechism, in the explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, teaches beautifully of the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, but it cannot, according to its plan, deal with such principles in the doctrines of the Church as we

find them expressed in Articles VII, VIII, XIII, XIV and XV. The Augsburg Confession is an altogether different kind of a Confession as compared with the Catechism. Some of its statements and principles may appeal less to the heart, but each one of these principles is an essential pillar under the structure of the Church. We cannot here go into details, but must refer to the explanation of the articles in the third part of this book.

Augsburg Confession and Catechism mutually supplement each other. Both are adapted for laymen because they are brief and simple. All Lutherans should be thoroughly at home in the Small Catechism. They should so know it that they could always repeat it for their comfort. But Lutherans who want to be intelligent in church matters, who care to understand their Church as distinguished from other churches, who desire to be familiar with the principles constituting the life of their Church, Lutherans who are called upon to lead and to teach should be thoroughly familiar with the Augsburg Confession as well as with Luther's Catechism.

XI. What is the Form of Concord and what should be our Attitude towards it?

This document, the last of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, was written for the purpose of establishing peace at a time when, after the death of Luther and Melancthon, our dear Church was torn up by doctrinal controversies. These controversies were not unnecessary quarrels, for there were real difficulties that had to be settled. And it took decades of serious investigation, meditation and discussion before an agreement could be effected. The Form of Concord consists of two parts. Both deal with exactly the same questions, only that the first part (Epitome) treats of these matters in brief definitions, while the second part (solid, plain and clear repetition and declaration) gives a longer exposition.

The Form of Concord is necessarily more theological in the treatment of its subjects than the Catechism and even the Augsburg Confession. For this reason it cannot claim the attention of the laymen in the same degree

as it will arrest the interest of those that have studied theology as a science. Yet as an illustration of some of the doctrinal principles of the Augsburg Confession and for the purpose of learning in what directions a legitimate development of Lutheranism is to be sought it is very helpful to read the corresponding and other additional parts especially in the first part of the Form of Concord. Our book, in its third part, therefore, will have frequent references to the Form of Concord as well as to the other confessional writings of our Church. The Form of Concord is throughout a legitimate development of the principles of the Augsburg Confession and its definitions and expositions are of the greatest value for him who wants to familiarize himself thoroughly with the doctrinal system of the Lutheran Church.*

*A student of this book should be in possession of the people's edition of the Book of Concord, or the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated from the original languages, and edited by Dr. Jacobs.

PART II

The Story of the Augsburg Confession

I. *Growth of the Reformation Movement.* In order to arrive at a starting point of this "Brief History," we shall invite the kind reader to follow us back to a critical moment in the history of the Reformation. On April 26th, 1521, Luther had left Worms where he in such a heroic way refused to retract what he had been teaching. One month later, Charles V proclaimed the ban of the empire against him and all his friends. This meant that the cause of the Reformation was to be suppressed and its promoters and supporters to be put to death. But this so-called "Edict of Worms" could not be carried out in the dominions of Germany where the princes were favorable to Lutheranism. The Emperor's hands became tied as he soon found himself on terms of war not only with the King of France but also with the Pope. The cause of the Gospel grew daily. Several nobles heretofore indifferent now became supporters of the Reformation movement. These, together with the Elector of Saxony, constituted quite a formidable influence. It meant a great step forward in the development of the Reformation. Up to this time there had been only individual followers of Luther, but from now on a reorganization of the churches of the dominions on the basis of the teachings of Luther takes place, and the princes as parts of the Estates of the Empire, make themselves responsible for the movement. The changed situation could be observed at the Diet of Spires in 1526, where the Lutheran princes had inscribed over their code of arms the words: "Verbum Dei manet in aeternum," *i. e.*, "The word of God remaineth forever." The edict of Worms was a dead letter. During the years up to 1529 the foundations for the Lutheran Church were laid. Luther, Melancthon and Bugenhagen conducted visitations and

everywhere the theologians of the Lutheran Estates were busy with the work of reorganizing the Church on the basis of Evangelical principles. It was in 1529 when Luther composed his two Catechisms.

2. *The situation becomes critical.* In June, 1528, at Barcelona the Emperor had concluded a peace with the Pope and he promised to use his whole power in suppressing heresy. By the Treaty of Cambray, the following year, the war with Francis I of France was also brought to a conclusion. In this treaty Charles and Francis both promised each other to suppress the Reformation movement. Under such conditions another diet was summoned to meet in Spires in 1529. The brother of the Emperor, Ferdinand of Austria, was to preside. Here the Catholics were in the majority, and, in harmony with instructions from the Emperor, resolutions were adopted which meant the death-knell of the Reformation. Against these the Lutherans entered a solemn protest, drawn up in a carefully prepared document and signed by the protesting princes. This act gave to the Lutherans the name Protestants. When Ferdinand refused to receive the document it was sent to the Emperor who was at that time in Italy and about to be crowned by the Pope. But neither was the Emperor inclined to listen. Having gained free hands he is now bent upon either bringing the Lutherans back again to the Church or to crush the cause of the Reformation. The agreement between the Emperor and the Pope was that Germany should be cleaned of the Lutheran heresy. First, attempts should be made to win the Protestant princes by promises. If this should not avail threats were to be used. The next step should be the use of force. Ferdinand was to co-operate with an Austrian army. The Pope promised to induce other princes to assist. After the political power of Protestantism had been crushed, the inquisition was to be introduced to complete the work. Such were the plans. The Romanists were rejoicing that the Emperor as protector of the Catholic faith would soon be on the ground.

3. *But once more the arm of the Emperor was checked.*

God in His providence interfered with the plans against Protestantism. The Turks, under Sultan Soliman, with an army of 300,000 started their new march upon Vienna, determined to conquer the whole occident. Soliman carried an Emperor's crown with him which should be placed upon his head after the overthrow of the empire of Charles V. In vain did his brother Ferdinand try to make peace with Soliman in order that the plans against Protestantism might be carried out. It could not be done. This changed the policy of the Emperor. He needed the good will and support of the Protestant Estates to battle successfully with the Turks. This consideration induced Charles to summon in kind terms for the spring of 1530 a diet at Augsburg. Here they would all deliberate in mutual kindness on the religious cause and at the same time try to agree on a mobilization plan against the Turks. In the invitation of the Emperor, the Protestants were even recognized as one party of the empire, with which the Romanists would negotiate.

4. *Two important colloquies.* The Protestants, during these most critical years, felt their political weakness because they were doctrinally divided. As early as 1524, it had become evident that Zwingli and Luther could not agree on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Protestant cities in Southern Germany leaned to the views of Zwingli, and Philip of Hessa, the most energetic of the Protestant princes, was sympathizing with him. So it came that in view of the threatening attitude of the Roman Catholic forces, attempts were made to reach an understanding in order that the Protestants might be able to present a united front to any onslaught on their cause. Two conferences were held, both of which are memorable because here articles of faith were drawn up which afterwards were used as sources for creating the Augsburg Confession.

a. *The Schwabach Articles* must have been written by the Wittenberg theologians, Melancthon and Luther, about July or August of 1529.* The object in view was

*For details see my article in *Lutheran Quarterly*, April, 1909. The text is in Jacobs' Book of Concord, Vol. II.

to effect an agreement, especially concerning the Lord's Supper, between Brandenburg and Saxony on one hand and the South German cities, who had been leaning to Zwingli, on the other hand. So these articles were a kind of a political document aiming at an alliance of all the German Protestant forces against the Emperor and the Catholic princes. For this reason they were first kept secret and were not published until the Augsburg diet was in session. They did not, however, accomplish the desired union. The South German cities insisted on a modification of the statements regarding the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper. To this the princes of Brandenburg and Saxony would not agree. In that day, the conscience on matters of truth was the only deciding factor. Even the laymen would not for one moment think of bridging over doctrinal differences by unionistic formulas for relieving a difficult situation. Rather would these princes go down in defeat before the Emperor and suffer the loss of all they had, even their life, than to make doctrinal concessions against their conscience. But while these Schwabach Articles did not effect the desired union yet they have served a good purpose: on this basis the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession (the first twenty-one) were written.

b. *The Marburg Articles* (text in vol. II of Dr. Jacobs' Book of Concord) were drawn up by Luther at the close of a colloquy held in Marburg between Luther and Zwingli on the 2d and 3d of October, 1529. Philip of Hessa had invited both parties to meet in his palace. Here both agreed on all doctrines with exception of the one on the Lord's Supper, and the Marburg Articles are a codification of agreement and disagreement between the two reformers. They could not agree on the Lord's Supper. These articles also may have aided Melanchthon in shaping the first twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession.

5. *Melanchthon's work of writing the Confession.* Melanchthon, the co-laborer of Luther, was an accomplished master in formulating articles of doctrine. The Elector of Saxony, under whose government he, together

with Luther, was teaching in the Wittenberg University, commissioned him with the important work of formulating articles on "doctrines and abuses," to be submitted to the Emperor at the diet as a defence of the religious condition in the Saxon dominion.

a. *The first plan.* The opinion was held that the main thing would be to explain to the Emperor why the Lutherans had done away with a number of things, which the Catholics insisted upon as matters of importance for the maintenance of the Church: such as the administration of the communion by giving the bread only, the unmarried life of the clergy, the mass, auricular confession, the observation of ceremonies, monastic vows. So Melancthon began his work by writing the articles which we now have in the second part of our Confession. On these questions, articles must have been agreed upon at Torgau (the so-called Torgau Articles), before leaving for Augsburg. A work which especially occupied Melancthon was a somewhat lengthy introduction or preface to those articles on the abuses. He finished it in Augsburg and wrote about it to Luther who had been left at Coburg, a fortress near to Augsburg. (Luther could not appear at Augsburg because the ban of the Empire was upon him.) This introduction, which according to later plans was set aside in favor of an introduction to be written by Chancellor Dr. Brueck, has recently been found in the Nuremberg archive, and it is a skillfully written defense of the religious conditions in Saxony. It must be remembered that at this time Melancthon was writing the Confession as a document which was to be an "Apology" for the Elector of Saxony only. The Augsburg Confession was at first not intended to be the Confession of all the Lutherans at Augsburg.

b. *What convinced Melancthon that also articles on doctrines should be submitted to the Emperor?* Dr. Eck, the great enemy of the Lutherans, published a pamphlet containing 404 articles against those that disturb the peace of the Church. Here the Lutherans were put in the same class with Zwingli, Carlstadt and the Ana-

baptists. A copy of this pamphlet was sent to the Emperor. By remarks, with red ink on the margin, the Lutherans were accused of teaching the most radical heresies. Of this Melanchthon heard in Augsburg and it convinced him that the document, to be submitted to the Emperor, should not only be an "apology," but a confession as well. So Melanchthon began to write on what we now have in the first twenty-one articles. For this he could make use of the Schwabach Articles.

c. *The first draft is sent to Luther.* While waiting for the Emperor to arrive at Augsburg, Melanchthon had so far finished the Confession that on May 11th the Elector could send a special messenger to Luther at Coburg with the document. Luther should look over it and feel free to write suggestions on the margin. May 15th his answer came back: "I have read over Magister Philip's Apology. It pleases me very well, and I know of nothing therein to be improved or changed; nor would it become me, for I cannot move so gently. Christ, our Lord grant that it may bring much and great fruit as we hope and pray." Luther could not have expressed himself so mildly as had done Melanchthon and as it was necessary at this occasion. The Emperor did not arrive until 15th of June. During all this time Melanchthon continued to improve the Confession, making changes daily. Yet that first draft of May 11th was the only one sent to Luther before the delivery of the Confession. There was so complete harmony between Luther and Melanchthon at that time that there was no need of constantly keeping Luther informed of every change made. Furthermore the suspense in which the Lutherans lived during those days of awaiting the arrival of the Emperor was of such a nature that a historian has no difficulty in understanding why Luther did not receive a draft every few days.

d. *How did this first draft compare with the Confession as it was finally delivered?* This would naturally be an interesting question. What did Luther see of the articles in the document as read before the Emperor? We do not know for sure, because that first draft of May

11th has not been preserved. A draft, however, of a later time, which shows us in what condition the Confession was about the first of June has recently been discovered in the Nuremberg Archives and was published by Professor Kolde as "Die aelteste uns bekannte Redaction der Augsburgischen Konfession." It is astonishing to see how different the Confession in that state of its development was from the final form in which it was delivered. Our Article IV was there the fifth article. Articles VII and VIII were one article. Our article on the Lord's Supper (X) was the ninth article. Articles XX, XXI and XXVII were not yet written. Furthermore, in Article II there was no rejection of the Pelagians. In the article on Justification (now Article IV) there was not yet the sentence: "This faith God imputes for righteousness in his sight.—Rom. 3 and 4." In Articles VII and VIII (now Article VII) the phrase "in which the Gospel is rightly taught" did not yet have the word "rightly." Article VIII (later IX) on Baptism simply emphasized infant Baptism and offered no doctrine of Baptism. In Article XVI (our seventeenth) on Christ's return to judgment the thought was expressed that the dead will be raised "with the very body in which they died." This was changed in the final reading. (See our interpretation of Article XVII.) These points can give us an idea of how imperfect the Confession must have been when Luther saw the first draft of May 11th.

e. *The confessional document which Melanchthon had been preparing exclusively in the name of the Elector of Saxony becomes by agreement of the several Estates the common Confession of all the Lutherans at Augsburg.* How did that come about? The Emperor was approaching and was soon expected to be in Augsburg. Persistent rumors that the Papists together with the Roman Catholic princes had succeeded in making the Emperor very suspicious of the Lutherans and unfriendly to them convinced the Lutheran Estates that they should stand together and hand in a common Confession. There was at first a little difficulty with Philip of Hessa. He was opposed to the sentence in Article X on the Lord's

Supper: "and we disapprove of those who teach otherwise." He desired that Zwingli and the South German cities should be taken in too. But Melanchthon, with the others, was immovable. So Philip yielded. Melanchthon's introduction which had been prepared exclusively with reference to conditions in Saxony was now removed and the Saxon chancellor, Dr. Brueck, was instructed to write an introduction in the name of all the Lutheran Estates. On the 23d of June, after a final discussion of the situation, the Confession was signed by the princes who were willing to identify themselves with the cause of Lutheranism.

6. *The arrival of the Emperor* took place under very spectacular circumstances. The Elector of Saxony carried the sword of the Empire before him. To both sides on horse back could be seen in gorgeous attire the ambassadors, Campeggius and Pimpinelli. Next to the Emperor in the parade followed the bigoted enemies of the Reformation, King Ferdinand of Austria, Elector Joachim I of Brandenburg and the Dukes of Saxony and Bavaria. Right on the first day of meeting with the Emperor an occasion offered itself to the Lutherans to give testimony of their faith. After the ceremonies of welcome were over the papal ambassador lifted up his hands to pronounce the benediction of the Pope. But while all fell upon their knees the Lutheran princes remained standing. It took courage so to act, but the cause of the Gospel was to them a matter of conscience, and they regarded it as their duty to confess the truth under all circumstances. On the following day the Corpus Christi procession was to take place and the Lutherans were expected to participate. But they refused. A controversy arose over the preaching on Sundays. The Emperor insisted that the Lutheran ministers should not preach during the diet. Margrave George of Brandenburg replied that for conscience sake he could not forbid his ministers to preach the Gospel. He would be willing to lay down his head before the Emperor, but could not yield to this demand. The Emperor answered in broken German: "Not head off, dear prince." Charles V was

not without good traits. When his brother Ferdinand urged him to force the Protestants to yield, he replied: "It becomes princes to be magnanimous."

7. *The opening of the Diet.* On the 20th of June all proceeded in a splendid procession to the cathedral where the Diet was opened with very impressive services. The ambassador of the Pope in addressing the Emperor, admonished him to do away with the schism in the Church. After the service all marched in procession to the convention hall. The first question was about the program for the Diet. The plan of the Romanists was first to arrive at an agreement as to the defence of the empire against the Turks, and then, after the Lutheran Estates had pledged themselves, to take up the religious question. But the Lutherans insisted that the religious question should be the first on the program. And they prevailed.

8. *The situation.* During the days of the Augsburg Diet a comedy was presented on the stage, which was characteristic of the situation: A scholar (Reuchlin) appears with a bunch of straight and crooked sticks, throws them down and goes. A theologian (Erasmus) comes, and trying in vain to make the crooked sticks straight, runs off. A third man in the garb of a monk (Luther) appears, and after he had set fire to the sticks, goes. Another in the robe of the Emperor (Charles) comes and draws his sword against the flames, but with this he intensifies the fire and goes off with indignation. At last the head of the church appears, and, consulting with himself for a moment what should be done to extinguish the fire, beholds two vessels, one with oil, another with water. He takes the one with oil, pours it into the fire and runs off in consternation.

9. *The delivery of the Confession.*

a. *Attempts to prevent a public reading.* The Emperor and all the Romanists knew that a public reading of a Confession of the Lutherans would strengthen their cause. The Papal ambassadors who, in co-operation with enemies of the Reformation like Dr. Eck, had been busy in spreading so many lies against their adversaries, feared that such a public reading might explode most of their

tales. But the Lutherans were determined to be heard in public. On Friday afternoon at a certain moment all Lutheran princes arose, and Chancellor, Dr. Brueck, as their spokesman, said that they were now ready for a public reading of their Confession. The Emperor answered that it was now too late and that they should simply hand over to him the document. Dr. Brueck replied promptly that they could not agree to a disposing of this important matter in such a way. They had been too much slandered as to what doctrines they hold and therefore they owed it to the truth to show publicly of what spirit they were. They would therefore plead with the Emperor to permit a public reading. The Emperor insisted upon his demand. But the Lutherans did not give up. Dr. Brueck said: The Emperor had listened so often in cases of much less importance and they could not believe that he would now refuse in a matter that had so much to do with the welfare of the souls of his subjects. This appeal was too much for Charles V, he yielded and appointed the afternoon of the following day for the reading. As place for the meeting he designed the chapel of his lodging place instead of the convention hall. This perhaps was with the purpose of limiting the hearers, as the chapel did not hold more than about 200 persons. Again the Emperor demanded that the document containing their Confession should be handed him now. But Dr. Brueck declared that they could not give up the document at this time, they had been hurried in the composition of it and they would yet like to write a clean copy. While this was true, their fear was that even yet the intrigues of the Papal ambassadors might succeed in frustrating the public reading. Again the Emperor yielded.

b. *The public reading of the Augsburg Confession.* In the afternoon at 3 o'clock, the 25th of June—it was on a Saturday—the palace of the bishop was filled to its utmost capacity, and many were standing outside before the windows. All were eager to hear the Confession of the Lutherans. Another trick, however, was tried by the Romanists to minimize the effect of this public read-

ing. While Dr. Brueck stood there with the Latin and Dr. Beyer (another chancellor of the Saxony) with the German copy in hand the Emperor demanded that the Latin copy be heard. Many who were present could not have understood the Latin. At this moment the Elector of Saxony arose and with a firm voice insisted that since they were on German soil the German copy should be read. Again the Emperor yielded. Now Dr. Beyer, a man with a penetrating voice, read loud and slowly word for word the articles of the Confession. He was heard even by the crowds standing outside. When Dr. Beyer had finished, he returned his copy to Dr. Brueck, who again handed both the Latin and the German document to the secretary of the Emperor. But Charles taking both copies into his hands put the Latin into his pocket and gave the German to the archbishop of Mayence to be deposited in the archives of the empire.*

c. What was the effect of this reading? *What effect did it have upon the Emperor?* There are different reports. Brentz writes that when the Confession was read the Emperor slept. But when we remember that the reading took two hours, the napping for a moment on the part of a layman should not be interpreted as meaning a lack of interest. Court preacher Coelestine of Brandenburg remarks that the Emperor slept for a moment only. Dr. Schaff says: A moment's napping here does not mean a lack of interest in this Confession, for when a few weeks later the reply of the Catholics (the "Confutation") was read, Charles V was again soundly asleep. Jonas reports that the Emperor had watched with a good deal of interest.—*What effect did the reading have upon other Catholics?* Duke William of Bavaria said in a friendly remark to the Elector of Saxony: "I have been misinformed concerning this doctrine." To Dr. Eck, his own professor at Ingolstadt, he addressed this question: "Can you refute this doctrine?" Eck answered: "With the Fathers I can, but not with the Scriptures." "Then," the reply was, "I see that the Luth-

*The history of these two copies of our Confession will be briefly related at another place.

erans are in the Scriptures, and we outside." The Catholic bishop Stadion of Augsburg said after the reading of the Confession: "It is the truth, the pure truth, we cannot deny it." A beautiful remark is reported of the Confessor of the Emperor. He said to Melancthon: "You have a theology which can be understood only by one who prays much." The Cardinal Campeggius is reported to have said: "Personally I could admit this doctrine, but officially we must oppose it."—*What was the effect upon the Lutherans themselves?* They felt greatly encouraged. They felt that they had given an account of themselves as a church and that they had a right to exist. The Confession now became their flag which they were determined to follow. A number of cities subscribed to the Confession here at Augsburg. Several princes who joined later had received the deciding impression at this occasion. Spalatin, one of Luther's co-laborers, wrote: "This was a day that witnessed one of the greatest acts that has even taken place on this globe. A Confession has been delivered in Latin and German, so Scriptural in character, as the world has not heard the like in a thousand years." Luther rejoiced that he had been permitted to see this day when the words of the Psalmist (Ps. 119:46) had been fulfilled: "I will speak of thy testimonies also before Kings, and will not be ashamed." These words of the Psalmist have been used as a motto over all the editions of the Augsburg Confession.

