

American Lutheranism Vindicated; or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics eBook

American Lutheranism Vindicated; or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics

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Contents

American Lutheranism Vindicated; or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	10
Page 3.....	11
Page 4.....	12
Page 5.....	13
Page 6.....	14
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	16
Page 9.....	18
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	20
Page 12.....	22
Page 13.....	23
Page 14.....	24
Page 15.....	25
Page 16.....	27
Page 17.....	28
Page 18.....	29
Page 19.....	30
Page 20.....	31
Page 21.....	33



[Page 22..... 35](#)

[Page 23..... 36](#)

[Page 24..... 37](#)

[Page 25..... 39](#)

[Page 26..... 41](#)

[Page 27..... 42](#)

[Page 28..... 43](#)

[Page 29..... 44](#)

[Page 30..... 45](#)

[Page 31..... 46](#)

[Page 32..... 47](#)

[Page 33..... 48](#)

[Page 34..... 49](#)

[Page 35..... 50](#)

[Page 36..... 51](#)

[Page 37..... 52](#)

[Page 38..... 53](#)

[Page 39..... 55](#)

[Page 40..... 56](#)

[Page 41..... 57](#)

[Page 42..... 59](#)

[Page 43..... 60](#)

[Page 44..... 61](#)

[Page 45..... 62](#)

[Page 46..... 64](#)

[Page 47..... 66](#)



[Page 48..... 68](#)

[Page 49..... 70](#)

[Page 50..... 71](#)

[Page 51..... 73](#)

[Page 52..... 74](#)

[Page 53..... 76](#)

[Page 54..... 77](#)

[Page 55..... 79](#)

[Page 56..... 80](#)

[Page 57..... 81](#)

[Page 58..... 82](#)

[Page 59..... 83](#)

[Page 60..... 84](#)

[Page 61..... 86](#)

[Page 62..... 87](#)

[Page 63..... 88](#)

[Page 64..... 89](#)

[Page 65..... 90](#)

[Page 66..... 91](#)

[Page 67..... 92](#)

[Page 68..... 94](#)

[Page 69..... 95](#)

[Page 70..... 97](#)

[Page 71..... 99](#)

[Page 72..... 100](#)

[Page 73..... 101](#)



[Page 74..... 102](#)

[Page 75..... 103](#)

[Page 76..... 104](#)

[Page 77..... 105](#)

[Page 78..... 107](#)

[Page 79..... 109](#)

[Page 80..... 110](#)

[Page 81..... 111](#)

[Page 82..... 112](#)

[Page 83..... 113](#)

[Page 84..... 114](#)

[Page 85..... 116](#)

[Page 86..... 118](#)

[Page 87..... 119](#)

[Page 88..... 120](#)

[Page 89..... 122](#)

[Page 90..... 124](#)

[Page 91..... 126](#)

[Page 92..... 128](#)

[Page 93..... 130](#)

[Page 94..... 132](#)

[Page 95..... 134](#)

[Page 96..... 135](#)

[Page 97..... 136](#)

[Page 98..... 137](#)

[Page 99..... 139](#)



[Page 100..... 141](#)
[Page 101..... 143](#)
[Page 102..... 145](#)

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
		1
		15
		46
		52
		60
		69
		77
		81
		85
THE APOSTLES' CREED		91
ARTICLE XIV. — OF CHURCH ORDERS, (OR THE MINISTRY.)		94
INDEX.		98



Page 1

CHAPTER II. REPLY TO THE GENERAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE PLEA.

In replying to the general observations, which constitute the introduction of the Plea, we shall pursue the order of their occurrence.

“We shall, in this short tract,” says the author, “not speak of the objections, which in the Definite Platform are set forth against some errors, contained in some other symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, but we shall confine ourselves exclusively to the errors pointed out in the Augsburg Confession, the work of Luther and Melancthon themselves, and *the only one of our Confessions which was universally received as such, by the whole Lutheran Church in all parts of the world,*” p. 4. This concession is no less honorable to the reverend author, than the fact itself is important in the discussion of the subject before us. As the contrary has frequently been asserted in this country, in the face of history, it seems proper to advert to its details. The facts in the case are the following:

The Form of Concord was rejected in Denmark, Sweden, Hussia, Pommerania, Holstein, Anhalt, and the cities of Strasburg, Frankfurt a. m. Speier, Worms, Nuerenberg, Magdeburg, Bremen, Dantzic, &c. For particulars see Koellner’s *Symbolik*, Vol. I, pp. 575-77.

The Smalcald Articles were rejected by Sweden and Denmark.

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession, was denied, official authority, by Sweden and Denmark.

The Larger Catechism of Luther, in Sweden and Denmark.

Even *the Smaller Catechism* of Luther was not received as symbolic in Sweden. See Guericke’s *Symbolik*, pp. 67, &c., 113.

Here, then, we perceive, that those ultra Lutherans of our day, who insist on the whole mass of former symbols as essential to Lutheranism, must unchurch a very large portion of the Lutheran Church even of the sixteenth century. But among these we can by no means class the author of the Plea, who is evidently a Lutheran of the more enlightened and liberal class.

The author of the Plea represents “the Augsburg Confession, as the *unexceptionable* password of the adherents of the Lutheran Church for three centuries.” The idea designed probably is, that the *great mass* of doctrines taught in this confession has been thus received. For it is a historical fact, that cannot be contested, that private confession, which is enjoined in the eleventh, twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth Articles of the Augsburg Confession, and was retained by Luther, Melancthon and their churches, was from the beginning [sic] rejected by the *entire Lutheran Church in Sweden and*



Denmark, as well as other places, and a public confession of the whole church, such as is now employed in Germany and this country, introduced in its stead. See Siegel's Handbuch, Vol. I., p. 200.

Page 2

“Of course the accusation against the Augsburg Confession, involves an exhibition of Luther and Melancthon, those pillars of the Reformation, as teaching *heretical doctrines*, which are not in accordance with the word of God.” p. 4. This language we regard as not entirely correct. Those errors alone are, in correct English, usually termed “heretical,” which are of fundamental importance, and deny some doctrine that is necessary to salvation. That this is neither affirmed or implied by the Platform, must, we think, be admitted by all. But that both Luther and Melancthon did entertain some erroneous views in 1530, some of which are taught in the Augsburg Confession, namely, those specified in the Platform, is affirmed by the great body of our American Lutheran Church.

“The errors are not, on the side of the Augsburg Confession, but on the side of those *who agitate our Lutheran Church* with the introduction of a fatherless and motherless child, the Definite Platform.” To this we reply, the Platform was publicly adopted by three or four Synods in the West, within a few weeks after its publication. As to its authorship, we never denied having prepared it, at the urgent request of some of those brethren, on the plan agreed on by them, and some Eastern brethren of the very first respectability. It was carefully revised by ourselves and Dr. B. Kurtz, and we have not yet found a single one of its positions refuted. That the request was made and complied with, will not be regarded as discreditable to either party by impartial judges, after the smoke of battle shall have disappeared, and the vision of men again be unobstructed. As to the friends of the Platform being agitators of the church, we regard the supposition as erroneous. The Platform was designed to be adopted by those Western Synods, as it has been, publicly, but without controversy, as other Synods had done before with their symbolic platforms. But enemies of the Platform raised the alarm, and agitated the church with threatened dangers. That the friends of the assailed instrument should stand up in its vindication, was an indispensable act of self-defence, to which no impartial man will object.

“We shall endeavor to maintain in this controversy, a dignified and Christian spirit, as becomes this holy subject, and those who, differing in some points, know one Master and one service. People on earth will always differ in their opinions. The truth will gain by giving free scope to investigation, and by the illustration of the different sides of the same question.” This position is true, and creditable alike to the head and the heart of the author. Church government and doctrine are topics of primary importance to the prosperity of the kingdom of the Redeemer, and no reason can be assigned why they cannot be debated to the edification of the church, except the human frailty of disputants. Had these subjects been discussed in our religious papers with calmness,

Page 3

and in a Christian spirit, they would have been alike instructive and edifying both to ministers and laity. The discussion would have infused into laymen a deeper interest for the welfare of the church, and a larger liberality in the support of her institutions. Are we not commanded to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; and to be always ready to give to him that asked us a reason for the hope that is in us? But let us not despond; God will overrule even these controversies to the good of his church. *Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit.*

“The Synods adopting this Platform are expected to make it a principle *not to receive into their membership any one who will not subscribe this Definite Platform,*” (meaning the whole pamphlet,) p. 6. On this subject the Platform was entirely misapprehended, by the readers not reflecting that the third resolution, on p. 6, must be construed in connection with the two immediately preceding and numerically connected with it. Resolutions first and second declare the “doctrinal Platform” to consist of the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession, together with the General Synod’s Formula of Government and Discipline. And the third resolution adds, no one shall be received into this Synod who will not subscribe “*this Platform,*” namely, the one just defined. This American Recension or Revision of the Augsburg Confession, contains, *unaltered,* the doctrinal articles of that Confession, except, that a few sentences are omitted, and *nothing added in their stead.* Now, if it be admitted that when an enumeration of the parts of a whole is professedly and explicitly made, any thing not included in that enumeration is excluded, then certainly, as the first two resolutions enumerated specifically the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession, as the parts constituting the Platform to which assent was required, it follows that the list of Symbolic Errors rejected, which is not named at all, and which formed a separate part of the pamphlet, is excluded. But the misapprehension evidently arose from the fact, that after the term *doctrinal platform* had been used in the work, to designate the doctrinal and disciplinarian basis contained in the first part of it, the name *Definite Synodical Platform* was selected for the whole pamphlet, and the distinction not kept up with sufficient prominence before the mind of the reader. This is remedied in the second edition, by employing the phrase *Doctrinal Basis or Creed* for the first, and “*Synodical Disclaimer, or List of Symbolical Errors*” for the second part. Moreover it is expressly stated, on p. 5, that “whilst we will not admit into our Synod any one who believes in Exorcism, Private Confession, and Absolution, or the Ceremonies of the Mass,” (not one of which is practiced, so far as we know, by a single minister connected with the General Synod),



Page 4

the Platform “grants liberty in regard to all the other topics, omitted from the Augsburg Confession in the American Recension of it.” For it adds, “We are willing, as heretofore, to admit ministers who receive these views, provided they regard them as *non-essential*” (that is, as *non-fundamental*, not, as has been asserted by others, as of minor or of little importance), “and are willing to co-operate in peace with those who reject them.” To the List of Errors rejected no one is required to subscribe, and it is published by the Synod as a disclaimer of these errors, which are often imputed to us, but which are rejected by the great body of the American Lutheran Church. The Platform cannot, therefore, with truth, be said to exclude old-Lutherans, unless they are so rigid as to regard their own views on these disputed points as essential, and are unwilling to co-operate in *peace* with their brethren: and in that case it is certainly preferable for all parties, that they should organize a Synod for themselves.

Says the author of the Plea, p. 6: “Suppose some Episcopal ministers having arrived at the conviction that some of their church canons were wrong,” “would it be regarded as anything else than a most *astounding presumption*, for such men to dare to change the character of the church canons and denounce some of them as errors, and at the same time to maintain that *they themselves are the true representatives of the Episcopal Church*, and can *unchurch* others?” Here are three positions, all of which we regard as erroneous. In the *first* place, it is not presumptuous, but a Christian duty, when ministers of a church are firmly convinced, that the avowed standards of their church contain some tenets contrary to the word of God, publicly to disavow them, that their influence may not aid in sustaining error; and if the majority of a synod participate in this opinion, it is their duty to change their standards into conformity with God’s word. The Augsburg Confession itself was such, a disclaimer of Romish errors, and avowal of the truth: and if it was the duty of the ministry in the sixteenth century to make their public profession conform to their belief of Scripture truth, it is equally the duty of every other age. But although their case involves the *principle* objected to by the *Plea*, the following cases are more exactly analogous. The Episcopal ministry and laity did, after the American Revolution, change their doctrine, that the king is the head of the church and adopted the opinion that no civil officer, as such, has any office in the church. They accordingly rejected from their creed Article XXI., and also excluded from their liturgy and forms of prayer, all allusion to the king as the head or governor of the church. Listen to the testimony of the *Episcopal* ministers of Maryland, in 1783, soon after the acknowledgment of the independence of this country. They passed a number of resolutions,

Page 5

of which the fourth reads thus: "That as it is the *right*, so it will be the *duty* of the Episcopal Church, when duly organized, constituted, and represented in a Synod or Convention of the different orders of her ministers and people, to revise her liturgy, forms of prayer and of public worship, in order to adapt the same *to the late Revolution*, and OTHER LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF AMERICA," [Note 1] &c.

Our *Presbyterian* brethren also changed their Confession of Faith, and adapted it to their belief. Hear the testimony of *Dr. Hodge*, in his Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States: [Note 2] the Synod then "took into consideration the twentieth chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the third paragraph of the twenty-third chapter, and the first paragraph of the thirty-first chapter; and having made some alterations, agreed that the said paragraphs, as now altered, be printed for consideration, together with a draught of a plan of government and discipline." They were subsequently adopted.

In like manner did our *Methodist Episcopal* brethren deal with the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, which they had avowed from the days of Wesley. They not only rejected the recognition of the king as the head of the church, but also entirely omitted Article XVII., which is supposed by many to inculcate Calvinism, together with several others; and materially altered Articles I., II., VI., IX., XXVI., and XXXIV. If, then, it be competent for these several Synods, or Conferences, to change the Westminster Confession and Thirty-nine Articles, which were prepared far more deliberately, and with much less restraint, and had become equally venerable by age, without any one pretending to deny their authority, or to pronounce the measure "presumptuous," why may not the Synod of Wittenberg, and other similar bodies, correct the Augsburg Confession, by the omission of several tenets, believed not only by her members, but by the great body of American Lutherans, to be unscriptural? Now the Definite Platform was prepared at the request of the leading members of those Western Synods, according to a plan previously agreed on among them and others, for the express purpose of being proposed for discussion, correction, and *adoption by these Synods*; and, until so acted on, was a mere unofficial proposal, *such as any friends of the church have a right to make*. And who can dispute their right, or the right of any Synod, to adopt a Confession of Faith for herself, when the Constitution of the General Synod originally conceded this power specifically to each Synod, and still does so, in Article III., Section 3, by requiring them only to adhere to the *fundamental* doctrines of the Bible, as taught by our church? Is not a Lutheran Synod possessed of as much power as an Episcopal or Methodist convention? And although an individual necessarily drew up the document, it

Page 6

was prepared according to the plan decided on by about twenty brethren, and claimed no authority until acted on by Synod. The Definite Platform could never, *with truth*, be regarded as the work of a few individuals. Its inception was the result of a consultation of a large number of influential brethren, especially of the West, who had been convinced by the aggressions of surrounding symbolists, that a decided, but also a more *definite* stand on the ground of the General Synod, was necessary in self-defence. It was prepared and published at their request, not as an official document, but as a draft of such a basis as they had agreed on. It was presented to them, and taken up for consideration by their several Synods; and the unanimity with which they adopted it is conclusive proof that it was prepared according to the stipulated principles. By denying the right of the several Synods of Ohio, and of any other Synod, to improve or decide on their own doctrinal basis, within the fundamentals of Scripture as taught in the Augsburg Confession, the enemies of the Platform *renounce the principles of the General Synod*, which expressly allows this right; and they also renounce the original and universally acknowledged Independent or Congregational principles of Lutheran Church Government, avowed by Luther, Melancthon, and all the leading divines of our church, one part of which is the right and obligation to form our own views of Scripture truth, and to avow them to the world.

No individual can justly pronounce the Platform an invasion of his rights; for it has never even been proposed by *its friends* to any Synod other than those at the request of whose members it was prepared; and should it, at any time hereafter, be presented, it will possess no authority unless conferred on it by Synodical action, in which each minister has a right to participate. The war that has been and is still waged against the Platform, by old Lutheran Synods, and papers, to whom it was never proposed for adoption, is wholly offensive; and whilst we do not deny the right of any Synod to take it up by way of counsel, the intolerant and aggressive principles avowed by Old School papers, is a direct assault on the rights of American or New School Lutherans, which cannot in the end fail to unite them in measures of self-defence.

Secondly, the Plea is mistaken, in supposing that the friends of the Platform profess to be the true representatives of the Lutheran Church in the *symbolic* sense of the term: for have they not reiterated, in a score of publications, for five and twenty years past, that they do not hold all the views of the former symbols; and does not the Platform itself explicitly disclaim any such idea, by publicly protesting against the errors of those books?

Thirdly, the idea of our “unchurching others,” is openly disclaimed by the Platform, as was proved above.



Page 7

Again, says the Plea: “Those who undertake to change the doctrinal basis of a church, take upon themselves an awful responsibility,” p. 7. True; but there is an equally awful responsibility resting on those who, favored by Providence with the increased light of three centuries, continue to avow in their creed, and thus lead multitudes to embrace the superstitious and truly dangerous errors, which remain in these documents issued in the earlier and immature stages of the Reformation, and some of them under circumstances unpropitious to a free expression of views of Scripture doctrine. If these errors constituted the essence of Lutheranism, we ought to forsake the church; but as they do not, we are under sacred obligation to expunge them from our creed, so that we may not aid in their perpetuation.

“From this renewed church (of the Reformation) as from a new heart, of mankind, new and fresh and vigorous blood flows in an uninterrupted stream through mighty arteries, into the whole world.” p. 7. Or rather, we would say, this fresh and vigorous blood flows not from the church, much less from the errors which she retained in her symbols, but from that amount, of *God’s truth*, which constitutes the great mass of her confession. The separation of these errors, instead of impairing the efficiency of the church, will greatly multiply her energies, and pave the way for new and enlarged conquests over the world.

“Let any one examine the theological mastership, which this learned and honored disciple of Christ (Melancthon) exhibited in his Apology for the Augsburg Confession—and he will be convinced of the folly of those, who presume to think, that he, or his mighty coadjutor, (Luther,) might be materially benefited by the dogmatical and exegetical instructions of the theological professors and authors of the present times.” p. 7.8. This all sounds well enough in the abstract, and we ourselves have frequently and with equal sincerity, praised these great reformers. But after all, they were fallible men. This same Melancthon, in this same Apology for the Augsburg Confession, regards Private Confession and Absolutism [sic] as the third *sacrament*. At the Diet of Augsburg, he was willing to yield to Romish bishops the dangerous powers which they formerly had exercised over the churches, and when he saw danger thicken around him, he positively wrote to Luther, inquiring whether they might not, yield to the papists in the matter of *private and closet masses*, as will be seen in the sequel! Besides, these modern “professors, authors,” and, we will add, pastors, do not propose to improve the Confession by any light of their own; but by the progressive light, which the Providence of God has vouchsafed to the prayers, the philological and exegetical studies of three centuries. This light we receive with gratitude to God, and cannot for a moment doubt, that if these noble servants of Christ were now living, they would be amongst its most grateful recipients.



Page 8

They both continued through life to study the word of God, and to profess their improved views without the least hesitation. So far was Melancthon himself from regarding any of his works perfect, that he continued deliberately to make improvements, even in this same Augsburg Confession, after the storms of papal persecution had subsided, till the end of his life. And we might easily fill pages with the declarations of Luther, avowing his sense of the imperfections of his publications, and of the work of Reformation in his day.

“We believe,” says the Plea, “that they (Luther and Melancthon) are no more than guides to the fountain of truth, to the gospel; and whenever we find that they lead us off from the Word of God, we are bound not to hesitate in our decided deviation from their views.” p. 8. This is precisely the noble, enlightened, and christian stand point of the American Lutheran Church. In principle, the respected author of the Plea, does not differ from us. It is only in its application to particular cases, that we may occasionally not coincide.

“The state of theology and religion of an age, does not at all depend upon the progress of general science and social life.” p. 10. From this sentiment and the train of observation in reference to it on the same page, we do not dissent. But no American Lutheran appeals to *this* spirit of the age, exhibited in the progress of the physical sciences, as proofs of any advance in theology. The sciences to which we refer as media of increasing life, are those on which the proper interpretation of the sacred volume depends, philology, archaeology, hermeneutics, &c., and certainly our brother cannot dissent from this position, he will not maintain, that no progress has been made, in the knowledge of the original languages of Scripture by continued studies of scores of the ablest philologists the world has ever seen, especially during the last half century. He will not deny, that the exploring labors of travellers [sic] to the lands of holy writ, the increased study of the manners and customs and institutions of the nations inhabiting them, have illustrated some portions of the sacred volume. Nor will he affirm the utter fruitlessness of all the prayerful efforts of men of God, during the last three centuries, to understand the general principles of language, [sic] the different significations of words, (the literal, the tropical, the typical, the allegorical, &c.) and the proper rules for the interpretation of the Sacred Record. He is too well acquainted with the literary fame of Germany and the writings of that galaxy of theological luminaries, that has reflected so much glory on the land of the Reformation, not to admit that many parts of the Sacred Record are better understood at present, than they were three centuries ago. But the principal difficulty which prevented the full and clear appreciation of divine truth in the earlier Reformers, was the fact that *they were educated till adult age, [Note 3] in all the superstitious rites and ceremonies of the Romish Church*, and we all know that it is impossible entirely to emancipate ourselves from the prejudices of early education. Under these circumstances the marvel is, not that they retained a few papal views and

practices, but that they accomplished as much as they did, in unlearning the errors of their early education.



Page 9

“If all Christianity were to take its first start to-day;-to-morrow already interpretations and confessions would spring up like mushrooms in a hot-bed.” p. 11. This idea is expressed rather too strongly for the claims of history; as it is certain that during the golden era of Christianity, the first three centuries, no other creeds were employed by the churches generally, than the so-called Apostles’ and the Nicene Creeds. It is chiefly since the period of the Reformation, that the church of the Redeemer has been cut up into so many denominations, professing different and some of them very extended creeds.

“Every denomination has an individual life, and the law of self-preservation ought, to teach her, that she is throwing herself away, if she, is not determined to stand by her banners and to defend her position.” p. 11. Whatever definition we may adopt of the indefinite and cloudy term “*life*” in this passage, our reply is, the life of every Christian church ought to be the *life of the Gospel*, and the life of the church as established and conducted by the inspired apostles. Every thing in the life of any church inconsistent with this, must be wrong. It is true, since the formation of the different Protestant denominations, each one of them has a different creed, and is characterized by some peculiarities of government or worship, and if these peculiarities are intended by the “peculiar life” of a denomination, we judge it would be equally wrong for the members of any church, to lay it down as a rule in every case to defend them. It would bear some resemblance to the corrupt, political motto, so justly denounced by all good men: *Our Country right or wrong*. Had Luther adopted this rule, it would have required him to defend all the errors of Rome, which had been fully sanctioned by that church. But his judgment taught him differently, and he gradually rejected every one of those elements of the peculiar *life* of Romanism, which he found hostile to the life of the [sic] God’s word. But if it be replied, that by “peculiar life” is intended those peculiarities of our church, which are accordant with the Gospel; we fully assent to the position. This is precisely the principle, on which we endeavor to act. *We defend and retain every peculiarity of the church of our fathers, which we find taught in the word of God, or consistent with its spirit*; whilst we deem it a privilege and duty to labor at the improvement of our church and her ecclesiastical framework or platform, by removing from it every thing which, after a life of prayerful study, we are persuaded is offensive to God, because opposed to His word. Even the Form of Concord affirms the principle for which we here contend, by representing creeds as exhibitions of the sense in which *Christians of a particular age* understood the Bible; and never, until the duty of the church in every age to conform her standards to the word of God, is conceded; can she as a whole become more united, more pure and scriptural, and the kingdom of Christ be extended throughout the earth.

Page 10

The Plea objects to what it styles “the officious manner in which some persons raise alarm throughout the church, promulgate their intention to change the Augsburg Confession, and act in such a manner as if their views in regard to the so-called errors of the Augsburg Confession were absolutely above all possibility of error.” p. 13. This objection is probably based on a want of acquaintance with the history of our church in this country, if it is designed to refer particularly to the Definite Platform; which would be excuseable in our brother, as his residence amongst us is comparatively of recent date. But the truth is, that the rejection of the custom of requiring assent to the Augsburg Confession by the fathers in the Pennsylvania Synod *fifty years ago*, is proof enough of their dissatisfaction with that document. Nor did they hesitate distinctly to declare their dissent from some of its tenets. This was done not only privately, but also in their occasional publications. As to private confession and absolution, *they never adopted that practice in this country*; but from the beginning employed a *public and general* confession, preparatory to the Lord’s Supper, as our church in Sweden and Denmark did in the days of the Reformation. As to the *ceremonies* of the public mass, they were rejected by our church universally, some years after the diet of Augsburg, as private and closet masses had been before. The General Synod, at the adoption of her constitution in 1820, freely expressed her dissatisfaction in the public discussions, with some parts of the Augsburg Confession, and inserted a clause in her constitution, giving *power both to the General Synod and to each District Synod to form a new Confession of Faith*, for their own use. *Dr. Lochman*, one of the most active, pious, and respected divines of our church, in his Catechism, published in 1822, states it as one of “*the leading principles* of our church, [sic on quotation marks] “that the Holy Scriptures and *not human authority*, are the only source whence we are to draw our religious sentiments, whether they relate to faith or practice.” “That Christians are accountable to God alone for their religious principles,” and says not a word about adherence to the Augsburg Confession, as one of the principles of our church.

He also published an edition of the Augsburg Confession, in his work, entitled Doctrine and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in which *he made more omissions than are found in the American Recension*; and yet no one found fault with him for doing so. That the reader may judge of the extent of these omissions, we specify them: In

Art. I. he omitted the definition of *person*, in the Trinity.

Art. II. omits the condemnatory clause.

Art. III. omits the epithet *pure*, in reference to the Virgin Mary, and the reference to the so called “Apostles’ Creed.”

Page 11

Art. IV. omits the closing sentence, that God will regard this faith as righteousness.

Art. V. omits the condemnatory clause, and part of another sentence.

Art. VI. omits the word “*true*” in reference to the unity of the church.

Art. VIII. omits the condemnatory clause concerning the *Donatists*.

Art. IX. omits the name *Anabaptists*.

Art. X. omits the condemnatory clause.

Art. XII. omits “absolution” and part of the condemnatory clause.

Art. XVII. omits the condemnatory clause.

Art. XVIII. omits the name of Augustine’s work, *Hypognosticon*, and about *ten lines at the close*.

Art. XIX. omits the *last sentence*.

Art. XX. omits different portions of this long article, amounting to one-half of the whole.

Art. XXI. omits all that is said on war, and the Turks, &c., and the entire concluding paragraph, amounting to half a page 12mo.

Yet this work was circulated throughout the church, and we never heard a single word of objection, although the notes appended to it are far from being symbolic.