10. *Defending the Confession.*

a. *A Confession of the Romanists.* On the following day the Emperor convened the Catholic Estates and divines in order to counsel with them what should be done. Dr. Eck's advice was: The Emperor should not argue any longer with the Lutherans but simply use his sword. One prince said: "They have delivered a document with black ink, the Emperor should now draw a line through it with red ink." Another replied to this: "But look out, the 'presilje' (red ink then was prepared from roots imported from Brazil) may squirt into your eyes." He referred to the political power of the Protes-

tants. The Emperor himself felt that he was not yet ready for an open break with the Lutherans. He needed them in the campaign against the Turks. "Not yet" (nondum)—this was all through life the motto of Charles V. Wait with striking until quite ready, but then strike hard. So it was resolved to prepare a refutation of the Lutheran Confession and to submit it to the Diet. A committee of theologians was appointed to do the work. Dr. Eck was among them, with other fanatic enemies of the Reformation. These men considered this an excellent opportunity to denounce Luther's writings in the name of the Emperor. One chapter of the work was given the superscription: "The fruit of Luther's teaching as it can be seen in Anabaptism." They labored hard to prepare a work that should be a general accusation of Protestantism. It comprised 351 pages. It has recently been found in the Vatican. But when this work was presented to the Emperor and the Estates on the 15th of July it was rejected as too long, too superficial, and too insulting. The committee was told to do the work with more modesty, also with more thoroughness. And then it should be written in the name of the Emperor as his own Confession. No wonder that the members of the committee felt humiliated. They complained of the trouble they had with the Lutherans. Luther wrote from Coburg: "Poor carpenters make many chips and spoil much lumber." The second attempt was again a failure. In the third endeavor they succeeded. Their work was accepted. But two secretaries of the Emperor had to help them. On the 3d of August, thirty-eight days after the delivery of the Lutheran Confession, it was publicly read. The reading was no success. The secretary who read it got badly mixed up in the pages and read things that did not belong together. Worse than this was the poor theology of the document and the ridiculous way of proving points of Roman doctrine from Scripture. Here is an illustration. To prove that the laymen are entitled to bread only in the Communion and should not want wine, 1 Sam. 2:36 was quoted: "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left

in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say: Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread." The Lutherans were accused of having laughed loudly during the reading. With the presentation of passages like these, they were certainly excusable. The Roman Catholics have always been ashamed of this so-called "Confutation." It was a long time before it was published. Translated into English it is found in vol. II of Dr. Jacobs' Book of Concord (not the "People's Edition").

b. *The answer of the Lutherans.* The Lutherans, of course, wanted to reply and defend their Confession. But they were denied a copy of the "Confutation." Then they were told that a copy should be given them if they would promise not to reply. This they could not promise. They were expected simply to accept the Confutation as this was the Emperor's Confession, who could and would not tolerate a religious division in the Empire. But the Lutherans felt themselves bound in their conscience to abide with their own Confession of which they were convinced that it expressed the truth of the Scriptures. So they felt that it was their sacred duty to defend their Confession. Now something arose which aided Melanchthon wonderfully in meeting all the points of Roman objection against the Confession which they had delivered. For a time of three months he was, on the side of the Lutherans, part of a large committee, appointed by the Emperor to consider the possibility of an agreement. Here Melanchthon met with all the thoughts expressed in the "Confutation." The attempt to reach an agreement failed, as had been predicted by Luther at Coburg, who knew too well the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. But these three months' deliberations with the Catholics so enriched the thoughts of Melanchthon that with the additional aid of some notes taken down during the reading of the "Confutation" he was now ready to write his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, a document that has always been highly valued as a confessional writing of the Lutheran

Church. The Apology was also offered to the Emperor at the Diet by Dr. Brueck. But it was not accepted.

II. *A brief review of the history of the texts of the Augsburg Confession.*

a. *What became of those two copies delivered at Augsburg?* We heard that Charles V took both to himself and then handed the German to the Archbishop of Mayence to be preserved in the archives of the Empire while he put the Latin copy into his own pocket.

What became of the German copy? It was deposited in the archives of Mayence. But when the council of Trent was to be held, in 1545, this copy was taken to Italy and never returned. It may yet exist in some archive of Italy. Professor Haase of Jena has searched the Vatican library for it, but in vain. For two hundred years it had been believed that the text in the German Book of Concord (the text used by the Germans to-day) was identical with the German copy delivered at Augsburg. When the Book of Concord, the book containing all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, was to be published, the Elector of Brandenburg sent his court preacher Coelestin to Mayence on the mission of bringing home a verified copy of the German original. But he was deceived by the secretaries of the archive and partly committed an act of deception himself. As the German original had not been returned since it was sent to Trent, another copy of inferior value, dating from a time when the Confession was yet in the process of creation, had been put in its place. This copy, of course, did not have the signature of the princes. Coelestin added these himself. So the Book of Concord received its German text. Two hundred years later George Gottlieb Weber discovered the deception and published it in a work of two volumes ("Kritische Geschichte der Augsburg Konfession").

What became of the Latin text? Charles V deposited it in the archives of Brussels, the capital of the Netherlands over which he was ruler (King) in a special sense. But when his son, the fanatic Philip II of Spain, had ascended the throne and at the time when the Duke Alva

in the name of the King conducted his dreadful persecutions against the Protestants in the Netherlands, Philip wrote to him that on his return he should bring with him the Confession to Spain "in order that they (the Protestants) might not hold it as a Koran," and that he should "be careful that the original be given him, and not a copy, and that no other, not even a trace of it, be left, so that so pernicious a book may be forever destroyed." From a receipt given, we know that when Alva returned to Spain (1573) he took the Confession with him which has no doubt been destroyed.

b. Now the question will be asked: *What text, then, is it which we use in our English Lutheran churches?* The English Lutherans are a good deal better off with their English text than the Germans are with their German text. The Germans have always to correct their German text after the Latin which we have in the Book of Concord. Our English text is a translation of this Latin text. How did the Lutheran Church get this Latin text? When the Lutherans came home from Augsburg Melancthon published the Confession in both languages. You ask how could that be reliably done since the originals were not in his possession? But do not forget that he had all the material in hand, from which the clean copies for delivery had been made shortly before the public reading.

c. *Is there a way for us to find out how the first publication of Melancthon (the so-called Editio princeps of 1530) compares with those official copies delivered at the Diet?* Although these copies are lost, as we have seen, yet we are even here not altogether helpless. When the Confession was in process of preparation, and especially when it was about completed, there were copies taken from it by the different parties interested. There are yet thirty-nine of these in existence. Some of them, it is true, were taken when the Confession was yet very incomplete. To this class belongs the German text in the German Book of Concord. But some of these copies were taken after the completion of the document, at the time when the Lutherans were ready to deliver it. These

copies have even the signatures affixed, a class of manuscripts regarded as especially reliable. From the Latin text in its completed form we have six copies and one French translation. The late Prof. P. Tschackert of Goettingen has done us a service in publishing a book in which he, by careful comparison of all those manuscripts, has created a text, German and Latin, side by side, from which the original and lost copies cannot have differed very materially.*

d. *What do we find when we make the comparison?* We shall here not go into details, as we can refer to our pamphlet on the "Altered and the Unaltered Augustana" published by the German Literary Board, Burlington, Ia. Only this may be stated: Melancthon in his first edition for publication sought to improve the text at a number of points. In that day they did not feel that an official document should not be altered.

e. Among the editions of the Augsburg Confession, which followed in quick succession, there is one that is especially known as *the "altered" Confession* (the Variata). It is the edition of 1540. While in the preceding editions the changes merely aimed at making the thoughts clearer, in this edition there are changes of doctrinal significance especially pertaining to the Lord's Supper (Article X) and Free Will (XVIII). These alterations became the cause of much controversy in the Lutheran Church, especially since there were those who under the shield of these changes labored to alter the character of Lutheranism. So it became a custom in the Lutheran Church to make a distinction between an altered and an unaltered Augsburg Confession. Subscription to the unaltered Confession was regarded as a better safeguard for pure Lutheran teaching. This question has been thoroughly treated in the pamphlet mentioned.

12. *A few remarks on the history of the significance of the Augsburg Confession.*

a. *What was the significance of the Confession during*

*With the aid of this book (Die unveränderte Augsbürgische Confession, deutsch und lateinisch, nach den besten Handschriften aus dem Besitze der Unterzeichner. Leipzig 1910) it is now easy to make the comparison.

the time from the Diet at Augsburg, 1530, up to the Religious Peace Treaty at Augsburg, 1555? It must be remembered that at the time when the Confession was written there was no talk of creating a creed to which the pastors and churches should obligate themselves. The Confession was simply intended as a document by which the Lutherans wanted to give account of their doctrinal position before the Emperor and the Estates of Germany. It was therefore the princes who signed the Confession, not the theologians. Yet the feeling that the essential principles of the Lutheran Reformation had here been brought to an expression created within all followers of Luther a very high esteem for this document. All Lutherans, of their own free will, wanted to be adherents of the Augsburg Confession and they were known by their opponents as such. Charles V from now on up to the Religious Peace Treaty at Augsburg was bent upon two things: (1) to crush the political power of the Protestants and (2) by colloquies and conferences to unite the Lutherans with the Roman Catholics. At these conferences the question was always asked: What do the Lutherans teach according to the Confession delivered at Augsburg, and what may they be induced to concede? At the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty the Lutherans were recognized as adherents of the Augsburg Confession and an agreement was signed according to which, among all Protestants, the adherents of the Augsburg Confession only should enjoy toleration. The Anabaptists, Zwinglians and Calvinists were not included. The Calvinists tried to secure toleration by saying that they also could subscribe to the Confession in the form in which it had been published from 1540 on (the altered edition with its changes in Article X, where the phrases "truly present" and "they disapprove of those who teach otherwise" were omitted. See the interpretation of Article X in the third part of this book).

b. *What was the significance of the Confession from 1555 up to the end of the Thirty Years' War, 1648?* It continued to be regarded as a political document with the thought on the part of the Romanists—up to the time

of the outbreak of the war—that as soon as it could be proved that the Lutherans had departed from the Confession as it was delivered at Augsburg, the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty was null and void. During this period the consciousness of the Lutherans of the difference between the altered and the unaltered edition grew. Confessional subscription to the “unaltered” Augsburg Confession and other confessional writings, as the case was (first the *Corpora doctrinæ*, then the Book of Concord), on the part of the pastors, was demanded.

c. *What has been the significance of the Confession from the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648) on up to our day?* It is from now on merely a confessional document with no political significance whatever. Here, 1648, at the peace treaty of Osnabrueck, which concluded the Thirty Years' War, for the first time since the days of the Emperor Theodosius the Great (385), the principle of the freedom of conscience in religious matters was recognized. (Of course, there was the fatal restriction contained in the paragraph which gave to the individual princes the right to create uniformity of faith within their own borders by forcing those who refused conversion to emigrate. *Cuius regio, eius religio*. This brought the Salzburgers to our country.) From now on the discussion regarding the Augsburg Confession has been confined to its theology, and a rich literature has sprung up. All Lutheran churches in all countries, if they do not demand subscription to all the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, demand at least subscription to the Augsburg Confession.

PART III

An Interpretation of the Articles of the Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession*

DELIVERED TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V., AT THE
DIET OF AUGSBURG, A. D. 1530.

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

PREFACE

Most Invincible Emperor, Cæsar Augustus, most Clement Lord:

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

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

*The text of the Confession is that of the People's Edition of the Book of Concord, translated from the Latin and edited by Dr. H. E. Jacobs and published by the General Council Publication Board, Philadelphia, Pa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE ONE.

OF GOD.

Our churches, with common consent, do teach, that the decree of the Council of Nicea 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 co-eternal, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. And the term "person" they use as the Fathers have used it, to signify, not a part or quality in another, but that which subsists of itself.

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

1. Why is the reference here to "the decree of the Council of Nicea," and not to the Apostles' Creed?

The Nicene Creed was always regarded in a special sense as the foundation of orthodoxy (so at the Councils of Constance 1414-18 and at Trent 1545-63), because it had the expressed sanction of the orthodox fathers at the first œcumenical council at Nicea (325) and was again formally adopted at the second œcumenical Council at Constantinople (385). The Apostles' Creed was a gradual growth, a development of the Baptismal Formula, and had never been formally adopted by the Church. The aim of Melancthon here is to meet the accusation of Dr. Eck that the Lutherans were not in harmony with the Catholic Church on the doctrine of God.

2. How does our Confession state the doctrine of the Trinity?

(1) There is *only one God*, one divine Essence.

(2) But there are *three "persons"* in this one divine Essence.

(3) As this word "person" can easily be misunderstood and cannot claim to be an adequate expression of what the "persons" in the Trinity means, this word "*person*" is defined: a. negatively: "not a part or quality in another" (against the Samosatenes, see below);

b. positively: "but that which subsists of itself." The practical meaning is that to each of the three persons can be applied the personal pronouns: "I," "Thou," "He." To each one can be attributed a distinct work. The best illustration as to what is meant by persons in the Trinity we have in Luther's explanation of the Articles of the Apostles' Creed. Of God the Father he says that He "has created me and all that exists; that He has given and still preserves to me my body and soul . . . ; that He daily provides me abundantly . . . protects me, . . . and preserves me." Of Christ he says that He was "begotten of the Father from eternity . . . is my Lord; who has redeemed me . . . in order that I might be His . . ." Of the Holy Ghost He confesses that He "has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; . . . daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day."

(4) *The three persons are equally God* (against Arianism, see below).

(5) *This one God is "eternal, without body, without parts, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible."* The point is that while the Triune God is to be thought of in "persons" yet he is above all human limitations.

3. Which are the heresies rejected?

The Errorists here mentioned can be divided into three classes:

(1) Those who deny the one essence.

a. The "*Manicheans* who assumed two principles (Gods), one good, and the other evil."

b. The "*Valentinians* (a kind of Gnostics) who taught a multiplicity of deities coming forth from a divine source in pairs.

(2) Those who teach one God, but deny that this one God exists in three persons.

a. The "*Mohammedans* who emphasized the oneness of God, rejecting the persons, but thus lost the reality of God. The Mohammedans are an exception among all

others here mentioned. They stand alone as having no relation to Christianity. Why were they mentioned? It must have been because Dr. Eck in his pamphlet put the Lutherans on the level with the Turks ("worse than the Turks").

b. The *Samosatenes*, the followers of the heretic bishop Paul of Samosata, making the Word, or the Son, a mere power with which the man Jesus was endowed, and also making the Holy Spirit an impersonal power. The Samosatenes are here qualified by the remark: "old and new." By the "new" are meant certain men at the time of the Reformation who rejected the Trinity (such as Denk, Hetzer, who again were followed by Joris, L. and F. Socinus). Melancthon had such as Denk and Hetzer in mind. They considered God as an abstract unity, denied the divinity of Christ and regarded the Spirit as an impersonal power. Hetzer particularly taught, as our Confession here says, "that the Word and Holy Ghost are not distinct persons, but that 'Word signifies a spoken word, and that Spirit signifies the motion created in things.'" All these heresies, and others, we find in Unitarianism of to-day. But Unitarianism is not confined to the few bearing the name Unitarians. The Universalists, the Cincinnati "Protestants," the Swedenborgians, the Russellites, and the Christian Scientists reject the doctrine of the Trinity including in this the denial of the essential divinity of Christ. The same position is taken by many liberalists in whatever denomination they may be found. The "Christians" (Campbellites) also have an aversion against the mystery of the Trinity. All these we would to-day understand as coming in under the term of our Confession: the "new" Samosatenes.

(3) Those who admit three persons but who subordinate Son and Spirit to the Father.

a. The *Arians*. From the beginning there were those in the Church who thought that the Father was the real God and that the Son was a being subordinate to the Father, and God in a secondary sense only. At first this view was not regarded as heretical. But when the bishop Arius came and developed it to a consistent doctrine and

taught that Christ had been *created* by the Father and that He had *not been in existence from all eternity* and was *not of the same essence as the Father*, then the Church saw the danger of this subordination-idea and condemned the doctrine at the first synod ever held, the œcumenical synod at Nicea, 325. The consideration was this: There is no guarantee of our redemption, if Christ was not, as the Nicene Creed says, the "only begotten Son of God" (against the "created" of Arius), and begotten "before all words, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." Melancthon, in our Confession, describes the persons of the Trinity as "of the same essence and power, who are also co-eternal."

b. The *Eunomians* are the extreme wing of the Arians who went so far as to say that there was no likeness between the Father and the Son. The relation of the Eunomians to the Arians is that of the superlative to the comparative in grammar.

4. Can the doctrine of the Trinity claim the significance of a fundamental doctrine?

a. There are those who say that it cannot. They say the term "Trinity" is *not found in the Scriptures*. This is true. But no one who takes his Bible seriously can deny that the substance is there. We learn that God is *one* and that He manifested Himself in *three persons*. (Remember what we said above on the word "persons.")

b. Then they point to the *speculative character* of the doctrine of the Trinity as, for instance, exhibited in the Athanasian Creed. And yet while we admit that the passages of this Creed, in their endeavor to bring to our understanding as near as possible the great mystery of the Trinity, sound speculative, could we do without them in our believing and praying, in our teaching? In the exercise of our practical piety, that is if we want to be in harmony with the language of the Holy Scriptures, we cannot make use of the one divine Essence without assuming a manifestation in persons with a special relation to each other and to the world. A God as the

Mohammedans and the Indians of America believe in is of no comfort to the sinner. In Christ only we have a reflection of the heart of the Father. But of Christ we would know nothing except through the Holy Spirit.

c. Finally they say that *a doctrine so difficult to understand cannot possibly be intended to be believed by man as a condition of his salvation*. But understanding and believing should not be so identified. The doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery which we can never understand fully. We can only catch glimpses of it. But different from not understanding this doctrine is to reject and to ridicule it as the Antitrinitarian teachers have done. It is a doctrine of fundamental importance for the teaching of the Church which is entrusted with the care of souls. And even simple Christians, although they may not appreciate the doctrine connectively as theologians can, the more they are real living Christians the more will they be practical believers in the Holy Trinity.