Rev. J. A. Probst, in his work on the Reunion of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, published in 1826, speaking of this country, and especially the Synod of Pennsylvania, of which he was a member, says, “Zwingle’s more liberal, rational, and scriptural view of this doctrine, (election) as well as of the *Lord’s Supper, has become the prevailing one among the Lutheran and Reformed,*” p. 74. The same fact, the rejection of some of the articles of the Augsburg Confession, is taught in some publications in 1827, by *Dr. Endress*, one of our most respected and learned ministers; and is confirmed by the language of the resolution passed by the Synod of Pennsylvania in 1823, on the subject of union between the Lutheran and Reformed churches in this country, between which bodies they affirm a *unity of doctrinal views*. This dissent, was publicly avowed by *Dr. F. C. Schaeffer*, of New York, who, in his edition of Luther’s Catechism, published in 1820, omitted the word “*real or true*” in reference to the Saviour’s body in the eucharist, (p. 21,) and in his Address at the Laying of the Corner-stone of St. Matthew’s Church, thus expresses himself. “We rejoice with thanksgiving before the Lord, because he has given us *our great symbolical book, the bible*. This is preferable to all the “books” and “*confessions*” of men. According to a fundamental principle of the Lutherans, we



depend not merely on the irrigating streamlets that originate in the fountain to which we have access, but we rather drink from that fountain itself. The study and proper interpretation of the sacred writings, accompanied by the use of all outward helps which God's providence has furnished, and aided by fervent prayer in the acceptable name of Jesus Christ the Mediator, is mainly inculcated in the Evangelical Lutheran Church." p. 10.



Page 12

This same dissent from the symbols, was also publicly avowed by *Dr. Hazelius*, who in his Annotations on the Augsburg Confession, published in 1841, says, "The opinions now entertained in the Lutheran church, as to the nature of the sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, differ in no material point from those entertained by the other protestant churches on the subject." p. 21. This dissent in non-fundamentals from the Augsburg Confession, is also avowed by *Dr. Bachman*, in his Discourse on the Doctrines and Discipline of the Lutheran Church, published in 1837, and sanctioned by his Synod: also by *Dr. Lintner*, in his preface to the Augsburg Confession, in 1837, pp. 3, 4; by *Dr. Krauth*, in his Sketch of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, for Buck's Theological Dictionary, in 1830; in which he says the doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are *substantially* those of the Augsburg Confession," [sic on quotation mark!] implying dissent from that creed in some non-essentials; and recently his own dissent in an article in the Lutheran Observer, and the Evangelical Review of July, 1850. *Dr. G. B. Miller* published his dissent from the Confession on some of its representations of baptism, (baptismal regeneration, as he contends,) and the *real presence* in the Eucharist, in his Sermon before the Ministerium of New York, in 1831.

The same dissent was freely expressed by *Dr. Baugher*, in his Report on the "Doctrines and Usages of the Synod of Maryland," in which he thus describes his position and that of this Synod:

"ON REGENERATION.—We believe that the Scriptures teach that regeneration is the act of God, the Holy Ghost, by which, through the truth, the sinner is persuaded to abandon his sins and submit to God, on the terms made known in the gospel. This change, we are taught, is radical and is essential to present peace and eternal happiness. Consequently, it is possible, and is the privilege of the regenerated person to know and rejoice in the change produced in him."

"OF THE SACRAMENTS.—We believe that the Scriptures teach, that there are but two sacraments, *viz.*: Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in each of which, truths essential to salvation are symbolically represented. We do not believe that they exert any influence '*ex opere operato*,' but only through the faith of the believer. *Neither do the Scriptures warrant the belief, that Christ is present in the Lord's Supper in any other than a spiritual manner.*"

"OF THE SYMBOLICAL BOOKS.—Luther's Larger and Smaller Catechisms, the Formula Concordiae, Augsburg Confession, Apology, and Smalkald Articles are called in Germany the Symbolical Books of the church. We regard them as good and useful exhibitions of truth, but do not receive them as binding on the conscience, except so far as they agree with the Word of God."

Page 13

To this catalogue we might add the names of many others, who have avowed the same position of dissent from this venerable symbol, long before the Definite Platform was thought of. No one in former times presumed to deny the right of our ministers and synods expressing this dissent, and proposing to form a new creed, if they deem it requisite. To call the dissenting position of the *Definite Platform* a new one, is therefore a historical error; and to attempt to cast odium on it by the charge of officiousness, is also an act of injustice. The same charge would equally lie against the greater part of our best ministers during the last half century, *and against the founders of the General Synod themselves.*

With this occasional disclaimer of these errors, American Lutherans have hitherto been satisfied, nor would the question of officially adopting a new creed have been raised at this time, had not the Ultra-Lutherans of our land, of late become animated by a new zeal to disseminate their symbolic errors, and to denounce as not Lutherans, all who do not receive them. When the adoption of a new creed was thus forced upon them, a number of the brethren advocated the formation of one entirely new; but others believing it best to retain the venerable mother symbol of Protestantism, as far as we could regard her teachings as Scriptural, proposed the omission of the few disputed points, and the adoption of the residue unaltered, thus retaining nearly the whole of the doctrinal articles. The suggestion was adopted, as being more respectful to the venerable symbol of our church, we were urged to prepare the work for the consideration of some of the Western Synods; and thus the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession originated from respect for that creed, rather than the want of it. The talk about sacrilege, &c., would sound more natural among Romanists than Protestants; and the idea of deception is utterly unfounded, because the very name adopted, "American Recension," is a constant notification to the reader of some change. Neither one or the other charge was ever made against the Methodist Episcopal Church, for making four times as many changes in the Thirty-nine Articles. As to respect for the Confession, we see but little difference between several methods proposed amongst American Lutherans; to adopt the Confession as to the fundamentals of Scripture doctrine, leaving all free to reject the non-fundamentals; or to publish the symbol, with a list appended of some of its articles, which may be rejected; or to omit those same articles, leaving them free, and adopting all the residue unconditionally. On neither of these three plans does the *matter* of the Confession remain intact, even if the letter does; for in *all*, certain parts of it divested of binding authority, and left to the judgment of each individual. The American Recension is nothing more than a revised edition of the Confession, in which those parts are omitted that had already been divested of binding authority, and thus been superseded by subsequent ecclesiastical legislation.



Page 14

And is it not creditable to any church, when she finds some tenets of her creed in conflict with the Scriptures, and calculated to circulate error, to reform and improve it? We should suppose that every enlightened and reflecting theologian, and still more every intelligent layman, would concur in the sentiments of that devoted friend and defender of the Lutheran Church, *Dr. Koecher*, of Jena, in 1759, who, discussing the charge that our church had changed her doctrines, says, "It avails nothing merely to charge a church with having made changes in her Creed; we must direct our attention to the subject or doctrine itself, and inquire whether it is true or false. Because, *not every alteration in matters of faith is inadmissible and censurable*. Suppose a church to perceive that a doctrinal error has crept into her creed, and to correct it by the exclusion of the error; does she not merit our approbation, much rather than our censure or abuse? Suppose that the Lutherans did formerly believe in transubstantiation (as has been charged,) but in the course of time rejected this doctrine, because they found it militate against divine truth; suppose the earlier Lutheran divines did approve of the doctrine of unconditional election, and limited grace of God, whilst our later theologians had renounced them, because they are in conflict with the teachings of God's word:— we say, suppose this had been the case, though it was not; their procedure would not be improper, and their doctrinal change would merit our approbation and praise, rather than censure." How much more christian and manly are these views, than the position which, though not avowed, is acted on by many, that the members of a church should never attempt to improve her symbols; but, as a matter of course, defend any doctrine taught by them, because it is there inculcated. What is this else than practically to elevate Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Calvin, or Wesley, above Christ? What is it else, than preferring [sic] to be Lutherans rather than Christians, if we are not ever ready to renounce anything Lutheran, if found not to be Christian? How can the church of Christ continue to develop [sic] herself in accordance with the divine purposes and plan, unless every part of the church is kept in constant contact with the Bible, and is ever willing to improve and conform its entire framework to the increased light of God's word and Providence? It was Luther's deep sense of obligation to the Bible, as paramount to all human authority, which enabled him and his Spartan band of coadjutors, under God, to reform the church of Germany from so many Romish errors, and nothing short of the same noble principle can conduct the church safely in her high and holy mission of converting the world. Whilst, therefore, we love Luther much, let us, my brethren, ever love Christ more. And whilst we respect the soul-stirring productions of the illustrious reformers, let that respect never induce us to sanction any errors contained in them, or bias our minds against the free and full reception of the revelations of God's holy Word!



Page 15

Note 1. Colton's *Genius of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, &c.*, p. 151.

Note 2. Vol. ii., p. 498.

Note 3. Luther was a faithful papist until he was upwards of *thirty years* old, when he began to protest against the errors of Rome.

CHAPTER III. DISADVANTAGES UNDER WHICH THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION WAS PREPARED.

In forming an idea of the estimate which should be placed on the Augsburg Confession, as an expression of the results attained by the biblical studies of Luther, Melancthon and their associates, at the date of the diet in 1530; much depends on the question, whether the circumstances under which it was prepared, and the design for which it was intended, were favorable to a free and full exhibition of their views. The affirmative of this question has often been declared in this country; but the contrary is incontestably established by authentic history, as well as by the declarations of the Reformers themselves. The diet, it will be remembered, was appointed by the Emperor of Germany, Charles V., for the purpose of settling the controversies between the Pope and the Protestant princes of his empire, as well as for other political purposes. The place selected was the City of *Augsburg*, in Bavaria, about two hundred English miles from Wittenberg, and about ninety miles from Coburg, where Luther was left by the Elector during the diet. [Note 1] The Pope had long been urging the emperor to adopt violent measures for the suppression of the Protestants. He fondly anticipated that a deathblow would now be given to the Protestant cause, and with which party the emperor would side was not fully known, although, being a Romanist, little favor could be expected by the Confessors. The Confession was composed by Melancthon out of the Torgau Articles, at Augsburg, where he and the Elector John, with his retinue, arrived on the 2d of May. On the 10th of May, it was sent to Luther, at Coburg, for his revision, and he returned it with his approbation on the 16th, remarking, "I have read Philip's Apology (the Confession,) and am very well (*fast wohl*, an obsolete meaning of the term "fast,") pleased with it. I know nothing to improve or alter at it; nor would it be suitable, as I cannot tread so softly and lightly." [Note 2] As the emperor did not arrive until about a month later, Melancthon continued to make various alterations, to render the Confession more acceptable to the Romanists; for the fears of the Protestants were greatly excited, as will appear by the following extracts from Melancthon's own letters, penned at this eventful period.

In a letter to *Luther*, dated Augsburg, June 15th, Melancthon says, "On the day before Corpus Christi festival, at 8 o'clock, P. M., the emperor arrived at Augsburg. From the imperial court, it appears, we have nothing to expect; for the sole object which *Campegius* seeks to accomplish, is that we should be suppressed *by force*. Nor is there any one in the emperor's entire court, who is milder than he himself." [Note 3] This



was indeed a gloomy prospect, for they were entirely at the mercy of their emperor. He could reenact the scenes of the previous century, and send them, like Huss and Jerome, to the dungeon and the stake.



Page 16

On the 26th of June, the day after the public presentation of the Confession, he again addresses *Luther*: “We live here in the *most lamentable anxiety and incessant tears*. To this a new source of consternation has been added today, after we had read the letter of *Vitus* (Dietrich, Luther’s friend,) in which he states that you are so much offended at us, that you are unwilling even to read our letters. My father, I will not increase my sufferings by words, but I merely beg you to consider, where and *in what danger we are*, where we can have nothing to tranquilize us except your consolations. Streams of sophists and monks collect here daily, to inflame the hatred of the emperor against us. But the friends, if we could formerly number them amongst our (party,) are no longer with us. Alone and despised, we are here *contending against endless dangers*. Our Vindication (the Confession) has been presented to the emperor, and I herewith send it to you for perusal. (If it had not been altered after Luther had seen and approved it, it would have been superfluous to send him another copy.) In my judgment, it is strong enough; for you will here perceive the monks depicted sufficiently. Now, it appears to me, that before our enemies reply, we must determine, *what we will yield to them* in reference to the ‘eucharist in both kinds,’ what touching matrimony (*celibacy* of priests,) and what in regard to ‘CLOSET MASSES.’ In [sic] appears they are determined in no case to yield the last two.” [Note 4]

In a letter to *Camerarius*, [Note 5] he thus describes his condition: “My spirit is *filled with lamentable anxiety*, not for the sake of our cause, but on account of the indifference of our associates. Be not concerned about me, for I commit myself to God. But *something remarkable disturbs us*, which I can only tell you personally.” [Note 6]

To *Luther*, he writes [sic] on the 27th of June, “I cannot describe how deeply I was distressed, on reading in the letter of *Vitus*, (or Dietrich, a favorite of Luther, who remained with him at Coburg, as his associate,) that you are irreconcilably [sic] offended, because I do not write with sufficient frequency.” “The condition of our affairs here is still such, that we spend the *greater part of our time in tears*. We have written very often, as we can prove.” From this and other passages in Melancthon’s letters, as well as from his complaints, that he could not induce [Note 7] the *Protestant princes* to send messengers regularly to Luther, Niemeyer regards it as evident, that Luther’s displeasure arose in part from the fact, that the princes felt disposed, at this important juncture, to act without either his knowledge, counsel, or co-operation, probably under the impression, that, they could more easily effect a reconciliation, if the intrepid, firm and hated Luther were kept out of view.



Page 17

But to proceed with Melancthon's letter. "Our Confession (he says,) has been presented to the emperor, and I have sent you a copy. I entreated you (in my former letter) to inform me, how far we might *yield to our opponents*, if it is practicable. It is true, as you know, we have already consulted on these subjects; but they are always adjusted in a different manner on the field of battle (sie geben sich im Schlachtfeld allezeit anders,) from what they are when previously made the subjects of discussion. I presume the greatest conflict will occur in regard to *private masses*. But as yet I have no certain information." [Note 8]

In another letter to Luther, dated Aug. 6, he says: "The Landgrave proceeds with great moderation, and has openly told me, that in order to preserve peace, *he would submit to still more severe conditions*, provided they could be accepted without bringing reproach on the gospel."

During the pendency of these negotiations, Melancthon made repeated efforts by letter to conciliate influential individuals of the papal party. Among these is his letter to *Cardinal Campegius, the apostolic legate, of July 6th, which reflects no little light on the state of his mind. This intense anxiety to gain the imperial favor for the Protestant cause, could not fail strongly to tempt him to make the Confession as palatable as possible to the Romanists, by yielding nearly everything that he did not regard as essential. Hear the letter:*

"*Most Reverend Sir:—As many good men applaud the very great moderation exhibited by your Eminence, amid your honors and elevation, I am induced to cherish the hope, that your Eminence will receive my letter with favor. Verily it was a true saying which Plato uttered, that nothing more desirable, or better, or more divine, can happen to men, than when wisdom is associated with power in government. Hence, when the intelligence arrived, that your Eminence was sent to this Diet, as judge in the pending religious controversy, many good men congratulated Germany, that the investigation of these most important affairs was confided to a man, who transcended others not merely by his high (official) dignity, but also much more by his wisdom; for even heretofore the fame of your Eminence's wisdom him resounded through all Germany. Now, as I believed, that with this wisdom your Eminence would greatly abhor violent measures, I was thereby induced to write to your Eminence, that it might be made known to you, that we also long only for peace and concord, and reject no condition for the restoration of peace.*"



Page 18

“We have *no doctrine different from that of the Romish Church*, (wir haben keinen von der Roemischen Kirche verschiedenen Lehrsatz,) yea, we have restrained many who wished to disseminate pernicious doctrines, as may be proved by public testimonies. [Note 9] *We are prepared to obey the Romish Church, if, with that mildness which she has always manifested toward all men, she will only overlook and yield, some little, (einiges Wenige,) which we could not now alter if we would.*” [Note 10] Let not your Eminence believe our enemies, who wickedly pervert our writings, and falsely impute to us anything which can inflame the general hatred against us. We reverently *pledge obedience [Note 11] to the authority of the Roman Pontif*, [sic] and to the entire organization of the (Verfassung) of the [sic on repetition] church, only let not the Pope of Rome reject us. Many feel assured, that if your Eminence were better acquainted with our cause and views, you would not approve of these violent counsels. For no other reason do we incur greater hostility in Germany, than because we defend the doctrines of the Romish [Note 12] Church with the utmost steadfastness. This fidelity, if the Lord will, we will show to the Romish Church *until our last breath*. There is indeed some *small* difference in usages, which seems to be unfavorable to union. But the ecclesiastical laws themselves declare, that the unity of the church may continue even amid such diversity of customs.” [Note 13]

Is it possible that any impartial man, after reading this letter can suppose the circumstances of this diet to have been favorable to a free and full expression of the points of dissent, between the Protestants and Papists, even at that day? During the entire six weeks that Melancthon was at Augsburg, before the arrival of the Emperor, his mind was in this agitated and alarmed condition. According to his own account he continued daily to make changes in the Confession, *after* it had been submitted to Luther. No wonder, therefore, that Luther, responding to Melancthon’s inquiry, “what more they could yield to the Romanists,” makes this rather dissatisfied reply, under date June 29: “*Your Apology* (the Augsburg Confession, as altered by Melancthon. after Luther had sanctioned it on the 15th of May, and it had been presented to the diet on the 25th of June,) *I have received, and wonder what you mean, when you desire to know, what and how much, may be yielded to the papists. As far as I am concerned, TOO MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN YIELDED TO THEM IN THE APOLOGY (Confession).*” [Note 14] Here it is evident that the various changes, made by Melancthon between the 15th of May and 25th of June, led Luther to affirm what American Lutherans now maintain, that he had yielded too much to the papists in the Augsburg Confession_. “I daily altered and recast the greater part of it, (says Melancthon himself,) and would [Note 15] have altered still more if our



Page 19

counsellors [sic] had allowed it.” And so much greater was his dissatisfaction at the still more important concessions, [Note 16] which Melancthon and his associates were willing to make, in their negotiations after the Confession had been delivered, that, in a letter of Sept. 20, to *Justus Jonas*, one of the principal Protestant theologians at the Diet, he gives vent to his feelings in the following remarkable language: “I almost burst with anger and displeasure, (Ich boerste schier fuer Zorn und Widerwillen,) and I beg you only to cut short the matter, cease to negotiate with them (the Papists,) any longer, and come home. They have the Confession. They have the gospel. If they are willing to yield to it, then it is well. If they are unwilling, they may go. If war comes out of it, let it come. We have entreated and done enough. The Lord has prepared them as victims for the slaughter, that he may reward them according to their works. But us, his people, he will deliver, even if we were sitting in the fiery furnace at Babylon.” [Note 17] Thus have we heard abundant evidence from the lips of Melancthon and Luther themselves, that the circumstances under which the Augsburg Confession was composed, in eight days, before its submission for Luther’s sanction, and the increasing pressure under which Melancthon afterwards made numerous changes in it, during five weeks before its presentation to the Diet, were far from being favorable to a full and free exhibition of the deliberate views of the Reformers even at that date, and fully account for some of the remnants of Romanism still found in that confession, whose import we are now to examine. The declaration of that elaborate historian *Arnold*, is therefore only too true; “*Melancthon had prepared the Confession amid great fear and trembling, and in many things accommodated himself to the Papists.*” (Nun hatte dieselbe Melancthon zuvor in grossen Zittern und Angsten aufgesetzt, und sich in vielen nach den Papisten bequemet.” [Note 18]

Of similar import is the judgment of *Dr. Hazelius.*” [sic on quotation mark] [Note 19] In reference to the article of Baptism, says he, we have first to remind the reader of the sentiments expressed by the Confessors, in the preface to this (the Augsburg) Confession, declaring there, and in various passages of their other writings, that it was their object_, not only to couch the sentiments and doctrines they professed, in language the least offensive to their opponents, but also to GIVE WAY AS FAR AS CONSCIENCE WOULD PERMIT. This being premised, we shall endeavor to discover the meaning of the Reformers in regard to the article of baptism from some of those portions of their writings, where they had not cause to be so circumspect and careful of not giving offence to the Roman party, as they had in the delivery of the Augsburg Confession.”

Page 20

Nor is it at all surprising, that, as Luther's views of the evils of the mass were so much clearer even at this period, he should, after seven years more time for study, and in times of peace and security, express his abhorrence of this Romish error in such strong terms as we meet in the Smalcald Articles. Indeed, it was this undecided character of the Augsburg Confession on some points, which led the Elector, who, in other respects valued it highly, to have this new Confession prepared by Luther for the Council, which Pope Paul III. [sic] had convoked, to meet at Mantua, in 1537, for the purpose of settling these religious disputes. Because, says Koellner, "the Augsburg Confession had been prepared with the view to give the *least possible offence to the opponents*. But now, the Evangelical party, being stronger, were not only able to avow the points of difference more openly; but they were also determined to do so; and for such negotiations a different form (from that of the Augsburg Confession) was of course requisite. Finally, the transactions at Augsburg, during the reciprocal efforts at reconciliation, and especially through the great mildness and yielding disposition of Melancthon, had in regard to many doctrines, obliterated the clear and real point of difference, so that in many of them the *opponents affirmed, there was no longer any difference at all.*" Koellner's Symbolik, Vol. I., p. 441.

Note 1. The reason why he was left, was because the civil authorities of Augsburg excepted him in the safe passport, which they sent to the Elector, under date of April 30. See Koellner, Vol. I., p. 172.

Note 2. "Ich habe M. Philipsen's Apologie ueberlesen, die gefaellt mir fast wohl, und weisz nichts daran zu bessern, noch zu aendern, wuerde sich auch nicht schicken: denn ich so sanft und leise nicht treten kann."

Note 3. We mention here once for that all our extracts from Melancthon's Letters are translated from C. Niemeyer's work, entitled *Philip Melancthon im Jahre der Augsburgischen Confession*, Halle, 1830.

Note 4. Niemeyer, pp. 26, 27.

Note 5. At that time Professor of Greek and Latin Literature in the Gymnasium of Nurenberg.

Note 6. Niemeyer, p. 28.

Note 7. Niemeyer, p. 78. "Ich kann es bei Hofe nicht erlangen, dasz von heir [sic] ein bestimmter Bote an Luther geschickt wird."

Note 8. Page 30.

Note 9. Dogma nullum habemus diversum a Romana Ecclesia.



Note 10. Here Niemeyer also gives the Latin: “Parati sumus, obedire ecclesiae Romanae, modo ut illa pro sua dementia, qua semper ergo omnes homines usa est, pauca quaedam vel dissimulet, vel relaxet, quae jam ne quidem, si velimus, mutare queamus.

Note 11. Ad haec Romani Pontificis auctoritatem et universam politiam ecclesiasticam, reverenter colimus, modo non abjiciat nos Romanus Pontifex.

Note 12. Here, says Niemeyer, Melancthon probably means the Romish church as she ought to be, and not as she was.



Page 21

Note 13. Page 32.

Note 14. Eure Apologia habe ich empfangen, und nimmt mich wunder was ihr meynet, dasz ihr begehrt zu wissen, was und wie viel man den paepstlichen soll nachgeben. *Fuer meine person ist ihnen allzuviel nachgegeben in der Apologia (Confession)*. Luther's Werke, B. XX., p. 185, Leipsic Edit.

Note 15. See his letter to Camerarius, dated June 26, 1530. "Ich veraenderte und gosz das meiste taeglich um, und wuerde noch mehreres geaedert [sic] haben, wenn es unsere Raethe erlaubt hatten." Niemeyer, p. 28.

Note 16. Melancthon had agreed to the restoration of the power of the bishops, and evidently, as seen by his letter to Luther, of June 26, if Luther had not objected, he would have made some retractions on the celibacy of the clergy, the communion in both kinds and even the private and closet masses. The Protestants did admit that the saints pray for us in heaven, and that commemorative festivals might be kept to pray God to accept the intercession of these saints; but by no means that our prayers should be addressed to the saints themselves. Niemeyer, p. 87.

Note 17. Luther's Works, Vol. XX, p. 196.

Note 18. Gottfried Arnold's Unpartheische Kirchen und Ketzler Historien, Vol. I., p. 809, edit. 2d of 1740.

Note 19. Doctrine and Discipline of the Synod of South Carolina, pp. 18, 19, published in 1841.

CHAPTER IV.

CUMULATIVE PROOF OF THE TRUTH OF THE SEVERAL POSITIONS OF THE DEFINITE SYNODICAL PLATFORM.

The Preamble.

On the subject of the preamble, we will add a few authorities for one or two of its positions, which we have heard called in question. On page 3, we read:—

"Subsequently, Luther and his coadjutors *still further changed* their views on some subjects in that Confession, such as the mass." The truth of this position is demonstrated even by the extract from the Smalcald Articles, given on p. 22 of the Platform. In the Augsburg Confession, Melancthon [sic] says (and Luther approved of it): "It, is *unjustly* charged against our churches, that they have abolished the mass. For it is notorious that the *mass is celebrated among us* with greater devotion and seriousness than by our opponents." But seven years later, in the Smalcald Articles, Luther employs this very different language, which was sanctioned by his coadjutors:



“*The mass in the Papal church, must be the greatest and most terrible abomination, since it is directly and strongly opposed to this chief article (of Justification through faith in Christ,)*” &c. Here the contradiction in words is positive and unqualified. But we must recollect that the term mass here, as will be fully proved hereafter, does not signify the Papal mass in full. It is a well-known fact, and the Confession itself informs us, that the confessors had long before rejected *private and closet masses*, and also had rejected the idea

Page 22

of the public mass being a *sacrifice*, or offering of Christ, for the sins of the living or the dead. But that the word mass cannot be regarded as merely synonymous with Lord's Supper, or communion, in this passage, as it frequently is elsewhere, is clear from the context. For we are told that by proper and diligent instruction "in the design and proper mode of receiving the holy sacrament," "the people are attracted to the *communion and to the mass*," (zur communion *und* mess gezogen wird;) clearly proving that by mass they here meant something else than communion, namely, the public mass, divested of its *sacrificial* nature, and of its design to benefit any others than the communicants themselves; in short, regarding it, thus modified, as an admissible *preparation* for the holy communion. This mass, which the Platform, *with great moderation*, styles merely "*Ceremonies*" of the mass," p. 21, they confessedly did subsequently also abandon, as they had done private and closet masses before.

Again, if we may believe Luther himself, they certainly did afterward change their ground in regard to the jurisdiction of the Pope and bishops. Hear his own language in 1533, three years later: "Hitherto we have always, and especially at the diet of Augsburg, very humbly offered to the Pope and bishops, that we would not destroy their ecclesiastical right and power, but that we would gladly be consecrated and governed by them, and *aid in maintaining their prerogatives and power*, if they would not force upon us articles too unchristian. But we have been unable to obtain this; on the contrary, they wish to force us away from the truth, to adopt their lies and abominations, or wish us put to death. If now, (as they are such hardened Pharaohs,) their authority and consecration should fare as their indulgences did, whose fault will it be?" He then proceeds to denounce the power and consecration which he had admitted at the time of the Augsburg Diet, and declares the church's entire independence of Rome for ordination. [Note 1]

Again, the Preamble asserts, "That the entire Lutheran Church of Germany has rejected the symbolical books *as a whole*, and also abandoned some of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, among others the far greater part of them, the doctrine of the *bodily* presence of the Saviour in the eucharist."

The truth of these positions is well known to those acquainted with the churches in Germany generally. A few extracts from standard authorities may be pleasing to those not well informed on this subject. Says *Koellner*, in 1837: "The theologians of more recent times have, as a body, departed from the rigid doctrinal system of the symbols, and let it be particularly noted, not only those who in the opposing parties are termed rationalists, but also those who, in antithesis to these, desire to be regarded as *champions for the doctrines of the church*."



Page 23

Accordingly, not only those who have been sufficiently denounced as heterodox, have abandoned the doctrines of the symbols, but also the so-called *orthodox*, such as *Doederlein, Morus, Michaelis*, the venerable *Reinhard, Knapp, Storr, Schott, Schwartz, Augusti, Marheinecke*, as well as *Hahn, Oltshausen, Tholuk*, and *Hengstenberg*. In like manner has the public *pledge to the symbols* been greatly relaxed, and is *nowhere unconditional*; but in fidelity to the principles of Protestantism, and guarding it, the obligation is always expressed with the *explicit reservation* of the supreme authority of the Scriptures, as is evident from an inspection of the pledges prescribed in the different Protestant countries.” [Note 2] Again: “It may as well be confessed and openly avowed, for the good of the church, that, *there are but few theologians who still believe and teach the doctrines of the symbols.*” [Note 3]

Professor *Schultz*, in his work on the Eucharist, [Note 4] in 1831, says: “If, in the most recent times, individuals have here and there arisen in the Lutheran Church itself, as defenders of Luther’s views of the Lord’s Supper, it must not be overlooked, that even they, sensibly feeling the difficulty of their undertaking, resort to all manner of subtle explanations and arbitrary additions, in order to explain away the objectionable aspects of this view.”

Finally, listen to the testimony of *Dr. Hagenbach*, of Basel, one of the most distinguished orthodox divines of Europe: “*How few Lutherans*, in this rationalizing period, firmly *adhere to the doctrine of the bodily presence* of Christ in the eucharist: and how few Reformed adhered consistently to the doctrine of unconditional election. If, therefore, the one, party relinquished the one, and the other party the other point (or dividing doctrine,) then the union between them was of course effected in the most natural way possible.” [Note 5]

We close our observations on this topic with the impressive counsels of the venerable *Dr. Knapp*: [Note 6] “Speculations concerning the manner of the presence of the body and blood of Christ, have not the least influence upon the nature and efficacy of the Lord’s Supper. What the Christian chiefly needs to know is the object and uses of this rite, and to act accordingly. Vide Sec.145. He must there therefore believe from the heart that Christ died for him; that now, in his exalted state, he is still active in providing for his welfare; and that hence it becomes him to approach the Lord’s table with feelings of the deepest reverence and most grateful love to God and to Christ. Upon this everything depends, and this makes the ordinance truly edifying and comforting in its influence. These benefits may be derived from this ordinance by all Christians; and to all who have true faith, or who allow this ordinance to have its proper effect in awakening attention to the great truths which it exhibits, it is a powerful, divinely-appointed means of grace, whatever theory respecting it they may adopt—the Lutheran, the Reformed, or even the Roman Catholic transubstantiation, gross as this error is.”



Page 24

The American Recension of the Augsburg Confession.

The general principle, on which this Recension was constructed, is to present the doctrinal articles entire, without the change of a single word, merely omitting the several sentences generally regarded as erroneous, together with nearly the entire condemnatory clauses, and *adding nothing* in their stead. All that the Recension contains is therefore the unadulterated Augsburg Confession, slightly abridged. The following list will show, that *almost the entire Confession is thus retained*, a single article only being omitted, *viz.*: that on Private Confession and Absolution.

ART. I. *Of God*: retained *entire*.

ART. II. *Of Natural Depravity*: entire, except the omission of the words, "by baptism and the Holy Spirit." The condemnatory clause is also given, except the name "Pelagians and others, &c."

ART. III. *Of the Son of God and his Mediatorial Work*: retained *entire*.

ART. IV. *Of Justification*: retained *entire*.

ART. V. *Of the Ministerial Office*: retained *entire*.

ART. VI. *Concerning New Obedience* (or a Christian Life:) *entire*.

ART. VII. *Of the Church*: *entire*.

ART. VIII. *What the Church is*: *entire*, except the omission of the last two sentences.

ART. IX. *Concerning Baptism*: according to the German copy. *entire*.

ART. X. *Of the Lord's Supper*: omits the words "*body and blood*" and "*truly*," and the phrase "are dispensed_" &c.

ART. XI. *Of Confession*: omitted, as private confession and absolution" [sic on punctuation] are confessedly not taught in Scripture.

ART. XII *Of Repentance (after Backsliding:)* *entire*, except the omission of "the church's granting *absolution* to those manifesting repentance," and that faith is produced also "*by means absolution*."

ART. XIII. *Of the Use of the Sacraments*. *entire*.

ART. XIV. *Of Church Orders, (or the Ministry.)* *entire*.

ART. XV. *Of Religious Ceremonies*. *entire*.



ART. XVI. *Of Political Affairs; (excepting the word "imperial.") entire.*

ART. XVII. *Of Christ's Return to Judgment. entire.*

ART. XVIII. *Of Free Will. entire.*

ART. XIX. *Of the Author of Sin. entire.*

ART. XX. *Of God's Works. entire.*

ART. XXI. *Of the Invocation of the Saints, (except a reference to the authority of the Romish church, the canons and the fathers.) entire.*

Note 1. See Luther's Works, Vol. XXI., p. 34, Leipsic ed. See this subject ably discussed in several articles in the Evangelical Lutheran, of December, 1835, by Dr. S. Sprecher, President of Wittenberg College, Ohio.



Page 25

Note 2. Koellner's Symbolik, Vol. I., p. 121.

Note 3. Idem. p. 148.

Note 4. P. 344.

Note 5. Hagenbach's Church History of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, Vol. II., p. 358; also Hahn's Lehrbuch, 1828, p. 578.

Note 6. See Knapp's Theology, translated by L. Woods, Jr., page 513,1 (Glauben's Lehre, &c., 1827,) or German copy, Vol. II., p. 505.

CHAPTER V.

SYNODICAL DISCLAIMER,

or List of Symbolic Errors rejected by the great body of the churches belonging to the General Synod.

Having now arrived at the second part of the Definite Synodical Platform, namely, that part which is not to be subscribed to by the members of Synod; but which is published as the view of the majority, from which individuals are allowed to dissent; we shall pursue the following order in regard to each topic:

1. We shall recapitulate, briefly, what the Platform does assert.
2. State the objections made to these positions by the plea of Rev. Mr. Mann.
3. Examine these objections and vindicate what seems to be the truth. And as the Rev. Mr. Mann confines himself to the alleged errors of the Augsburg Confession, we shall, with little exception, do the same.

CEREMONIES OF THE MASS.

1. As to *what the Platform teaches* on this topic, there ought to be no difficulty; because,
 - a. On page 5 of the Platform, we find a definite list of the errors contained in the Augsburg Confession, *viz.*:
 1. The approval of the *ceremonies* of the mass.
 2. Private Confession and Absolution.
 3. Denial of the Divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath.
 4. Baptismal Regeneration.



5. The real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist.

Here it is evident that the charge is, that the Confession advocates the *ceremonies* of the mass, but *not the mass itself*, as has been alleged.

b. In the same connexion it is stated, "These are the *only* errors contained in the Augsburg Confession." But if these are the only errors charged, then it follows that the error of inculcating the mass itself, or doctrine of the mass, is at all events *not charged in the Platform*, if it is in words even contained in the Confession.

c. The *caption* in the list of errors on page 21 of the Platform, is not headed the *Mass*, as is the article of the Confession to which it refers; but what the Confession calls mass, the Platform, *with great moderation*, styles *Ceremonies* of the mass.

d. In the list of errors, the profession of which should exclude from membership in Synods accepting the Platform, we find p. 15, the following: "Whilst we will not admit into our Synod any one who believes in Exorcism, Private Confession and Absolution, or the *Ceremonies* of the Mass." Here again *Ceremonies* of the mass are stated, but if the Platform taught that the Mass itself is inculcated in the Confession, believers in the Mass would, *a fortiori*, have also been mentioned as excluded.

Page 26

What then is the meaning of the sentence on page 22 of the Platform, “In refutation of the *tolerant views of the mass* above expressed, &c?” Why, of course we should suppose it meant those views of the mass which the Platform charges against the Confession, as taught in these passages, namely, retaining and approving the *ceremonial* of the mass, which constituted by far the greater part of the public mass, so called, although its nature had been changed by denying the *sacrificial* character of the minister’s act of self-communion, and its being performed for the benefit of *others*, either living or dead. We think also, some objectionable parts of the ceremonial itself were changed, although the Confession asserts that the addition of some German hymns, along with the Latin, was the only alteration made. Among those objectionable parts retained, was *the elevation of the host*, of which Luther thus speaks, in his *Short Confession about the Sacrament* against the Fanatics, in 1544. [Note 1] “It, happened about twenty or twenty-two years ago, when I began to condemn the mass (messe,) and wrote severely against the papists, to show that it (the mass) was not a sacrifice, nor a work of ours, but a gift and blessing or testament of God, which we could not offer to God, but ought and must receive from him. At that time I was disposed to reject *the elevation of the host*, on account of the papists, who regard it, as a sacrifice, &c. But as our doctrine was at that time new and exceedingly offensive over the whole world, I had to proceed cautiously, and on account of the weak, to yield many things, which I, at a later period, would not do. I therefore suffered the elevation of the host, to remain, especially as it admits of a favorable, explanation, as I showed in my little work ‘*De Captivitate Babylonica, &c.*’” The elevation of the host was still practised in Saxony generally in 1542, [Note 2] twelve years after the Confession was written, approving of the ceremonies of the mass, of which this was one. This remnant of popery was, however, universally rejected soon after this period, certainly before 1545, and in Wittenberg, in 1542.

Again, what is the natural import of the phrase on page 21 of the Platform: “Accordingly the Lutheran church, in Europe and America, has unanimously repudiated alike the mass and its ceremonies.” The passage itself specifies no time, when either was rejected, and neither says nor implies that both were rejected at the same time. The word “accordingly” refers to what preceded. The whole reads thus: “Topic I., *Ceremonies* of the mass. The error taught on this subject by the Augsburg Confession and Apology to it (namely, the error on these ceremonies of the mass) was rejected by the reformers themselves a few years after the Confession was first published. Accordingly, the Lutheran Church, both in Europe and America, has unanimously repudiated alike the mass



Page 27

and its ceremonies.” As the Augsburg Confession expressly teaches that private and closet masses had been *previously* rejected, and the Platform says the *only* error in the Augsburg Confession on this subject is the *ceremonies* of the public mass, its sacrificial and vicarious nature having also been repudiated long before, it follows, that the thing here spoken of as the mass and its ceremonies is that remnant of this rite, which, as proved above, had not yet been rejected before 1530, the essential doctrine even of the public mass having been rejected long before. Hence, the import of this passage is: that whilst the reformers had long before the Diet of Augsburg rejected the doctrine of the mass, as a sacrifice or a vicarious service for the benefit of others, and had wholly rejected *private and closet masses*; they retained the ceremonies or ritual of the public mass, preceding communion: but even this latter also they renounced soon after; and accordingly, the Lutheran church, every where in Europe and America, imitating their example, has repudiated alike the mass and its ceremonies, which with the above-mentioned various qualifications, are taught in the passages cited from the Confession. Had we been writing for those unacquainted with the Augsburg Confession, the qualifications here referred to, might have been specified.

2. *Our next inquiry is, What objection does the Plea make to the representations of the Platform on this subject?*

The whole charge of our respected friend against the Platform is, that it misapprehends the *import of the word mass* in the 24th Article, and therefore misrepresents the Confession, in charging it with sanctioning the ceremonies of the Romish mass. To support this charge he affirms, that the word mass (or missa, mess,) was at the time of the Confession, in 1530, *in general use for the eucharist*; and that in later years the term mass, in this sense, was entirely given up by the Reformers, page 15 of Plea.

The charge is certainly a grave one, and if unfounded, a grievous injustice is done to the venerable mother symbol of Protestantism. Viewing it in this light, we were slow to admit its truth ourselves, until a pretty extensive acquaintance with the writings of the Reformers compelled us to yield our conviction. Still we would have greatly preferred to remain silent on the subject and throw the mantle of oblivion over this deformity of our symbolic mother; had not ill-advised ultra-symbolists of late years carried on a crusade against all Lutherans who will not adopt the entire symbolic system. The charge in the Platform was advisedly made, after careful examination. Since the charge has been denied, we have again extensively examined the writings of the Reformers, and whilst it would afford us pleasure to withdraw it, and acknowledge our error; our conviction has grown more firm, and we shall be greatly surprised if the great majority



Page 28

of impartial minds do not find the evidence of our position fully satisfactory. At the same time, whilst we charge the Confession with favoring merely the *ceremonies* of the mass, other writers of the first respectability, have expressed the charge in stronger language. Thus *Fuhrmann*, in his *Lexicon of Religious and Ecclesiastical History*, speaking of the Romish mass, says: "*That Luther for some time tolerated it, and gave it a German garb and afterwards abolished it, is notorious.* [Note 3] And that impartial and highly respectable historian of our own country, Dr. Murdock, whose extended and valuable additions to the classic church history of Dr. Mosheim, abundantly prove his acquaintance with the subject; in giving a synopsis of the contents of the Augsburg Confession, thus epitomises the 24th Article: "*The Protestants are falsely taxed with abolishing the mass. They only purified it; and discarded the idea of its being a work of merit, or offering for the sins of the living and the dead, which militates against the scriptural doctrine, that Christ's sacrifice is the only sin offering.*" [note 4]

In order that we may give this question an impartial and conscientious investigation, let us first inquire into the meaning of the word mass among the Papists, apart from the present dispute. "*Mass (missa, Mess,) says Fuhrmann, in his Lexicon of Religious and Ecclesiastical History, [Note 5] at first signified that worship of God, which preceded the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Subsequently, and especially in the fifth century, ministers termed the public celebration of the eucharist, mass (or missa, dismissed); because this service took place after the catechumens were dismissed. This word 'missa' was gradually corrupted into mass. But how did that mode of celebrating this ordinance arise in the Romish Church, which consisted in the priest's giving the sacrament to himself alone, connected with solemn turnings around, and moving about from place to place, and changes of attitude, resembling in some degree a theatrical exhibition, which is termed mass?*" He then proceeds to explain the history of the Romish mass here defined.

Siegel, in his excellent *Manual of Christian Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, published at Leipsic, in 1837, in four volumes, presents an extended view of this subject, from which we will extract little more than his definition of the mass. "The mass, in the Roman Catholic sense of the term, belongs not to the centuries of Christian antiquity, but to a later period." [Note 6] We take up the subject at the time when the Catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation* was fully developed, (since the Lateran Council of 1215.) In conformity to this view of the sacrament, (the doctrine of transubstantiation,) *the idea of the mass was so developed, as to signify that solemn act of the priest, decorated with many ceremonies, by which he offers the unbloody sacrifice at the altar.*"



Page 29

[Note 7] *The mass service is a commixture of Scripture passages, long and short prayers, extracts from the gospels and epistles (pericopen,) liturgic forms, which are divided into several chief parts, designated by different names, Introitus, Offertorium, Canon missae," &c. [Note 8] This whole service amounts to some fifteen or twenty octavo pages, including the directions for genuflections, crossings, tergiversations, &c., occupying about an hour in the reading, the performance of which by the priest was termed "reading mass," as the listening of the audience was called "hearing mass."*

In view of these authorities, we may take for granted, what we suppose no one will deny, that in the Romish Church, not only of the present day, but since several centuries before the Reformation, and, therefore, in 1530, the most common and primary meaning of the word *mass*, was not Lord's Supper; but that long ceremonial, including the consecration of the elements, elevation of the host, and self-communion of the priest, as an offering of the body of Christ a sacrifice for the sins of the living and dead, *which preceded* the distribution of the sacrament to the people.

Again, it will be admitted, that whilst among Papists the above specific meaning of the word *mass* was the most common one, that term was also not unfrequently used by synecdoche, as a part of the whole, to designate the sacramental celebration in general: just as we use the word "*preaching*" which specifically signifies the delivery of a sermon, for the whole services of public worship in the phrase, "will you go to preaching to-day?"

Finally, it will be admitted, that the Reformers, having been educated as Papists, were trained up to this twofold use of the word *mass*, namely, specifically the extended services above described, which *preceded* the communion, and sometimes informally the eucharist, communion or sacrament in general.

The question then seems definitely to be reduced to these two inquiries; first, *Did the Reformers retain this distinction in the use of the word mass at the time of the Diet at Augsburg; and, secondly, did they employ the word in its specific sense in the disputed passages of that Confession?*

First Inquiry.

We shall *first* inquire whether this distinction in the use of the word *mass* was observed by the Reformers at and before the time of the Augsburg Diet?

I. And *first* let us listen to *Luther* himself. In 1523, the great Reformer, 1, in his "*Method of conducting Christian Mass,*" addressed to Rev. Nicolas Hausman, after having rejected such portions of the Romish *mass*, as he thought wrong, he approved others, as explained by himself, such as the, Introitus, the Kyrie eleison, the Collecta or prayer epistles, the Singing of the Gradual, a short sequens, the Gospel, the Nicene Creed, and a number of other matters, including the elevation of



Page 30

the host, but not for worship, [Note 9] he proceeds to the next part of the Treatise which is headed “How to *administer the most holy sacrament to the people*,” [Note 10] and his first sentence is the following: “Let this much suffice to be said of the Mass, and service of the minister; we will now proceed to treat of the manner in which the holy sacrament shall be administered to the people, for whose benefit especially the Supper of our Lord was instituted.” Here we clearly see the distinction between the performances of the priest *before* the communion which constitute the *Mass*, and the distribution of the elements to the people, which he terms holy *sacrament*. Then, after having discussed the subject of the communion, that it should be received in both kinds, &c., he adds, “Let this suffice for the present on the subject of the mass *and* communion.” [Note 11]

2. In his *letter to Lazarus Spengler*, in 1528, Luther observes this same distinction. “In the first place,” he remarks, “it is unreasonable that any one should be forced to receive the sacrament or to abstain from it.” And he adds: “All masses, at which there are *no communicants*” (that is, at which the sacrament is not administered,) “should absolutely be omitted.” [Note 12] Here the administration of the supper to the laity is termed *sacrament*, and that service performed by the minister, which was sometimes succeeded by the sacrament or communion, and at others not, is called *mass*.

3. *The Counsel of Luther and Pomeranius*, in 1528, to Duke George: “First, as you inquire concerning *parish masses*, &c. Be it known to you that no minister can with good conscience perform mass alone, when there are no communicants. Therefore here there is no room for further inquiry; either there must be communicants, or there should be no mass.” [Note 13]

4. Luther’s “*Confession of the Christian Doctrines, in XVII. Articles*,” published in 1530. This is a very short Confession, each article containing but three or four sentences, and the whole amounting to only three or four 8vo. pages. In Article X. he says: “The *eucharist* or *sacrament* of the altar also consists of two parts, namely that the true body and blood of Christ should verily be present in the bread and wine;” and in Article XVI. he says: “Above all other abominations, the *masses*, that have hitherto been regarded as a *sacrifice* or *good work*, by which one designed to procure grace for the other, are to be rejected.” [Note 14] Here the distinction is not only made between the mass and eucharist, but the doctrine of the mass as a sacrifice of Christ offered by the priest for others, is also denounced. It will also be recollected that this view of the mass as a sacrifice, and as vicarious, is strongly denounced in the Augsburg Confession, whilst the charge of having rejected the rite itself

Page 31

with these and other modifications, is flatly denied, in these words: "It is *unjustly* charged against our churches, that they have abolished the mass," (Art. XXIV., p. 21 of the Platform,) a thing never charged against them in reference to the eucharist, for from the very beginning of the Reformation, they charged the Papists with having mutilated it, and claimed the restoration of the cup also to the laity.

5. In a *letter* of September 20, 1530, addressed to *Justus Jonas*, one of the theologians at the diet, Luther thus expresses himself: "For, what else do our opponents, (the Papists,) presume to propose, than that they shall not yield a hairsbreadth, but that we not only yield on the subject of the canon, *the mass*, the *one kind*, (in the eucharist,) celibacy, (of the clergy,) and jurisdiction (of the bishops); but shall also admit that they have taught the truth, and acted properly in all things, and were falsely accused by us." [Note 15] Here the mass is again distinguished from the eucharist in one kind. He then adds: "If we will get at it (yielding to the Papists,) let us yield only the canon, and the closet masses; and either of these two is sufficient fully to deny our doctrine and to confirm theirs." The *canon* was that part of the ritual of the mass which contained the forms of transubstantiation, which were positively rejected by the reformers, the closet masses are rejected in the Augsburg Confession; but Luther says nothing against the public mass, qualified as it is in the Confession.

6. In his *Exhortation to the Sacrament* of the body and blood of Christ, published in 1530, he says: "If the Papists do, as usual, quibble at my language, and boast that I myself here make a sacrifice in the *sacrament*, although I have hitherto contended that the *mass* is no sacrifice; then you shall answer thus: I make *neither the mass nor the sacrament* a sacrifice, ("Ich mache weder Messe noch Sacrament zum opfer,") but the remembrance of Christ," [Note 16] &c. Here the two are distinguished as clearly as language can discriminate between two separate objects, and even placed in antithesis to one another: and let it be remembered, that all the examples are taken from works published either before or in the very year in which the Augsburg Confession was written. A few years later, in 1534, in a letter to a friend, in which he inveighs strongly against the closet masses and the perverted order or arrangements of the mass, (*verkehrte ordnung der Messe*,) and against the Romish mass in general: "I wish, and would very gladly see and hear, that the two words mass and sacrament were considered by every one as being as far apart as light and darkness, yea, as the devil and God. For they (the Papists) must themselves confess, that mass does not signify the reception of the sacrament as Christ instituted it; but the reception of the sacrament they do, (and

Page 32

no thanks to them,) they *must* call *communion*. *But that is called MASS which the priest alone performs at the altar, in which no common christian or layman takes part.*" All other christians do nothing more than receive the sacrament, *and do not perform mass*. [Note 17] Certainly it must be evident that Luther did not regard the word mass as the ordinary term for eucharist, but had a clear idea of the distinction, and of the importance of observing it.

II. Let us now adduce similar evidence from the writings of *Melancthon himself*, who wrote the Confession, to show that he also observed the distinction between *mass* and *eucharist*. This evidence will be the stronger as all his letters quoted, were written from Augsburg itself, during the very time that he composed the Confession, and whilst it was under consideration in the Diet. [Note 18]

1. In a letter to Luther, dated Augsburg, July 30, 1530, Melancthon says: "Zwingle has sent hither a printed Confession. His views of the *Eucharist* (Abendmahl) he urge strongly. He wishes all bishops to be extirpated." Then after speaking of human traditions, he adds: "In the matter of the *mass*, (not eucharist, which he had just mentioned before,) and in the first discussion (Aufsatz, composition) of the doctrinal articles I think I was cautious enough, but on the topics concerning unwritten traditions, I was never rightly satisfied with myself." [Note 19]

2. In another letter to Luther, of August 6th, he says: "At last, on Aug. 3d, we heard the (Romish) Refutation (of the Augsburg Confession), and also the declaration of the emperor. His declaration was terrible enough, but the Refutation was composed in such a puerile manner, that we could not but heartily congratulate each other. There is not a single composition of Faber, (the pensman of the Refutation,) however silly it may be, that is not exceeded in silliness by this. On the doctrine concern the two kinds, (in the Eucharist,) he adduced the history of the sons of Eli, who desired bread to eat; and wished to prove by it, that it becomes laymen to be satisfied with the mere bread in the *Eucharist*. His defence of the *Mass* was very frosty." [Note 20] Here we find the eucharist and the mass spoken of as separate things, and the discussion of the one represented as silly, and that of the other frosty.

3. In a letter to Luther, dated August 22d, he thus writes: "Yesterday we closed the discussion, or rather the quarrel (Gezaenk) which has been conducted before the umpires. The third point was the question of merit, &c. Then he came to the *two kinds* (in the eucharist). Here he exerted himself to the utmost to prove that *both* kinds are not commanded. He maintained that it was a matter of indifference whether one or both kinds are received, and and [sic] that if we would teach this, he would cheerfully allow us both kinds. This I could not

Page 33

accede to; nevertheless, I excused those who had hitherto erroneously received but one kind; for they cried out, the whole church is condemned by us. What think you of this? The command of Jesus refers to ministers and laymen. Hence if it is our duty to receive the *sacrament*, we are also obligated to retain the form of the entire sacrament. If you also are of this opinion, then inform me of it distinctly. On the subject of the *mass*, vows and marriage, there was no discussions, only some conditions were proposed, which we, however, did not accept.” [Note 21] Here again, the distinction between the sacrament and the mass is clearly made, and we are told that at the disputation before the umpires, the former was debated and the latter not. Can anything be plainer, than that a distinction is here made between eucharist and mass?

4. Under date of August 28, Melancthon thus writes to *Luther*: “They (the Papists,) wish us to admit, that neither those who administer but one kind, nor those who receive it, are guilty of sin. We have, indeed, exonerated those from blame, who receive but one kind; but as to those who administer but one,—there is the knot. The Synod of Basil conceded the *whole sacrament* to the Bohemians, on condition that they would acknowledge that it may, with propriety, be taken and received in one kind only. This confession they also wish to extort from us. *Eckius* says he contends for this point, merely because the people cannot be retained in the discharge of duty, unless we also release their consciences in regard to the *sacrament* (that is, unless the reformers would admit, that its reception in one kind was also allowable). We therefore desire to know your judgment on the case. As to the application of *masses*, they are willing to postpone this till the meeting of the synod (or council); and thus they intimate, that they will not oppress us with the reception of their ungodly views on the *mass* (Koethe’s edition: mit der gottlosen Application der Messe, with the ungodly application of the mass, *i.e.* to the living and dead). And yet they desire us to receive the *canon* of the mass, (*i.e.* the most objectionable part of the ritual of the mass, relating to the transubstantiation of the bread and wine, its application to others, &c.) but with a convenient and devout explanation.” [Note 22] Here again, the distinction between the mass and the sacrament is clearly seen.