ARTICLE TWO.

OF ORIGINAL SIN.

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

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

I. What is to be said on the importance of this article?

We keep in mind that Article IV on Justification is the central article of our Confession. And now this Article II establishes the need of justification. As Melanchthon says in the Apology: "The recognition of original sin is necessary. For the magnitude of the grace of Christ cannot be understood, unless our diseases be recognized." (Book of Concord, p. 80.) Article II of original sin is

the organic basis of the doctrine of justification by faith. Claus Harms says: "He who rejects original sin overthrows the whole of Christianity."

2. Where does our article trace the origin of man's sinful condition?

a. Back to the "*Fall of Adam*" in paradise. It is inherited. Therefore it is called "disease or vice of origin." The term "original sin" is not found in the Scriptures, but the doctrine is there. In Romans 5: 12 we read: "Wherefore by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." In John 3: 6 the Lord says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

Parallel passages on the subject of Original Sin are found in the Apology, Article II; Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article I; Form of Concord, Article I (pp. 493, and 573).

b. But tracing our sinful condition backward *we must stop with "the Fall of Adam."* We must not go still further back, even to the creation of man as the Manicheans did who said that he was created by an evil being (Compare Article XIX of our Confession on the Cause of Sin). If this was true then man could not be redeemed. Sin does not belong to our substance, but it has come into man as something foreign to him. He was created in the image of God (Gen. 1: 27), and this image which was lost in the fall of Adam is to be restored again (Eph. 4: 24; Col. 3: 10) through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, or, as our article says, by being "born again through baptism and the Holy Spirit."

3. Does our article have anything on the extent of original sin?

It says that "all men, *begotten according to nature*, are born with sin." So Christ is *excluded* because He was born in a supernatural way through the influence of the Holy Spirit. But Mary, the mother of our Lord, is *included* (against the Roman Catholic Church) as she was "begotten according to nature."

4. What definition of original sin do we find here?

“Born with sin, that is without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence.” First something negative and then something positive is mentioned. (In the German text the order is reversed.)

a. *Negative*: “Without the fear of God, without trust in God.” In the second edition of the Confession, Melancthon took the liberty of expressing it this way: “and can have by nature no *true* fear of God, no *true* love of God, no *true* faith in God.” We can have by nature a false fear, or an instinctive fear of God, but not a true fear. So we may also have a false trust in God, or a relying on His kindness which forgets that He cannot be love at the expense of His holiness. Let us be careful to note what our fathers at Augsburg meant by this. In the Apology, Melancthon points to the German copy of the Confession to show that it was not any sinful act, but the inability of fearing and trusting God that they had had in mind when writing the Confession. We must distinguish between the *inability* of fearing and trusting God and the *actually not* fearing and trusting Him. Dr. Krauth says: “There must be something in a child that can love before it does love, and that something is born with the child.” (Conservative Reformation, p. 387.) There is a lack of power to fear, trust and love God with a true fear, trust and love.

b. *Positive*: “and with concupiscence.” The old translation (“and with evil *propensities*”) was misleading. Our Confessors did not have in mind any individual outbreaks of the evil within us, but they meant the depravity which is the source of all evil inclinations. Neither does concupiscence have special reference to the sexual desires nor to the perverted and polluted exercise of them. The word concupiscence is here used as Paul does, Romans 7:7 and 8. Here he speaks of a “lust” that has “wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.” As Luther says that he had begun to learn “not what sins are, but what sin is.” Luther speaking of original sin says: “This sin is not done like all other sin, but it is, it lives and does all sin, it is the essential sin which does not

sin for an hour or for a certain time, but wherever and as long as the person is there and that long is this sin also." Therefore Paul, Romans 7, calls it sin fourteen times, and he names the law of sin warring against the law of the mind, an evil, a *sinning sin*. If concupiscence had reference chiefly to the sins of the sixth commandment then many prominent sins would be left out of consideration: pride, hatred, envy, and, above all, the many sins springing from selfishness. (Compare Col. 2:18; 2 Cor. 10:2; Gal. 3:3; 3:19.) Melancthon says: "Flesh, when contrasted with spirit, does not mean a part of man, but the whole man consisting of soul and body. . . . Original sin is a living impulse producing fruits, i. e., sins, in all parts of man and at all times of his being, sins many of which the natural man does not regard as sins: covetousness, unholy ambition, hatred, envy, jealousy, pride, lust, wrath and so forth. So unfathomable is the corruption that its true character can be learned only through the law of God." (Locī, ed. of Plitt, pp. 119, 133.) Dr. Krauth: "It (this concupiscence) is that in which all other sins in some sense take their origin. It throws its life into them; without it they might not be: it is not only original, it is also the originating sin, or that sin which gives the origin to all others." (Conservative Reformation, p. 390.)

5. Why does our Confession, after having given the definition of what original sin is, add the statement "that this disease, or vice of origin is truly sin"?

The Roman Church (on the basis of its peculiar conception of the image of God in man) was teaching this: The natural depravity is something indifferent, neither good nor bad, and not properly speaking sin. It only becomes sin when it develops into sinful acts. This doctrine of the Roman Church—in theology we call it Semi-Pelagianism—was the source of the work-righteousness and all the evils connected therewith. (Compare the close of our article.) Here our Confession had to clarify things. The question may be asked: How can the inability to fear and to trust and to love God be

really sin? We answer: It is a violation of the first commandment which is the sum of all the commandments. It is a real want of conformity with God's law. It is being otherwise than God wants us to be. And regarding "the concupiscence" it is by no means anything indifferent, or, as the Catholics say, even an incentive for the better powers in man, but it is the very thing that is forbidden in the ninth and tenth commandments. It is, as the Apology calls it, "enmity against God, an habitual corruption." Compare the quotations under the preceding questions (4, b). According to Luther in the Smalcald Articles, this corruption is so deep and awful that man can know it only from revelation.

6. What are the natural consequences of original sin?

Our text says that it is "even now condemning and bringing eternal death." (a) "*Death.*" What God had threatened took place: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2: 17.) This means not only temporal death, the fearful separation of body and soul (Ps. 90: 7 and 11), but eternal death which "is the eternal state of the soul reunited with the body and separated from God." (Jacobs.) (b) "*Even now.*" The penalty for the state of depravity was not confined to the first parents, but it is visited upon every one of their posterity, because they have actually inherited this condition: the inability to fear, trust and love God and the lust for evil.

7. What is the remedy for the evil?

Eternal death shall be visited only upon these "who are not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost."

a. *Regeneration is necessary.* There is no salvation of any human creature without a change from the depraved condition into which he is born. Dr. Krauth remarks: Even those who reject infant baptism usually have some kind of explanation how children are made acceptable to God without baptism which our Church regards as the ordinary means of regeneration. If they seek for no such explanation they are outright Pelagians. (What Pelagianism is will be explained under question

8.) As to the absolute necessity of regeneration for every human creature the testimony of Scripture is very clear. Jesus says: "Except a man (that is anyone and everyone) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If there is anyone who wants to evade the force of these words, let him read what the Lord adds: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," that is: every human being born naturally into this world is fleshly, and needs a new birth (John 3:6). A child may seem innocent as contrasted with an adult, its sin may even seem to lend a charm of vivacity to the young life; but the first budding of sin is in essence the same as in the grey-haired old reprobate. A person of good character is looked upon as not needing regeneration in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. But in this second article of our Confession we deal with the *moral nature* of man, which is depraved, no matter how many excellencies the character of an individual may have. Let us distinguish between character and nature in this question. The young ruler whom Jesus loved had a better character than Judas, but both had the same nature, a nature that was not regenerated (Dr. Krauth, *Conservative Reformation*, pp. 415, 416, 420).

b. *The Holy Spirit is the sole author of our regeneration.* We cannot effect the new birth ourselves, out of powers of our own. Here the adult is as helpless as the infant. The adult can with reflective consciousness desire the new life, which the infant cannot, but even such conscious desire is the work of the Holy Spirit. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5). Regeneration which is a mystery to us can be wrought only by the Holy Spirit. "Before the true doctrine of the supreme and sole necessity of the Holy Spirit's work, as the author of regeneration, the great mystery of infant salvation passes away." (Krauth, p. 425.)*

*Here and in the thoughts presented under question 4 we have the connecting link between Articles II and XVIII. The eighteenth article dwells upon the truth that man with the powers of his will cannot bring about his conversion, but that this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

c. *Baptism is the ordinary means of the new birth.* Article IX treats of Baptism in a special way, and there we find the statement that it "is necessary for salvation." This of course, does not mean that a person can under no circumstances experience the new birth except he has been baptized. If Baptism is not obtainable for him, or if he does not know of its necessity then God will not hold him responsible. But God will hold him responsible if he is unwilling to be baptized and despises the Sacrament.

8. Which are the errorists rejected?

Our article closes: "They condemn the *Pelagians* and *others*, who deny that the vice of origin is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ's merits and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason?"

a. *Who are the Pelagians?* Pelagius was the opponent of the great bishop Augustine about 410. He taught that the fall of Adam has had no influence upon his posterity. Every man to-day is born in a state of innocence and has the power of choice the same as Adam. The Pelagians deny the source of sin, the depravity. Concupiscence (in the sense as we have spoken of it under 4, b) is to them no sin, but something innocent, a necessary part of man's original nature. There is no sin before there are sinful acts. Man is in perfect possession of the freedom to work out his own salvation. With such a teaching it is evident that the redemption of Christ is not necessary. Pelagianism, therefore, works "to obscure the glory of Christ's merits and benefits" and argues "that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason."

b. *What are we to understand by the words "and others"?* There can be no doubt that in the first place the *Semi-Pelagianism of the Roman-Catholic Church* was meant. The Roman Catholic Church meets Pelagianism half way. The Romanists will not go so far as to say that the fall of the first parents has had no influence upon the race. They admit that we have been

weakened in our moral powers. But they *deny our total depravity* and the real sinfulness of our evil inclination, of the lust or the concupiscence. Here they will say like the Pelagians that there is no sin before there are sinful acts. The Pelagians had no real need of grace and the Holy Spirit, as man is thought to be perfectly able to save himself; the Roman Catholic Church will say: Man can save himself with some aid of divine grace to assist him in his somewhat weakened condition. The position of our Confession is that man has suffered such a depravity and has so lost his free will in spiritual things that he depends upon the Holy Spirit to create in him a new spiritual life. According to Pelagianism the natural man is *well*, according to Romanism he is *weak*, according to Lutheranism he is "*dead* in trespasses and sins."

It has been a matter of discussion whether also *Zwingli* was meant as belonging to these "others." (See on this question Krauth, p. 448; Zoekler, Augsburg Confession, p. 154; Plitt, Augustana, II, p. 129.) It can hardly be denied in view of the whole situation. In the Confession which *Zwingli* sent to Charles V in Augsburg he says: "Whether we will or will not, we are forced to admit that original sin as it is in the sons of Adam, is not properly sin . . . for it is not a deed contrary to the law. It is, therefore, properly a disease and a condition." In a letter to Urban Rhegius in Augsburg he says: "What could be clearer than that original sin is not sin, but a disease?" Dr. Krauth remarks that *Zwingli's* mistake is the ordinary one. He can see the character of sin only in the deed, not in the moral nature which produces the deed. According to him, as with many people, sin cannot *be*, but it must always be *done*.

If we examine carefully then we will find that the doctrine of this second article of our Confession is rejected by the following denominations: The Socinians, Unitarians, the German Evangelical Protestants of Cincinnati and other cities, the Universalists, the Swedenborgians (these as outright Pelagians, compare question 8, a); the Roman Catholic Church, Greek Catholic Church, the Campbellites, the Mennonites, the Quakers, the Seventh

Day Adventists (these as Semi-Pelagians, compare question 8, b).

ARTICLE THREE.

OF THE SON OF GOD.

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

It is at once clear that there should be between Articles II, of Original Sin, and IV, of Justification, one treating of the Son of God. Jesus is the Redeemer from sin, and His work is the meritorious cause of the sinner's justification. Zoekler calls this article the dynamic centre in the body of saving truths.

We find here no errorists expressly mentioned and enumerated. There was, however, already at that time a doctrinal difference between Luther and Zwingli on the two natures in the person of Christ, and it seems that the emphasis of our article upon the personal union of the two natures was directed against the Swiss reformer. And against the Church of Rome in particular the following words are directed: "not only for original guilt, but for all actual sins of men." The Papal Church taught that the death of Christ had been for the original guilt only, and that for the actual sins there should be satisfaction on the part of man.

It is interesting to observe that our article did not yet regard it necessary to take notice of those who denied the divinity of Christ. True, the germs of our modern

rejection of Christ's divinity existed already in the teachings of some of the Anabaptists, the "new" Samosatenes of which we heard in Article I (question 3). But such voices were so few that a refutation and silencing of them was not considered necessary. How different it is to-day!

1. What does our article teach with respect to the origin of the Saviour?

"Also they (that is the Lutheran churches) teach that the Word, that is the Son of God, did take man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary."

a. By calling the Son of God "the Word," our Confession reminds us of *Christ's pre-existence* as taught in John 1:1: "In the beginning *was* the Word, and the Word *was* with God, and the Word *was* God." Christ had no beginning. He existed with the Father from all eternity. Through Him all things were made (John 1:3). When God created the world, the Son was not among the things created. But at that time the Son (the Word) "*was*" already existing.

b. When the time was fulfilled the incarnation of Christ took place in order that He might be the Mediator of man's salvation. *Where was the initiative in this act of incarnation?* The Ebionites, a sect in the early Church, taught that the *man* Jesus (who did not exist from eternity) had led such a virtuous life that He was *adopted* as Son of God. The Socinians, at the time of the Reformation, developed this view into an elaborate system, according to which Christ was a mere man, though a great prophet, who became adopted as Son of God. But in our article we read not that man became God, but "that the Word, that is the Son of God, *did take man's nature.*" The initiative in the act of incarnation was taken by the Son of God, the eternal Word. Rationalistic Christology of to-day is Ebionitic and Socinian.

c. *The Virgin Birth.* This incarnation took place "in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary." This will always remain an essential part in our creed. Without the Virgin birth the true divinity of Christ, especially His sinlessness, cannot be maintained.

d. Christ assumed human *nature*. Not a human person already existing, else we would have had two persons, a divine and a human, contrary to 1 Tim. 2:5. But the Son of God did take man's *nature* which is common to us all. Hence He redeemed not a particular man, but all men as partakers of the nature.

2. What does our article emphasize regarding the personal union of the two natures in Christ?

“So that there are Two Natures, the divine and the human, inseparably conjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man.”

a. Under the preceding question we heard of the act of incarnation by which two natures were united into one person. Here we have *the result* of this act: the personal union as a condition in Christ, the Saviour of man. Our Lutheran Church has always laid much emphasis upon this union of the two natures in Christ.

b. *The discussion of the relation of the two natures in the history of doctrines.* The relation of the two natures in Christ was most thoroughly discussed in the first half of the fifth century. The question was then settled at the two œcumenical councils held at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), and the doctrinal statements adopted can be found in the second half of the Athanasian Creed. There were two extremes between which a union had to be found: The Nestorians believed in two natures, but not in a real personal union of these two natures; they practically believed in two separate persons. The other extreme (Monophysitism) took the position that in reality there was in Christ after His incarnation only one nature which was a mixture of the divine and the human. The first of these views was irreconcilable with the true divinity of Christ, the second with His true humanity. In the Reformation age this question came up again as a difficulty between Luther and Zwingli, and here were the roots of their differences on the Lord's Supper. Zwingli, in his doctrine of the person of Christ, so tenaciously denied the participation of the one nature in the life and experiences of the other

that the reality of the personal union was lost. Whenever in the Scriptures something human is ascribed to Christ's divinity, or something divine to His humanity, there Zwingli would say that it was not so meant, that it was simply the custom of the Scriptures, in a merely rhetorical way, to say something of one nature which, strictly speaking, can be said only of the other. This was Zwingli's "alloiosis" which was emphatically rejected by Luther. Luther emphasized the person of Christ, the personal union embracing the two natures: "One Christ, true God and true man." The "two natures, the divine and the human" are "inseparably conjoined in one person."

c. *The practical religious interest in this seemingly speculative question.* Luther said: If Christ's human nature can have no part in the attributes of His divinity, if His glorified body has no part in the attribute of omnipresence, then Christ cannot be present with His humanity at the Lord's Supper. And Zwingli said: Because Christ is omnipresent only according to His divine nature, but not with His human nature, therefore Christ can be present at the Supper only in a spiritual way, but not with His humanity which is confined to a certain place at the right hand of God. Yet, Luther's doctrine of the person of Christ was not a mere invention for the purpose of furnishing a support for the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper. No, what Luther wanted to establish with his strong emphasis upon the personal union was nothing less than the full value of the atonement wrought by Christ, the Godman. If the humanity of Christ is so separated from His divinity that there is no real communion, no communication of the divine attributes to the humanity, then there is no real validity in the sufferings of Christ. Luther writes: "If the devil should persuade me that in Christ a mere man was crucified and died for me, then I would be lost, but if I can attach to it the importance that Christ died for me as real God and Man, then such doctrine will outweigh and destroy sin, death, hell and all misery." And again with reference to Zwingli's theory: "Beware,

beware, I tell you of the alloiosis, it is a mask of the devil! For in the end it constructs a Christ, after which I would not like to be a Christian; a Christ whose sufferings and life do not mean more than that of any ordinary saint."

3. What is to be noted regarding the states of Christ?

There is the distinction between the state of humiliation and the state of exaltation. This part is much like that in the second article of the Apostles' Creed.

a. *The state of humiliation* is described with the following words: "who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried." The thought here to be emphasized is that not only the man in Christ suffered this, but the Godman. The Word, that is the Son of God who became incarnated and united Himself with the humanity, experienced these acts of humiliation in the human nature. Neither was the suffering of the Godman a delusion (as some Gnostics said); to meet such thoughts we read here: "*truly* suffered." In the German text we have: "wahrhaftig geboren."

b. *The state of exaltation* begins with the words: "He also descended to hell." "*He* also," that means the same person of which we have spoken, the Godman. Everywhere this emphasis is laid upon the personal union. Then follow the other parts belonging to the exaltation of Christ: His resurrection, His ascension, His sitting at the right hand of the Father, and His return to judgment. But note the way in which His sitting on the right hand of the Father is here spoken of: "That He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign, and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin." This is the purpose of it all. The evident intention of our article is to emphasize that Christ is a *living* Saviour. He is not like Mohammed who invented a religion and then passed away without being more to his followers than a person that had once lived.