5. On Sept. 4th, he again writes to *Luther*: “I know that this long silence must be very annoying to you, especially at this time, when we ought to consult one another most frequently; but believe me, nothing is so much opposed to my wishes in the court, as this indifference in dispatching more frequent messengers to you, and yet I am unable to induce them to do it. We have not yet received from our opponents the proposed conditions in reference to the *two kinds* (in the eucharist), marriage and *the mass*.” [Note 23] Here again, who does not see the distinction?



Page 34

6. In a document, which Melancthon prepared for a friend of the chancellor of the bishop of Luettich, in which he states how far they yielded, and also the points in which they could not agree, we find the following: "*Of the two kinds.*—Here we excused those (the laity,) who receive one kind alone (that is, merely the bread in the eucharist), for as they do not distribute the sacraments, they have to receive the sacrament as it is given to them." [Note 24] "*Of the mass.*—In regard to the mass we have already given our reply: namely, that our party retain the substantials (substantalia,) and principal parts of the mass, so far as the consecration is concerned, &c." [Note 25] "*The mass is not a work which, when applied to others, merits grace for them ex opere operato; but according to the confession of the whole church, the Lord's Supper is the sacrament, through which grace is offered to him that receives it, which grace he also really receives, but not by the more external act, but through faith, when he is certain that, in it., grace and pardon of sins are offered.*" [Note 26]

III. We will add a few short *extracts from other reformers*, written at the time of the Diet, to confirm our position that they also made a distinction between the mass and the eucharist, and that by the former they meant that performance of the priest alone at the altar, which preceded the communion.

1. *Aurifaber*, who was a particular personal friend of Luther, and was present at his death. In his account of the incidents of Luther and his doctrines in the year 1530, speaking of the special committee which was appointed on the 16th of August, consisting of seven members on each side, he remarks: [Note 27] "These assembled and took into consideration the Augsburg Confession of the Protestant States, deliberating on one article after another, and the first day agreed upon eleven articles. The second day they continued their negotiations and agreed toll [sic] to twenty-one articles. But on the articles concerning *the mass*, marriage of priests, *the Lord's Supper*, monastic vows and the jurisdiction of the bishops, &c., they could not agree and remained at variance." Here the mass and the Lord's Supper are distinctly classed as different topics.

2. *Spalatin*, one of the theologians who attended the Elector to Augsburg, in his narrative of what occurred during the diet, giving a brief abstract of the contents of the Augsburg Confession, epitomises the, Xth Article thus: Of the Holy *Sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ* in the Sacrament of the altar; and the XXIV Article, "of the *Mass*, how it is celebrated amongst us, and the reason why closet masses have been rejected by us." Here again, who does not see that the two are represented as distinct?

IV. We shall close this cumulative mass of evidence for the distinction between the terms mass and eucharist or Lord's supper, at the time of the diet of Augsburg, by an extract from the professed *refutation of the Augsburg Confession*, prepared by the *papists* during the diet; from which it will be evident, not only that they make this distinction themselves, which no one denies, but that *they understood the Augsburg Condition as making it also*.



Page 35

In their reply to Article XXIV. of the Confession, (or the III. of the Abuses Corrected) they state: "For the *mass* is celebrated, in order that the *holy eucharist* may be offered in memory of the passion of Christ." [Note 28] "In those churches, (which apostatize in the latter times) *no more masses* will be celebrated, *no more sacrament* distributed, no more altars, nor images of the saints, &c." [Note 29] Finally, near the close of their pretended refutation of this Article of the Augsburg Confession, (XXIV.) the papist Refutation says, "It is therefore not rejected or regarded as wrong that the (Protestant) Princes and cities (according to their Confession, Article XXIV.,) celebrate one common (public) mass in their churches; if they only performed it properly, according to the holy rule and canonical regulations, as all Catholics perform it. But that they (the Protestants, in their Confession) reject all *other masses*, can neither be tolerated nor suffered by the christian faith and Catholic profession, (that is, cannot be allowed by us, who profess the Roman Catholic faith.) [Note 30]

Here then, in view of all this mass of evidence, we appeal to every candid and conscientious reader, whether it is not impossible, fairly, to resist the conviction, that the Reformers did, at and before the diet at Augsburg in 1530, ordinarily observe the distinction to which they had been trained in the Romish church, between the words *mass* and *eucharist*, or *Lord's supper*, so that in all cases where precision was necessary, and especially where both were spoken of, each was called by its appropriate name? We say "ordinarily," because we freely admit that sometimes they did use the word *mass* in a more general sense, as a part for the whole, to include both the *eucharist* and the *mass* proper, just as we now use the term *preaching* for the whole of the public service, in the inquiry, "Will you go to *preaching* to day?" whilst in its proper meaning, *preaching* has reference only to the sermon. Our chain of argument is therefore not complete until we add another link, and prove that the Reformers employed the word *mass* in its specific and proper signification, in the disputed passages of the Augsburg Confession, as they did in the numerous passages above cited, and as the Papists themselves understood them to do.

Second Inquiry.

Let us now, in *the second* place, inquire, *Whether the Reformers employed the word mass in its proper and specific meaning in the disputed passages of the Augsburg Confession.*

The affirmative of this question is, we think, certain, from a variety of evidences.



Page 36

1. Because we find *two different articles of the Confession, the one with mass (Messe) for its caption, and the other headed: OF THE HOLY SUPPER (vom Heiligen Abendmahl.)* Now, if mass here signified Holy Supper, the probability is that one or the other term would have been used in both places. The design of captions prefixed to a chapter or article, is to indicate the general contents of such article; and a diversity of caption or title, naturally raises the presumption that different subjects are discussed. The most natural method of deciding this question concerning the meaning of the caption, is to inquire what, are the subjects discussed in each article. If the subjects discussed in both articles are the same, then the captions are or ought to be synonymous, and as the Lord's Supper never signifies mass in its specific sense, it follows that mass would have to mean Lord's Supper. But if different subjects are treated of in the two articles, then the captions, if appropriate, must mean different things. Now, it will not be denied, that whilst the Article X., headed Lord's Supper, discusses matter specifically relating to the eucharist, (namely the real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Holy Supper;) the Article XXIV., headed the *Mass*, actually discusses what is specifically termed the mass, namely, the ceremony and acts of the priest or minister *preceding* the Lord's Supper. Thus, the article states, "No perceptible change was made in the public ceremonies of the mass, except the addition of German hymns along with the Latin; but it is well known that there are no other "public ceremonies" connected with the Lord's Supper in the Romish church, except those embraced in *the mass*, specifically so called, and that the *Latin* hymns were part of this mass, "Masses are bought and sold at annual fairs, and the greater part of them (the masses) in all the churches, were sold for money;" but we have never heard that Romanists had to pay for receiving the communion, it is only for a certain performance of the priest, called mass, that they pay the priest. These "money masses and closet masses," are condemned; whilst no objection is made to public mass, at which the sacrament is administered; on the contrary, it is stated, that by proper instruction, "the people are attracted to communion *and* the mass." The question is referred to "whether a mass performed for a number of persons collectively, was as efficacious as a separate mass for each individual;" but who ever heard of christians receiving one Lord's Supper collectively, for a number of other persons, or for an individual? And if the thing is done by the priest, then it is what is specifically called mass. So also, who ever heard of the Lord's Supper being received "for the dead;" but it is very common for the priest to say *mass* for the dead. Thus, might we add additional sentences from this Article XXIV., which applied to the Lord's

Page 37

Supper, make no sense, but are appropriately and historically true of the mass in its specific sense. Since then almost the whole article treats of the mass proper, does not common sense, as well as the legitimate principles of interpretation, require us so to interpret the word mass in the caption and passages cited from this article? The same reason would apply to a comparison of the caption of Article XXII., or I, of the Abuses Corrected, namely, "Of Communion in both kinds," compared with the word mass; but we deem it unnecessary.

2. That the word mass is here used in its appropriate sense, is evident, *because Melancthon himself, in translating the Latin original into German, always renders the Latin term for mass (missa) by the German term messe (mass); whereas if he had used the Latin term in its more general sense in Article XXIV., he would at least sometimes have translated it eucharist, or Lord's Supper. But so far as we have examined, the word mass (messe) is always employed in this article, where the German is a translation of the Latin. In one case at least we have found the German and Latin Confessions pursue different trains of thought; so that though mass is found in the one, nothing corresponding is contained in the other. The same may be affirmed of all translations into English that we have seen, whether made in this country or in Great Britain. No translator, so far as our knowledge extends, has ventured to render "missa" or "messe," by Lord's Supper or eucharist; but by the appropriate term "mass;" because they all felt that the context and scope of the Article demanded it.*

3. Another proof in Article XXIV. itself, that the word mass is used to designate that ceremonial, which preceded the distribution of the sacrament, is found in *the fact that both the word mass and sacrament are used together, with the copulative conjunction AND connecting them. a.* Thus, near the commencement of the article, we read: "Our people are instructed repeatedly, and with the utmost diligence, concerning the design and proper mode of receiving the holy sacrament; namely, to comfort alarmed consciences; by which means the people are attracted to the *communion AND the mass,*" [Note 31] (dadurch das volk zur communion *und* Mess gezogen wird.) The Latin copy here has a different train of remarks.

b. Again, the following passage near the close of the Article: "The ancient canons also show that one of the priests performed the mass, *and* administered the communion to the other priests and deacons." [Note 32] (Auch zeigen die alten canones an, dasz einer das Amt gehalten hat *UND* die andern Priester und Diakon communicirt.) *c.* Also the passage preceding this: "Our custom is, that on holy days, and also at other times, if communicants are present, *we hold mass AND admit to communion* such as desire it." (So wird diese Weise bei uns gehalten,



Page 38

dasz man an Feiertagen, auch sonst so communicanten da sind, mess haelt, und etliche so das begehren, communiciert. *Servatur apud nos una communis missa singulis feriis, atque aliis etiam diebus, si qui sacramento velint uti, ubi porrigitur sacramentum his qui petunt.*) Here, then, we find three passages in this very Article itself, in which the mass is distinguished from the distribution of the supper, and the two things are connected by “and,” necessarily implying their diversity.

4. That the words [sic] mass is used in its appropriate specific sense in this Article, and not as synonymous with Lord’s Supper, or eucharist, as the Plea for the Augsburg Confession [Note 33] asserts, is proved by the fact, that *if you substitute either of these words for it, many passages in the Article will not make sense.* We will present a few specimens, which may be multiplied by any one who will take Article XXIV. of the Confession and read it, substituting either Lord’s Supper or eucharist in place of the word mass.

“By which means the people are attracted to the communion and the *eucharist*, (the mass;”) which is equivalent to saying, they were attracted to the eucharist and the eucharist.

“An annual fair was made, at which *eucharists* (masses) were bought and sold.” This would be historically untrue.

“And the greater part of them (the *eucharists*) in all the churches, were performed for money.” To this the same remark applies.

“These money-*eucharists* and closet *eucharists* (masses,) have ceased in our churches:” but the eucharist certainly had not ceased.

“Hence also arose the controversy, whether a *eucharist* (mass) performed for (not by) a number of persons collectively, was as efficacious as a separate *eucharist* for each individual.” This question applies only to the mass proper, and was never mooted about the eucharist.

“The ancient canons also show, that one of the priests performed or celebrated (halten, celebrare) *eucharist*, and administered the communion to the other priests and deacons.” [Note 34] *This specimen, like the first, would be purely tautological.*

5. That the word mass is used in Article XXIV., distinctively for the mass, is evident from the fact that the *Romanists* so understood it, and in their answer to the Confession attempt to refute the Protestant rejection not of the Lord’s Supper, but of the private *masses*, the closet *masses*, and the sacrificial and vicarious nature of the *mass* in general whilst they applaud the retention of public mass by the Reformers, if they would

only celebrate it according to canonical regulations. We will cite a single passage, out of many that might be adduced:—



Page 39

“It, is therefore not rejected, nor regarded as wrong, that the (Protestant) princes and cities (according to Article XXIV. of their Confession, on which they are commenting,) celebrate one common (or public) mass in their churches; if they only performed it properly, according to the holy rule and canonical regulations, as all Catholics perform it. But that they (the Protestants) reject all *other* masses, can neither be tolerated nor suffered by the Christian faith and Catholic profession;” (that is, cannot be allowed by us who profess the Roman Catholic religion. [Note 35]) As this Romish Refutation is rarely met with, we add the exact original: “*Wird demnach nicht verworfen noch fuer unrecht erkannt, dasz die Fuersten und Staedt halten ein gemeine Mess in der Kirchen, wann sie solche nur ordentlich und richtig nach der heiligen Richtschnur und canonischen Regel hielten und thaeten, we es alle Catholischen halten: Dieweil sie aber alle andere Messen abschaffen, das kann der Christlich glaub und Catholische Profession und Bekaentnisz weder dulden noch leiden.*”

6. The same fact is confirmed still further by *the Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, written by Melancthon, in reply to the Romish Refutation, from which we have just presented an extract. From this it is evident that the Papists had correctly understood the Augsburg Confession as speaking of the mass properly so called; and that we have therefore also not misunderstood or misrepresented it. Speaking of the very part of the Refutation from which the above passage is cited, Melancthon says: “In the first place, we must state, by way of introduction, that we *do not abolish the mass*. For on every Sunday and Festival, *masses*, (Messen) (not Lord’s Suppers) are held in our churches, at which the *sacrament* is administered to those who desire it.” Here evidently mass and the sacrament are two things.

“Our opponents make a great talk (geschwaetz) about the *Latin* mass, that is about the Mass which, as is well known, was and is *read* in Latin; but certainly they did not talk about the Latin Lord’s Supper.

“But where do we find the Pharisaic, doctrine written, that the *hearing* of the mass without understanding it, is, *ex opere operato*, meritorious and saving?” The term *hearing* evidently refers to the mass, which was read; but what sense would there be in the phrase *hearing* the Lord’s Supper?

“That we do not celebrate private masses, but only a *public mass* (eine oeffentliche Messe,) when the people also commune, is not at all contrary to the common (or general) Christian church.” Here the *private* masses are distinguished from the *public* mass, and the fact affirmed, as clearly as language can convey the idea, that the *Reformers did retain and practice PUBLIC mass on sacramental occasions.*” [Note 36] We might easily adduce a number of other passages from this book, but really it seems to be a work of supererogation.



Page 40

To this decided declaration of Melancthon, we might add his assertions on other occasions. Let a single one suffice. In his letter to Margrave George, of Brandenburg, on the *private* mass, he uses this language: “Finally, as your excellence wishes to know what we retain in our churches of the ceremonies of the mass, I would inform your excellence, that the mass is entirely abolished, *except when are persons present* who wish to receive the Lord’s Supper;” [Note 37] that is, we have entirely abolished private masses; at which, as it is well known, no one communed but the priest himself, but retain the *public mass* at communion seasons.

Finally, to make assurance doubly sure, we will add a similar testimony from Luther himself, in a letter of Counsel to Lazarus Spengler, in 1528: “In the *first place*, let all masses be absolutely dispensed with at which there are no communicants present; as they properly ought to be set aside. Secondly, that in the two parish churches (namely, in Nuerenberg, where Spongier resided,) one or two masses should be held on Sabbath and holy days, according as there may be many or few communicants.” [Note 38]

Now, in this passage, the word mass either means Lord’s Supper in general or mass in particular. It does not mean the former, because it was something which Luther says had been performed *without any* communicants being present, but should not be performed hereafter, unless there were communicants. Again, he says, that on Sabbath or holy days, when there are communicants present, this mass, which from its nature *could* be and had been performed without communicants, should be performed once or twice. But what sense is there in terming that the administration of the Lord’s Supper at which there are no communicants. Or in talking about administering one or two Lord’s Suppers, as the number of communicants might be large or small? For ourselves, it is impossible to doubt, that the mass proper is here intended, which was often celebrated by the minister alone, and which, at communion seasons, was the usual preparation for the communion.

And now, what is the result of our inquiry?

We premised, as conceded by all, that as the word mass among the Romanists does now, so it did at the time of the the [sic] Reformation, and several centuries before, specifically signify a certain service of about an hour’s length, consisting of a commixture of Scripture passages, long and short prayers, invocations, extracts from the gospels and epistles, liturgic forms, the forms of consecration of the elements and transubstantiation of them into the Saviour’s body and blood, with numerous crossings, genuflexions, the elevation of the host and especially the self-communion of the priest, as an offering of the body of Christ a bloodless sacrifice for the sins of the living or dead; all of which was read and done by the *priest himself* before the altar; and which preceded the sacramental communion of the congregation, and was the only preparation for the communion.

Page 41

We also admitted, that then, as now, the word mass was sometimes used by the Romanists for the sacramental celebration in general, including the mass proper.

Thirdly, we assumed as undenied, that the Reformers, having been born and educated in the Romish religion till their majority, were accustomed to this two-fold use of the term mass.

We then asserted that the Reformers continued the twofold use of the term, and as its occasional use for the eucharist in general is not disputed, we especially proved that they continued to observe the distinction and to employ it in its *specific sense*, whenever the mass proper was spoken of.

We proved from various letters and other documents of *Luther*, written in the year of the Diet, that he makes the distinction and uses the term mass for the above described mass proper.

We proved from various letters and other articles of *Melancthon*, written during the session of the Diet, that he employed it in this specific sense.

We proved that the other Reformers used the word in this specific sense, such as Aurifaber, and Spalatin. And finally:

We proved that the *Romanists* used it in this sense at the Diet, in their pretended Refutation of the Augsburg Confession.

There being no possible doubt of the Reformers using the word mass to mean the specific mass, in their other writings at that time; the, only remaining question was, whether Melancthon so used it in the disputed passages of the Article XXIV. of the Augsburg Confession.

That he did here employ it, in this specific sense, we proved by the following facts: Because he made two different captions or headings for two different articles, and in the one headed "Of the Lord's Supper," he discusses that subject, and in the other headed "The Mass," he discusses what is specifically termed mass.

We proved, that Melancthon and all other translators from the Latin or German copy, have translated these passages, *messa*, and *mass*, and not Abendmahl, or Lord's Supper, or Eucharist.

We have proved, that in this very Article XXIV., the mass and sacrament are spoken of in the same sentence as different things, being connected together by the word "*and*."

We have proved, that if we substitute the Lord's Supper instead of mass in this Article, many of the passages will make nonsense.



We have proved, that the Romanists themselves in their Refutation of the Augsburg Confession, understood this Article XXIV. as speaking of the Mass proper, and censured it for rejecting private masses, *whilst it approved of it* for retaining public masses.

Finally, we have proved, that Melancthon, in replying to this Romish Refutation, does not charge them with having misunderstood the XXIV. Article; but goes on to refute their arguments, implying that they had understood him correctly.



Page 42

In view of all these facts it is impossible for us to doubt, that the word mass in the objected passages of the Article XXIV., signifies the mass in its specific sense, and not the Lord's Supper in general: and that when the Reformers affirm in their Confession, that "they are unjustly charged with having abolished the mass" they meant that they retained the mass on sacramental occasions, with the limitations and altered explanations of the nature and application of it, specified in different parts of the Confession; whilst they freely admitted, that they had rejected private and closet, masses, and indeed all masses, except on occasions when the sacrament was administered to the people. What the Romanists considered as the essential doctrine of the mass, *viz.*, its being a sacrifice of Christ, offered by the priest, and its being offered by him for others than himself, either living or dead, and its being performed at any other time, or for any other purpose than as a preparative for Sacramental Communion, the Confession rejects, but the *outward* rite itself, on public sacramental occasions, it professes to retain: and this being the only charge made in the *Platform* on this subject, we appeal to every candid reader to decide, whether it has not been fully established.

Whether Melancthon and the princes had yielded more in this Confession than Luther approved, and whether any of the alterations confessedly made in the Confession after Luther had approved it, related to this Article, is quite a different question, and cannot affect the meaning of the Article itself. It is not improbable that such was the case; but even the ritual, which Luther prepared in 1523, contained the greater part of the Romish mass, such as the *Introitus*, the *Kyrie Eleison*, the *Collecta*, or prayer and *epistles*, *Singing of the Gradual*, a *Short Sequens*, the *Gospel*, the *Nicene Creed*, and a number of other matters, not excepting even the *elevation* of the host, but not for adoration, which latter he retained till [sic] *till twelve years after the Diet at Augsburg!* Yet, even at that time, he had rejected the greater part of the most objectionable portions of the mass. Hence, as the *Platform* charges the Confession only with favoring the *Ceremonies of the Mass*, the charge is not only sustained, but falls short, of what we have established in the preceding pages: and all the vituperation aimed at us by different individuals, who have studied the subject imperfectly, or not at all, we cheerfully forgive, conscious that the aim of all we have published on this subject has been the prosperity of the church, and assured that it will be blessed by the Master to this glorious end.

Reference to the author's former works containing representations of this subject.

Page 43

In view of these indisputable results of a careful investigation of the original sources, it may not be amiss to cast a glance at the representations of this subject in our former publications during the last quarter of a century, as we have frequently been charged, not indeed by the author of the Plea, but by superficial writers, with self-contradiction and misrepresentation. It would indeed have been in perfect unison with the habit of the best authors of Europe and America, to change our opinions as we extended our investigations, and freely to profess such change. Nor should we feel any reluctance in following such distinguished authorities, if we felt that our case required it. But in reperusing our former statements, we cannot see that they differ, in any material point, from the results of our latest investigations above given.

In the Popular Theology, (page 406 of the seventh edition,) first published in 1834, speaking of the article of the Augsburg Confession on the Mass, we find the following: —“On this subject, (the mass,) the language of the Confession was less condemnatory, than that which they soon after employed. In the Smalcald Articles, which were published seven years after this Confession, in 1537, Luther declares the Papal mass to be a most momentous and abominable corruption; because it militates directly and powerfully against the fundamental doctrine, (justification by faith in Jesus Christ.)” We then add several extracts from the Augsburg Confession, showing that the confessors rejected the *sacrificial* and *vicarious* nature of the mass, as well as other objectionable features of it. Now here we find the same two positions taken, which the preceding discussions of this chapter have established, namely, that the Confession is less condemnatory than the later Smalcald Articles; that it favors the mass more, and speaks of it in milder language than was employed at a subsequent period. As no one of any note at that day pretended to urge the adoption of the entire Augsburg Confession, much less of all the symbolical books, there was no necessity of dilating on the objectionable features of the Confession, and we of course abstain from doing so. In this silence we would have persevered to this day, had not a new generation of European symbolists since then sought refuge on our shores, and carried on aggressive operations, incessantly assailing the General Synod and her members, and charging them with unfaithfulness to Confessions which they never adopted, except as to fundamentals; thus compelling us to expose these remnants of Romish error which they certainly do contain.



Page 44

When, we turn to our *History of the American Lutheran Church*, published in 1852, we find on pages 240, 241, the following statement:— “The mass, that is, *the name and some of the ceremonies* of the Romish mass, were retained in the Augsburg Confession; although the errors in doctrine, by which the Romish mass grew out of the Scripture doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, were rejected in that as well as subsequent symbols.” “Our churches,” (says the Augsburg Confession, Art. XXIV.) “are *unjustly* charged with having rejected the mass, (messe.) For it is publicly known that the mass is celebrated amongst us with greater devotion and earnestness, than amongst our opponents.” “Nor has there been any perceptible change made in the public ceremonies of the mass, except that at several places *German* hymns are sung along with the *Latin* ones.” “Our custom is on holy days (and at other times also, *if there be communicants*) to say mass, (not to say a Lord’s Supper,) and those who desire it, receive the Lord’s Supper.” Subsequently, however, great changes were made in the public ceremonies attendant on the Lord’s Supper, and Luther in his Smalcald Articles rejects the mass entirely, both the name and accompanying ceremonies. And soon after the whole Lutheran church followed him. Still, if the Augsburg Confession were *strictly binding on us*, we should be under the necessity of adopting on sacramental occasions all the public ceremonies then and now usual in the Romish Church in celebrating public mass.” Here again we see the following points, which were clearly proved above: 1. That the Augsburg Confession denies having rejected the mass. 2. That she does reject those doctrinal errors which gave rise to the Romish mass. 3. That it was their custom on public occasions (when persons were present who desired to commune) to say a mass, and then administer the sacrament to them. 4. That the Confession explicitly asserts that “*no perceptible change*” had been made in the public ceremonies of the mass, except the introduction of German hymns along with the Latin ones in several places. Hence the inference would necessarily follow, that if they had made no perceptible change in the public ceremonies of the mass, we could make none, if the Confession was *strictly binding on us*: and as the ceremonies of the Romish mass are the same now as then, the ceremonies which the Confession prescribes are the same as those now observed in the church, and if we obeyed the Confession, we should have to perform the same without any “*perceptible*” difference, except the addition of German hymns along with the Latin, which were at that time used in the Lutheran Church. These, Luther for sometime himself defended, as it is certain he did the elevation of the host, (but not for adoration,) till 1542, more than *twenty years* after he commenced the Reformation. Those who object to these statements confound the

Page 45

teachings of the Confession with the *subsequent practice of Luther and the churches*; yea, it has appeared to us, in the course of our recent examinations on these subjects, that the Augsburg Confession was not even up to the progress of reform attained by churches at that day, and this may be one reason why Luther told Melancthon he had yielded too much to the Papists in the Confession. In our Lutheran Manual, we have simply presented the article of the Confession in full, in juxtaposition with the Smalcald Article, treating of the same subject; and have done so without note or comment, except the remark, that the latter refutes the tolerant views of the mass expressed in the former. We can, therefore, see no inconsistency between what we have published on this subject at distant intervals, certainly much less than might have occurred to the most careful and conscientious writer, on a subject so closely connected with the fluctuations of language. Doubtless, by taking detached portions of a paragraph apart from the limitations connected with them, and falsely imputing sinister motives to almost every sentence, it is possible to make the most correct author contradict himself and misrepresent his subject; but with such men, whether their misrepresentations arise from deliberate design or inveterate general habit, we cannot consent to debate. The injury done is rather to the cause of Christ and of truth than ourselves, and we can well afford to commit the case for adjudication to that Omniscient Being, "who judgeth righteously."

Note 1. See Luther's Works, Leipsic ed., Vol. xxi, pp. 447, 448.

Note 2. See Luther's letter to Prince George in his Works, Vol. xxi., p. 430.

Note 3. Vol. iii., p. 114.