4. What doctrine of atonement do we find in this article?

It is the doctrine of vicarious atonement. Christ, the Godman, experienced the humiliation in order "that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice." It is not man who is to be reconciled to God, by receiving impressions of God's kindness, so that He might give up his enmity against God. No, it is God who is to be reconciled. The German text speaks of God's wrath which is to be appeased ("versoehnet"). In connection with this the death of Christ can have no other but a substitutional significance. Article IV also says that Christ "by His death, hath made satisfaction for our sins."*

ARTICLE FOUR.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

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

1. What can we say in appreciation of this article?

This article is the centre of the doctrines treated in the Confession. The leading question for Luther was not: Who is God, and what do we know of Him? but: How can I come to God and be assured that He is my Father? This had already been the question during the middle ages. Only it had not been answered right. The advice had been given that we should effect communion with God through the doing of good works. This could never bring the assurance of favor with God to the distressed sinner as he would always be troubled with the fear whether he had done enough. Luther found the

*Passages in the other Confessions that should be studied in connection with this article are the following: Apology, Article III; Smalcald Articles, Part I; Small Catechism, Creed, Article II; Larger Catechism, Creed, Article II; Form of Concord, Article VIII in both parts.

answer of the Gospel to that question. It is: Believe in Christ who has made satisfaction for our sins and on account of whose merits God justifies freely the believing sinner who suffers under the burden of his guilt. This doctrine brings peace to the soul and is (as will be shown in articles VI and XX) the true source of real good works. How Luther himself valued this article can be seen from the following words found in the Smalcald Articles (Part II, Article I): "Of this article nothing can be yielded nor surrendered, even though heaven and earth and all things should sink to ruin. . . . And upon this article all things depend, which, against the Pope, the devil, and the whole world, we teach and practice. Therefore we must be sure concerning this doctrine and not doubt, for otherwise all is lost, and the Pope and devil and all things against us gain the victory and suit." (Book of Concord, p. 312.) And in the Form of Concord we find these words: "This article concerning Justification by Faith (as the Apology says) is the chief in the entire Christian doctrine, without which no poor conscience has any firm consolation, or can know aright the riches of the grace of Christ as Dr. Luther has written: 'If only this article remain in view pure, the Christian Church also remains pure, and is harmonious and without all sects; but if it do not remain pure, it is not possible to resist any error or any fanatical spirit.'" (Book of Concord, p. 571.) If we should read the whole Augsburg Confession even in a cursory way, we should be impressed with the fact that the leading principle in every direction was to reform whatever tended to obscure the precious doctrine of justification by faith.

2. Where in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church do we find something more on this important article?

Our fourth article is very brief, and since every phrase contains something fundamental the student will gladly avail himself of additional references. As has been mentioned it is a good plan to study in connection with this article the articles VI and XX. The Apology

also has lengthy expositions on this subject. The second chapter of the Apology, pp. 84-103 in the Book of Concord, deals with Justification, while the third, pp. 104-161, treats of "Love and the fulfilling of the Law," thus offering an exposition of Article VI of our Confession. It is profitable to study these parts together. Special care should be used to observe the relation between justification and sanctification. The confounding of these two doctrines was the fundamental error of the Roman Catholic Church. But there are many non-Catholics who fall into the same mistake. The Form of Concord also has some valuable contributions on this subject. Read especially Article III on "the Righteousness of Faith before God" and Article IV "Of Good Works." Even the following articles V "of Law and Gospel" and VI on "The Third use of the Law" can be studied with profit in this connection. Using the Form of Concord it is well to remember that this Confession always treats of the same subject in two parts: first briefly in the "Epitome" and then more in length in a "Comprehensive Summary."

3. How may this article be divided for a profitable discussion?

I. RENUNCIATION OF THE ERROR.

Text: "Also they (the Lutheran Churches) teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits or works."

1. The history of this error:

a. In the *early Church*, soon after the death of the Apostles, Paul's doctrine of free grace dropped into the background, and a doctrine of law and works prevailed. (See Kurtz, Church History, §30, 2.)

b. *Augustine* agreed with Lutheranism when he said, that in fallen man there are no powers left to bring about his spiritual renewal and that all must be expected from divine grace; but he was a Roman Catholic in his conception of justification as a gradual growth in right-

eousness. He confounded justification and sanctification by saying that God justified man not only by forgiving his sins, but by more and more infusing the divine righteousness into his life. He failed to take justification as a declarative act. Thus, this error originated.

c. The teachers of *the middle ages* (Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Gabriel Biel and others) developed this teaching into the form, in which it became the accepted doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent.

2. Why were our Reformers so outspoken in rejecting this doctrine?

a. The *Scriptures* teach us to exclude the merits of man from that by which he is actually saved. Eph. 2: 8-9; Rom. 3: 24; Rom. 3: 24.

b. It leaves the sinner in *uncertainty* as to his salvation. Augustine taught consistently that man could never be absolutely sure of his salvation.

c. It was the fruitful *source of many errors*: work-righteousness in all its forms (monastic seclusion, pilgrimages, penances, the belief that man may even do something in excess of what God has the right to demand of him and thus merit special grace, a grace which is stored up in a treasure of "superabundant works" and applied for the benefit of others).

II. STATEMENT OF THE TRUE DOCTRINE.

1. **The source of justification**, or the efficient cause. Text: "freely justified." Rom. 3: 24; Rom. 5: 15.

2. **The ground of justification**, or the meritorious cause. Text: "for Christ's sake," and "who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins." An especially striking passage of Scripture is Rom. 3: 24-25.

3. **The true meaning of justification**: It is not making a man righteous, as the Roman Church takes it, by infusing sanctifying grace into his life. Then we would have no peace of our soul as we would always have to ask whether the process of sanctification has advanced suffi-

ciently. No, justification is an act of God, by which the sinner is declared to be justified for Christ's sake. God regards the sinner just notwithstanding the fact that he is actually sinful. Our article refers to the entire argument of the third and fourth chapters of Paul to the Romans. A negative and positive side are to be distinguished:

a. *Negative*: A non-imputation, or forgiveness of sins. Text: "That their sins are forgiven." Rom. 4:7-8.

b. *Positive*: The act of justification. The act of pardon and forgiveness takes from the sinner what he has, but justification gives him what he has not: the righteousness of Christ. But how does the act of justification take place? The text of our article says: "This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight." Sometimes it is the "righteousness of Christ" and at other times it is our "faith" that is said to be imputed to us. But that involves no contradiction. For "faith" is here meant only as apprehending "the righteousness of Christ." The Scripture basis is Rom. 6:3-6. The emphasis is upon the idea of imputation. If we believe on Christ then His righteousness is *imputed* to us. The Roman Catholic Church and those of similar position cannot appreciate such an "imputed" righteousness. Adam Moehler, a Romanist, says: "The Protestant theory of justification expects of God to regard an Ethiopian as white." But this is not the case, for in our doctrine of justification we do not consider the sinner as he is in himself, but we consider him in his relation to and in his union with Christ.

4. **Faith as the instrumental or apprehending cause of justification on man's part.** Text: "Through faith."

a. *What kind of faith is meant?* Article XX of our Confession was written to supplement Article IV, and here we find beautiful thoughts with which to answer this question. "Faith does not only signify a knowledge of the history, which may be in the wicked and in the devil," though such knowledge is the basis of faith. No, justi-

fyng faith must be “a faith which believeth the article of the remission of sins, namely, that by Christ we have grace, righteousness and remission of sins.” It means “a trust, which doth comfort and lift up disquieted minds.” Even our brief Article IV offers a fitting description of what justifying faith is: “when we believe that we are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake.” Such faith is a living and a transforming one. That is the leading thought in the last part of Article XX. The Apology says: “We speak of faith as being not an ideal fancy, but a new light, life and power in the heart, that renews the heart and disposition, transforms man into a new creature.” See also Form of Concord, p. 573 (19-20).

b. But while this belongs to the nature of faith, *it is not the sanctifying character of faith that justifies us.* We must guard against making faith a meritorious work. Our article simply says: “through faith,” not: *for the sake of* faith. We must never forget these words of our article: “freely justified for Christ’s sake through faith” (propter Christum, per fidem).

We are now prepared to see how this article is the central article of all the rest of the Confession, even of the second part, which treats of the abuses.*

ARTICLE FIVE.

ON THE ORIGIN AND THE CAUSES OF FAITH.

(Of the Office of the Ministry.)

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

*The chief opponents to the Lutheran doctrine of justification as a judicial act on the part of God are the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Catholic Church, the Quakers, the Unitarians, the Universalists. The Reformed churches are here in agreement with the Lutheran Church. Only they do not give to this doctrine the central place which it holds in the Lutheran Church.

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

1. What is the leading theme of this article?

Remember that in the preceding article *faith* was mentioned as the instrumental or the apprehending cause of salvation. Now the question comes: How is this justifying faith obtained? The answer is: Faith is wrought in us through the means of grace. The custom has been to write over this article as superscription: "Of the Office of the Ministry." But the ministry is here spoken of only in an incidental way, namely, as the office which is charged with administering the means of grace. The ministry is specifically treated in Article XIV. If we read thoughtfully the beginning of Article V we cannot help but receiving the impression that Melancthon here wants to teach us how faith is obtained. The superscriptions over the articles of our Confession have been added at a later time.

2. How is justifying faith obtained?

a. It is *wrought in us* through the Holy Ghost ("the Holy Ghost is given, who worketh faith"). Compare with this the phrase in Article XVIII: "but this righteousness *is wrought* in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the word." This is in agreement with Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason and strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him, but the Holy Ghost has called me, etc." We can resist the Holy Spirit, but we cannot do His work. We must "hear the Gospel" and we must respond to the preaching of the Word, but every bit of the new life that comes into us is a work of the Holy Spirit.

b. Even *occasion and time* of such working of faith in us is in the hand of God: "Who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God in them that hear the Gospel." Does this sound arbitrary? Suppose God should work faith in one individual later than in another and should let him struggle longer than another before full confi-

dence in the Saviour brings him the peace of his soul, who knows whether this will not in the end mean a deeper and a better founded and humbler Christian? Some obtain faith in consequence of an early Christian training, others after first having lost themselves in the world, some late in life. God in His providence chooses time and place with the best interests of our soul in view.

3. Through what instruments does the Holy Ghost work faith in us?

a. "Through the *Word and Sacraments* as through instruments." These are the divinely appointed means of grace. By the Word we understand the Law and the Gospel. Much depends upon using these in their proper relation to each other. Read in the Form of Concord Articles V and VI. The Sacraments are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Why do we admit these only to be Sacraments? A Sacrament must have all of the following three marks: (1) the institution by Jesus Christ Himself; (2) the visible sign; (3) the communication of a heavenly gift. Read the fourth and fifth parts of Luther's Small Catechism, and the same parts in his Larger Catechism.

b. A special "*office* of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments" has been instituted. It is an "*office*" of service, not, as in the Roman Catholic Church, an order of propagating itself and with the right to rule the Church.

4. What errorists are here rejected?

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

a. The *Anabaptists* at the time of the Reformation despised the "external Word," i. e., the written word of the Scriptures. Their emphasis was upon the Spirit, by which they understood an inner light in those who had received the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself in inspirations and revelations.

b. There were "*others*" at that time who took an

equal position. Among them was Carlstadt, Zwingli, Schwenkfeld. A leading thought in the Reformed Church from the beginning was this, that the divine influences upon men are experienced in an immediate way. Created things (like words of the Bible and the elements of the Sacraments) are not believed to be used by God as necessary instruments and vehicles of His gracious influence upon man, but the Holy Spirit is believed to work immediately. The last consequences of this spiritualism have been drawn by the Quakers, a denomination which in this respect must be regarded as a legitimate daughter of the Reformed Church.

c. "*Through their own preparations and works.*" All who are laboring to work themselves into a state of spiritual exaltation by anything that is calculated to excite the feelings fall under the sentence of this article. Examples: exciting prayer meetings through which sentiment is worked up during evangelistic campaigns; mannerism in preachers, mostly evangelists, through which they try to bring their hearers under the spell of their personality; the employment of drastic language in revival meetings. At the basis of it all lies a despising of the God-appointed means of grace.

ARTICLE SIX.

OF THE NEW OBEDIENCE.

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

1. What kind of faith will always be the source of good works?

Our article answers: "*this* faith." The faith, namely, that was described in Article IV as the confidence "that

they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake." The faith which, according to Article V, has been wrought by the Holy Ghost through Word and Sacrament.

2. How does our article describe the nature of this faith with reference to the production of good works?

"That this faith is *bound* to bring forth good fruits, and that it is *necessary* to do good works." Note in the German text the words "soll" and "muesse," in the Latin "debeat" and "oporteat." Faith cannot co-exist with a purpose to sin, and a true believer cannot live in sin. The person with a living faith is under an inner necessity to do good works. Luther says: "Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and regenerates us. It mortifies the natural man in us and makes us new men in heart, spirit, mind and all powers, and it cannot be without the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, busy and powerful thing about faith. It is impossible that it should not always do good works. It does not stop and ask where good works can be done, but before there can be any asking, it does good works and is always doing them." Such inner necessity for doing good works (read Form of Concord, Article IV, 6, p. 505) is fundamentally different from being driven by an outward compulsion of the law, which can result only in works that have the appearance of being good, but which in reality have no value in the sight of God. Article VI in the Form of Concord contains valuable statements on the distinction between works of the law and works of the Spirit.

3. What kind of works will faith bring forth?

"Good works *commanded* by God." This remark is directed against the self-chosen works of the Roman Catholic Church. The Romanists had developed the theory of the so-called "evangelical counsels." An opportunity should be given to do more good works than God has commanded. It was taught that the doing of such works would bring special credits, and that such credits of all good men accumulated were constituting

a treasury of superabundant good works, a credit over which the Church was manager and could help others in purgatory who had a shortage of credits. There were especially three good works which were regarded as not demanded by God and for this reason considered to be highly meritorious: (1) not to marry, (2) to remain poor, and (3) to live a life of absolute obedience to the Church. These are the vows of Monasticism, never appreciated by the Lutheran Church, because they represented a self-chosen sanctity, with no foundation in the Scriptures. The Lutherans took the position that anything which love, growing out of faith, compels us to do is simply our Christian duty and in no way optional. They regarded those aforementioned works as useless. Matthew 15:9 we read: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." The Scriptures, containing the commandments of God, are the guide, enabling us to determine which are good works, and which are not.

4. What shall be the motive?

On this we have a double statement, first a positive and then a negative.

Positive: "because of God's will." In the Apology three reasons are mentioned why a believer should do good works: (1) out of gratitude to God; (2) for the exercise and development of faith; (3) as a testimony before the world.

b. *Negative:* "but not that we should rely on those works to merit justification before God." This article stands for a careful distinction between justification and sanctification. Many sincere Christians deceive themselves by reasoning in the following way: Since "it is necessary to do good works," it must be concluded that they belong to the ground of salvation. But as soon as this is admitted our salvation is uncertain, because we can never do all we should and will always have to stand under the words of Christ: "When ye shall have done all these things, say: We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10). Guided by this consideration, the Form of Con-

cord (see p. 504), rejected the statements of George Major: "Good works are necessary for salvation," "it is impossible to be saved without good works," "no one has ever been saved without good works." The ground of our salvation, as we saw in Article IV, is Jesus Christ "who, by His death, hath made satisfaction for our sins"; and our assurance of salvation is God's act of freely justifying us for Christ's sake, through faith when we believe that we are received into favor and that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. In Eph. 2: 8 and 9 we read: "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." The opponent of George Major (Nic. Amsdorf) went so far as to say: "Good works are injurious to salvation." This the Form of Concord also rejects. Good works will become injurious if "we *rely* upon those works to merit justification before God," as our article says, but the fact remains that faith is "bound to bring forth good fruits and that it is necessary to do good works."

Article XX of our Confession was added to elucidate this article as well as Article IV.

ARTICLE SEVEN.

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 rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As Paul says: "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," etc. (Eph. 4: 5, 6).

I. What is the Church?

a. It is not, as the Catholics teach, an external organization under the Pope of Rome and his bishops and priests. If that were the Church then Luther and his followers certainly were outside of it, because they were excommunicated.

b. "The church is the congregation of saints." Wherever there are souls who have been regenerated through the Holy Spirit and believe in Christ as their Saviour, there the Christian Church is, and these souls are members of it, forming part of the "One holy Church," no matter how far apart they may live and by what denominational name they may be known.

c. Yet while our Confession could not consent to the Roman Catholic conception of the Church as one certain circumscribed outward organization, neither could it agree with the Anabaptists who believed in no *congregation* of the saints, but just in individual saints, with no obligation whatever to assemble. Against this view Melancthon writes in the Apology: The Church is not a Platonic state, but it has a real existence. Therefore he calls it in our article "the *congregation* of saints, in which the *Gospel* is rightly taught and the *Sacraments* rightly administered."

2. Have the Lutherans not destroyed the unity of the Church?

At the beginning of this article it is admitted "that one holy church is to continue forever." But by rejecting the traditions, rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church the Lutherans seem to have destroyed this unity of the Church. To this grave charge an answer had to be made in this article. We find it in the following words: "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." This is the *positive* part of the answer. A very important statement: Where there is agreement in the teaching of the Gospel and in the administration of the Sacraments there is unity, but only there. Then follows the *NEGATIVE* statement: "Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites and ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike." These words are also important. Such traditions, rites and ceremonies are not here unconditionally rejected. Some, of course, must be rejected, as will be seen in Article XV, namely, such as have been "insti-

tuted to propitiate God, to merit grace and to make satisfaction for sins"; but not those "which may be observed without sin, and which are profitable unto tranquillity and good order in the Church." Yet while some of these "human traditions, rites and ceremonies, instituted by men," may be right and even helpful, we are not warranted in making the observance of them essential to unity in the Church.

3. How are we to judge of the various denominations as to the question where the true Church of Christ is to be found?

The true Church is found where "the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered." Can this be said of the Lutheran Church? To answer this question correctly we have to divide it into two questions: (1) *Can we say of the Lutheran Church as represented by her Confessions that she is pure in her teaching of Word and Sacraments?* Every one who is a Lutheran of conviction, having examined the Confessions in the light of the Scriptures, will affirm this. And it seems to us that others also, if they could just rid themselves of prejudices, would, after a candid examination, reach the same conclusion. The Scripturalness of the Lutheran Confessions will captivate him who gives himself to a thorough study of them. But (2) *Can we claim of the Lutheran churches everywhere that they actually do teach the Gospel rightly and that their administration of the Sacraments rests upon the Scriptural conceptions?* This is an altogether different question. The Lutheran name does not always guarantee a teaching after the Lutheran Confessions. There are Lutherans who find themselves in disagreement with the doctrine of man's total depravity as taught in Article II, who teach a Christ that can be no Saviour (against Article III), who in their conceptions of justification and sanctification (Articles IV and VI) are moving on Roman Catholic ground, who ignore the appointed means of grace and expect to draw the Holy Spirit by all kinds of human efforts (against Article V), who can never learn the meaning of Holy Baptism for

the life of the Christian and to whom the Sacraments are nothing but symbols (against Articles II, IX and X). Occasionally we find more Scriptural conceptions in other churches than in Lutheran churches. So in answering this question we can only say: *Lutheran churches are representatives of the true Church of Christ only in so far as they actually live up to their Confessions in teaching and practice.*

This has paved the way for a brief discussion of how we should regard the other denominations. Can we say of the other churches that they are true churches of Christ in the sense of our article? Here also we must be guarded by the words: "The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is *rightly* taught and the Sacraments *rightly* administered." Do not say that this word "rightly" may not have been so seriously meant, so that we would be justified to treat it as a mere slip of Melancthon's pen. We know that it was not in the first drafts of the Confession, as can be seen in the manuscript which was found in the Nuremberg archive, a few years ago, but it was put in before the Confession was finished, which shows that it is there for a purpose. Can we as Lutherans admit that in the other churches "the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered"? If we believe that our Confessions are Scriptural then we must regard the teaching of the other churches as unscriptural in the points where they reject the teaching of our Confessions. Yes and No cannot dwell together in one conviction.