Note 4. See Murdock, Edition of Moshem's History, Vol. iii, page 53, Harper's edition.

Note 5. Fuhrmann's Lexicon, Vol. iii., p. 3.

Note 6. Siegel's Manual, Vol. iii., p. 362.

Note 7. Ibid, p. 366.

Note 8. Ibid, p. 375.

Note 9. Luther's Works, Vol. xxii., p. 233-37.

Note 10. Ibid, p. 237.

Note 11. Ibid, p. 240.



Note 12. Ibid. p. 338.

Note 13. Luther's Works, Vol. xix., p. 666.

Note 14. Ibid., Vol. xx., p. 3.

Note 15. Luther's Works, Vol. xx., p. 195.

Note 16. Ibid., p. 257.

Note 17. Luther's Works, Vol. xxi., p. 63.

Note 18. The edition from which all our translations of Melancthon's Letters are made is that of Niemeyer, published at Halle, in 1830, entitled Philip Melancthon in Jahre der Augsburgischen Confession.

Note 19. Niemeyer's Melancthon, pp. 41-43.

Note 20. Ibid., p. 56.

Note 21. Niemeyer's Melancthon, p. 71.

Note 22. Niemeyer's Melancthon, p. 76.

Note 23. Niemeyer, p. 90, 91.

Note 24. Koethe's Melancthon's Works, Vol. I., p. 263.



Page 46

Note 25. Ibid., p. 265.

Note 26. Ibid., p. 267.

Note 27. Luther's Works, Vol. XX., p. 199.

Note 28. Pfeiffer's Augapfel, second edit., p. 1045.

Note 29. Ibid. p. 1048.

Note 30. Pfeiffer's Aug. Appel., second edit., p. 1050.

Note 31. See the Lutheran Manual, p. 288, and Muller's Symb. Bucher, p. 51.

Note 32. See Lutheran Manual, p. 289.

Note 33. Plea, &c., p. 15.

Note 34. Lutheran Manual, pp. 288, 289, and Muller's Symb. pp. 51, 52, 53.

Note 35. Pfeiffer's Augapfel, 2d ed., p. 1045.

Note 36. Mueller's Symb. Books, pp. 248, 249.

Note 37. Koethe's Melancthon's Werke, Vol. i., p. 250.

Note 38. Luther's Works, Leipsic ed., Vol. xxii., p. 338.

CHAPTER VI. OF PRIVATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

This rite, in any sense of the term, that can be given to it in the Augsburg Confession and other former symbols of the Lutheran church, has long since been abandoned throughout our church in Europe, excepting in that small portion of German churches, known as Old Lutherans, and among those foreigners in the west of our country, who constitute the Missouri Synod. It is historically unjust to apply the term *private* confession to that public confession of sins, made by the congregation collectively, as part of our preparatory exercises on sacramental occasions, and usually a misnomer to apply the name private confession, to the habit of some of our German ministers, (termed Anmeldung,) of having all communicants call on them for conversation on their spiritual state, prior to sacramental communion. Although these customs both grew out of private confession properly so called, neither of them retains its essential elements.

Let us first inquire *what does the Augsburg Confession mean by the phrase Private Confession*. Among the Romanists, *Auricular* Confession is that rite, in which every individual of both sexes must, at least once a year, appear before the priest at the



confession box in the church or chapel, and confess in detail all the sins that he can recollect; after which, the priest assigns the penitent some acts of penance, and on his promising to perform them, he then, as in the stead of God, professes to forgive him his sins. The Reformers, however, distinctly rejected the necessity of the penitents enumerating his individual sins, and the propriety of the minister's prescribing any penance to the penitent. They also distinctly made confession optional with the penitent, and the absolution dependent on his faith; and this purified rite they termed *Private Confession*, although in some parts of the church it was still called *Auricular Confession* (*Ohrenbeicht*). [Note 1] The manner in which this rite was performed in the Lutheran Church, is thus described by *Funk* in his work entitled



Page 47

“Kirchenordnungen of the first century of the Lutheran Church in Germany,” in which he presents the results of thirty of the *oldest* Lutheran Formulas of Church Discipline and Worship. “Absolution was received *privately*, by each one *individually*, *kneeling* before the *confessional*, the confessor *imposing his hands* at the time. Private confession was given only *in the church*, in which the confessional was so located *near the pulpit*, that *no other person could be near, or hear what was said by the penitent.*” [Note 2]

But

I. What does the Platform teach in regard to *this Private Confession*? The Platform teaches, 1. That it was retained by the Augsburg Confession and other symbolical books. 2. It is objected to by the Platform, as unauthorized by the Word of God. 3. And thirdly, as being inconsistent with the fundamental doctrine of the Reformation, that *faith it the only condition* of the justification or pardon of the sinner.

II. What does the Plea object to these positions?

1. That the impression might be made by the Platform, that the Lutheran doctrine has some affinity to the Romish doctrine of Auricular Confession. But the Platform expressly states the rejection of *Auricular Confession* by the Reformers, and their retention of what they called private confession in its stead, the latter differing from the former as above stated. The Plea next introduces a formula of absolution, used in Wittenberg, in 1559, to show the harmlessness of the rite. But here, unfortunately, if we are not entirely mistaken, our friend has overlooked the fact, that it is a formula for *public*, and *not private* confession which he cites. This is certain from the language throughout, being addressed “*to all such as are here present,*” &c. It is well known that *private* confession was rejected in the Lutheran Church in Denmark and Sweden in the beginning, as well as by different portions of Germany at an early day, and a public or general confession adopted in its stead. In Luther’s Short Directory for Confession, &c., [[Note 3] tr. note: there is no note number in the original to go with the corresponding footnote, but this appears to be where it should go] we have his formula for *private* or individual absolution, which will convey to the reader a more correct idea of its form: After the directions for confession of sins; the

Confessor says: “*God be merciful to thee and strengthen thy faith. Amen.*”

“*Dost thou believe that my remission of thy sins is God’s remission?*”

Answer of the penitent: “*Yes, dear sir, I do.*”



Then the confessor says: *“According to thy faith, so be it unto thee. And I, by command of our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive thee thy sins, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Depart in peace.”*



Page 48

Another specimen of private absolution we find in the Kirchenordnung, [Note 4] or Church Directory of Count *Wolfgang*, of the Palatinate, on the Rhine, &c., published in Nuernberg, 1557.

“The Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be gracious and merciful to thee, and will pardon all thy sins, for the sake of his dear Son Jesus Christ, who suffered and died for them. And in the name of this, our Lord Jesus Christ, by his command, and in virtue of his declaration, ‘Whose sins ye remit they are remitted,’ &c., *I pronounce thee free and clear of all thy sins*, that they shall all be forgiven thee, as certainly and completely, as Jesus Christ by his sufferings and death merited the same, and in his gospel has commanded it to be preached to all the world. Receive, therefore, this consoling promise, which I have now made to thee in the name of the Lord Christ, let thy conscience be at rest, and do thou confidently believe, that thy sins are assuredly forgiven thee, for Christ’s sake, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

2. The Plea affirms, that private confession may be useful as a means of bringing the members of the church into personal interview with their pastor. The advantage of such interviews we freely admit; but they can be and are secured in our churches without this rite; and as it is confessedly destitute of Scripture authority, we have no right to invent a *new ordinance* in Christ’s church for any purpose.

3. The Plea maintains that explanation of “the power of the Keys,” which authorizes a minister to pronounce absolution of sins, and appeals to Matth. xviii. 18, “Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth,” [sic] &c. But the previous context “tell it to the *church*” &c., clearly shows that it refers to church discipline, and signifies “whatever acts of discipline ye enact in regard to such an individual, I will ratify in heaven.” But this has no bearing on private confession and absolution. The other passage from John, xx. 23, “Whosoever’s sins ye remit,” &c., was uttered on a different occasion, after the Saviour’s resurrection; and either refers to a miraculous power bestowed on the apostles, to discern the condition of the heart, and to announce pardon to those whom they knew to be truly penitent and believing; or it confers on the ministry, in all ages, the power to announce *in general* the conditions on which God will pardon sinners. But it contains no authority to uninspired ministers to apply these promises to individuals, the condition of whose hearts they cannot know, as is done in private absolution.

III. We therefore feel constrained to maintain the positions of the Platform on this subject also.

1. *That private confession and absolution were inculcated by the Augsburg Confession*, is so evident, that it cannot be successfully denied. Nor is this done only in the Abuses Corrected, as the Plea seems to suppose, p. 20. In Art. XI. of the Confession, we read: “In regard to confession, they teach, *that private absolution ought to be retained*

in the church; but that an enumeration of all our transgressions is not requisite to confession.”



Page 49

In the *Apology [Note 5] to the Confession*, Melancthon employs this language: "Wherefore it would be *impious* to take away private absolution from the church." (Quare impium esset, &c.) *Luther*, in the Smalcald Articles, Art. VIII., says, confession and absolution ought *by no means* be abolished in the church, &c., (Nequaquam in ecclesia confessio et absolutio abolenda est, &c.;) and he is speaking of *private* confession.

The Romish alleged Refutation of the Augsburg Confession, on the above cited Art. XI., thus expresses its approbation: "This article (Art. XI.) that private and special absolution should remain, and be preserved in the churches is *Catholic*. Yet two things must be required of them, (of the Reformers,) that both men and women should attend confession at least once a year, &c.; secondly, to confess all the sins you *can* recollect." [Note 6]

Dr. Plank, in his celebrated and elaborate History of the Origin and Changes of the Protestant Doctrinal System, [Note 7] speaking of the negotiations between the Reformers and Papists during the Diet of Augsburg, says, "On the subject of the Confessional *there was an entire agreement*, for they (the Reformers) had declared that they regarded Confession as a very useful institution, and had no idea of suffering it to fall, and also regarded it as good, that the people should be accustomed to confess their sins," viz., at the confessional.

Siegel, in his Manual of Christian Ecclesiastical Antiquities, [Note 8] after stating that Luther rejected *Auricular* Confession, as a sacrament, and a means of oppressing the conscience, adds: "But, on the other hand, Luther was as unwilling as Melancthon, to have *private confession* abolished, and the latter had, in his *Loci Theologici*, pronounced private absolution to be as necessary as baptism." In regard to confession in the Lutheran Church of Germany, the fact is, that private confession, which the Reformers so earnestly recommended, is almost entirely abandoned and changed into a general (and public) confession, which may with more propriety be termed preparatory services to the Lord's Supper."

Finally, we will add the testimony of only one more witness, *Prof. Jacobson*, in the excellent *Theological Encyclopedia of Dr. Herzog*, now in progress of publication in Germany, who says, "Whilst the compulsory part of the institution (private confession,) fell to the ground, each one was left to judge whether and how much he would confess. The institution itself *was retained*, and *private confession* especially recommended. The Augsburg Confession presupposes it (private confession,) *as the rule:*" Our custom is not to give the sacrament to those who have not first been confessed and absolved;" and the Smalcald articles [sic] teach that Confession and Absolution must by no means be allowed to be omitted in the church." [Note 9]



Page 50

After all this testimony, it may be regarded as incontestably established, that the former symbolical books of our church do teach *private confession* and absolution, with some modifications, and hence, that the church in Sweden and Denmark *always rejected this part of the Augsburg Confession*, in practice, and that the entire church in Germany and the United States, which now use a *public* confession, have made a similar departure from the teachings of the Augsburg Confession as well as of Luther, Melancthon and the other Lutheran reformers.

2. That *this rite of private confession, is unauthorized by any command of the Word of God, in so clear, that the Symbolical books themselves admit it*, and commend the rite merely on the ground of human expediency, and inferential scriptural reasoning. The same acknowledgment is made by the Plea of the Rev. Mr. Mann. In Art. XXVI. of Augsburg Confession, being Topic V. of the Abuses Corrected, the confession says: "Confession is *not commanded in Scripture*, but has been instituted *by the church*." [Note 10]

3. The rite of *private absolution*, on which the Reformers lay much stress, is in like manner destitute of scriptural authority, and most injurious to the interests of spiritual religion. The *omniscient* Saviour could well say to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," Matt. ix. 2; for he knew the heart of man.

For the same reason he could say to Mary Magdalene, "Thy sins are forgiven." Luke vii. 48.

But, even the inspired apostles never in a single instance, either undertook to forgive sins themselves, or to announce the pardon of sin to any *individual personally*. It is therefore a solemn thing for ministers, unguided by inspiration, to assume greater power. To proclaim publicly and privately the willingness of God to pardon the impenitent, is an important and delightful [sic] part of the minister's duty; but for uninspired men to institute a special rite in the church, for the express purpose of announcing *pardon to individuals*, even when done conditionally, as the reformers maintained it always should be, is inevitably calculated to lead, especially the less intelligent, to believe their sins forgiven, at least in part, because the ministers announce the fact, and because they have professed penitence to him. But this is wholly unauthorised in God's Word. On the contrary:—

(a) The Scriptures throughout represent *God*, and *the Lamb of God*, as the only beings that can "forgive" and "take away" sin. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, "The Lord God, merciful—*forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin*."

The blessed Saviour, in his memorable prayer, teaches us to address our supplication, not to the minister, but to our *heavenly Father*, "forgive us our sins," &c., Luke xi. 4. He says nothing, nor does any writer of the Old or New Testament *say a word* about advising a resort to the priest or minister to obtain forgiveness of sins. The same truth

is taught in a multitude of other passages. We refer the reader to a few: Eph. iv. 32; Acts viii. 22; 1 John i. 9; Matth. ix. 6; Mark xi. 25; 1 Kings viii. 30; 2 Chron. vii. 14; Psalm lxxxvi. 5; Jerem. xxxi. 34; Dan. ix. 19.



Page 51

(b) The very fact, that sin is committed essentially *against God*, is a violation of *his* law, implies that no other being, not even an angel or archangel, much less a man, can forgive it, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," said the Psalmist, "and done this evil in thy sight."

(c) The offers of pardon in God's Word, are all *conditional* and *general*, and these alone has the minister the right to proclaim, either to a congregation or to an individual. The implication of the promise to individuals is made by the Holy Spirit, working faith in the individual, or enabling him to trust in Christ. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and this peace is the believer's evidence, is the Testimony of the Spirit, that our sins are forgiven.

(d) The actual pardon of individuals by God, depends on their possessing the moral fitness required by him. It is based on their having performed the prescribed moral conditions sincerely, of which none but the Omniscient Jehovah can certainly judge; hence, even the declarative annunciation of pardon to individuals, is not only unauthorized but dangerous. Because, even if conditionally announced, the formality of the absolution, and the fact that the church has made a *special rite* of it, are calculated to beget the idea, especially in the unintelligent, that the granting of absolutions by the minister, is proof of the genuineness of their faith, and reality of their pardon.

(e) Finally, the doctrine of ministerial absolution, or the supposed sin-forgiving power of the ministry, is inconsistent with the doctrine, that justification or pardon can be attained only by a living faith in Jesus Christ, a doctrine of cardinal importance in the eyes of the Reformers, and the one which Luther has styled the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*, the doctrine with which the church must stand or fall." The Scriptures and also the Reformers, teach that pardon or justification can be obtained only through the merits of Christ, which merits must be apprehended by a living faith, which living faith can be found only in the regenerate or converted soul. Hence, as none but a regenerate sinner can exercise living faith, no other can be pardoned, whatever else he may do or possess. Now those who attend confession are either regenerate, or they are not. If they were regenerated or converted before they went to confession, they had faith, and were pardoned before; if they were unregenerate or unconverted, then neither their confession, nor the priest's absolution, can confer pardon on them, because they have not a living faith, although they may be sincere and exercise some sorrow for their sins. On the other hand, if any amount of seriousness and penitence, short of true conversion or regeneration, could, through the confessional, or any other rite, confer pardon of sin; the line of distinction between converted and unconverted, between mere formalists and true Christians would be obliterated; we should have pardoned saints and pardoned sinners in the church, converted and unconverted heirs of the promise, believing and unbelieving subjects of justification, and the words of the Lord Jesus would prove a lie, "That, *unless a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven!*"-Def. Platform, p. 25.



Page 52

On the subject of this rite, we regret to state, that a more careful study of the subject, as presented in the above results, will not permit us to speak as favorably of the practice of the Reformers, as we did in some of our former publications, twenty years ago, and even later. The positions above maintained, we think, cannot be successfully controverted, as our investigations of the original sources has been sufficiently extensive to dispel all doubt.

Note 1. See Koecher, p. 515.

Note 2. Funk's Kirchenordnungen, pp. 189, 190.

Note 3. Mueller's Symb. B., p. 364.

Note 4. Page 97.

Note 5. Mueller's Symb. B., p. 185.

Note 6. Pleiffer, p. 534. [sic]

Note 7. Vol. iii. pt. 1, p. 125.

Note 8. Vol. i., pp. 199, 206.

Note 9. Vol. iv., p. 781.

Note 10. Lutheran Manual, p. 293.

CHAPTER VII. DENIAL OF THE DIVINE INSTITUTION AND OBLIGATION OF CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

The incalculable importance of the proper observation of the Christian Sabbath to the progress of the kingdom of Christ in general, and to the growth of piety in the heart of every Christian in particular, is a point on which, we are happy to state, there is no difference between the Plea and the Platform. Yet we cannot resist the conviction, that in our efforts to observe this day, not with the pharisaic formalities of the Jew, but with the conscientious spirituality of the Christian, the question whether in doing so, we are obeying an injunction of God, exhibited in the inspired example of his apostles, or are merely conforming to an uninspired regulation of the church, must be of great importance.

The lax views of the early reformers on this subject are so frequently met with in theological discussions, that we had not expected to find the position of the Platform disputed; but rather that the theory of the Reformers would be defended, as is done by writers of no mean name in Germany at the present day. The author of the Plea, however, takes a different view of the Confession, and affirms that this venerable



document does not deny the divine institution and obligation of the Christian Sabbath. “Luther and Melancthon (says he,) had received from the older church, the doctrine and practice of the Christian Sabbath, as a holy day, as a divine institution and obligation, and they had not a word to say against this view of the Sabbath. But they had a great deal to say against the abuses, by which the bishops made the Sabbath a day of sin and dishonor to God and his church, instead of making it a day devoted to his glory,” p. 28.



Page 53

This opinion is different from that commonly entertained among the learned. A few authorities alone may suffice to sustain our statement. *Dr Ruecker*, in his work on *The Lord's Day*, in which he thoroughly examines the views of the church on this subject, in all the different ages of her history, fully confirms the position of the Definite Platform. He says, "*The Reformers do not recognize in the religious observance of Sunday an institution resting on an immediate divine command; and the idea of a transfer of the Sabbatic law of the Old to the New Testament Sunday, is altogether strange to them, and is positively rejected by them, as in consistent with the gospel*" (*Die Reformatoren erkennen in der Sonntagsfeier keine unmittelbar goettliche anordnung, &c.*) Ruckert, *von Tage des Herrn*, p. 48.

And again, on p. 67, he affirms this more liberal view of the Lord's Day, to be the more general one in Germany at the present time. "So far," says he, "as we know, the most important, living, theological writers, of the present day, entertain this so-called more liberal or lax view, (namely, that of Luther.)"

Dr. Hengstenberg, the well-known editor of the Evangelical Church Paper at Berlin, Prussia, and author of numerous learned and valuable works, uses the following language: "What Luther's views were, on the law concerning the Sabbath, may easily be inferred from his views of the Old Testament law in general, and of the Decalogue in particular. The distinction which became current after his day, between the moral and ceremonial law, according to which Christ abrogated only the latter, whilst the former is regarded as universal and binding on all ages, was distant from his views. He regards the whole law as an external, coercive letter, designed only for the Jews." "How *Luther* regarded the Sabbath from this general view, is so clearly exhibited in his Larger Catechism, that the introduction of other passages from his writings, is entirely superfluous." He then quotes the passages which will be given in full in our next section, in which Luther declares the Sabbath to be designed only for the Jews, and that in its outward sense it does not concern Christians. (*Darum, says Luther, gehet nun dies gebot nach dem groben Verstande uns Christen nichts an, &c.*) *Melancthon* (continues *Hengstenberg*,) agreed with Luther, and this view was introduced into the Augsburg Confession." See *Hengstenberg, ueber den Tag des Herrn*, Berlin, 1852, pp. 108, 109, 110.

But the accuracy of the Platform will no longer be disputed, when even *Dr. Walter*, [sic; should be *Walther*] the leader of the old Lutheran Synod of Missouri, and editor of their periodical, a man of acknowledged theological learning and rigid advocate for the entire Augsburg Confession, bears testimony in favor of our position. In the March No. of the *Lehre und Wehre*, p. 93, he thus expresses his views: "We cannot agree with him (the author, whom



Page 54

he is reviewing) in the views he expresses concerning the Sabbath. He asserts that the Sabbath or Christian Sunday *is a divine institution*, and that this is the doctrine of the Lutheran Symbols: That the Lutheran Church differs from the Calvinistic only in the mode of observing the Sabbath, the former advocating an evangelical, the latter, a legal method. *The contrary of this is clearly evident from Article XXVIII. of the Augsburg Confession*, and it would be *almost incomprehensible how the author could fail to perceive this*, were it not for his manifest desire to make the sanctification of the Sabbath as binding a duty as any other precept in the decalogue, and his apprehension that this could not be accomplished any other way, than by maintaining the divine appointment of the Sunday.

Once more, let us listen to the the [sic] testimony of that learned and impartial historian of our own country, *Dr. Murdock*, himself, though a native American, a highly respectable German scholar: "The XXVIII. Article of Augsburg Confession," says he, "teaches that as to Sundays and other holy days, and rites and forms of worship, bishops may and should appoint such as are convenient and suitable; and the people should observe them, NOT AS DIVINE ORDINANCES, but as conducive to good order and edification." *Murdock's Mosheim*, Vol. iii., p. 53, Harper's edition.

I. *What is the charge of the Definite Platform against the Augsburg Confession on this subject?* It is, that

The Augsburg Confession "treats the Sabbath as a mere Jewish institution, and supposes it to be totally revoked whilst the propriety of our retaining the Lord's Day or Christian Sabbath as a day of religious worship, is supposed to rest only on the agreement of the churches for the convenience of general convocation.

II. *What ground does the Plea take?*

It denies the position, and affirms the contrary, as above stated, while it supposes the Confession to object not to the divine institution and obligation of the Lord's Day, but to the corruptions which the Romish church had connected with it, and especially the idea that the observance of the Lord's Day was a meritorious work, which would secure our justification before God.

The observations of the Plea against the self-righteous abuse of the Sabbath are just and Christian, but do not affect the position of the Platform. The author also intersperses other useful practical remarks, which we have not have room to quote. The simple point of difference, of any moment, is that relating to the question whether our obligation to observe the Christian Sabbath rests on its appointment by God or by the church. Indeed, it can scarcely be said that this question remains, for the author of the Plea, at the close of his discussion, virtually acknowledges the point affirmed by the

Platform, when he says: “The Augsburg Confession, notwithstanding her definite assertion that the Christian Sabbath rests on *no special dictate of the Word of God*, maintains that by necessity, and by right, the *church* instituted our Christian Sabbath, and we ought to keep it.” P. 34. To this we shall confine our proof.



Page 55

III. *We shall prove that the Augsburg Confession does deny the divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath or Lord's Day.*

In establishing this position, we shall first prove from the other writings of Luther and Melancthon, that they both rejected the divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath or Lord's day; secondly, show from the Augsburg Confession itself, as well as the Apology to it, both written by Melancthon, that its divine appointment is there denied.

Let us listen to the *declarations of Luther* on this subject. In his Commentary on the Pentateuch, speaking of the decalogue, he says: "Saint Paul and the entire New Testament have abolished the Sabbath of the Jews, in order that men may understand that the Sabbath concerns the Jews alone. It is therefore unnecessary [sic] that the Gentiles should observe the Sabbath, although it was a great and rigid command among the Jews." [Note 1] "Among Christians, under the New Testament, every day is a holy day, and *all days are free*. Therefore, says Christ, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day. Matt. xii. 8. Therefore Paul, at different places, admonishes the Christians, not to suffer themselves to be bound to any particular day. Ye observe days and months, and times and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain. Gal. iv. 10, 11. And still more clearly in Colossians ii. 16, 17. Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come." "But although the Sabbath is *now revoked*, and the consciences of men are free from it, it is nevertheless good and necessary that *some* particular day of the week be observed, in order that the word of God may be dispensed on it, may be heard and learned; for not every one can attend to it every day. Moreover, nature demands that both man and beast rest one day in the week, and abstain from labor. Hence, if any one desires to make a necessary command out of the Sabbath, as a work required of God, he must observe Saturday and not Sunday, for Saturday was enjoined upon the Jews, and not Sunday. But Christians have hitherto observed Sunday, and not Saturday, because on that day Christ, arose. Now this is a certain evidence to us that the Sabbath, yea the entire Moses (Mosaic dispensation) no longer concerns us, else we would be under obligation to observe Saturday. This is a great and strong proof that the Sabbath is revoked; for throughout the whole New Testament we find no place in which the observance of the Sabbath is enjoined upon Christians."



Page 56

“But why (continues Luther,) is Sunday observed among Christians? Although, *all days are free and one day is like another*, it is still necessary and good, yea, very necessary, that some one day be observed, *whether it be Sabbath, Sunday or any other day*. For God designs to lead the world decently, and govern it peaceably; therefore he gave six days for work, but on the seventh day, servants, hirelings, and laborers of every kind, yea, even horses and oxen and other laboring animals shall have rest, as this precept requires, in order that they may be refreshed by rest. And especially in order that those, who at other times have no leisure, may hear the preached word and thereby learn to know God. And for this reason, namely, of love and necessity, Sunday has been retained, not on account of the Mosaic precept, but for the sake of our necessities in order that we might rest and learn the word of God.” [Note 2]

In his larger Catechism, Luther thus expresses himself. [Note 3]

“This commandment, therefore, with respect to its outward and literal sense, does not concern us Christians; for it is wholly an external thing, like other ordinances of the Old Testament, confined to certain conditions, and places, which are all now left free through Christ. But in order that we may draw up for the uninformed, a Christian meaning of what God requires of us in this commandment, is necessary to observe, that we keep the Sabbath-day, not for the sake of intelligent and learned (gelehrten) Christians; for these have no need of it: but in the first place, on account, of physical reasons and necessities, which nature teaches and requires for the common mass of people, men-servants and maid-servants, who attend during the whole week to their labor and employments, so that they may also have a day set apart for rest and refreshment (erquickern:) in the second, mostly for the purpose of enabling us to take time and opportunity on these Sabbath-days, (since we cannot otherwise attain them,) to attend to divine service, so that we may assemble ourselves to hear and treat of the Word of God, and then to praise him, to sing and pray to him.