But can we not say that the differences consist only in the viewpoints taken, so that both sides have the Gospel from a different point of view? It is true, for instance, that the Calvinists have with us the doctrine of justification. But they have it from peculiar viewpoint, the sovereignty of God. This does not do away with the Gospel, yet the Gospel of free grace becomes beclouded. Under Calvinistic preaching, God appears to us more as a stern Lord than as a loving Father. We are more His obeying servants than His confiding children. A wrong viewpoint can seriously affect the

teaching of the Gospel. But now take another doctrine, for instance, the Lord's Supper. Here the difference is not in viewpoints, but the one side positively rejects what the other side accepts. The difference between Lutherans and Baptists on the Sacrament of Baptism is another case. The difference is a radical one: what the Lutherans regard as a real means of grace and the source of the new religious life, this is to the Baptists a mere act of obedience on the part of the converted. In these, as in many other cases, it is not a mere difference in viewpoints, but a question of Yes and No. A Lutheran who believes that the Confessions of his Church are Scriptural cannot include the opposing denominations as such in the Church "in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered."

And yet, we would not want to deny that the Church of Christ has its existence also among the other denominations. Thank God that it has. Absolute purity of doctrine, let us remember, is an ideal that has not been reached by all Lutherans either. The Confessions of our Church are Scriptural, but to what extent have we succeeded in embracing their truth in all directions? It is the goal for the development in many parts of the Lutheran Church. On the other hand, many of the churches which by name are opposing Lutheranism have so much of Gospel truth left in the systems of their teaching that souls can be regenerated to a life with Christ. The unscriptural principles of their creeds and traditions frequently do not work themselves out in the convictions of their ministers and members. The Bible with much truly Scriptural literature is constantly counteracting these influences. In some churches, it is true, the errors overshadow the truth in a most deplorable manner, so that it is hard to discover even some remnants of the one Holy Church of which our article speaks. But of many churches we rejoice to admit that notwithstanding some of their unscriptural conceptions of doctrine so much is preserved of the means of grace that in them also the Holy Spirit can have His work for the regeneration of

souls. And where the Holy Spirit can operate for man's regeneration there must be a representation of the one holy Church.

ARTICLE EIGHT.

THE MINISTRY OF EVIL MEN IN THE CHURCH.

What the Church Is.

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

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

1. What is the main object of this article?

This article does not intend to present a deliverance on what the Church is. On that subject we heard in the preceding article. In the way of mere repetition or, perhaps, for the purpose of emphasis only we read here: "that the Church properly is the congregation of saints and true believers." It is rightly remarked by Prof. Kolde that the old superscription "What the Church is?" is not well chosen. (The superscriptions over the articles of the Confession have been added at a later time.) The object of this article is to establish an important principle with reference to the ministry of evil men in the Church.

2. Are the means of grace effectual when administered by unregenerated persons?

This is the real theme of this article. On this important question the Church of the Reformation had to express itself. First the statement is made that "in this life many hypocrites and evil persons are mingled with the Church. It cannot be otherwise in this life where we can see into no man's heart and where we cannot be

absolutely sure as to the sincerity of his profession. But now, if this is a fact how can we be sure, absolutely sure, that even the ministers of the congregations are always godly men? They are of flesh and blood and tempted to sin like the rest of humanity. But now the serious question comes: Are the ministerial acts of ungodly men valid? How with the preaching of the Word of such men? To this our article answers: "It is lawful to use the Sacraments, which are administered by evil men; according to the saying of Christ: The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, etc. (Matt. 23: 2). Both the Sacraments and the Word are effectual by reason of the institution and commandment of Christ, notwithstanding they be administered by evil men." The validity lies in the "institution and commandment of Christ." If a man is regularly called into the ministry (see Article XIV) then we must believe in the efficacy of the means of grace administered by him.

3. Who are quoted here as opponents of this principle?

"The Donatists, and such like."

a. The *Donatists*, a strong separatistic sect in North Africa about the fourth century, taught that holy men only should be tolerated in the Church, and that only such priests as had been consecrated by holy bishops and were blameless in their lives could administer the Sacraments rightly, and that the ministerial acts of unholy priests had no effect.

b. "*And such like.*" Wiclef was not sound on this point. If Luther had followed him here, it would have meant the stamp of a sect upon the Church which he founded. There is also a Donatistic tendency in Methodism.

ARTICLE NINE.

ON 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 His grace.

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

1. Where in our Confessions do we find a more exhaustive treatment of the Sacrament of Baptism?

In the Catechisms of Luther. The fourth part of Luther's Small Catechism especially must be carefully studied by him who wants to have a full view of what our Church teaches on Baptism. This article is exceedingly brief. We know from the draft of the Confession which a few years ago was found in the Nuremberg archive that at first the intention was simply to insist on infant Baptism against the Anabaptists. The article was changed to its present form during the last days before the delivery of the Confession. A few doctrinal statements on Baptism in general were inserted. We must keep in mind that the Augsburg Confession does not aim at a complete exhibition of the doctrines of the young church. In fact, at the time of the preparation of the Confessions, Melancthon wrote with the thought in his mind that the Lutherans were to remain a part of the Roman Catholic Church. The doctrines which the Lutherans held in common with their opponents were not dwelt upon much except when there was a special reason to do so. This explains the brevity of this article as well as the following on the Sacrament.

2. Does our article make Baptism a real means of grace?

Here appears a point of division between the Lutherans and all other denominations, if we leave the peculiar position of the Roman and the Greek Catholic Churches out of consideration. All other Protestant denominations can see in Baptism no means of creating a new spiritual life. To them Baptism is only a symbol of regeneration. It does not work the forgiveness of sins, but it is merely an illustration of how God will wash man's sins away. Some also speak of Baptism as a seal of the forgiveness of sins which has taken place independent of Baptism. To all these, Baptism is no real means of grace, no means through which God communicates His grace to the soul.

Now the question is: Does our brief article offer a testimony on this question? Indeed it does! We read that "through Baptism is offered the grace of God." Are we justified in taking this word "offered" in the meaning of a real communication of grace? What does Luther's Small Catechism answer to the question: What gifts or benefits does Baptism confer? He says: "It worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and confers everlasting salvation on all who believe as the Word and promise of God declare." I ask again: How is this word "offered" to be taken without doing violence to the text of our article? If we take in connection with it the closing words of the first paragraph "who, being offered to God through Baptism, are received into His grace" then the teaching of Article IX of the Augsburg Confession is the same as that of Luther's Catechism. Perhaps someone will say: The word "regeneration" is not in this article. But how did we read in Article II on Original Sin? There we read that this sin was "condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost." The Scriptures speak of Baptism as a real means of grace in the following passages: Acts 2:38; 22:16; John 3:5; Tit. 3:5-7; Eph. 5:25-27; Mark 16.

3. What suggestion may we take from the fact that our article has no statement on the mode of Baptism?

In the question whether Baptism should be administered by sprinkling or by immersion our Church is not interested. It cannot be proved by the Scriptures to be an essential matter.

4. What does this article emphasize against the Anabaptists?

That children also are to be baptized. The position of the Anabaptists and their followers "that children are saved without baptism" is rejected. If God in His mercy will make exceptions and not punish children because they were not brought to Baptism yet we have no right to make an established rule of such gracious exceptions

and keep children from the means of grace. The objection that children should not be baptized because they cannot yet understand and believe rests upon a misconception. While there is no conscious faith in a child, yet there is need of salvation. It must come into contact with Him who came as a Saviour into this world and who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the Kingdom of God." (Mark 10: 14.)

5. What should be our attitude to what the Germans call "Nottaufe," a Baptism by laymen in the case of extreme necessity?

If Baptism is "necessary to salvation" as our article says, if it is an appointed means of grace, through which we are "born again" (Article II) and through which we "are received into His grace," then we should not be deprived of this Sacrament in the hour of our death, merely because an ordained minister is not at hand. In such case a layman, even a woman, may administer Baptism. This has always been customary in the Lutheran Church. The following passage of Scripture has been quoted in favor of this practice: "Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son" (Ex. 4: 25). Other churches are not favorable to such practice. But to them there is no real necessity for Baptism, since they regard it as a mere symbolic rite. To us it is a necessary means of grace. Therefore the order of the Church in respect to the administration of the Sacrament by ordained ministers is second to the need.

6. But is Baptism under all circumstances "necessary for salvation"?

We would not say that, as was already stated in our interpretation of Article II. But while God is not bound to the rule and can find other ways, we have no right to make the exceptions. We are tied to the rule, and God will hold us responsible when we treat his Sacrament with indifference or contempt.

ARTICLE TEN.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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

1. Where do we find something more on this important subject?

Above all read the fifth part of Luther's Small Catechism. All the Confessions treat of the Lord's Supper. A very thorough discussion is found in Article VII of the Form of Concord. Read first the brief summary (Epitome) in the first part, and then the more extensive exposition in the second part.

2. What is, according to our article, the Sacramental gift in the Lord's Supper?

Not bread and wine only, not certain spiritual influences from the exalted Christ exclusively, but "the Body and Blood of Christ." This is the clear teaching of the words of institution. The Body and Blood of Christ in the glorified condition of His humanity as He is risen from the dead and has ascended to heaven and is now sitting at the right hand of God the Father with the power of being present wherever He wills—the Body and Blood of this Christ is the Sacramental gift in the Lord's Supper. As Luther says in his Small Catechism: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself." The gift here is something different from what we receive in other religious services. Matt. 26: 26-28.

3. For what purpose do we receive the Sacramental gift of Body and Blood of Christ in the Supper?

Our article does not express itself on this question. But Luther does in the Catechism. Speaking of the benefits derived from such eating and drinking he says: "They are pointed out in these words: 'Given, and shed

for you, for the remission of sins.' Namely, through these words, the remission of sins, life and salvation are granted unto us in the Sacrament. For where there is remission of sins, there are also life and salvation." The spiritual gifts communicated in the Lord's Supper are "the remission of sins, life and salvation." This must be received through faith in God's promises. But the Body and the Blood are, on one hand, a means for communicating these spiritual gifts. This is apparent from the words: "Given and shed for you." They are, on the other hand, a pledge and a seal by which these spiritual gifts are assured to us. This is clear from the words: "For the remission of sins." (Larger Catechism, pp. 478, 479.)

4. How do we come in contact with the Body and Blood of Christ in the Supper?

The basis for our answer are the words of our text: "The Body and Blood of Christ are *truly present* and are *distributed* to those *who eat* in the Supper of our Lord." We need not secure Christ's presence by drawing Him down from heaven through our faith as is taught by Calvin. He is present at the communion. And not only according to His divinity, but also according to His humanity. We need not lift ourselves up by a strong faith to the right hand of God in order there to participate in Christ's humanity which, according to Calvin, is confined to a certain place in heaven; no, Christ's humanity has been glorified, it is omnipresent with His divinity, and, therefore, His Body and Blood "are truly present" in the Supper. So our article can speak of a distribution and an eating. It is through an eating and drinking that we receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the communion.

5. Are the words of our text meant in the sense of Transubstantiation?

By transubstantiation we understand the changing of bread and wine into Body and Blood of Christ. Our article does not intend to teach this Roman Catholic

doctrine. This we can tell by referring to the German text of our article, which reads: "It is taught that the true Body and Blood of Christ are truly present *under the form of bread and wine* in the Supper." The same language we find in Luther's Small Catechism: "It is the true Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, *under the bread and wine.*" This shows that the Lutheran Church does not teach transubstantiation. *But does she not teach consubstantiation?* If by this term we are to understand the creation of a third substance out of the two substances (bread and wine on the one hand, Body and Blood on the other), then the Lutheran Church also rejects consubstantiation. According to the Confessions of our Church the earthly elements of bread and wine remain what they are, unchanged, but "in, with and under" these elements, in a mysterious way, the true Body and Blood of Christ are received.

6. Who are meant by the closing words of our article: "and they (the Lutheran churches) disapprove of those that teach otherwise"?

a. Of course, all opponents to the Lutheran doctrine, the Roman Catholic Church included. Even though it may be true that Melancthon, at this critical moment, was anxious to say as little as possible of the opposition of the Lutherans to the Catholic Church, yet the theory of transubstantiation was not held by the Lutherans. Luther had rejected it positively.

b. But it is historically sure that this closing sentence of our article was especially intended as an expression against Zwingli and his adherents. We know that from Melancthon's correspondence at that time. Philip of Hessa whose sympathies were on the side of Zwingli was opposed to this phrase of rejection, and he tried his best to move those who were to give their signatures to the Confession to strike it out. He wanted to make it possible for Zwingli with his symbolical conception of the Lord's Supper to come in under this article. But neither Melancthon nor the rest of the Lutherans assembled at Augsburg could be persuaded. So Philip of

Hessia yielded. Out of consideration for him the milder term "disapprove" instead of "condemn" (as in Articles I, II, V, VIII, IX, XII, XIII, XVI, XVII, XVIII) was used at this place. But our Lutheran fathers at Augsburg felt that it was their duty not only to state their doctrine, but also to reject the teaching that had been opposed to it by the Swiss reformer and the "Sacramentarians" in general.*

7. Is it right for the Augsburg Confession to reject the teaching of the Reformed churches regarding the Lord's Supper?

a. *What do we understand by the "Reformed" churches, and how do they teach on the Lord's Supper?* By the Reformed churches we understand, in the first place, the Church which took its beginning from the work of Zwingli, but then received its stamp from Calvin. It is the Church of the Heidelberg Catechism. This Church was at an early time transplanted to Holland, to Scotland and to England. In England and Scotland it divided on the question of church government and established itself under the names of the Episcopal, of the Presbyterian and the Congregational churches, with confessions agreeing with the Heidelberg Catechism in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Methodists and the different kinds of Baptists are daughters of the Reformed Church and have the conception of the Heidelberg Catechism in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. What do all these Reformed churches teach on the Lord's Supper? All agree on this: Bread and wine are mere signs of the absent Body and Blood of Christ. Bread and wine

*Later, 1540, in the so-called *altered* Augsburg Confession (*Variata*), after the death of Zwingli, Melancthon eliminated this phrase: "and they disapprove of these who teach otherwise." He also removed the words "truly present" which were a stumbling block to the sympathizers with Zwingli. He must have done it with the view of uniting the Reformed with the Lutherans on the basis of the Augsburg Confession. At first no special objection was made against it. But when at a later time it was found that the followers of Melancthon, who went further than Melancthon himself would have done, were taking steps to sell out to Calvinism, and when they tried to accomplish it under the cover of the altered edition of 1540, then the Lutherans became alarmed, and from now on demanded that the "unaltered" Augsburg Confession, meaning by that the edition of 1530-31, should be accepted.

remind us of the crucified Body and the shed Blood of Christ. It is as if we would look at a painting of the crucified Saviour and be reminded of His death for us. This was as far as Zwingli would go. Calvin and the churches following him went a little further: If our faith is strong enough then it lifts itself up in the power of the Holy Spirit to the right hand of God where Christ's humanity is confined and there we become partakers of His Body and Blood. The Body and Blood of Christ are not present in the Supper, because Body can be only in one place at one time. We can therefore not take part of the Body of Christ orally, but only spiritually through faith. If we come to examine carefully what some of the Reformed Confessions mean by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ we will find that they mean nothing more than to partake of the power of Christ's sufferings and death. In the Lord's Supper we receive substantially the same that we receive already in the Word.

b. *How would we sum up the difference between the Lutheran Church and the Reformed churches on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper?* 1. **The Real Presence.** *The Lutherans* say: The Body and Blood of Christ are present in the Supper, and this heavenly gift can be present, because the humanity of Christ in its glorified condition is like His divinity: omnipresent, omnipotent, etc. *The Reformed* say: Christ according to His humanity is not present in the Supper, because as man He is confined to that one place at the right hand of God, His humanity has no part in the attributes of His divine nature, it is not omnipresent. 2. **The communication.** *The Lutherans* say: Since Body and Blood of Christ are present, the believer needs not to strain himself at the altar, as if to draw down the heavenly gift. If he is spiritually hungry and thirsty, he simply needs to eat and to drink. This is the means of communication. *The Reformed* say: Since the humanity of Christ is far away from the communicant he must make special efforts to bring himself into communion with Christ. The communion becomes the test of a strong faith instead that

it should be the nourishment for a weak faith. 3. **The character of the Sacrament.** *The Lutherans* say: There is an essential difference between a preaching service and a Communion. At the Communion the object, of course, is also the reconciliation of man with God. But in addition to this we have the confirmation of the forgiveness of sins through the Body and Blood of Christ as a pledge and a seal. And in the Communion we come in real contact with Christ as our brother. *The Reformed* say: There is no essential difference between a common religious service and the Communion. In both cases the heavenly gift consists of spiritual influences which must be received by a special exercise of our faith. Very characteristic is the following which is told of a Methodist congregation. On Communion Sundays this congregation always has a weak attendance, because people say: Oh, to-day it is just Communion; we will wait until there is preaching. Quite consistent! If the aim is merely to be reminded of Christ's death and to strengthen our faith in Christ then a preaching service is more helpful than a Communion.

c. Now we will be prepared to answer our question: *Is it right for the Augsburg Confession to reject the teaching of the Reformed churches on the Lord's Supper?* We have seen that the two positions are opposed to each other like Yes and No. They cannot be harmonized into one view. It has been tried many times in history, and it has always failed. If the "German Evangelical Synod of North America" has succeeded in establishing an organization which unites Lutherans and Reformed into one body then it has been done on the basis that the distinguishing points are matters of indifference. This certainly is unfaithfulness to truth. Such position carries with it laxness in Scripture truth in every direction. No, it cannot be otherwise: the Reformed must reject our position and we must reject the position of the Reformed. It is a plain case of Yes and No, both of which cannot dwell together in one conviction. The Augsburg Confession wisely refuses to endorse that middle-of-the-road-policy which has gained favor with many in our day.

When it establishes a doctrine on the basis of the divine Word then it calls the opposing doctrine an error and rejects it.

ARTICLE ELEVEN.

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).

1. What do we understand by auricular Confession?

At the fourth Lateran Synod, 1215, it was decreed that all mortal sins of which a person has knowledge should be confessed to the priest. Not only should the sins be mentioned, but the circumstances under which they have been committed are to be told. With the information thus secured, the priest, as a divinely appointed judge, is to say what steps are to be taken to secure the divine forgiveness.

2. Why does our article reject auricular Confession?

a. "An enumeration of all sins is not necessary." It is not commanded in the Scriptures. The priest has not been appointed by God as a judge over the consciences of men.

b. "For it is impossible, according to the Psalm: 'Who can understand his errors?'" (Ps. 19: 12). We can easily deceive ourselves in judging the nature of our own sins. In Jer. 17: 9 we read: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Neither will it be possible for us always to distinguish between "mortal" and "venial" sins. We cannot accept the artificial distinction of the Roman Church which names seven mortal sins. We say: every sin committed by the unregenerated and by him who is not justified is a mortal sin, and all sins in the regenerated which do away with and nullify justification are mortal sins. An attempt, therefore, at enumerating the mortal sins before a priest will easily be a deceptive practice.

3. What do we understand by private absolution?

We distinguish it from the general confession and absolution which takes place at the preparation of the congregation for the Lord's Supper. Read Article XXV in the second part of our Confession. In private absolution an individual, feeling the burden of special sins or his general sinfulness, comes of his own free will to his pastor seeking spiritual comfort, and the pastor pronounces to him individually the forgiveness of sins.