“But this, I say, is not so confined to time, as it was among the Jews, that it must be precisely on this or that day; for one day is not better in itself than another, but it should be daily attended to; but since the mass of the people cannot attend to it, we should reserve one day in the week, at least, for this purpose. Inasmuch, however, as Sunday has been set apart from of old for this purpose, we should therefore let it remain so, that the Sabbath may be observed with uniformity, and that no one create disorder through unnecessary innovation.”

The above testimony of Luther is so distinct and decided, that he certainly would not have approved of the Augsburg Confession if Melancthon had introduced a different doctrine into it. But there was no difference of opinion on this point, between these two luminaries of the church.



Page 57

2. *Melancthon*, in a letter addressed to Luther from Augsburg, dated July 27, 1530, thus speaks of the Christian Sabbath: "When St. Peter appoints the religious observance of Sunday, I regard this work (the observance of the day) *not as divine worship*, (Gottesdienst, cultus,) but as being attended by bodily advantage, (leiblichen Nutzen,) if the people assemble together on a fixed day." [Note 4]

Again, in his *System of Divinity, or Loci Theologici*," [Note 5] we find the following unequivocal declaration: "We have, heard above that the Levitical *ceremonies* are abolished. But the law concerning the Sabbath is a Levitical ceremony, and *St. Paul* expressly says, Col. ii., Let no one judge you, if you do not observe the Sabbaths," (Niemand [sic] soll euch richten, so ihr die Sabbathe nicht haltet;) why then (it may be asked) do you insist so rigidly on this precept? Answer. This precept in the words of Moses embraces two things, one *common*, that is necessary to the church at all times, and a *particular day*, which concerned only the government of Israel. The *common* part (of this precept) is the proper public office (or duty) to preach and to observe the divine ceremonies, which God has at any time enjoyed. This *common* precept binds all men; for this honor all rational creatures owe to God, to aid in sustaining the office of preacher, and Christian assemblies, (public worship,) according to the condition and calling of each one, as shall be farther stated hereafter. *But the particular part, concerning the seventh day, DOES NOT BIND US: therefore we hold meetings on the first day and on any other days of the week, as occasion offers.*"

Such then being the views of the illustrious reformers, one of whom penned the Augsburg Confession, and the other sanctioned it, we might naturally expect to find them expressed in the Confession itself, which a bare recital of a few passages, will prove to be the case.

And, I. From the *Augsburg Confession*, Art. XXVIII.

"And what are we to believe concerning *Sunday* (the Lord's day,) and other similar ordinances and ceremonies of the church? To this inquiry we reply, the bishops and clergy may make regulations, that order may be observed in the church, not with the view of thereby obtaining the grace of God, nor in order thus to make satisfaction for sins, nor to bind the consciences, to hold and regard this as a *necessary* worship of God, or to believe that they would *commit sin* if they *violated* these regulations without offence to others. Thus St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xi. 5,) has ordained that *women shall have their heads* covered in the congregation; also, that ministers should not all speak at the same time in the congregation, but in an orderly manner, one after another.



Page 58

“It is becoming in a Christian congregation to observe such order, for the sake of love and peace, and to obey the bishops and clergy in these cases, and to observe these regulations so far as not to give offence to one another, so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church. Nevertheless, the consciences of men must not be oppressed, by representing these things as *necessary to salvation*, or *teaching that they are guilty of sin, if they break these regulations without offence to others*; for no one affirms that a woman commits sin who goes out with her head uncovered, without giving offence to the people. SUCH ALSO IS THE ORDINANCE CONCERNING SUNDAY, Easter, Whitsunday, and similar festivals and customs. For *those who suppose that the ordinance concerning Sunday instead of Sabbath, is enacted as necessary, are greatly mistaken*. For the Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath, and teaches that all the ceremonies of the old law may be omitted, since the publication of the gospel. And yet, as it was necessary to appoint a certain day, in order that the people might know when they should assemble, the *Christian church*, (not the apostles,) has up appointed Sunday (the Lord’s day) for this purpose; and to this change she was the more inclined and willing, that the people might have an example of *Christian liberty*, and might know that *the observance of neither the Sabbath nor any other day is necessary*. There have been numerous erroneous disputations published, concerning the change of the law, the ceremonies of the New Testament, and the change of the Sabbath, which have all sprung from the false and erroneous opinion, that Christians must have such a mode of divine worship as is conformed to the Levitical or Jewish service, and that Christ enjoined it on the apostles and bishops, to invent new ceremonies, which should be necessary to salvation.” [Note 6]

Here we are distinctly taught, (a) that the Jewish Sabbath is entirely abolished; (b) that no particular day was divinely appointed in its stead; (c) that those who suppose the ordinance concerning Sunday instead of Sabbath is enacted as necessary, “are greatly mistaken.” (d) But that, as it was necessary to appoint a certain day for the, convocation of the people, “the *Christian church* (not the apostles,) appointed Sunday.”

II. Of similar import are the teachings of the *Apology to the Confession*, which also flowed from the pen of Melancthon.

Apology to the Confession, Art. IV.

“But we maintain, that the harmony of the church is no more broken by variations in such *human ordinances*, than it is by variations in the natural length of the day in different places. Yet we like to see the *general ceremonies* uniformly kept, for the sake of harmony and order, as in our churches, for instance, we retain (behalten) the *mass*, the *Lord’s Day*, and *other great festivals*.



Page 59

“And we approve, all *human ordinances* which are good and useful, especially those which promote good external discipline among youth and the people generally. But the inquiry is not, shall human ordinances be observed on account of external discipline and tranquillity? [sic] The question is altogether different; it is, is the observance of such human ordinances a divine service by which God is reconciled; and that without such ordinances, no one can be righteous before God? This is the chief inquiry, and when this shall have been finally answered, it will be easy to judge whether the unity of the church requires uniformity in such ordinances.” [Note 7]

Here again the Lord’s day (a) is classed in the category of *human* ordinances, the observance of which is free, and may differ in different places.

(b) Yet uniformity in general ceremonies is pleasing, such as “the mass, the Lord’s day, and other great festivals.”

(c) It is classed again with *human* ordinances which promote good external discipline among the people.

And now having proved that the lax views of the Christian Sabbath, charged by the Platform on the Augsburg Confession, are attributed to it by the learned in Germany generally, that Luther and Melancthon teach them in their other writings: in view of all these evidences, we ask every impartial, conscientious reader, whether it is possible to doubt the accuracy of the positions maintained by the Platform on this subject—namely, that the Augsburg Confession treats the Sabbath, or religious observance of the *seventh* day of the week, as a mere Jewish institution, an institution appointed of God for the Jews alone; whilst the propriety of retaining the *Lord’s day* or Christian Sabbath, as a day of religious observation and worship, in their judgment, rests on the appointment of the church, and the necessity of having some one day for the convenience of the people in assembling for public worship. The act of keeping any one day *entirely* for religious observance, they regard as ceremonial and temporary, and the moral or common part of the precept, as stated in our extract from Melancthon, they resolve into the general duty of preaching and hearing the gospel, and of sustaining public assemblies for this purpose; that is, of bearing the expenses incident to the support of the ministry and the ordinances of God’s house.

“Our American churches, on the contrary, as well as some few in Germany, believe in the divine institution and obligation of the Christian Sabbath, or Lord’s day, convinced that the Old Testament Sabbath was not a mere Jewish institution; but that it was appointed by God at the close of the creative week, when he rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, and sanctified it, (Gen. ii. 2, 3,) that is, set it (namely, one whole day in seven,) apart for holy purposes, for reasons of universal and perpetual nature,

Page 60

Exod. xx. 11. Even in the re-enactment of it in the Mosaic rode, its original appointment is acknowledged, '*Remember the Sabbath day—because in six days God made heaven and earth—and rested on the seventh; wherefore he, (then, in the beginning,) blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.*' Now this reason has no more reference to the Jews than to any other nation, and if it was sufficient to make the observance of the Sabbath obligatory on them, it must be equally so for all other nations before and after them.

'Since therefore the observance and sanctification of a portion of his time, is based on universal reasons in the nature of man, especially as a religious being, and the proportion of time was fixed at a *seventh*, by the example and precepts of the Creator in the beginning; the Sabbath or religious observance of one day in seven, must be universally obligatory, and the abrogation of the Mosaic ritual, can at most only repeal those ceremonial additions which that ritual made, and must leave the original Sabbath as it found it. Now whilst the apostles, and first Christians under the inspired guidance, for a season also attended worship on the Jewish Sabbath, they observed the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week, as their day of special religious convocations; and this *inspired example* is obligatory on Christians in all ages. Still the essence of the institution consists, not in the particular day of the week, though that is now fixed, but in the religious observance of one entire day in seven." [Note 8]

We do not, indeed, maintain that the conduct of the apostles was inspired on all occasions; but it seems just and necessary to maintain, that when engaged in the specific and appropriate duties of that office, for which they were inspired, they were as much under the guidance of the Spirit in their *actions*, as their words.

On the divine institution and obligation of the Christian Sabbath, we refer the reader to an extended argument in its favor, in the author's Lutheran Manual, pp. 310-24.

Note 1. Luther's Works, Leipsic edit., Vol. iii., pp. 642, 643.

Note 2. Luther's Works, Vol. iii., p. 643.

Note 3. Symbolical Books, pp. 449, 450, corrected by the original.

Note 4. Niemeyer's Briefe Melanchthons, [sic] p. 50.

Note 5. Vol. iv., p. 113, of Koethe's edit.

Note 6. See Schmucker's Lutheran Manual, pp. 306, 307.

Note 7. See Symb. B. Newmarket, ed. 2d., corrected by the German, p. 223.

Note 8. See Definite Synodical Platform, p. 27.

CHAPTER VIII. GENERAL NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS.



Page 61

On this subject the author of the Plea does not pursue the order of the Platform, in which baptism and the eucharist are discussed separately; but he unites the two under the caption of Baptismal Regeneration and the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and enters into some discussions of the sacraments in general, and then introduces remarks on each in particular. Whilst we deem a separate discussion of each sacrament necessary to its proper elucidation, there are certain general views common to them both, which may with propriety be considered in connexion. We, therefore, devote some pages to this purpose, under the head of the *General Nature of the Sacraments*, and reserve the discussion of each one individually to subsequent chapters. It would require an extended volume to discuss all the several aspects of this interesting and solemn subject glanced at by our author. He does not, however, present in definite lineaments the precise system, which he attributes to the Lutheran Symbols; and lest we should do him injustice in endeavoring to present his system in detail, in order to controvert it, we deem it more Christian and courteous to specify only a few items of his chapter, and occupy our space chiefly in presenting and defending what we regard as the doctrine taught in the Word of God on this subject. This doctrine is also the theory that underlies the positions of the Definite Platform, and, we suppose, is assented to by its friends.

The Plea affirms, "The Lutheran doctrine maintains that the Sacraments have an *intrinsic value*; but the Definite Platform seems to regard them as mere signs_, which may have a tendency to *promote piety*, p. 35. On this point we think our author has not clearly presented the point of difference between the friends of the Platform and the Plea. We not only admit, but strenuously affirm, that the sacraments have an important *intrinsic* influence. The Platform thus describes it: "Baptism in adults is a means of making a profession of previous faith, or of being received into the visible church, as well as a *pledge* and *condition* of obtaining *those blessings purchased by Christ*, and offered to all who repent, believe in him and profess his name by baptism," p. 30. As to the question, whether this influence is intrinsic or not, it is not touched in the Platform; although we doubt not its adherents very generally hold the affirmative. But the real point of dispute is the *precise nature* of the influence exerted by the sacraments. The symbols *seem* to regard *forgiveness of sins*, that is, justification, as the *immediate* effect of every worthy reception of these ordinances; whilst the friends of the Platform hold this influence to consist in their tendency to produce that *living faith*, resulting from regeneration, which is the *only condition of pardon*, and without the possession of which God has not promised to forgive



Page 62

the sins of any one, no matter what outward duties he may perform. For God will not forgive the sins of an unconverted sinner. The symbols do, indeed, often insist on the necessity of faith, yet they speak as though in those who do believe, it was the sacrament, and not their faith in the Redeemer, which secured the blessing. Nor do they in many passages sufficiently discriminate, that it is not a mere historical or intellectual, but a living faith, a faith of the heart also, a faith that works by love and purifies the heart and overcomes the world, a faith that involves an entire surrender to the soul of God, which is required to the full efficacy of the sacraments.

The Plea affirms that the primitive church regarded the sacraments as "*mysterics*;" p. 37. But the author presents no evidence of this fact from God's word, or the *apostolic* church; and the church of subsequent ages is no conclusive doctrinal authority for us as Protestants.

The Plea states: "He (God) is able to accomplish by the Holy Baptism, performed in the mysterious name of the ever adored Trinity, a work of regeneration in the heart of the little child." "The expression used in the Augsburg Confession, Art. II., is, regenerated by baptism and the Holy Ghost, (John iii. 5.) This doctrine, however, is not to be understood as if the new creation was fully completed by new generation. It is complete so far as a *live seed* is complete in itself. This does, by no means, exclude subsequent development brought about by favorable internal and external influences;" p. 36. "And Christ, the Godman, is able to make us poor earthly creatures partakers of his celestial nature_, (2 Pet. i. 4,) in the most solemn rite of his church, (the eucharist,) which is therefore communion between Christ and man, in the fullest manner possible on earth;" p. 37. Here the respected author, by adopting the theory that a *living seed* is implanted by *baptism*, (whether into the soul or body he does not specify,) and then that the Godman Christ Jesus makes these baptized individuals *partakers of his CELESTIAL NATURE by the sacramental supper*, seems to favor something like that theory of concorporation, or a physical union between Christ and the believer, which is known in *various* phases as Puseyism in England, and Nevinism in the German Reformed Church of this country, and which has spread a withering influence over the interests of practical piety wherever embraced. Yet we would by no means affirm that the Rev. Mr. Mann has embraced all the cardinal features of this system. The objection that is fatal to it in our mind is, that we cannot find it in God's word. [Note 1]

We shall therefore proceed to ascertain the Scripture doctrine in regard to the influence of the sacraments in general. For the sake of brevity and perspicuity, we shall present it in a concatenation of propositions, that in the end will cover the whole ground, and conduct us safely to the surest biblical results.



Page 63

Scripture view of the Influence of the Sacraments.

I. The plan of salvation, revealed in God's word, presupposes that, man is a *fallen creature, depraved in nature and practice*,—that all men are rebels against the righteous government of God, lying under his righteous displeasure, and morally disqualified for heaven. And also, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord! [Note 2] "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh," is sinful, and except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." [Note 3] Consequently, without a new-birth, an entire moral renovation, in which the rebel lays down the arms of his rebellion, and the slave of sin is delivered from the dominion of his depraved habits, and becomes an obedient servant of Christ, loving holiness and delighting in the service of God, it is impossible for him to obtain pardon or to be justified.

II. The *grand means* by which the Holy Spirit effects this moral reformation, is *divine truth*, either oral, written or symbolic. "Go ye into all the world, says the Saviour, and *preach the gospel* to every creature; he that *believeth* and is baptised, shall be saved, and he that *believeth* not shall be damned." Here preaching the "gospel," the truths of God's word, is placed *foremost* in the list of instrumentalities, and baptism is only appended as a rite to be performed *after* the Holy Spirit, through the preached word, has wrought faith in the hearer's soul. But faith presupposes regeneration. Hence, as truth is the instrumentality employed by the Holy Spirit in the production of *regeneration*, and *faith*, as baptism is to be added *after* the great moral change, conversion has been effected in adults, it follows that the truth or word is the grand and principal means of grace, and not secondary to baptism.

In other passages the *mission of the apostles* is characterized as a mission to *preach*, and baptism is not even named at all. Jesus ordained the twelve, we are told, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to *preach*, &c.; Mark iii. 14, 15. And Paul even thanks God, in his epistle to the Corinthians, [Note 4] that he had baptized none of them save Crispus and Caius, and adds: "For Christ sent me, *not to baptise*, but to *preach* the gospel." Paul, therefore, certainly regarded preaching as far more important than baptism. Of the apostles, Luke informs us, they *daily* in the temple and in every house, ceased not *to teach and preach* Jesus Christ; Acts v. 41, 42. And in order to gain more time for their great work, they appointed deacons to attend at tables, that they might give themselves "continually to prayer and the *ministry of the Word*," but they say nothing of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Paul expressly tells the Romans (x. 13-15,) that faith comes by *hearing* (not by baptism); and to the Corinthians he says,



Page 64

“For in Christ, Jesus I have begotten you, through the *gospel*. 1 Cor. iv. 15. We are regenerated by the incorruptible “*seed of the word*.” [Note 5] We are sanctified by “*the truth*.” In short, our call, [Note 6] our convictions, [Note 7] regeneration, our faith, our sanctification, [Note 8] our preservation [Note 9] and salvation, [Note 10] are all produced by the *word* or *truth*, and it must be the grand means of grace. [Note 11]

This truth, contained in God’s Word, is therefore fully adequate to the production of all the progressive changes, by which we pass from the condition of the careless sinner to that of the advanced and sanctified believer.

III. The *stage of progress* in this moral renovation which is *requisite* before the returning sinner is *morally* qualified for pardon or justification, is that implied by a *living faith*. This justifying faith may be defined to be, “that voluntary act of the illuminated and evangelically penitent sinner, by which he confides in the mercy of God through Christ for salvation, on the terms offered in the gospel.” [Note 12] A more historical faith implies no such preparation, nor the more intellectual belief of the reality and truth of the statements of God’s Word, whilst the heart is estranged from him; for with such a faith the devils believe and tremble but remain devils still. Nor does the state of the convicted, or penitent, or seeking, but yet unconverted sinners furnish such moral preparation to receive pardon. Evidently nothing short of living faith will satisfy the representations of God’s Word and the nature of the case. Whenever the returning sinner exercises the first act of this living faith, he is justified, that is, then God performs that judicial or forensic act, by which a believing sinner, in consideration of the merits of Christ, is released from the penalty of the divine law, and is declared to be entitled to heaven. [Note 13] In this state of justification the believer continues through life, unless he by voluntary transgression falls from a state, of grace and becomes a backslider.

IV. *The evidence of this pardon or justification, to the believer himself, is within his own heart:—*

(a) It is that peace of God, or sense of pardoned sin, wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. “Being justified by faith, we have *peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 1.

(b) “*The love of God shed abroad in our hearts* by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. [Note 14]

(c) It is the testimony of “the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are children of God.” [Note 15] “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.” [Note 16]

(d) It is the *fruit of the Spirit*, exhibited in the believer’s life, “which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” [Note 17]



Page 65

(c) It is “being led by the Spirit of God,” for then, says the apostle,” [sic on punctuation] they are the sons of God. [Note 18]

All these evidences presuppose or involve that great change of heart and life, termed by the Saviour new birth, by which the sinner becomes morally qualified for that pardon, purchased by the blood of Christ, and appropriate to the believer by his faith. But no outward rites *necessarily* imply such moral preparation, and hence they could not be the conditions of justification, according to the analogy of God’s Word.

V. Hence the sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, are not the *immediate* conditions or means of pardon or justification; *but they are means of grace, like the Word of God, and seals of grace to all worthy recipients.* They have an *intrinsic efficacy* by virtue of the truths symbolically represented by them, and an *additional specific efficacy* in virtue of their peculiar nature, in connexion with the influence of the Holy Spirit, to awaken, convert and sanctify the soul. The distinguished Lutheran divine, *Dr. Baumgarten*, speaking of adult receivers of these ordinances, thus expresses his view: “The sacraments stand in the same relation to these influences, (namely, those of covenant grace,) as does the *Word of God*. Hence they are also called the visible word of God, *verbum visibile*; because the *offer* of their reformatory, changing and restoring influence is universal, and reaches every recipient of these ordinances; but its actual communication and full effect take place only in those, who permit themselves to be made susceptible of it.” [Note 19] In regard to children, however, he with equal propriety adds, that the blessings which baptism confers on them, are bestowed irrespectively of any action of their own.

These sacraments, however, do not necessarily prove the existence of any particular progress in the work of conversion, or any definite state of mind, except, a general disposition to seek the Lord, which is implied in the willingness to attend on these ordinances. They cannot therefore be the condition of pardon or justification.

These influences, like those of the truth, may be resisted, and depend for their success on the disposition of the recipient; they do not act *ex opere operato*. The *special* influence of the sacraments, so far as known, is the same in kind_ as that of the truth.

That the sacraments are not IMMEDIATE conditions of pardon or justification, is evident, from a multitude of considerations.

1. If the sincere reception of the sacraments actually secures pardon or justification *per se, immediately*, without the intervening instrumentality of a living faith, then faith is not the only condition of justification as the scriptures teach, but we are justified either by faith, or by the sacraments, and then there will be *three conditions of justification*, faith, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper! For thousands receive the eucharist sincerely, who are unregenerate, and have not a living faith.



Page 66

2. Because no sinner is morally qualified for pardon, until he has been regenerated, and has consecrated himself to the service of God; but multitudes receive the sacrament who are unregenerate, and who therefore cannot be justified or pardoned, even by the sincere reception of the sacraments. Hence as the reception of the sacraments is no certain proof of pardon, it cannot be the immediate condition of it.

3. The sacraments are not immediate conditions of justification or pardon, because *previous faith* is required in the recipients of each of them. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved," [Note 20] says the great Redeemer; "but he that believeth not shall be damned." But if some may be baptised who are destitute of faith, then the existence of faith is not necessarily involved in baptism. And as baptism without faith does not rescue the soul from damnation, it evidently cannot be the *immediate* or certain condition of pardon; for if the immediate condition of a blessing is performed, that blessing must be conferred. And since previous faith is required in baptism, and none but the baptised are admitted to the Lord's Supper, it is evident that faith is also required of communicants.

4. That they are not *immediate* conditions of pardon, is evident, because the same truths which the sacraments inculcate, do not when taught orally or in God's word, invariably or necessarily secure the pardon or justification of all attentive hearers. The result of the proper use of the truth preached or read, is invariably the spiritual advancement of the sinner, whatever the stage of his progress may be. And such appears to be the operation of the sacraments. As it is absurd to affirm that each sermon preached, will convert or affect the pardon of every sinner who attentively hears it; so it were equally gratuitous to affirm the same of the sacraments. If the sinner had been on the verge of regeneration and faith *before* he heard the sermon in question, and the hearing of that discourse completed the change, the result might be affirmed of the last sermon which preceded his faith, but not of its predecessors; and so also of the sacraments as means of grace. Every sermon attentively heard will benefit all who thus hear it. But whether it will produce conviction, or penitence, or faith, or a sense of pardoned sin, depends on the recipient's previous stage of progress in the divine life.

5. If the sacraments were possessed of a sin-forgiving power, in such a sense, as to be the *immediate* conditions of pardon or justification, then the sinner would be dependent for pardon on the sacraments, and on the clergyman who administers them, and not immediately on the Spirit of God. But this would virtually be one of the most dangerous features of Puseyism and Romanism, by which the minister is thrust in between the penitent, sinner and his God, and the priest is elevated to the position of the dispenser of pardon,



Page 67

holding in his hand the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Now it is indeed flattering to the frail heart of the minister (for we are all mere men) to find himself elevated to such an exalted post, to stand (as the Papists say of their priest) in the place of God, and have his whole congregation *look to him* for the pardon of sin, in private confession and the sacraments; and this may possibly be one of the reasons why this Puseyite, semi-Romish system is more popular with the clergy than with the laity. But Protestant ministers should never forget, that the Saviour himself asserted it as his peculiar characteristic, "that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sin." Mark ii. 7.

6. That the sacraments are not the necessary or certain conditions of pardon, is evident, also, from the fact, that some, as the thief upon the cross, were saved without them after their institution, whilst others who had partaken of them were lost, of which Judas and Simon Magus are examples.

7. That the sacraments are not immediate conditions of pardon is finally evident from the declaration of the apostle Peter, "The like figure whereunto baptism doth now save us; *not the putting away of the filth of the flesh*, that is, *not the mere outward rite* of applying the water, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." [Note 21] that is, the faithful performance of the duties to which our Christian profession, made in baptism, obligated us, by keeping a conscience void of offence before God and man.

From all this, it is very clear, that whilst the sacraments are divinely appointed as means and seals of grace, they operate like divine truth, either oral or written, by promoting that great change of heart, without which no man can see God: that where they are received with a living faith, there is indeed pardon of sin or justification; but this pardon is the result of that living faith, the appointed condition of justification, and not of the sacraments, which can only tend to secure pardon by promoting faith.

That these views of the mode of operation of the sacraments, are sustained by many of our ablest divines, is evinced by the following extracts from their works. *Dr. Mosheim*, one of the greatest ornaments of the Lutheran Church, expressly affirms, "Those who possess *faith* have the benefits of Christ sealed and confirmed to them. Let it therefore be remarked, that *faith is necessary to the salutary fruit and effect of the sacraments*, though not required as necessary to their essence (namely, as valid outward ordinances.*)" [Note 22] The distinguished *Dr. Reinhard* says, "We attribute to the sacraments a really beneficial influence in effecting our salvation, only in as far as they are used in accordance with their design. This is a necessary inference from the nature of a ceremony (or rite) in general, which can only then be of any service, when it excites *those views and feelings*, which it is designed to produce." Here this illustrious divine evidently implies that the sacraments exert their influence by promoting certain views and feelings, and that these are the *immediate* causes of the beneficial results, such as

pardon and salvation: consequently the sacraments are mediate, but not immediate conditions of pardon.



Page 68

One extract more, taken from the “Biblical Theology” of the venerable *Dr. Knapp*, of Halle, edited by *Dr. Guericke*, may suffice: “The power and influence of these several religious ordinances or sacraments, is *not physical and mechanical*, and also *not magical*, or operating by enchantment (or charm.) Nor does the mere external rite exert any influence. On the contrary, they stand in the most intimate connexion with the doctrines themselves, which they represent, and never exert any influence without them. Therefore they can by themselves exert no influence in the case of a person who has no knowledge and lively conviction of the doctrines which they represent. But the truths which are thereby represented to the senses, and are to be appropriated to ourselves, operate precisely in the same way, or the Holy Spirit works through them on the hearts of men, in exactly the same way as these truths are wont to act apart, (from the sacraments,) when they are heard, read or meditated on by any person; only, that in the case of the sacraments, these truths are not communicated by words, but in a different way presented to the senses. All that we have said (Part. I., Art. 8) on the influences exerted by the Holy Spirit, through the word, (or divine doctrine,) and in the use of the divine doctrines on the hearts of men, is also applicable to this subject. For he operates in a similar manner in these religious ordinances, through the divine doctrines which are represented by them to the senses, and appropriated by ourselves. Against the abuse of such divinely appointed religious ordinances, when their mere external performance is regarded as sufficient, (as in the case of the sacrifices,) even Moses and all the prophets, protest in the most emphatic manner.” [Note 23]

From all those considerations it is most evident, that although *baptism and the Lord's Supper are important, and influential, and divinely appointed ordinances; neither of them can be the immediate condition of pardon or justification, because neither necessarily involves that state of moral qualification, which, the Scriptures require for pardon*, namely, genuine conversion or regeneration, evinced by its immediate and invariable result, a *living faith*.

Note 1. For the information of such of our readers as prefer a skeleton of the Puseyite system of the sacraments, rather than wade through volumes of Semi-romish discussion, we annex its features:—

I. That man is “made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” in and by holy Baptism.

II. That man “made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” in and by holy Baptism, is renewed from time to time in holy Communion.

III. That a “death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness” is given to every adult, and every infant, in and by the outward visible sign or form in Baptism, “water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”



Page 69

IV. That the gift may be received, in the case of adults, worthily or unworthily, but that it is always received.

V. That the body and blood of Christ are given to every one who receives the Sacramental Bread and Wine.

VI. That the gift may be received worthily or unworthily, but that it is always received.

There is no mistaking the meaning of this. It is clear and explicit; but wherein it differs from Romanism it would be difficult to tell.

Note 2. Heb. xii. 14.

Note 3. John iii. 6, 2.

Note 4. 1 Cor. i. 14-17.

Note 5. See also 1 Pet. i. 23. Luke viii. 4, 11, 15. Here the whole process of conversion is described, and the grand instrumentality is the word or seed, but not a syllable is said of baptism. Also James i. 18.

Note 6. 2 Tim. ii. 14.

Note 7. Jer. xxiii. 29.

Note 8. John xvii. 17.

Note 9. Psalm cxix. 11.

Note 10. 1 Tim. 4.

Note 11. Verbum Dei est medium salutis *efficacissimum*, quippe cujus vis non est tantum objectiva, sed etiam effectiva. Hollazii Theol. Dog. II. p. 452. See the writer's Elemental Contrast, pp. 26, 27.

Note 12. Mark i. 15. *Repent ye and believe* the gospel. James ii. 14-17 Even so *faith*, if it have not works is dead, being alone, &c.

Note 13. Rom. v.1, 2; iii. 21, 22, 23. John iii. 18.

Note 14. Rom. v. 5.

Note 15. Rom. viii. 16.

Note 16. 1 John v. 10.



Note 17. Rom. viii. 15.

Note 18. Gal. v. 22.

Note 19. Dogmatik, Vol. iii., p. 285.

Note 20. Mark xvi. 16. Acta ii. 37, 38: viii. 37, &c. Acts ix. 11. &c.

Note 21. 1 Peter, iii. 21.

Note 22. Elementa Theol. Dog., Vol. ii, p. 295. Qui fidem habent, illis beneficia Christi obsignantur et confirmantur. Notandum ergo est, fidem quidem ad salutarem fructum et effectum sacramentorum, non autem ad eorum essentiam requiri.

Note 23. Biblische Glaubenslehre von Dr. H. E. F. Knapp, Prop. Halle, 1840, p. 292.

CHAPTER IX. BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

In regard to this error, the author of the Plea, relieves us from the necessity of proving that it is contained in the Symbolical books, by himself not only acknowledging the fact, but also defending the doctrine. For ourselves we do not think it taught as clearly in the Augsburg Confession, as most of the other errors touched on in the Definite Platform. But although not inculcated as explicitly as the others, the substance of the doctrine runs through the entire symbolic system, and therefore is justly chargeable on it. The name is not often distinctly met with there, but the thing meets us on many occasions. This seems evident even from the following few citations.

Proof that this doctrine was taught by the Lutheran Symbols and early Lutheran divines.



Page 70

ART. II. — *Augsburg Confession*

“Our churches teach that this innate disease and original sin, is truly sin, and condemneth all those under the eternal wrath of God, who are *not born again by Baptism and the Holy Spirit.*”

Apology to Augsburg Confession, p. 226.

“Our opponents also agree to the ninth article, in which we confess that *Baptism is necessary to salvation*, and that the baptism of infants is not fruitless, but necessary and salutary.

Luther's Smaller Catechism.

“*What does Baptism confer or benefit?*”

“*Ans.*—It effects the *forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil*, and confers *everlasting salvation* upon all who believe it, (not believe in Christ,) as the words and promise of God declare.”

“*How can water effect such great things?*”

“*Ans.*—Indeed it is not the water that has such effect, but the Word of God that is with and in the water, and the faith trusting such Word of God in the water. For without the Word of God the water is mere water, hence no baptism; but with the Word of God it constitutes a baptism, that is, a gracious water of life, and a *washing of regeneration*, in the Holy Ghost.”—*Symb. B.*, p. 421.

Luther's Larger Catechism.

“Every Christian, therefore, has enough to learn and practice in baptism during his life; for he must ever exert himself to *maintain* a firm faith in *what it promises and brings* him, namely, triumph over the devil and death, the *remission of sins*, the grace of God, Christ with all his works, and *the Holy Ghost with all his gifts*. In short, the blessings of baptism are so great, that if feeble nature could but comprehend them we might justly doubt their reality. For, imagine to yourself a physician, who possessed an art preventing persons from dying; or, even if they died, immediately restoring them to life so as to live eternally afterwards, how the world would rush and flock around him with money, while the poor, prevented by the rich, could not approach him! And yet, here in *baptism*, every one has such a treasure, and medicine gratuitously brought to his door—a medicine which abolishes death, and preserves all men to eternal life_.”—*P.* 525.

Luther's Larger Catechism.



“It (baptism) is, therefore, very appropriately called food for the soul, which flourishes and strengthens the new man; *for through baptism we are born anew*; but beside this, the old vicious nature in the flesh and blood nevertheless adheres to man, in which there are so many impediments and obstacles, with which we are opposed as well by the devil as by the world, so that we often become weary and faint, and sometimes stumble.”—*Symb. B.*, p. 533.

In the *Visitation Articles*, published fourteen years after the other symbolical books for the purpose of explaining their true import, and then made symbolic in Saxony:



Page 71

ART. III.—*On Baptism.*

SECT. II. “By baptism as the *laver of regeneration*, and *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, God saves us, and works in us such righteousness and purification from sins, that whosoever *perseveres* in such covenant, and reliance, *will not be lost*, but have eternal life.”

SECT. IV. “Baptism is the bath (laver) of regeneration, *because in it we are regenerated*, and sealed with the spirit of sonship and obtain pardon.”-*Mueller’s Symb. Buecher*, pp. 848, 849.

That the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was taught by Luther, and the prominent older divines of our church, is well known to those acquainted with their works.

1. *Luther*, indeed, sometimes expressed the most extravagant ideas of baptism, maintaining that the water in baptism, was pervaded by the divine majesty, and was a (durch goettertes Wasser,) water penetrated through and through with God! [Note 1] He compares the water in baptism to heated iron, in which, though you see nought but iron, fire also is contained, which represents the divine name and power pervading the water. But we will not enter any further into his extravagant illustrations of the power of baptism. The result at which he arrives is thus expressed: “Therefore, he (this omnipotent name or power of God,) must also in baptism, make pure and holy, heavenly and divine persons, as we shall hereafter further see.” (Darum musz er auch in der Taufe reine und heilige und eitel himmlische, goettliche Menschen machen, wie wir hernach sehen werden.) [Note 2]

In his sermon on Baptism, Luther thus describes the influence of this ordinance:—“The import of baptism is a blessed dying unto sin, and resurrection in the grace of God, that the old man that was conceived in sin, may arise and go forth *a new man* born of grace. Thus St. Paul in, Tit. iii. 5, terms baptism a bath of *the new birth*, that in this bath men may be *born again* and renewed. Thus also Christ, in John iii. 3, says: Unless ye are born again of water and the Spirit (of grace), ye cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. For just as a child is born of its mother, and by this bodily birth is a sinful being and a *child of wrath*; thus also is man taken and *born spiritually* from the baptism, and by *this birth he is a child of grace and a justified person*. Thus are sins drowned in baptism, and thus does righteousness arise in the place of sin.” [Note 3]

2. *Melancthon*, whilst he by no means indulges in the extravagant and unscriptural views of a change in the water employed in baptism, by the Deity’s pervading it, &c., seems however in substance to have entertained views of the efficacy of this ordinance, amounting to baptismal regeneration.

Page 72

“The real use of baptism,” (says he,) “is taught by these two particulars, the outward sign and the promise, ‘he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved;’ also the words which are used in baptism, ‘I baptise thee in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost:’ that is, through this outward sign (baptism) I, in the place of God, *testify that you are reconciled to God, and accepted of him*, who is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The Father receives you for the sake of the Son, and grants you the Holy Spirit, by which he will renew, make alive, comfort, and sanctify you.” [Note 4]

And, again, when discussing the subject, of pedobaptism, he thus describes his view: —“In and by baptism the Holy Spirit is given to children, who operates in them according to their measure (*masse*) or capacity, as he operated in John in the womb of Elizabeth. And although there, is a difference between the old and the young, inasmuch as the old are attentive to the works, still the influences of the Holy Spirit are in both old and young a tendency toward God.” [Note 5]

That this doctrine was also taught by the great majority of the most distinguished older theologians of our church, is a point which requires no proof to those acquainted with those authors. As their works are accessible to comparatively few of our readers, we will annex a quotation from several of them, at the same time abbreviating them as much as is consistent with perspicuity. Thus, Dr. Hunnius, professor at Wittenberg, and subsequently Superintendent at Luebeck, [Note 6] in his *Epitome Credendorum*, says: —“The sacrament of baptism is a spiritual action, instituted and ordained by Christ, by the performance of which a man is baptised with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost; and by means of which he receives *forgiveness of sins*, is received into God’s covenant of mercy, and is made partaker of the merits of Christ, of *adoption* and of *eternal salvation*.” [Note 7] Again, “Baptism is not a sign of regeneration, that is to take place some time after baptism had been administered to him. For as *baptism causes regeneration*, it cannot be said to signify the same,” &c. [Note 8] And again, “Nevertheless, we have seen it to be the will of God, that they (children) should enter the kingdom of heaven, and it therefore becomes indispensably necessary for them to be regenerated. But this *regeneration is brought about by no other means than by baptism*, which we know to be the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,” &c. [Note 9] The celebrated *Dr. Gerhard* says, “The holy Trinity is present with his grace (in baptism). The Father receives the baptized person into favor; the Son bestows his righteousness upon him, and the Holy Spirit *regenerates* and *renews him*,—produces faith, *regeneration* and renovation, and seals the covenant of grace in the hearts of the baptized.” [Note 10]



Page 73

Again, “Baptism is the first gateway of grace, the sacrament of initiation: the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of confirmation; by baptism we are *regenerated*, by the Holy Supper we are nourished and strengthened to eternal life. As in nature so in grace, we are first born and then fed, first generated and then we increase, (ix. 67.) *Dr. Buddeus*, one of the most distinguished theologians of the School of Halle, in his “*Theologia Dogmatica*, [sic on punctuation] p. 1127, says, “The design of the baptism of infants is their *regeneration*; in the case of adults, the confirmation and sealing of that faith, which they should have before (the reception of the rite.”)

Since therefore we have seen that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was taught not only by the symbolical books, but also by Luther and Melancthon in their other writings, as well as by the leading divines of the first two centuries after the Reformation, who all received the symbolical books, and understood their import, we may regard the charge of the Platform as established beyond contradiction, that this tenet was a part of Symbolic Lutheranism.

Influence of this Doctrine on the Pulpit.

Now the influence of this doctrine on the ministrations of the pulpit, is of the most deleterious nature. The word of God represents all mankind as by nature dead in trespasses and sins. Paul tells us that “there is none righteous, no not one, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God:” and affirms that the carnal mind is enmity against God. The faithful ambassador of Christ must therefore announce the command of God, “that all men every where should repent: and that unless they do repent, they shall all likewise perish. He must divide his congregation into two classes, the friends and the enemies of God, those who are for the Saviour and those who are against him: and he must insist upon judging not by their profession, “Lord, Lord, but by the question, whether they *do the will of our Father in heaven.*” Thus when the faithful servant of Christ represents all as unconverted, and exposed to the curse of the divine law, who do not give evidence of regeneration in their walk and conversation; careless sinners become alarmed and feel the necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come, by repenting and turning to God, by seeking pardon and a new heart, and consecrating all their powers of mind and body to the service of God.

But all this the believer in baptismal regeneration cannot consistently [sic] do. Because

1. If we believe all our hearers *regenerated*, (for they are generally all baptised) even those whose life presents not the least evidence of piety, and many proofs to the contrary; we still must believe them in some sense the children of God, as they are born again! We cannot tell them that they are in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity; because we profess to believe them regenerated— therefore children of God in some sense.



Page 74

2. We cannot exhort the impenitent baptised, though apparently dead in trespasses and sins, to pray for a *new heart* and a new spirit; for these, as regenerated persons, they have obtained.
3. The minister who believes in baptismal regeneration, cannot with Paul proclaim, "If any man be in Christ Jesus and is a new creature, old limits are passed away, behold all things have become new;" for his ungodly baptised hearers are all new creatures by baptism, and yet their old sinful habits *have not passed away*, and all things have not become new to them.
4. He cannot consistently preach, that those who have put on the new man (Ephes. iv. 24,) are created in righteousness and true holiness; for the majority of those said to be regenerated, or to have put on the new man by baptism, continue in sin and are destitute of righteousness and trim holiness.
5. He cannot, with the blessed Master, preach, "by their fruits ye shall know them; for here, on his theory, are regenerate souls bringing forth the fruits of death, good (regenerate) trees bringing forth rotten fruits," which is as incredible as thorns producing grapes, and thistles yielding figs.
6. The believer in baptismal regeneration cannot consistently preach, that "not every one who saith, "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only those who also do the will of our heavenly Father; for here are regenerate men who have the germ of eternal life in them (by baptism) who do not the will of God. Now as these on his theory are regenerate men, the bible promises them salvation. But according to the Saviour they shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The apostle James Inquires, [sic] "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Will his (dead) faith save, him?" Or we may add, can his dead baptismal regeneration do it? As the apostle of the Gentiles declares, that circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God: so as baptism occupies the place of circumcision, baptism is nothing and the want of it nothing, unless accompanied with a sincere, universal and irrevocable purpose to keep the commandments of God.

If any one responds, we do not mean regeneration in its proper sense, when we ascribe it to the influence of baptism; then do not deceive yourselves and others by employing the name, when you do not mean the thing. The Saviour uses it for an entire, and radical change, and we have no right to use it for anything else.

Or does any one say, by baptismal regeneration, we understand an inferior kind or degree of regeneration, the beginning of the change. If so, then do not mistake the beginning for the completion of this great spiritual renovation; nor ascribe to the one, the precious promises and spiritual benefits which belong only to the other.

Page 75

In short, if the word regeneration, in connexion with baptism, be employed to signify anything resembling its proper meaning, its influence on the preached gospel must be baneful; and just in proportion as we use it in a sense approximating to its legitimate import, does it obscure, confuse and derange the ideas of men as to the great and glorious plan of salvation in the gospel, which represent all men as either for or against Christ, and appeals to their works as decisive of their actual, spiritual character, as friends or as enemies of the Redeemer.

Such being the deleterious influence of this doctrine, it is important to show, that it finds no sanction from a just interpretation of the Word of God.

By baptismal regeneration is properly meant the doctrine that baptism is necessarily and invariably attended by spiritual regeneration; and that such water baptism is essential to salvation.

In the case of all adults, the Scriptures represent *faith in Christ* as the necessary prerequisite to baptism, and baptism as a rite by which those who had already consecrated themselves to Christ, or been converted, made a public profession of the fact, received a pledge of the divine favor, or of forgiveness of sins, and were admitted to membership in the visible church. The same inspired records also teach, that if men are destitute of this faith, if they believe not, they shall be damned, notwithstanding their baptism. "He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved, and he that *believeth* not, shall be damned," Matt. xvi. 16. And Philip said to the eunuch, "If thou *believest* with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized," Acts viii. 37. "*Repent* and be baptized," Acts ii. 38; viii. 62; xviii. 8. Hence if baptism required previous faith and repentance, or conversion in adults, and if, when they were destitute of this faith or conversion, they were damned, notwithstanding their baptism; it follows that baptism was not, and is not, a converting ordinance in adults, and does not necessarily effect or secure their regeneration.

Now that baptism cannot accomplish more in infants than in adults, is self-evident; hence if it is not a converting ordinance in adults, it cannot be in infants.

The effects of baptism on *infants are nowhere specified in Scripture*; hence we must suppose them to be same as in adults, so far as children are naturally capable of them. Of *regeneration*, in the proper sense of the term, infants are incapable; for it consists in a radical change in our religious views of the divine character, law, &c.; a change in our religious feelings, and in our religious purposes and habits of action; of none of which are children capable.



Page 76

Again, as regeneration does not destroy but merely restrains the natural depravity, or innate, sinful dispositions of the Christian, (for these still remain in him after conversion,) it must consist mainly in a change, of that *increased predisposition to sin arising from action, of that preponderance of sinful habits_* formed by voluntary indulgence of our natural depravity, after we have reached years of moral agency. But infants have no such *increased* predisposition, no *habits* of sin prior to moral agency, consequently there can be no change of them, no regeneration in this meaning of the term. Hence, if baptism even did effect regeneration in adults, which we have proved not to be the case; still it could have no such influence on infants, as they are *naturally incapable* of the mental exercises involved in it. The child, on its first attainment of moral agency, has merely natural depravity, until by voluntary indulgence in sin, it contracts personal guilt, and forms habits of sinful action. If the child, by the grace of God and proper religious instruction, continues to resist the solicitations of its depraved nature, its continued obedience will form holy habits, and this preponderance of holy habits, when established, constitutes its regeneration. If the growing child, as its powers of moral agency are developed, for any reason indulges its innate sinful propensities, it becomes a confirmed sinner, and its subsequent regeneration, if it take place, will be the more striking, as its change of habits must be greater.

Baptism in *adults*, is a means of making a public profession, of previous faith, or of being received into the visible church, as well as a pledge and condition of obtaining those blessings purchased by Christ, and offered to all who repent, believe in him, and profess his name by baptism.

Baptism in *infants*, is the pledge of the bestowment of those blessings purchased by Christ for all. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." And "The promise is to you and your *children*," Acts ii. 39. These blessings are forgiveness of sins, or exemption from the penal consequences of natural depravity, (which would at least be exclusion from heaven on account of moral disqualification for admission,) reception into the visible church of Christ, grace to help in every time of need, and special provision for the nurture and admonition in the Lord, to which parents pledge themselves.

The language of the Saviour to Nicodemus, John iii. 6, "*Unless a man be born of water and the spirit*" doubtless refers also to baptism, which had been known to the Jews, and practiced by John the Baptist, before the ministry of Christ, as a mode of *public reception* of proselytes, who were then said to be new born. Its import is to inform Nicodemus, that he must *publicly* profess the religion of Jesus by baptism, and also be regenerated



Page 77

by the Holy Spirit, if he desired to enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus, also, the words, Acts xxii. 16, "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,*" were addressed to Paul *after* he had surrendered himself to Christ, and signifies: "Arise, and publicly profess Christ by baptism, and thus complete your dedication of yourself to his cause, the condition, on the sincere performance of which, God will for Christ's sake, pardon your sins."

Baptismal regeneration, either in infants or adults, is therefore a doctrine not taught in the Word of God, and fraught with much injury to the souls of men, although inculcated in the former symbolical books. At the same time, whilst the doctrine of baptismal regeneration certainly did prevail in our European churches, and is taught in the former symbolical books, it is proper to remark, that the greater part of the passages in the symbols relating to this subject, are explained by many in the present day, to signify no more than we above inculcate, and therefore a not teaching baptismal regeneration.

Note 1. Luther's Works, Vol. xii., p. 339.

Note 2. Ibid.

Note 3. Ibid. Vol. xxii., p. 139.

Note 4. Melancthon's [sic] Works, Koethe's edit., Vol. iv., p. 234.

Note 5. Ibid. pp. 251, 242.

Note 6. Died in 1643.

Note 7. Gottheil's Translation, p. 187.

Note 8. Ibid. p. 188.

Note 9. Ibid. p. 193.

Note 10. Loc. Com. Vol. iv., p. 260.

EXAMINATION OF THE LUTHERAN SYMBOLS. CHAPTER X. THE LORD'S SUPPER.

That the doctrine of the *real presence* of the body and blood of the Saviour in the eucharist, is taught in the symbolical books, is acknowledged by the Plea of the Rev. Mr. Mann, and indeed generally admitted, though variously stated and explained. It would therefore be unnecessary to quote those symbols in proof, were it not that many of our readers have not access to them elsewhere, and that the completeness of our



representation, as well as the plan of our work require it. The following passages will suffice to explain this view:—

Augsburg Confession, Art. X.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“Concerning the holy Supper of the Lord, it is taught, that the *true body and blood* of Christ are truly present, under the form of bread and wine, in the Lord's Supper, and are there administered and received.”—*Symb. Books*, p. 112.

Apology to the Confession, Art. VII., VIII. (IV.)

“Our adversaries (the Romanists,) do not object to the tenth article (of the Augsburg Confession,) in which we confess that the *body and blood* of Christ our Lord, are *truly present* in the holy supper, and administered and received with the visible elements, the bread and wine, as hitherto maintained in the (Romish) church, and as the Greek Canon shows.”—*Symb. Books*, p. 227.



Page 78

Smalcald, Article VI.

“Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, we hold that the bread and wine in the Eucharist, are *the true body and blood* of Christ, which are administered and received, not only by pious, but also by impious Christians.”—*Symb. Books*, p. 384.

Luther's Smaller Catechism.

“*What is the Sacrament of the altar?*”

“*Ans.*—It is the *true body and blood* of our Lord Jesus Christ, with bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself, for us Christians to eat and drink.”—*Symb. Books*, p. 124.

Form of Concord, Pt. I., Art. VII.

“We teach that the *true body and blood* of our Lord Jesus Christ, are truly and essentially, or substantially, present in the Lord's Supper, administered with the bread and wine, and *received with the lips by all* those who use this sacrament, be they worthy or unworthy, good or evil, believing or unbelieving; being received by the believing unto consolation and life, but by the unbelieving unto judgment.”—*Symb. Books*, p. 570.

“We believe, teach, and confess, that the words of the testament of Christ, are not to be understood otherwise than according to their *literal* sense, so that the bread does not signify the absent body of Christ, and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but on account of their sacramental union, *that the bread and wine ARE truly the body and blood of Christ.*” (Sondern dass es wahrhaftig um sacramentlicher Einigkeit willen der Leib und Blut Christi sei. Sed ut propter sacramentalem unionem panis et vinum vere sint corpus et sanguis Christi.)—*Idem.*, p. 571.

“We believe, teach, and confess, that not only the truly believing and the worthy, but also the unworthy and the unbelieving, *receive the true body and blood of Christ.*”—Page 572.

“In addition to the above clear passages, incontestably teaching the real presence, it deserves to be ever remembered, that only fourteen years after the Form of Concord was published, when Duke Frederick William, during the minority of Christian II., published the VISITATION ARTICLES OF SAXONY, in 1594, in order to suppress the Melancthonian tendencies to reject this and other peculiarities of the symbols, the Article on this subject which was framed by men confessedly adhering to the old symbols, and designing to re-enunciate their true import, and which was enforced upon the whole church in Saxony as symbolic, gives the most objectionable view of this doctrine, viz.: I. 'The pure doctrine of our church is, that the words, 'Take and eat, this is my body: drink, this is my blood, are to be understood *simply and according to the letter.*' II. That the body (which is received and eaten,) is the *proper and natural body*



(der rechte natuerliche Leib) of Christ, *which hung upon the cross*; and the blood (which is drunk) is the *proper*

Page 79

and *natural blood* (das rechte natuerliche Blut) *which flowed from the side of Christ.* Mueller's Symb. Books, p. 847. Now we cannot persuade ourselves, that this is the view of a single minister of the General Synod, or of many out of it; and yet these are the views that those are obligated to receive, who avow implicit allegiance to the former symbolical books of our church in Europe. If any adopt the modification received by many of our distinguished divines, such as Reinhard Storr, Knapp, and others, they do not faithfully embrace the symbolical doctrine, and cannot fairly profess to do so."

In regard to the arguments against this view of the *mode* of the Saviour's presence, we shall merely add an enumeration of the principal, and refer the reader for a more full and detailed discussion of the subject to Discourse IV. contained in our History of the American Lutheran Church, pp. 120 to 154, 5th edition.

The Reformers justly rejected the Romish error, that the bread and wine were transformed and transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ. But they still adhered to the opinion, that the real body and blood of the Saviour are present at the Eucharist, in some mysterious way, and are received by the month of every communicant, worthy and unworthy. This view of the subject appears inconsistent with the Word of God, for various reasons:-

(a) When Christ uttered the words, this (bread) is my body, his body was not yet dead, but living and reclining, at their side at the table. It was therefore certainly not received by them into their mouths. The language must, therefore, have been figurative, such as Jesus was accustomed often to employ. Thus, when he said, "I am the *door*" John x. 9, he certainly does not mean a literal door, such as a door of wood or stone or brass or of any other material. He means that the acceptance of the atonement and mediation by the sinner is the appointed condition of salvation to him. Thus also when he says, "I am the *true vine*" John xv. 1; or "The field is the world," "The seed is the word," &c., he evidently is speaking figuratively and communicating important moral truth, by images drawn from physical nature, as is naturally done by nearly all writers and speakers of all ages and in all languages.

(b) The blessed Saviour himself exhorts us, "Do this in remembrance of me;" but we can remember only that which is past and absent. Hence when he admonishes us to do this in remembrance of him, he teaches us, that he is not personally or bodily present at the eucharistic celebration.

(c) Paul also represents the design of this ordinance to be, "To show or publish the *Lord's death*," until he comes. But the Lord's death upon the cross occurred about eighteen hundred and twenty years ago. Therefore, according to Paul, the object of the holy supper is to commemorate a *past event*, and not a present person.



Page 80

(d) The doctrine of the real presence of the true body and blood of Christ, contradicts the clear and indisputable testimony of our senses, for as the body and blood are to be received by the mouth of the communicant, they must be circumscribed by space, and the reception must be a local and material one, which if it did occur at sacramental occasions, could be observed by the senses.

(e) It contradicts the observation of all nations and all ages, that every body or material substance must occupy a definite portion of space, and cannot be at more than one place at the same time.