4. Is private Confession compulsory?

a. The *Scriptures* teach in many places that we must confess our sins (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Ps. 51), but we find no conclusive proof that confession must be made to the spiritual leader of the congregation, as a condition of the forgiveness of sins.

b. *Luther*, who put a very high estimate upon voluntary private confession, took the position that it must not be made compulsory, that we may confess to whomsoever we will, that the all important thing is that we confess to God. From this position Luther never wavered, although he always warmly recommended voluntary private confession. (In Erlangen Edition of Luther's works compare vol. 28, pp. 248, 249, 250, 308; vol. 29, p. 353; vol. 10, p. 401; vol. 23, p. 86.)

c. Our *article* says with precaution "that Private Absolution *ought to be* retained in the churches." That compulsion is here not intended we see from the following words of the Schwabach Articles: "Private Confession should not be forced with laws." And in the eleventh of the Marburg Articles, written by Luther, we read that "Confession, or the seeking of counsel from the pastor or a friend (Nächste) should not be forced, but be free." Since these articles were the sources which Melancthon used for writing our Confession they are suggestive in the interpretation of the article under consideration.

5. Why was private absolution retained in the Lutheran Church?

If private absolution is used aright and care is taken

not to let it degenerate into the auricular confession of the Roman Church it can become a valuable means for promoting the religious life in the congregation. It calls especially for ministers of the right kind. The question is—as Origen said already at the beginning of the third century—whether “high-priest-like-personalities can be found, merciful as Christ and the Apostles.” (Seeberg, *History of Doctrines* I, § 15). Such ministers will remember that it is not within their rights to ask impertinent questions, like a Roman Catholic priest will do. They will remember that as far as duty to confess sins goes, the sinner needs to confess to God alone; but that it is the privilege of those with a troubled conscience to make use of the office of the ministry for counsel and assurance of divine grace. Luther emphasized the thought that one may also make confession to a friend, in accordance with James 5:16: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

ARTICLE TWELVE.

OF REPENTANCE.

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

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

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

This article is directed against four special errors which are enumerated in the last paragraph of our text.

We have a rejection (1) of the Anabaptists; (2) of the Perfectionists; (3) of the Novatians, and (4) of the Romanists. The latter are not mentioned by name. The first paragraph of our article offers the positive doctrine of our Lutheran Church against the Novatians, and in the second paragraph we have the doctrine of repentance as opposed to the Romanists.

1. Can those once justified lose the Holy Ghost?

The Anabaptists denied it. The Schwenkfeldians at the time of the Reformation took the same position. The strict Calvinists also deny that he who has been justified can fall from grace. He may fall into sins, offend the Holy Spirit and wound his conscience and lose the feeling of grace *for a time* (Synod of Dort), but he cannot fall forever. This is in harmony with the doctrine of absolute and unfailing predestination. Our article says: "They (the Lutheran churches) condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that those once justified can lose the Holy Ghost." Such doctrine is clearly against the teaching of the Scriptures. Matt. 26:41: "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 1 Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Cor. 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Gal. 5:4: "Ye are fallen from grace." This matter is further discussed by Luther in the Smalcald Articles in Part III, Article III, line 42, and in the Form of Concord, Article IV, line 31 (second part).

2. What is the teaching of the Perfectionists and what is our attitude toward them?

a. It is the contention "that some may attain to such perfection in this life that they cannot sin." The *Roman Catholic Church*, at the Council of Trent, confirmed the doctrine that the justified can perfectly live up to the commandments of God. The *Methodists* of all kinds emphasize Christian perfection and perfect holiness.

The so-called *Oxford Movement* (Pearsall Smith) stood for this doctrine. Some say that after conversion a second religious experience is to follow which will lead to perfect holiness.

b. To this we answer: The sanctification and the renewal of the believers is a gradual growth, but it will always remain imperfect in this life. Paul says: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3: 12.) And in 1 John 1: 8 we read: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Here the perfectionists like to oppose: While we may have sin, yet we need not to sin; to have sin and to sin are two quite different things. But how will they then answer the 10th verse in the same chapter? It reads: "If we say that we have not *sinned*, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Where in our Confessions do we find more on this subject? See Apology, Article IV, 9; Article VI, 25; Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article XIII, 2; Small Catechism, Part II, Article III; Part III, fifth petition; Part IV, 12. Larger Catechism, Part II, Article III, 57. Fifth petition 86; Form of Concord, First Part, Article VI, 4; Second Part, Article I, 14; Article II, 68, 84; Article III, 23; Article VI, 7, 21.

3. What was the error of the Novatians, and what do we oppose?

a. This sect of the early Church "would not absolve such as had fallen after Baptism, though they returned to repentance." The Novatians stood for absolute purity of the Church. If Christians after their Baptism had fallen into grave sins they were to be excommunicated and not to be admitted again even upon repentance. They should be left to the mercy of God, but the Church should not defile itself with them.

b. The Lutheran Church also stands for excommunication of those who are living in grave sins and are impenitent, according to 1 Cor. 5: 4, 5, 11. Paul says in the 13th verse: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." But at the same time

our Church says in this twelfth article of its Confession "that for those that have fallen after Baptism, there is remission of sins whenever they are converted; and that the Church ought to impart absolution to those thus returning to repentance." This is the plain teaching of the Scriptures. 1 John 1:7 we read: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." The admission of all to repentance is emphasized in the following passages: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11: 28.) "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6: 37.) The Lord "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. 3: 9). And it is utterly against the spirit of the Scriptures that they whom Christ accepts should be excluded from the "Holy Christian Church and the Communion of Saints" where according to Luther's explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed "he daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers"; it is inconceivable that they should remain excluded from the Sacrament of the Altar which was instituted as a means of grace.

4. What part of our article is especially directed against the Roman Catholic Church?

Note the closing words: "They also are rejected who do not teach that remission of sins cometh through faith, but command us to merit grace through satisfactions of our own." With this passage, which plainly reminds us of Article IV, the second paragraph of our article may fittingly be taken together. It is a very valuable definition of what repentance is in the conception of the Lutheran Church.

a. *Of what parts does repentance consist according to Roman Catholic theology?* Of three parts: (1) contrition of the heart; (2) oral confession; (3) satisfaction through good works. Of these, contrition only can be admitted. *What is our objection against the two other parts?* They deprive the penitent sinner of the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and thus of true comfort. If

the genuineness of repentance is to be dependent upon an enumeration of all mortal sins in auricular Confession then the penitent sinner will always have to ask: Did I do *all* my duty? Did I mention *all* sins? Furthermore, if works of satisfaction are part of repentance as the condition of the forgiveness of sins, then he with a troubled conscience will always have to ask: Did I do enough? Were my works sufficient?

b. *What doctrine does our article oppose?* "Now repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which, born of the Gospel, or of absolution, believes that, for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors." Contrition and faith are the two parts of which repentance consists. Read the following passages of Scripture: Luke 18: 13; Ps. 51: 19; Acts 16: 30-31. The other Confessions deal with this subject in the following places: Apology, Article XII. Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article III. Form of Concord, Second Part, Article II, 14. Article V, 7 f.

REMARK.—Good works are excluded from the definition of repentance, because it would lead to work-righteousness. Yet they must follow as our article says: "Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance."

ARTICLE THIRTEEN.

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 do not teach that, in the use of the Sacraments, faith which believes that sins are forgiven, is required.

1. What was ONE purpose for ordaining the Sacraments to be used in the Church?

“To be marks of profession among men.” By using Baptism and Lord’s Supper men will know each other as Christians. He who is not baptized and does not go to the Sacrament of the Altar is no Christian. This was a thought emphasized by Zwingli. To him the Sacraments with their symbolic meaning were chiefly “marks of profession among men.”

2. But for what purpose have the Sacraments been MAINLY instituted?

“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.” *Baptism* is to “awaken” faith in us. It is to us a testimony, a seal and a pledge for the forgiveness of our sins and our regeneration through the Holy Spirit. Through all our life we shall use it for this purpose. The Sacrament of the Altar is to “confirm” faith in us. It is testimony, seal and pledge of the closest communion with our Saviour whose Body and Blood we eat and drink for the remission of sins.

3. What is, therefore, necessary for receiving the benefits of the Sacraments?

“That faith be added to believe the promises which are offered and set forth through the Sacraments.” The Sacrament as such exists independently of faith, but faith is the hand with which we receive the benefit which it offers. Mark 16:16; 1 Cor. 11:26.

4. What view is here condemned?

“That the Sacraments justify by the outward acts,” or “ex opere operato,” as we read in the original. This last paragraph was not in the documents delivered at Augsburg, but was added by Melanchthon when the first edition for print was prepared. It is not in the German copy because this dates from a time when the Confession was not fully finished as we have seen in Part Two of this book. This paragraph is directed against the Roman Catholic Church which says that the Sacraments communicate their benefits to every participant who does not intentionally hinder the operation of grace, faith not

being necessary. In foreign missionary work Roman Catholic missionaries have taken children from their heathen parents, secretly baptizing them, and then reported them as Christians. According to this an idiot would participate with profit in the Holy Communion.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN.

OF ECCLESIASTICAL ORDER.

Of Ecclesiastical Order, they teach, that none should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments, unless he be regularly called.

1. What is the object of this article?

To establish a principle with respect to administering the means of grace, that will secure good order in the Church.

The office of teaching the Word and administering the Sacraments belongs to the Church as a whole. It is not a possession of the bishops only, as the Roman and Greek Catholics say. The congregations, represented in church bodies (synods), co-operate in producing the ministry (theological seminaries). The local congregations have the right to extend the call to their ministers. In addition to this, we believe in the universal priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9). In cases of extreme necessity even laymen can administer Baptism. And to-day we employ our laymen in Sunday schools and all kinds of meetings.

The question now is: How can the Lutherans, when giving such rights to the congregations, maintain the order necessary in the Church of Christ with reference to teaching and administering the Sacraments?

2. What principle is here established?

“That no one should publicly teach in the church or administer the Sacraments, *unless he be regularly called* (nisi rite vocatus).” Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4.

3. What would we consider a regular call to the ministry?

a. We stated that the congregations have the right to call their pastors. But suppose some local congregation should be misled by a worthless individual, would such an one have the right to regard himself as a minister of the Gospel and could he expect to be called by other congregations? Certainly not. This then shows that *as far as the calling to the ministry in general is concerned* there must be other factors to co-operate with the local congregation if anyone is to have the regular call.

b. Not the mere fact that he holds a call from a local congregation makes a man a minister of the Gospel in the Christian Church, but in addition to an inner call, he must have received a training for this office, and during such period of training he must have been tested by teachers and finally must have received the recommendation for an ordination to the ministry, and this ordination must have been carried out by men who had an instruction to do so by a representation of Christian congregations. If the call from a congregation comes as the crowning act upon these preceding acts, then he has the right to teach publicly in the church and to administer the Sacraments.

c. This question is sometimes confused by not distinguishing between the call to the ministry in general and the call to administer the means of grace in a given congregation. If we have in mind the work of a minister in an individual congregation and do not include his recognition by the Church at large then even the fact that the congregation may have been misled in calling him would not make his ministerial acts invalid. Here the principle expressed in Article VIII on the basis of Matt. 23:2 would hold: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat." God will forgive what has been sinned in ignorance. But it would be a dangerous principle to say: Since this man has succeeded in being called by a congregation he is now a regular minister

of the Gospel and can claim the right to be presented to any congregation.

4. But how about the teaching of laymen in our churches?

a. According to the reading of this article, can they who have not been ordained for the ministry teach in Sunday schools and conduct devotional services in Young People's meetings? Note that it here says "that no one should *publicly* teach in the church," etc. By this was meant the public preaching of the Word on Sundays in the pulpit. This is a work that shall be left to the regularly called pastor of the congregation.

b. If an able layman or a theological student in times of vacancy should be called by a congregation to help out temporarily then he would have for such limited time the regular call.

The object is that everything be done "decently and in order" in the Church (I Cor. 14:40).

ARTICLE FIFTEEN.

OF RITES AND USAGES.

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

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

I. What is the aim of this article?

To lay down principles regarding usages in the Church that cannot claim to have a divine commandment to support them. Things that God has clearly commanded in His Word must be observed. There can be no argument

about that. But how with so many things which have come to be usages in the whole Church, or in parts of the Church, on which there may be difference of opinion as to whether they can be demanded or not? For instance, what shall be our attitude toward the order of service (liturgy), toward the question of holydays and festivals (Christmas, Easter, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Pentecost)? The special aim of this article is to lay down principles by which we may be guided.

2. What rites and usages ought to be observed?

Such as "are profitable unto tranquillity and good order in the Church." An institution such as the Church will develop out of its own life and experience a good many things that are helpful for the promotion of good order. A few examples may be cited: It is an order of the Church that a marriage shall be formally solemnized with an appropriate service before the married life begins. The custom of not going to Communion before Confirmation is also an order of the Church. Ordination even does not rest upon a divine command, but it is a most wholesome usage of the Church, helpful to discriminate against those that should not be entrusted with the sacred office. A good Scriptural liturgy, which gives proportion and solemnity to the services of the sanctuary, and helps to edify the worshiping congregation is also an ordinance. Of such, and many other things, we would say that they "ought to be observed."

3. What should be the motives for observing them?

a. They "*are profitable.*" If we take each case by itself we can easily show in what way they are profitable.

b. Parts of Article XXVIII should be studied in connection with this article. There, on page 65 (line 55), we read of the following motive: "It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of *charity* and tranquillity, so far that one do not offend another."

c. Another motive for observing such ordinances of the Church is that they can "*be observed without sin.*"

4. But what should never be the motive for their observance?

“Let men be admonished that consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observance was necessary to salvation.” Beware of making meritorious works of these observances! If we should urge the observance of these things by speaking of them as if they were necessary for salvation then we would burden the consciences. Article XXVIII dwells upon this thought.

5. Does the Sunday also come under the discussion of “Rites and Usages” in the Church?

a. *The Augsburg Confession.* The Sunday is not mentioned in this article, which speaks only of “particular holydays, festivals, and the like.” But in Article XXVIII (page 65, line 53) we read: “What, then, are we to think of the Sunday and like rites in the house of God?” Again: “Of this kind, is the observance of the Lord’s Day, Easter, Pentecost, and like holydays and rites. For those who judge that, by the authority of the Church, the observance of the Lord’s Day, instead of the Sabbath Day, was ordained as a thing necessary, do greatly err. Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath Day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church (the Apostles) designated the Lord’s Day for this purpose; and this day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping neither of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is necessary.” It is admitted (1) that by not observing the day we may make ourselves guilty of the sin of giving “offence to others.” That this must be avoided is repeated three times: “sine offensione aliorum” (without offence to others). The thought always recurs: “It is proper that the churches should keep such ordinances for the sake of charity and tranquillity.” It

is admitted (2) that it is lawful for the authorities of the Church "to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together" for worship, so that "things be done orderly in the Church." But it is insisted upon (3) that the observance of the day is not "necessary to salvation," as it is to be numbered among "the ceremonies of Moses," which have been "abrogated," according to Col. 2:16.

b. *Luther's Larger Catechism* must be taken together with the expositions of Melanchthon in the Augsburg Confession. Luther, in his interpretation of the Third Commandment, says that this commandment "according to its *gross sense* does not pertain to us Christians." The Sabbath "in this gross sense" is numbered among "the other ordinances of the Old Testament," "which have now been made free through Christ." Yet Luther wants the day to be recognized as a day of rest, "first of all for bodily causes and necessities, which nature teaches and requires; and for the common people, man-servants and maid-servants, who are occupied the whole week with their work and trade, that for a day they may forbear, in order to rest and be refreshed." Luther agrees with Melanchthon that an observance of the Lord's Day cannot be based upon the law of Moses. He bases it upon the order of creation. He retains the commandment: "Remember the Sabbath (Feiertag, day of rest) to keep it holy." He asks: "What is meant by keeping it holy?" and he answers: "Nothing else than to be occupied in holy words, works and life. For the day needs so sanctification for itself; for in itself it has been created holy (from the beginning of the creation it was sanctified by its Creator). But God desires it to be holy to thee." The chief thing for Luther is to "sanctify the Sabbath, or Day of Rest," "through God's Word," "so that to this day belongs a special holy exercise." But through this "holy exercise" we shall sanctify the day. Luther says: "Since, therefore, so much depends upon God's Word that without it no Sabbath can be kept holy, we ought to know that God will insist upon a strict observance of this commandment, and will punish

all who despise His Word and are not willing to hear and learn it, especially at the time appointed for the purpose."

6. What rites and usages are positively to be excluded from observance?

We read in our Article XV: "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." For an illustration of what here is meant read Article XXVI.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN.

OF CIVIL AFFAIRS.

1. What are the leading thoughts of this article?

- a. Civil government is a divine institution.
- b. It is right to hold property.
- c. Marriage is a state pleasing to God.

2. What does our Church teach on civil government?

a. "That it is right for Christians to bear civil office." Compare Apology, Article XVI; Form of Concord, First Part, Article XII, 12, etc.; Second Part, Article XII, 17. In Romans 13:1 we read: "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." The *Anabaptists* taught that among Christians there was no government necessary. The *Quakers* forbid their members to bear civil office because of the danger of compromising their principles with respect to war, oath, etc. The *Mennonites* take the same position. The *Reformed Presbyterians* (Covenanters) say that a Christian cannot bear civil office, unless the constitution of the government recognizes God as the source of all power.

b. It is right for Christians "to sit as judges, to determine matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments." The "existing laws" of a country are not always identical with the divine laws. They cannot be. The divine laws as contained in the Holy Scriptures, in many cases, have to express the Christian ideal, while the laws of a civil government, under the existing conditions of society, cannot go above the level of general ethics. For instance, the divorce laws of a country cannot be confined to the same as what the Scriptures admit as grounds for a divorce. But then the question comes: Can a Christian be a judge and determine matters by the "existing laws"? According to our article, he can. He need only be "just." The Lutheran Church does not believe in a theocracy such as Calvin endeavored to establish in Geneva, and Knox had intended for Scotland. Lutheranism has always stood for a separation between Church and state.

c. It is also right for Christians "to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers." This follows from Romans 13:1. Read Article XVI in the Apology.

d. Our article teaches obedience to the government: "Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws." Paul taught obedience to the government even though a Nero was on the throne. According to Romans 13 we must be subject to the "powers that be." An evil government is better than no government. It is characteristic of the Lutheran Church that she has always been opposed to revolution. In this Lutherans differ from the Reformed people who have always been quick to take up arms against the government. Our article says that we are only justified in not obeying the government when it commands us to sin, "for then we ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29.)

3. What does this article say on the question of holding property?

It is right for Christians "to make legal contracts, to hold property." This is opposed to the manifold

forms of communism. Melancthon says in Article XVI of the Apology: "For Scripture does not command that property be common, but the Law of the Decalogue, when it says (Ex. 20: 15): 'Thou shalt not steal,' distinguishes rights of ownership, and commands each one to hold what is his own."

4. What does our article say on the state of marriage?

That it is right for Christians "to marry, to be given in marriage." The further exposition of this part of our article is found in Article XXIII of our Confession, and also in Article XXIII of the Apology. There all passages of Scripture bearing on this subject are quoted. The Roman Catholic Church regarded the married life as an inferior state and therefore demanded celibacy for the priests. The Lutheran Church takes the position that the Christian virtues shall be exercised in the state of marriage.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN.

CHRIST'S RETURN TO JUDGMENT.

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

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

This article closes the body of doctrines treated in the Augsburg Confession. The following three articles are supplementary: XVIII and XIX to Article II, and XX to Articles IV and VI. The last article of the first part of the Confession (XXI on Invocation of Saints) prepares for the articles of the second part on abuses.

1. What is taught concerning Christ's coming at the consummation of the world?

a. "Christ shall appear." It means that He shall appear *visibly*. In Acts 1:11 we read: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

b. He "shall appear for judgment." John 5:22: "For the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son." And, referring to the thought in Article III, we emphasize that Christ will hold judgment according to both of His natures. We have no right here to divide Christ and say, as the Reformed do, that He will be judge only according to His divine nature. In John 5:27 we read: "And (the Father) hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." The opponents to the doctrine of Christ's return to judgment are the Swedenborgians, the Unitarians, the Universalists, the Independent Protestants of Cincinnati, etc., and the Christian Scientists.

2. What is the teaching of this article concerning those to be judged?

a. Christ "shall raise up all the dead." It is interesting to observe that in a former draft of our Confession Melancthon had written "that all deceased men shall be raised up with the same body in which they died." This he changed before the delivery of the Confession to the present reading. It reminds us of the discussion there has been on the question, whether we should speak of a resurrection of the body, or of the flesh. The Apostles' Creed, in the original, had "flesh." Luther translated it into the German with "Fleisch" (*Auferstehung des Fleisches*). In English the word "body" (resurrection of the *body*) has been employed. The Nicene Creed simply speaks of the "resurrection of the dead." In the Apology Melancthon used precisely the words of our article: "and shall raise up all the dead." In his Large Catechism (p. 446, Book of Concord) Luther writes on this as follows: "But the

term *Auferstehung des Fleisches* (resurrection of the flesh) here employed is not according to good German idiom. For when we Germans hear the word *Fleisch* (flesh), we think no farther than the shambles. But in good German idiom we would say *Auferstehung des Leibs*, or *Leichnahms* (resurrection of the body). Yet it is not a matter of much moment, if we only understand the words in their true sense." But what is their true sense? In the Form of Concord, Part Two, Article II, p. 548, we read: "In the article of resurrection, Scripture testifies that it is precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, which will rise again, and that in eternal life we will have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin." In Isaiah 26:19 we read: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dust."

b. There will be the two classes: (1) "the godly and elect" to whom shall be given "eternal life and everlasting joys," and (2) the "ungodly men and the devils" who shall be condemned and tormented without end. This stumbling block of the Universalists and the Unitarians is brought to an unequivocal expression, because it is the unmistakable teaching of the Scriptures in many places; John 5:29; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46.

c. "They condemn the Anabaptists who think that there will be an end to the punishments of the condemned men and devils." That in the end all will be saved was taught for the first time by the Church father, Origen. Some Universalists believe that there will be in the future world a punishment for a time, but that it will be a mere process of purification and that all will be saved in the end. Others again (Adventists and Russellites) believe that the wicked will in the end be annihilated. The word "eternal," in Matthew 25:41, is opposed to this.

3. What is the attitude of this article to Chiliasm?

"They condemn also others, who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions that, before the resurrection of

the dead, the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed (exterminated)." The word chiliasm is derived from the number 1000 in Greek, which is *chilioi*. The chiliasm here rejected is that interpretation of some obscure passages of Scripture to the effect that Christ shall reign on this earth in a visible manner, for a thousand years, over the saints of the first resurrection, and that this visible and earthly kingdom shall destroy the enemies of God. This strange doctrine which grew on Jewish soil is at war with other clear passages of Scripture, with the analogy of faith, or the "proportion of faith," according to Romans 12:6, and is, therefore, rejected by our Confession.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN.

OF FREE WILL.

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

For, although nature is able in some sort to do the outward

work (for it is able to keep the hands from theft and murder), yet it cannot work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc.

I. If this article was placed in the Confession for the purpose of supplementing Article II, on Original Sin, then we ask: Where is the connecting link between these two articles?

In Article II we learned of man's total depravity. That naturally raises the question as to his free will *after the fall*. We want to know in particular whether man can effect his salvation in his own natural powers, or whether he can do it with the aid of the Holy Spirit, or whether it is the work of the Holy Spirit altogether.

REMARK.—In discussing man's free will, four different viewpoints can be taken, says the Form of Concord in an introduction to Article II. We can ask (1) How it was with man's free will before the fall; (2) how since the fall and before regeneration; (3) how after regeneration; and, finally, (4) how after the resurrection from the dead. Here in this article the discussion is exclusively from the second viewpoint: *in what condition is man's free will since the fall and before regeneration?*

How can we divide this article for a profitable discussion of what it teaches of the condition of man's will since the fall and before regeneration?

The doctrinal contents of this article deal with two leading questions: (1) What *can* the unregenerated do by means of his own natural powers? (2) What is he unable to do before he is regenerated? Then follows (3) the rejection of the opponents.

I. WHAT CAN THE UNREGENERATE DO BY MEANS OF HIS OWN NATURAL POWERS?

Our article says, stating the condition in a general way: "That man's will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness, and for the choice of things subject to reason." Before conversion, then, man is free in **external things**, in "outward work," in "things subject to reason." Here he can choose between alternatives. The world will hold him responsible for his acts. He is a personality which cannot be without a free will

in external things subject to reason. But this article makes a distinction between things exclusively external and things that are external in the moral life of man:

1. **Things exclusively external.** Text: to have a will to "labor in the field, to eat and drink, to have a friend, to clothe oneself, to build a house, to marry, to keep cattle, to learn divers arts or whatsoever good pertains to this life." Into this class, says Quenstedt, belong also such things "as pertain to the external government and discipline of the Church, such as to teach and hear the Word of God, to observe certain ceremonies, to give and receive the Sacraments, and similar external works, affecting the external senses.

REMARK.—Yet do not overlook the word "some" ("man's will has *some* liberty"). Even in these altogether external things man cannot act independently of Divine Providence. We read in the text: "none of which things are without dependence on the providence of God; yea, of Him and through Him they are and have their beginning."

2. **Things that are external in the moral life of man.** Our article mentions "civil righteousness" (German: "aeusserlich ehrbar zu leben," translated: outwardly to lead an honest life); it also speaks of "evil things," "works as to have a will to worship an idol, to commit murder," etc. Man "is able to keep his hands from theft and murder." In these things, also, which are not morally indifferent, even the unregenerated man has the choice of alternatives. Of course, if we say that a man has a free will to do the good, we must be careful that by "good" we do not understand the things pertaining to salvation. It is only a "civil righteousness." In the Apology it is called a "righteousness of works," also a "righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, i. e., reason by itself without the Holy Ghost, renders." Scripture also calls it a "righteousness of the Law," because reason and observation tell man that there is misery in the way of the transgressor. This civil righteousness can even go together with an hatred of Christ. Dr. Baugher, in his lecture on our article in the first series of the Holman Lectures tells a significant little

story, of a man whose life was so exemplary that everyone wondered why he did not become a member of the Church. He seemed to be such in every thing except the profession. And when that man lay upon his dying bed and was asked by the ambassador of Christ, under whose ministrations he had so often sat, what do you think of Christ? the poor man, with conscious knowledge of his own heart and with rare candor, replied: "I hate Him!" (Hol. Lect., First Series, pp. 711-712.)

REMARK.—But here also (regarding civil righteousness and what is the opposite of it) we do not want to overlook the phrase "that man's will has *some liberty*" (Latin: "aliquam libertatem;" German, "etlichermassen") and that he has only a "*certain freedom*." As reason is given in the Apology that "the power of concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, as Paul says (Eph. 2:2), does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offences." (Book of Concord, p. 230) And the phrases "*some liberty*," "*some freedom*" have reference also to the "evil" things. God does not always permit an evil intention to become a deed, especially in cases where it would thwart the plans of His government. Illustrations are: Abimelech (Gen. 20:6), Laban (Gen. 31:24), Balaam (Num. 22:12).

II. WHAT IS MAN UNABLE TO DO BEFORE HE IS REGENERATED?

In one respect the will of man after the fall and before regeneration is not free. We read in our article: "Nevertheless, it has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God, that is **spiritual righteousness**, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14); but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word." "Nature . . . cannot work the inward motions, such as the fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience," etc.

I. Do these words from the pen of Melancthon agree with Luther's interpretation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed? The words of the Catechism are: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason and 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," etc. Here man's conversion appears exclusively as the work of the Holy Spirit. Does not this eighteenth article of our Confession admit more with respect to man's part in the process of conversion? When this article says that man's will has no power *without* the Holy Ghost does not that mean: the will has such power *with* the Holy Ghost? The German text reads: "Aber ohne Gnad, *Hilfe* und Wirkung des Heiligen Geistes," etc.; i. e., translated into English: "Without grace, *help* and Wirkung of the Holy Ghost man cannot become pleasing before God." How are we to harmonize this language with the words of Luther?

a. We answer first: This Article XVIII of the Augsburg Confession also teaches unmistakably that man's conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit: "This righteousness *is wrought* in the heart when the Holy Ghost is received through the Word." German: "Denn solches *geschieht* durch den heiligen Geist." Latin: "Sed haec *fit* in cordibus."

b. But by so teaching our article does, of course, not deny that it is and must be man's own will which is subjected to the divine influences, and that the decision in conversion is *through* (not by the power of) this will.

c. The word "help," (*Hilfe*) in the German text, will impress us differently when we keep in mind that the three words there employed (*Gnad, Hilfe und Wirkung*) present a gradation, a climax from the general to the specific. First grace in general; then help, assistance, which already is more specific; finally "*Wirkung*," which is difficult to translate into English with the full meaning of the German. The Lexicon gives "operation," but it means more. *Wirkung* is not merely *Wirken*, operation; it means the result of an operation, something that has been effected, *Bewirktes*. So we have in those three words (grace, help, *Wirkung*) a gradation, and it is the last word that receives the emphasis. The fact remains that the will of the natural man is unable to *effect* spiritual righteousness. This is done by a decisive influence (*Wirkung*) of the Holy Ghost.

2. Does the Form of Concord (Article II) go materially beyond the Augustana in the doctrine of Free-Will? We know that it is more outspoken, and that it takes pains in guarding against misinterpretations of this doctrine, which is to be explained by the experiences of Lutheranism in the synergistic controversies in the post-Reformation age, *but does the Form of Concord offer a new doctrine?*

a. The Form of Concord teaches that there are only two efficient causes of conversion, namely, the Holy Ghost and the Word (580, 12). Man's will must not be co-ordinated as a third cause (569, 90), as was done by Melanchthon in his *Examen Ordinandorum*. Conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal belong alone to the Holy Ghost and the Word of God as the instrument, "not to the human powers of the natural free will, either entirely, or half, or the least or most inconsiderable part" (557, 25). This is not irreconcilable with Article XVIII of our Confession.

b. The Form of Concord, quoting Luther, says "that man's will is in his conversion purely passive" (499, 18; 569, 89). Even this phrase is not against the doctrine of our article. If the spiritual righteousness is "wrought in our heart," and if it is a "Wirkung" of the Holy Ghost, who "renews and purifies us," and if it is God who "imparts life and motion" (Melanchthon's *Scholia on Colossians*), then man's will is passive in the act of conversion.

c. The Form of Concord approves of Luther's strong and drastic expressions that in conversion "man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue" (556, 20). This has often given offence, but there was no intention with these expressions to say that in conversion God does not act with man as with a personal being. The Form of Concord says again: "God has . . . a way of working in a man, as in a rational creature, quite different from His way of working in another creature that is irrational or is a stone and block" (564, 62). Therefore the Holy Ghost "effects conversion, not without means, but uses for this

purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word. Rom. 1:16; 10:17" (497, 4). It is "through the heard Word" that God's Spirit "lays hold upon man's will" (500, 20). God draws man "in such a way that his understanding, in place of darkened, becomes enlightened, and his will, in place of perverse, becomes obedient" (564, 60). If man is, with the words of Luther, compared to a "pillar of salt," to "a log and a stone," then such is a description of the spiritual death in which grace finds him: "For man neither sees nor perceives the fierce and terrible wrath of God on account of his sin and death, but he continues even knowingly and willingly in his security . . . and no prayers, no supplications, no admonitions, yea, also no threats, no reprimands are of any avail; yea, all teaching and preaching are lost upon him, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Ghost" (556, 21). But while man can "of himself and of his own natural powers" contribute to his own conversion or regeneration "as little as a stone or a block of clay" (556, 24), yet God's work in man is "not as a statue is cut in a stone or a seal impressed into wax, which knows nothing of it" (569, 89), but it is through a "drawing of the Holy Ghost, that God changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men" (569, 88). This is not opposed to the teaching of Article XVIII in the Confession. Even the expression: "It (man's will) has no power, without the Holy Ghost, to work the righteousness of God," etc. (at the beginning of Article XVIII) has its parallels in the Form of Concord, for instance, when it says, 498, 6: "For, without His grace, and if He do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says (John 15:5): 'Without me ye can do nothing.'"*

*Passages of Scripture confirming our article are these: 1 Cor. 2:14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. John 6:44: No man can come unto me except the father which hath sent me draw him. 1 Cor. 12:3: No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 7:18: For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; etc. Also, 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13.

So our conclusion is that in the Form of Concord (Article II) there is no doctrine of Free Will materially different from that in Article XVIII of the Confession. It is the original Lutheran doctrine of God as the sole cause of man's conversion, fortified, of course, against the objections of Melanchthon's later views. It may be admitted that already before 1530 (after the controversy of Luther with Erasmus, 1525) Melanchthon began to develop in the direction of Synergism, but the specifically synergistic doctrine of the three concurring causes in conversion (Word, Holy Spirit and man's will assenting to and not resisting) was not yet put into the Confession at the time of its delivery at Augsburg.

III. WHO ARE THE OPPONENTS OF THIS ARTICLE?

Our text reads: "They (the Lutheran churches) 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.'"

1. "The Pelagians." We read of them in Article II of Original Sin. As they believe that man is born without sin so they also believe that man's will is free in spiritual things and that he, in case that he should leave God, could turn to Him again out of his own spiritual powers. There is no sect to-day known under the name of Pelagians, but Pelagianism permeates all churches that are Socinian or rationalistic in character. The Unitarians, the Independent Protestants of Cincinnati, etc., the Universalists, the Campbellites, the Swedenborgians, are Pelagian in doctrine. And the ideas of Pelagianism are being disseminated in the literature of our day and in the public institutions of learning. Pelagianism is in a special sense the religion of the natural man.

2. "The Pelagians and others." The Romanists were Semi-pelagians, which means that they believe man, endowed with a free will in spiritual things, to be the principal factor in the process of conversion, the Holy

Spirit merely aiding. This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church up to our day. So the Greek Catholic Church also teaches. In the Reformed Church, as a reaction against the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, Arminianism arose, which, after the death of its founder, became practically Semi-pelagianism. The Free-Will Baptists are Arminianistic in principle. The Methodists seem to take a different position (according to Article VIII of their Articles of Faith), but their revival meetings show that in practice they are Arminians. The same is to be said of the Evangelical Association, the Quakers, the Seventh Day Adventists.

REMARK.—In the Lutheran Church, Melancthon, the writer of the Augsburg Confession himself, at a later time, began to emphasize more than he first had done, man's will as a factor in the process of conversion. He gave some expression to it in his so-called altered edition of the Augsburg Confession of 1540, as he had already done in a new edition of his Loci. But this "synergism," as it was styled, did not receive an abiding place in the Lutheran Church. It was rejected in Article II of the Form of Concord. See pp. 498 (line 11) and 567 (line 77). What is the difference between Roman Semi-pelagianism and Melancthonian Synergism? The answer to this question cannot be made clearer than by the following two brief paragraphs in the first part of the Form of Concord: 1. "We reject also the error of the Semi-pelagians, who teach that man, by his own powers, can make a beginning of his conversion, but without the grace of the Holy Ghost cannot complete it." 2. "Also that when it is taught that, although man by his free will before regeneration, is too weak to make a beginning, and by his own powers, to turn itself to God, and in heart to be obedient to God; yet, if the Holy Ghost, by the preaching of the Word, has made a beginning, and offered therein His grace, then the will of man, *from its own natural powers*, to a certain extent, although feebly, *can add, help and co-operate therewith, can qualify and prepare itself for grace, and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel.*" The concessions to man's free will, in this second paragraph, seem to be insignificant. Yet they have introduced a type of preaching which is at variance with the spirit of Lutheranism. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

ARTICLE NINETEEN.

THE CAUSE OF SIN.

Of the Cause of Sin, they teach, that although God doth create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of

the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says (John 8:44): "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own."

1. Why was this article put into the Confession?

Dr. Eck had among his charges one in which he accused the Lutherans of making God the cause of sin. This was based on some expressions bordering on absolute predestination, which Luther had used in his controversy with Erasmus. The natural place to treat of this matter is here, following the article of Free Will. From the assertion that man has no free will in spiritual things, as it was made in Article XVIII, it could easily be inferred that God has created him in such a condition. And this gives us the connecting link between this nineteenth article and Article II of Original Sin. For this article also is to supplement Article II. We discover the theme of this article by asking the following question:

2. If original sin "is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death," and if "all men . . . are born with" sin, must sin then not be charged to the Creator?

No. For God did not create man with sin. This Manichean doctrine was already condemned in Article II, because it dates original sin not from man's creation, but from "the fall of Adam." Sin has come in with the fall. It does therefore not belong to the *substance* of human nature. This Manichean error, to which even the strict Lutheran Matthias Flacius fell a victim, is dealt with in Article I of the Form of Concord. The following passages of Scripture taken together teach that man was not created sinful: 1 John 1:5: God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Job. 10:8: Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about. Gen. 1:27: So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him. Man's nature is not sin, but sinful. "Much as one may suffer from diphtheria or typhoid fever, no one can be said to be either of these diseases" (Dr. Jacobs). We must

not identify nature with the vicious quality of sin. Sin is like the mildew on bread.

3. But why does God preserve sinful nature?

Does not that show that He wills the existence of sin? It is not sin that God preserves or intends to preserve, but human nature, the person. It is possible for the sinner to be cleansed of his sin. So, also, regarding man's creation, there was the possibility of his fall. But that did not keep God from creating man. The possibility of man's falling into sin was included in God's plan of redemption. This explains also His preservation of sinful humanity. If the sinner is the object of God's preservation, and if, according to our old dogmaticians, we can even speak of a certain concurrence of God regarding the sinful acts of men, (compare Article XVIII, exposition I, 2, note, at the close) even this does not make God the cause of sin. "If the murderer raises his hand, then the strength is from God, but in the sin itself God has no part." Compare here what our dogmaticians taught concerning "Permission," "Hindrance," "Direction," "Determinism."

4. What is the cause of sin?

Our article says: "The cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, the devil and ungodly men." The possibility of sinning was in the nature of the will, in the fact that man is a personality. If God had created animals, plants or minerals instead of man, there would have been no possibility of a fall. But He created angels and man, who could use their will in choosing the wrong.

5. How did the fall of man take place?

a. The will of the devil is mentioned first. This is the first cause of sin. The temptation by the devil accounts for the fall of man and for the condition of his will which becomes, in a secondary way, the cause of actual sins.

b. But how does the choice of sin on the part of man take place? Here this article has a phrase which

is not easy to understand, namely: "which will, *unaided of God*, turneth itself from God." This means that God did not put anything into the will that in the moment of temptation caused the decision to fall in the fatal direction. The difficulty is not so much with the Latin text, of which our English is a translation, as it is with the German text, which reads: "So Gott die Hand abgetan," which in English is: when God withdrew His hand, or, "which, as soon as divine aid is withdrawn, turneth from God unto evil." The meaning seems to be that in man's temptation there are moments "when God withdraws His hand," when man is left to decide for himself. The meaning is, that God does not decide for man, and does not annihilate the tempter before he approaches. This has the confirmation of Scripture, in 2 Chron. 32:31, where we read of Hezekiah: "God left him to try him that he might know all that was in his heart." So the German text supplements the Latin in a very suggestive manner. The Latin, of which our English text is a translation, makes the negative statement, that God in no wise aids in the sinful act; the German adds the thought, that this should not be interpreted as God exempting man from the test in the smelting-furnace of temptation.

ARTICLE TWENTY.

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 holydays, 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 toler-

able 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 yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works," etc.

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

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

Heretofore consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works, nor did they hear any consolation from the Gospel. Some persons were driven by conscience into the desert, into monasteries, hoping there to merit grace by a monastic life.

Some also devised other works whereby to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins. There was very great need to treat of and renew this doctrine of faith in Christ, to the end that anxious consciences should not be without consolation, but that they might know that grace and forgiveness of sins and justification are apprehended by faith in Christ.

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

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

Furthermore, it is taught on our part, that it is necessary to do good works, not that we should trust to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. It is only by faith that forgiveness of sins and grace are apprehended. And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. For Ambrose says: "Faith is the mother of a good will and right doing." For man's powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God's sight. Besides, they are in the power of the devil, who impels men to divers sins, to ungodly opinions, to open crimes. This we may see in the philosophers, who, although they endeavored to live an honest life, could not succeed, but were defiled with many open crimes. Such is the feebleness of man, when he is without faith and without the Holy Ghost, and governs himself only by human strength.

Hence it may be readily seen that this doctrine is not to be charged with prohibiting good works, but rather the more to be commended, because it shows how we are enabled to do good works. For without faith, human nature can in no wise do the works of the First or of the Second Commandment. Without faith, it does not call upon God, nor expect anything from Him, nor bear the cross; but seeks and trusts in man's help. And thus, when there is no faith and trust in God, all manner of lusts and human devices rule in the heart. Where-

fore Christ said [John 15: 5]: "Without me ye can do nothing," and the Church sings:

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

This article is a further exposition of Articles IV and VI, here added for the purpose of meeting the persistent objection of the Romanists, that the doctrine of Justification quenches the striving after righteousness of life. We shall give this longest of all articles of the first part of our Confession in the form of an outline as we find it in a little book on the Augsburg Confession written in German for laymen, by a layman (a major of a city in Germany), who was so modest that he did not even give his name. This little book of 104 pages was published in Heidelberg (Germany) by Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung. The outline is as follows:

I. The accusation that the doctrine of justification by faith kills the striving after righteousness of life is false, because it is manifest that the writings of Luther and his brethren have given a new impulse even to the preaching of the opponents who now lay more emphasis upon the things which the Word of God demands concerning the daily life of the Christian, in place of the unnecessary things that were preached before (on holy-days, fasts, pilgrimages, the use of rosaries, etc.)

II. The Roman doctrine concerning works is false and harmful for the following *four reasons*:

1. *It casts contempt upon Christ*, and man invents a way of his own for salvation, notwithstanding Christ has said: I am the way (John 14: 6).

2. *It leaves the troubled conscience without comfort and peace* ("Heretofore consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works," etc).

3. *It leaves out of consideration that without faith and outside of Christ and without the Holy Ghost, we are too weak to do works pleasing to God*: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5).

4. *In connection with it is held that faith signifies "merely the knowledge of the history, such as it is in the ungodly and the devil."*

III. Over against these negative statements our article asserts in a more positive way the following three things:

1. This doctrine is *divinely true*, because

(a) It is taught in the Gospel, especially by Paul. Eph. 2: 8.

(b) It is the old doctrine "supported by the testimonies of the fathers." Augustine and Ambrose are quoted.

2. This doctrine is *necessary*, because

(a) It represents the most fundamental thing in Christianity;

(b) It gives peace to the timid and terrified consciences ("But although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, nevertheless," etc.);

(c) It does not lose sight of the essence of faith, which is confidence in God, and the trust that in Christ we have the forgiveness of sins.

3. *This is a safe doctrine*,

(a) Because on the one hand it teaches us about real good works, *not* that we should put our trust in them and try to merit grace, *but* that by doing them we should honor and glorify God;

(b) Because, on the other hand, we are taught that God *not only* wants such works, *but also* that through faith He gives us the Holy Ghost who endows us with strength to lead a holy life.

Conclusion: For all these reasons the opponents ought to praise this doctrine of faith and should not undertake to persecute those who have accepted it.

ARTICLE TWENTY-ONE.

OF THE WORSHIP OF 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 Christ, as the only Mediator, Propitiation, High-Priest and Intercessor. He is to be prayed to, and hath promised that He will hear our prayer; and this worship He approves above all to wit, that in all afflictions He be called upon (1 John 2:1): "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," etc.

The author of this book delivered the Holman lecture in the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., in the spring of 1909, on this article, and he takes the liberty of referring the reader, who is looking for an extensive treatment of this article, to that lecture, which was published in the *Lutheran Quarterly* of July, 1909. We shall confine ourselves here to a brief outline.

This article discriminates between a true and a false veneration of the saints. The first is commanded, the second is rejected.

I. The true veneration of saints consists in this, that we shall

1. Remember them for the strengthening of our faith;
2. That their good works shall be an example to us for imitation.

II. The false veneration consists in this, that men call on the saints in prayer and make them mediators before God.

1. This is not commanded in Scripture, nor can it be substantiated by Scripture, because there we are led to Christ.

2. There is no divine promise that such prayer shall be heard.

Passages of Scripture bearing on this subject: Heb. 13:7; James 5:10; Matt. 4:10; Acts 10:25, 26; Rev. 19:10; Isaiah 63:16; John 14:13; John 5:22, 23; Ps. 50:15.

THE CLOSING PARAGRAPH TO THE FIRST TWENTY-ONE ARTICLES, OR THE DOCTRINAL PART OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION :

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 should be regarded as heretics. The disagreement, however, is on certain abuses, which have crept into the Church without rightful authority. And even in these, if there were some difference, there should be proper lenity on the part of bishops to bear with us by reason of the Confession which we have now drawn up; because even the Canons are not so severe as to demand the same rights 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.

How can our Confession say that in the articles which have been treated "there is nothing that varies from the Scriptures, or from the church Catholic, or from the church of Rome as known from its writers"?

1. We believe, of course, that *the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession agree with the Scriptures.*

2. *But does our Confession agree with the "Church Catholic," and the "Church of Rome"?* Melancthon, speaking of the "Church Catholic," did not mean the opponents of the Lutherans. He took the position that the Lutherans were the true representatives of the Catholic Church, and that their opponents, such as the Pope, Dr. Eck and all who were now persecuting the cause of the Gospel, were out of harmony with the

true Catholic Church. The aim all through the Confession has been to show that the Lutherans had not departed from the true Catholic Church. When Melancthon spoke of the "Church of Rome" and claimed agreement with it, he meant by that, such writers as Augustine, Ambrose, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Saint Bernard. He meant the Roman Church before it was corrupted by the abuses of which he was going to speak in the second part of the Confession. That Melancthon in this statement was too optimistic as to the evangelical teaching of even these "writers" must be admitted. We know to-day that the "writers" which Melancthon had in mind, some of which he had quoted in different articles of the first part of the Confession, were far from being in entire accord with the doctrinal system of the Lutheran Church.

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 omit some Abuses which are new, and which have been erroneously accepted by fault of the times, contrary to the intent of the Canons, we pray that Your Imperial Majesty would graciously hear both what has been changed, and also what were the reasons, in order that the people be not compelled to observe those abuses against their conscience. Nor should Your Imperial Majesty believe those, who, in order to excite the hatred of men against our part, disseminate strange slanders among our people. Having thus excited the minds of good men, they have first given occasion to this controversy, and now endeavor, by the same arts, to increase the discord. For Your Imperial Majesty will undoubtedly find that the form of doctrine and of ceremonies with us, is not so intolerable as these ungodly and malicious men represent. Furthermore, the truth cannot be gathered from common rumors, or the revilings of our enemies. But it can readily be judged that nothing would serve better to maintain the dignity of worship, and to nourish reverence and pious devotion among the people than that the ceremonies be rightly observed in the churches.

ARTICLE XXII.

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 example of the Church. Therefore if any preferred to use both kinds of the sacrament, they ought not to have been compelled with offence 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.

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

concerning this matter, was almost killed in the tumult raised by the enraged priests. And so harsh was the dealing in the matter that not only were marriages forbidden for the time to come, but also existing marriages were torn asunder, contrary to all laws, divine and human, contrary even to the Canons themselves, made not only by the Popes but by most celebrated Councils.

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

But while the commandment of God is in force, while the custom of the Church is well known, while impure celibacy causes many scandals, adulteries, and other crimes deserving the punishments of just magistrates, yet it is a marvellous thing that in nothing is more cruelty exercised than against the marriage of priests. God has given commandment to honor marriage. By the laws of all well-ordered commonwealths, even among the heathen, marriage is most highly honored. But now men, and also priests, are cruelly put to death, contrary to the intent of the Canons, for no other cause than marriage. Paul [in 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; at least, they should give no offence 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.

Falsely are our churches accused of Abolishing the Mass; for the Mass is retained on our part, and celebrated with the highest reverence. All the usual ceremonies are also preserved, save that the parts sung in Latin are interspersed here and there with German hymns, which have been added to teach the people. For ceremonies are needed to this end alone, that the unlearned be taught. And not only has Paul commanded to use in the Church a language understood by the people [1 Cor. 14: 2, 9], but it has also been so ordained by man's law.

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

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

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

There was also added the opinion which infinitely increased Private Masses, namely, that Christ, by His passion, had made satisfaction for original sin, and instituted the Mass wherein an offering should be made for daily sins, venial and mortal. From this has arisen the common opinion that the Mass taketh away the sins of the living and the dead, by the outward act. Then they began to dispute whether one Mass said for many were worth as much as special Masses for individuals, and this brought forth that infinite multitude of Masses. Concerning these opinions our teachers have given warning, that they depart from the Holy Scriptures and diminish the glory of the

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

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

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

Forasmuch, therefore, as the Mass with us has the example of the Church, taken from the Scripture and the Fathers, we are confident that it cannot be disapproved, especially since the public ceremonies are retained for the most part, like those hitherto in use; only the number of Masses differs, which, because of very great and manifest abuses, doubtless might be profitably reduced. For in olden times, even in churches, most frequented, the Mass was not celebrated every day, as the Tripartite History (Book 9, chapt. 33) testifies: "Again in Alexandria, every Wednesday and Friday, the Scriptures are read, and the doctors expound them, and all things are done, except only the celebration of the Eucharist."

ARTICLE XXV.

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

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

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

The ancient writers also testify that an enumeration is not necessary. For, in the Decrees, Chrysostom is quoted, who thus says: "I say not to thee, that thou shouldest disclose thyself in public, nor that thou accuse thyself before others, but I would have thee obey the prophet who says: 'Disclose thy way before God.' Therefore confess thy sins before God, the true Judge, with prayer. Tell thine errors, not with the tongue, but with the memory of thy conscience." And the Gloss ("Of Repentance," *Distinct. 7, Cap. Consideret*) admits that Confession of human right only. Nevertheless, on account of the great benefit of absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience, Confession is retained among us.

ARTICLE XXVI.

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

persuasion concerning traditions, much detriment has resulted in the Church.

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

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

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

We see that the summists and theologians gather the traditions together, and seek mitigations whereby to ease consciences, and yet they do not succeed in releasing them, but sometimes entangle consciences even more. And with the gathering of these traditions, the schools and sermons have been so much occupied that they have had no leisure to touch upon Scripture, and to seek the more profitable doctrine of faith, of the cross, of hope, of the dignity of civil affairs, of consolation of sorely tried consciences. Hence Gerson, and some other theologians, have griev-

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

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

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

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

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

Moreover, they teach, that every Christian ought to exercise

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

Nevertheless, very many traditions are kept on our part, which conduce to good order in the Church, as the Order of Lessons in the Mass, and the chief holydays. But, at the same time, men are warned that such observances do not justify before God, and that, in such things, it should not be made sin, if they be omitted without scandal. Such liberty in human rites was not unknown to the Fathers. For in the East they kept Easter at another time than at Rome, and when, on account of this diversity, the Romans accused the Eastern Church of schism, they were admonished by others that such usages need not be alike everywhere. And Irenæus 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 holydays, but to preach godliness and a holy life."

ARTICLE XXVII.

What is taught on our part, concerning Monastic Vows, will be better understood, if it be remembered what has been the state of the monasteries, and how many things were daily done in those very monasteries, contrary to the Canons. In Augustine's time, they were free associations. Afterward, when discipline was corrupted, vows were everywhere added for the purpose of restoring discipline, as in a carefully planned prison. Gradually, many other observances were added besides vows. And these fetters were laid upon many before the lawful age, contrary to the Canons. Many also entered into this kind of life through ignorance, being unable to judge their own strength, though they were of sufficient age. Being thus ensnared, they were compelled to remain, even though some could have been freed by the provision of the Canons. And this was more the

case in convents of women than of monks, although more consideration should have been shown the weaker sex. This rigor displeased many good men before this time, who saw that young men and maidens were thrown into convents for a living, and what unfortunate results came of this procedure, and what scandals were created, what snares were cast upon consciences! They were grieved that the authority of the Canons in so momentous a matter was utterly despised and set aside.

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

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

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

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

Now if the obligation of vows could not be changed for any cause whatever, the Roman Pontiffs could never have given dispensation; for it is not lawful for man to annul an obligation

which is altogether divine. But the Roman Pontiffs have prudently judged that leniency is to be observed in this obligation, and therefore we read that many times they have dispensed from vows. The case of the King of Aragon who was called back from the monastery is well known, and there are also examples in our own times.

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

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

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

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

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

Paul says [Gal. 5: 4]: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." They, therefore, who want to be justified by their vows, are made void of Christ and fall from grace. For such as ascribe justification to vows, ascribe to their own works that which properly belongs to the glory of Christ. But it is undeniable that the monks have taught that, by their vows and observances, they were justified, and merited forgiveness of sins, yea, they invented still greater absurdities, saying that they could give others a share in their works. If anyone 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 offence in the Church to set forth to the people a service devised by men, without the commandment of God, and to teach that such service justifies men. For the righteousness of faith in Christ, which chiefly ought to be in the Church, is obscured, when this wonderful worshipping of angels, with its show of poverty, humility and chastity, is 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, again to conceive great faith, and to trust that, for Christ's sake, we have a gracious God, to ask of God, and assuredly to expect his aid in all things that, according to our calling, are to be borne; and meanwhile, to be diligent in outward good works, and to serve our calling. In these things consist the true perfection and the true service of God. It does not consist in the unmarried life, or in begging, or in vile apparel. But the people conceive many pernicious opinions from the false commendations of monastic life. They hear unmarried life praised above measure; therefore they lead their married life with offence to their consciences. They hear that only beggars are perfect; therefore they keep their possessions and do business with offence to their consciences. They hear that it is an evangelical counsel not to avenge; therefore some in private life are not afraid to take revenge, for they hear that it is but a counsel, and not a commandment; while others judge that the Christian cannot properly hold a civil office, or be a magistrate.

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

that, in his day, it was a new saying that the monastic life is a state of perfection.

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

ARTICLE XXVIII.

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

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

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

Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission, to teach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments.

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

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

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

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

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

Moreover, it is disputed whether bishops or pastors have the right to introduce ceremonies in the Church, and to make laws concerning meats, holydays and degrees, that is, orders of min-

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

But, concerning this question, it is taught on our part (as has been shown above), that bishops have no power to decree anything against the Gospel. The Canonical laws teach the same thing (*Dist.* ix.). Now it is against Scripture to establish or require the observance of any traditions, to the end that, by such observance, we may make satisfaction for sins, or merit grace and righteousness. For the glory of Christ's merit is dishonored when, by such observances, we undertake to merit justification. But it is manifest that, by such belief, traditions have almost infinitely multiplied in the Church, the doctrine concerning faith and the righteousness of faith being meanwhile suppressed. For gradually more holydays 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 has committed to the Apostles and bishops. For thus some of them write; and the Pontiffs in some measure seem to be misled by the example of the law of Moses. Hence are such burdens, as that they make it mortal sin, even without offence to others, to do manual labor on holydays, to omit the Canonical Hours, that certain foods defile the conscience, that fastings are works which appease God, that sin in a reserved case cannot be forgiven but by the authority of him who reserved it; whereas the Canons themselves speak only of the reserving of the ecclesiastical penalty, and not of the reserving of the guilt.

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

But there are clear testimonies which prohibit the making of such traditions, as though they merited grace or were necessary

to salvation. Paul says [Col. 2: 16]: "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days"; [v. 20, 23]: "If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not, which all are to perish with the using); after the commandments and doctrines of men? which things have indeed a show of wisdom." Also in Tit. [1: 14] he openly forbids traditions: "Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men that turn from the truth." And Christ [Matt. 15: 14] says of those who require traditions: "Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind"; and he rebukes such services [v. 13]: "Every plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up."

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

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 offence to others. So Paul ordains [1 Cor. 11: 5], that women should cover their heads in the congregation [1 Cor. 14: 30], that interpreters of Scripture be heard in order in the Church, etc.

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

Of this kind, is the observance of the Lord's Day, Easter, Pentecost, and like holydays and rites. For those who judge that, by the authority of the Church, the observance of the

Lord's Day instead of the Sabbath Day was ordained as a thing necessary, do greatly err. Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath Day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed, all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted. And yet, because it was necessary to appoint a certain day, that the people might know when they ought to come together, it appears that the Church [the Apostles] designated the Lord's Day for this purpose; and this day seems to have been chosen all the more for this additional reason, that men might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the keeping neither of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is necessary.

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

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

But the bishops might easily retain the lawful obedience of the people, if they would not insist upon the observance of such traditions as cannot be kept with a good conscience. Now they command celibacy; they admit none, unless they swear that they will not teach the pure doctrine of the Gospel. The churches do not ask that the bishops should restore concord at the expense of their honor; which, nevertheless, it would be proper for good pastors to do. They ask only that they would release unjust burdens which are new and have been received contrary to the custom of the Church Catholic. It may be that there were plausible reasons for some of these ordinances; and yet they are not adapted to later times. It is also evident that some were adopted through erroneous conceptions. Therefore, it would be

befitting the clemency of the Pontiffs to mitigate them now; because such a modification does not shake the unity of the Church. For many human traditions have been changed in process of time, as the Canons themselves show. But if it be impossible to obtain a mitigation of such observances as cannot be kept without sin, we are bound to follow the Apostolic rule [Acts 5: 29], which commands us to obey God rather than men. Peter [1 Pet. 5: 3] forbids bishops to be lords, and to rule over the churches. Now it is not our design to wrest the government from the bishops, but this one thing is asked, namely, that they allow the Gospel to be purely taught, and that they relax some few observances which cannot be kept without sin. But if they make no concession, it is for them to see how they shall give account to God for having, by their obstinacy, caused a schism.

CONCLUSION.

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

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

JOHN, Duke of Saxony, Elector.
 GEORGE, Margrave of Brandenburg.
 ERNEST, Duke of Lüneburg.
 PHILIP, Landgrave of Hesse.
 JOHN FREDERICK, Duke of Saxony.
 FRANCIS, Duke of Lüneburg.
 WOLFGANG, Prince of Anhalt.
 SENATE and MAGISTRACY of Nuremburg.
 SENATE of Reutlingen.