For these and other reasons the great mass of our ministers and churches, connected with the General Synod, reject this doctrine, as inconsistent with the word of God. The disposition to reject this error, or at least to leave the mode of the Saviour's presence undecided, was manifested by Melancthon himself, as is evident from his having stricken out the words which teach it from the Augsburg Confession, and from his having inserted others in their stead of a general nature, leaving room for different opinions on this question. The same disposition prevailed extensively in Germany in the latter third of the sixteenth century. But during the first quarter of the present century, the conviction that the Reformers did not purge away the whole of the Romish error from this doctrine, gained ground universally until the great mass of the whole Lutheran Church, before the year 1817, had rejected the doctrine of the real presence. During the last twenty years the doctrines and writings of the Reformation in general have been the subject of extensive study by the reviving church in Germany, and as is natural, a small portion of the churches have embraced the symbolic view of this doctrine in full, and have become known as Old Lutherans, whilst others, both there and in this country, have embraced various modifications of it. But the great body of the ministers and churches regard the real presence of the *body* and *blood* of the Saviour, in any proper sense, which the words convey, as a misapprehension of the word of God.

The supposed special Sin-forgiving Power of the Lord's Supper.

On this subject, important as it is, especially to the masses of the less educated, who are most liable to these erroneous views, but little need be said in addition to the principles established on the subject of the sacraments in general. The word of God clearly inculcates the doctrine, to which Luther and his coadjutors gave such prominence, that no one can be justified or pardoned except by a living faith in Christ, and such a faith is found only in the regenerate mind. And whenever the sinner exercises this living faith in Christ he is justified, that is, his sins are pardoned, he is in a *state of justification*, and continues in it, until by deliberate, voluntary violation of God's law, he falls from grace.



Page 81

Now, every communicant either possesses this faith, or he does not. If he does, he is justified or pardoned before he communes; if he is destitute of this faith, his communing cannot justify or pardon him; for man is justified by faith alone. Yet are there thousands of church members who afford no satisfactory evidence of regeneration, or of that faith which works by love, and purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; who, because they approach the sacramental table with seriousness and sincerity, and perhaps with some sorrow for their sins, believe that they obtain pardon for their transgressions, and yet still continue in their unregenerate state. It cannot be said that the symbolical books clearly teach the above error, but they are not sufficiently guarded, and are understood by many as inculcating the doctrine, that a sincere and devout participation of the Lord's Supper secures the pardon of sin, even where satisfactory evidences of regeneration are wanting, the persons referred to mistaking a mere historical belief for a living faith. Hence, as the *Scripture nowhere connects the forgiveness of sins with the duty of sacramental communion*, any more than with the performance of any other prominent christian duty, it is not proper that we should do so. The design of the Holy Supper is to show forth the Lord's death, to profess the name of the Redeemer before the world, to confirm the previous faith of the communicant, to bring him into closest spiritual communion with his blessed Saviour, and to secure his special spiritual blessing: but not to bestow forgiveness of sins upon the unregenerate, however serious they may be. Against this dangerous error all should therefore carefully guard, and ever remember the declaration of the Lord Jesus when he said, "*Unless a man be born again (become a new creature in Christ Jesus) he cannot see the kindom [sic] of God.*"

CHAPTER XI. EXORCISM.

This superstitious practice, which consists in a prescribed formula of adjuration, accompanied by various menacing demonstrations, by the use of which the priest professes to expel the evil spirits from an individual, of whom they are supposed to have taken possession, was practised in the Romish Church, principally before the baptism of infants. The rite was retained, with an altered interpretation, in various parts of the Lutheran Church in Europe, for several centuries. In the American Lutheran Church, it was never received by the fathers of our church, and is regarded as unscriptural and highly objectionable, under the most favorable interpretation that can be given it.

As exorcism is not touched by the Augsburg Confession, it is also not discussed by the Rev. Mr. Mann, in his Plea. But as others have objected to the Platform for representing it as in any degree a part of the Symbolic system, we will adduce evidence enough to satisfy every impartial and reasonable reader, that it was so regarded for several centuries, by a considerable portion of the Lutheran Church in Europe; and that the assertion of the Platform, "*that this rite was retained, with an altered interpretation, in various parts of the Lutheran Church in Europe, for several centuries,*" (p. 23,) is even more than sustained.

Page 82

As our church, in common with the other state churches of Europe, is controlled by the civil government, the ministers and members of the church were never invited or permitted to deliberate and decide on the question what books they will receive as symbolical or binding. This work the political rulers or princes determined for them, in consultation with some leading divines. Still we may fairly regard those confessional writings as symbolical, which have been prescribed by the government, and received and *practiced* on by the churches. Now, if the "Taufbuechlein," "Tract or Directory for Baptism," of Luther, *in which Exorcism is commanded*, was thus prescribed and received [tr. note: there is a space here which could be meant to contain the word "by"] two or three principalities or provinces of Europe, the position of the Platform is vindicated; but the truth is, it was received by entire kingdoms and provinces, and retained in practice for centuries; so that the Platform is more than sustained. Let us *first* hear the testimony of the best authorities of Germany on the subject, and *then* sum up the results.

(a) *Dr. Guericke, [Note 1] Professor of Theology at Halle, the author of a well-known Church History, testifies: "Moreover, the Smaller Catechism (of Luther) contained, even in the oldest known German edition, (Wittenberg, 1529,) several forms of prayer, the Family diretory [sic] or selection of Scripture passages on the duties of all orders and conditions of men, and the Directory for marriage and baptism, all of which supplementary tracts were also received into the_ FIRST authentic edition of the German "Book of Concord." The baptismal directory was therefore received into the very first authentic edition of the symbolical books.*

(b) *Dr. Koellner, Professor of Theology at Goettingen, in his excellent "Symbolik," p. 501, states: "There was a Latin Directory for Baptism extant, (in the Romish church,) which Luther translated into German unaltered in 1523. It is found in Vol. II. of his works, Jena edition, pp. 248-252, and Vol. II. All, pp. 304-327. But in 1524 or 1526 he wrote the Baptismal Directory, and brought it into the form in which it was added to the Catechism. Thus it is found Vol. II. of Altenb. ed. p. 227. It was therefore added to the Catechism by Luther himself, and at the earliest period (of the Reformation.) [Note 2] The directory for the solemnization of matrimony was also added by Luther in the 2d edition. Both those Tracts were usually published together with the smaller Catechism; and were also received into the Corpus Thuring. and into the first edition of the Book of Concord, June, 1580."*

Again, we see that this Directory for baptism in which exorcism is prescribed, was not only the production of Luther, but also added by him to his Catechism, and introduced into the very first collection of the symbolical book.



Page 83

(c) *Dr. Baumgarten Crusius*, Professor of Theology at Jena, in his *History of Christian Doctrines*, Vol. II. p. 322, thus testifies: "By means of the religiously energetic language of Luther, *exorcism* was introduced among his party, and established itself amid much opposition, (amongst others from the Papists) in rigid opposition to Calvinism, and as is the case amongst us *at present*, (1846,) from attachment to ancient, stern orthodoxy, and their idea of genuine Lutheranism, as well as from the superstitious belief of a magic influence over the kingdom of evil spirits."—"The liturgic formula (for exorcism) retained in the Lutheran church, was first zealously espoused by the populace, when the Crypto-Calvinists especially in Saxony, raised opposition to it; and since then it has been regarded as a *criterion of Lutheranism*, although exorcism is not mentioned in the Saxon Articles of Visitation, and from an early period it was defended by the Lutheran theologians merely as a free matter of indifference, with only a figurative meaning." Here we find not only that exorcism has extensively prevailed in the Lutheran church of Germany, but that as late as 1846, it still was adhered to by some in Saxony: and that for a long time after the rise of Crypto-Calvinism in the latter part of the sixteenth century, adherence to this rite was regarded as a *test* of genuine Lutheranism. How vain therefore the attempt to deny that it was regarded as a part of symbolic Lutheranism in some parts of the church!

(d.) *Dr. Augusti*, Professor of Theology at Bonn, and more recently at Berlin, the celebrated author of numerous works, bears the following testimony: "At the close of the sixteenth century the vindication of exorcism was considered a proof of *Lutheran orthodoxy* in opposition to the Reformed and Crypto-Calvinists. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was much contention for and against it; and even in the *nineteenth* century its retention or rejection was not yet regarded as a matter of indifference." p. 350.

(e) In *Siegel's Manual of Christian Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, (a learned and excellent work in four volumes, published in Leipsic, 1836,) vol II. p. 64, 65, 67, we find the following testimony: "Inasmuch as he (Luther) pronounced this rite not indeed as necessary, but yet as *highly useful*, in order to remind the people very impressively of the power of sin and the devil; it was not remarkable that the zealous adherents of Luther were also unwilling to abandon his views on this subject. Hence we find that *in all countries in which the views and example of Luther were rigidly adhered to, as in Saxony, Wuertemberg, Hanover, Sweden, and other places*, a strong attachment to exorcism prevailed, which was often regarded as *the criterion of orthodoxy*." "Some Lutherans cherished exorcism with a kind of *passionate fondness*." "In

Page 84

the sixteenth century exorcism was alternately defended in one place and disapproved in another; and in the latter half of the eighteenth, attention was again directed to the subject partly by accidental circumstances, and partly also by the great changes in the department of theology. The result has been that exorcism has been entirely abolished in different individual towns; and in several countries. This, for example, was the case in Regensburg in 1781, in Hamburg in 1786, and since 1811, in all Sweden." "In other Protestant Lutheran States, it is still left to the choice of the parents, whether they will have their children baptised with or without exorcism." "The author (says Siegel) was himself placed in the unpleasant predicament in the year 1836," of having been requested to perform baptism with exorcism!!

(f) *Dr. Sigismund J. Baumgarten* of Halle, one of the most learned and profound divines that ever adorned the Lutheran church, who himself published one of the best and the most extensively circulated editions of the symbolical books in 1747, not only inserts the Directory for Baptism (which inculcates exorcism) among the symbolical books, but on p. 637 bears the following testimony: "The Directory for solemnizing marriage, as well as the following *Directory for Baptism*, are found in the *oldest Corp. Doctrinae*, in the *Thuringian, Julian, Brandenburg*, and first DRESDEN EDITIONS, and also subsequently, in the *Leipsic and Reineccian*," p. 637.

From these historical testimonies the following points are clearly established:

1. That the Directory for Baptism, in which *exorcism* is prescribed, was certainly received into the first and authentic edition of the German Book of Concord, or collection of symbolical books. This is attested by Drs. Guericke, Sig. Baumgarten, and Koellner. It was subsequently republished in various other editions, down till the recent editions of Mueller, and also of Ludwig in our own country. In other editions [Note 3] it was omitted, because in some portions of Germany exorcism was rejected at an early day, as stated in the History of the American Lutheran Church.
2. It is proved that the *practice of exorcism* was for a long time regarded as a *test of orthodoxy* in many Lutheran territories of Germany. Attested by Drs. Augusti, Baumgarten Crusius and Siegel. In these countries editions of the symbolical books containing the Baptismal Directory were in use, and the rite was regarded as symbolical.
3. The rite was received and practised throughout Sweden, the entire kingdom of Wuerttemberg, Hanover, Saxony, &c., &c. Siegel and others. [sic]
4. It is established incontestibly [sic] that the practice was continued for centuries in some of these countries, and was but recently renounced by others. Siegel and others. [sic]

We may therefore well affirm, that the position of the Definite Platform on this subject has been established beyond the possibility of serious doubt, namely, "*That this rite was retained, with an altered interpretation, in various parts of the Lutheran Church in Europe for several centuries.*" p. 23.

Page 85

As to making the symbolic character of a book depend on its being found in any particular number of editions or in them all, it is inadmissible, because, as Dr. Hase remarks, and the respected author of the Plea admits, the Augsburg Confession is the only one of the Lutheran symbolical books which has been universally received throughout the church. These editions, moreover, have been published, some by the civil governments, and others by private individuals; and the Lutheran church as such, has never been called on to decide which books are symbolic. The practice of different portions of the church is different, therefore the distinction must be made as to the extent to which each book was received; and as it is certain that exorcism was in some countries and periods even regarded as a *distinctive test* of orthodoxy, *then and there*, this rite must have been regarded as symbolic in the highest degree.

Note 1. Symbolik, p. 103, n. 2.

Note 2. The original is: Also von Luther selbst und schon in den ersten *Zeugen* von ihm dem Katechismus ange haengt." [sic on punctuation] *Zeugen* here is evidently a typographical error for Zeiten.

Note 3. For particulars see the writer's History of the American Lutheran Church, pp. 239-241.

CHAPTER XII. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

We have thus found the statements of the Definite Platform, as to the tenets taught in the Augsburg Confession and other Symbolical books, established by the most careful and conscientious investigation of the original sources. Such are the facts incontestibly [sic] proved. They are true, and will remain true, notwithstanding all the ill-advised efforts to hide them. The Augsburg Confession, and other symbols, do teach the tenets ascribed to them in the Platform, and, in the judgment of the great mass of American Lutherans, the Word of God rejects them, and inculcates the contrary. All the invective and vituperation, not of the author of the Plea but of multitudes of old-Lutherans, &c., cannot change the truth, for it is unchangeable and eternal; nor is it their duty to deny it, any more than it is ours.

The question then arises, what is our duty under these circumstances? What does God expect of us, in view of these facts, as men to whom the interests and management of a portion of his church are confided? As men to whom he has given his inspired oracles, as the sure word of prophecy, to which we are to give heed? As men who love Luther and his fellow-laborers much, but desire to love Christ more?

Does our duty call on us to deny the truth, and say, these doctrines are not taught in these books, when the most careful examination has assured us of the contrary? No honest man can affirm this.

Is it honest or honorable to avow, unconditionally, creeds containing errors, and then labor to gloss over or defend these errors, because they are there? This would be to descend to the level of corrupt politicians, who professedly defend every measure of their party, whether right or wrong.



Page 86

Is it our duty to profess such creeds, then by arbitrary interpretations to explain away these errors, and thus endeavor to hide them from the public view? This would be injustice to the memory of their authors, and cast reproach on the principles of the Reformation, the essence of which was, that human errors must be rejected in favor of God's Word; and that the standards or professed doctrines of the church, must in every age be conformed to her views of Scripture truth.

Is it our duty, is it the Master's will, that we should try to believe those tenets of a creed which the Scriptures condemn? This would be treason to the Master, and be hearkening to the teachings of man rather than of God! Yet how many are there from whose lips the phrase confessional fidelity (*Bekenntnisstreue*.) is heard far oftener than fidelity to God's word (*Bibeltreue*)!

Is it our duty to renounce the Augsburg Confession altogether? This would be the case, *if its errors were fundamental*. But as they are few in number, and all relate to non-fundamental points, this does not necessarily follow. As nineteen twentieths of the creed are sustained by Scripture, and embody a rich and ample exhibition of divine truth, ten times as extended as that which was invested with normative authority in the golden age, the first three centuries of the Christian church, and used as a term of Christian fellowship, we may well retain the creed, after in some way disavowing its several errors. And the historical importance of the document, as the type of a renovated Christianity, authenticated by the blessing of Heaven, renders its retention desirable, as far as it has approved itself to the conscience of the church, after the increasing philological, exegetical, and historical light of three progressive centuries.

The position of those who maintain that *genuine Lutheranism* demands perpetual adherence to everything contained in this Confession, yea, as some affirm, to all the former symbolical books, is utterly untenable. In the *first* place, these brethren forget that the symbolic system, *i.e.*, the practice of binding ministers to the so-called symbolical books, was *not* adopted at the organization of the Lutheran Church, *nor at any time during Luther's life*, nor until more than half a century after the rise of Lutheranism, and more than a quarter of a century after the noble Luther had gone to his heavenly rest. *Symbolism is therefore no part of original Lutheranism*. The efforts of Luther to reform the Romish Church began in 1517—the first regular organization of Lutheran churches was not made until some time after his excommunication by the Pope, in 1520. The first directory for Lutheran worship was published by Luther in 1523, in which, although private masses and the idea of the mass being a sacrifice had been rejected, the *ceremonies* of the mass, even the *elevation of the host*, (though not for



Page 87

adoration) were retained; another improved one in 1526; and the Augsburg Confession was presented to the Diet in 1530; but the full symbolic system contended for by some of our opponents, was not adopted until 1580, *after the Lutheran church had existed more than half a century!!* That system, historically considered, is not, therefore, Lutheran, but *Post-Lutheran* and *Ultra-Lutheran*, for it is after him in time, and goes beyond him at least in one point of doctrine, and far beyond him in the abridgement [sic] of ministerial liberty of doctrinal profession, and in exaction of uniformity on minor points. Again, these brethren forget that Luther thought it his duty to *reform* the church of his birth, and did *not leave it until driven out by the Pope*. The efforts of American Lutherans to reform and render more biblical the ecclesiastical framework of our church, is therefore, *truly Lutheran in principle*, indeed far more Lutheran, than to retain unaltered those symbols, when we believe that the progress of Protestant light and biblical investigation for three hundred years, has proved them to contain important errors.

Thirdly, they forget that *Luther himself never saw, much less approved, the most objectionable and stringent of these books*, the Form of Concord, the profession of which they would make essential to Lutheranism.

Fourthly, they overlook the fact that *entire Lutheran kingdoms, such as Denmark and Sweden, from the beginning rejected some of these books*, and yet are everywhere acknowledged as Lutherans.

Fifthly, [sic] they forget that the *Form of Concord itself professes to regard Confessions of faith only an exhibitions of the manner* in which Christians of a *particular age understand the Scriptures*; implying that they were not supposed even by the authors of the symbolic system themselves to be unchangeable, although their incorporation with the civil law of the land, closed the door against all subsequent improvement.

A revision of our symbolic standpoint, is therefore perfectly consistent with primitive Lutheranism; and according to the Congregational or Independent principles of Lutheran church government, advocated by Luther, and hitherto practiced on by our American church, as well as avowed by the Constitution of the General Synod, each District Synod is competent to do this work for herself as long as she retains "the *fundamental* doctrines of the Bible as taught by our church."

How then can this important work be best accomplished, of releasing ourselves on the one hand from the profession of the errors contained in the Confession, and on the other of avowing the unadulterated truths of God's word?



Page 88

1. Shall we *drop the practice of binding our ministers to any creed except the Bible*, and refer in unofficial ways to the *Augsburg Confession*, as in general a correct summary of our views of Bible truth? This was the practice of the *fathers of our church in the Synod of Pennsylvania from the beginning of this century, till within two or three years*. It was practiced by that body whilst it was controlled by *Drs. Helmuth, Schmidt, Muhlenberg*, of Lancaster, *Schaeffer*, of Philadelphia, *Endress, Lochman, J. G. Schmucker, Geissenhainer* subsequently of New York, *Muhlenberg*, of Reading, and the present venerable Senior of the Ministerium, *Rev. Baetis*. This plan we always regarded as too lax, and preferred the distinct avowal of the Augsburg Confession as to the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, and were ourselves instrumental in introducing its qualified recognition into the General Synod's Theological Seminary in 1825, and her Constitution for District Synods in 1829. Still we have recently been denounced as unfaithful to the confession, by those unacquainted with the history of our church during the last five and thirty years.

2. Shall we *adopt a new creed*, to supercede [sic] the venerable Augsburg Confession? This is unnecessary, because the points regarded as erroneous in it, are confessedly few and non-essential. When these are erased, the great mass of Christian truth remains intact, and not one of all the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation is affected.

3. Shall we adopt and publish the entire Augsburg Confession, *with a list annexed to it, of those points believed by the majority to be erroneous*, providing that they may be rejected by all who do not believe them? This would be a contradictory procedure, first to publish the whole, and then to reject a portion of it as not symbolic or binding. If these supposed errors are not to be received, why perpetuate their memory, and afford to the enemies of our venerable church, a constant supply of material to fight against us, and render the church odious in the popular eye?

4. Shall we remain satisfied with *the General Synod's doctrinal basis*, of absolute assent to the *Bible*, and agreement with the *Augsburg Confession* as far as the *fundamentals* of God's Word are concerned?

This pledge we always regarded as accordant with the principles of God's Word, and sufficient for the necessities of the church. Amid the recent progress of more rigid symbolism, and symbolic sympathies, it has, however, been disparaged by some connected with the General Synod. We still believe it sufficient, *provided all* the Synods embraced in the General Synod will adhere to it; and those who have recently adopted the entire symbolic system, will return to it. But if District Synods of symbolic tendencies, will adopt the obligation to the mass of symbolic books; New School Lutherans are compelled, in self-defence, also to define their position more minutely, that the christian public may not hold them responsible for the errors of the former symbols, nor their supposed adherence to them tend to give them currency. If,

therefore, Old School Synods adhere to their recent pledge to all the symbolical books, we prefer the following course for other District Synods.



Page 89

5. The best plan by far in our judgment is to *retain the great body of the Confession unaltered, and simply to omit the few sentences inculcating the disputed or erroneous topics*. The remainder is believed by all, and can be subscribed by all, whether they believe the omitted topics or not.

This is precisely the thing done by the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession. *It's [sic] principle is to omit the disputed points and, retain unaltered the remainder, on which we all agree*. On the three disputed points which alone are believed by any amongst us, namely, baptismal regeneration, the real presence of the Saviour in the eucharist, and the denial of the divine appointment of the Christian Sabbath, entire freedom is allowed. As to the others, private confession and absolution, the ceremonies of the mass, and exorcism, which was taught not in the Augsburg Confession, but in the Appendix to Luther's Smaller Catechism,—they are not received by any one within the pale of the General Synod, and are so distinctly semi-Romish that they are prohibited by the Platform. The adoption of the name, *American Recension*, always notifies the reader of some revision, and precluded the charge of an attempt to pass it off for the unaltered Confession of the sixteenth century.

The Synodical Disclaimer or List of these rejected errors, which is annexed to the Platform, can be dropped as soon as the churches are fully informed of the ground of our not receiving the other symbolical books, or if this be deemed unnecessary, it may be dropped at once. By the adoption of either of the latter two methods, and especially of the last, by the individual District Synods, they would present to the world a clear profession of their faith, have a sufficient test for the admission of members, and the rejection of heretics, and could harmoniously labor together for the furtherance of the gospel. We have thus in the fear of God and in the spirit of Christian love; but uninfluenced by the fear or favor of man, presented our deliberate convictions on the subjects now agitating the church, after six and thirty years of study of the Bible, and experience in the ministry of our divine Master. And we close with the earnest prayer, that the Great Head of the Church, may employ these pages for the advancement of his glory, that he may conduct his beloved Zion onward in her march of development and progress, until she has attained her millennial features, and her world-wide extension, and until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

APPENDIX.
DEFINITE PLATFORM;
BEING THE
DOCTRINAL BASIS OR CREED,
CONTAINED IN
PART I.
OF THE
DEFINITE SYNODICAL PLATFORM,
REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING WORK, AND CONSTRUCTED

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE
GENERAL SYNOD.



Page 90

PREFACE. As the American Recension, contained in this Platform, adds not a single sentence to the Augsburg Confession, nor omits anything that has the least pretension to be considered “a fundamental doctrine of Scripture,” it is perfectly consistent with the doctrinal test of the General Synod, as contained in her Formula of Government and Discipline, Chap. XVIII., Sec. 5, and XIX., Sec. 2. The Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds are also universally received by our churches. Hence any District Synod, connected with the General Synod, may, with perfect consistency, adopt this Platform.

DOCTRINAL BASIS OR CREED.

Whereas it is the duty of the followers of Christ to profess his [sic] religion before the world (Matt. x. 32), not only by their holy walk and conversation, but also by “walking in the apostles’ doctrines” (1 Cor. xiv. 32), and bearing testimony “to the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3), Christians have, from the earlier ages, avowed some brief summary of their doctrines or a Confession of their faith. Such confessions, also called symbols, were the so-called Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, &c., of the first four centuries after Christ.

Thus also did the Lutheran Reformers of the sixteenth century, when cited by the Emperor to appear before the Diet at Augsburg, present the Confession, bearing the name of that city, as an expose of their principal doctrines; in which they also professedly reject only the *greater part* of the errors that had crept into the Romish Church. (See conclusion of the Abuses Corrected.)

Again, a quarter of a century after Luther’s death, this and other writings of Luther and Melancthon, together with another work which neither of them ever saw, the Form of Concord, were made binding on ministers and churches, not by the church herself, acting of her own free choice, but by the civil authorities of certain kingdoms and principalities, in consultation with some prominent theologians. The majority of Lutheran kingdoms, however, rejected one or more of them, and the Augsburg Confession alone has been acknowledged by the entire Lutheran Church. (Hutterus Red. p. 116, Sec. 50.)

Whereas the entire Lutheran Church of Germany has rejected the binding authority of the symbolical books as a whole, and also abandoned some of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession, and our fathers in this country more, [sic] than half century ago, ceased to require a pledge to any of these books, whilst they still believed and in various ways avowed the great fundamental doctrines contained in them:

And whereas the General Synod of the American Lutheran Church, about a quarter of a century ago, again introduced a qualified acknowledgment of the Augsburg Confession, in the Constitution of her Theological Seminary, and in her Constitution for District Synods, at the ordination and licensure of ministers, without specifying tho doctrines to be omitted, except by the designation that they are not fundamental doctrines of

Scripture; and whereas a desire has extensively prevailed amongst our ministers and churches, to have this basis expressed in a more definite manner; and the General Synod has left this matter optional with each district Synod:



Page 91

Therefore, Resolved, That this Synod hereby avows its belief in the following doctrinal Basis, namely, the so-called *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *American Recension of the Augsburg Confession*, as a more definite expression of the doctrinal pledge prescribed by the General Synod's Constitution for District Synods, and as a correct exhibition of the Scripture doctrines discussed in it: and that we regard agreement among brethren on these subjects as a sufficient basis for harmonious co-operation in the same church.

DOCTRINAL BASIS OR CREED.

The Old and New Testaments the only Infallible Rule of Faith and Practice

1. "We believe, teach, and confess, that the only rule and standard, according to which all doctrines and teachers alike ought to be tried and judged, are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone, as it is written, Psalm cxix. 105: 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light upon my path.' And St. Paul, Gal. i.8, says 'Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'
2. "But all human writings and symbols, are not authorities like the Holy Scriptures; but they are only a testimony and explanation of our faith, showing the manner in which at any time the Holy Scriptures were understood and explained by those who then lived, in respect to articles that had been controverted in the church of God, and also the grounds on which doctrines that were opposed to the Holy Scriptures, had been rejected and condemned."—*Form of Concord*, pp. 551, 552.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. — The third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

THE NICENO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED.

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



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



Page 92

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped [sic] and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe in one holy universal and apostolic church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

AMERICAN RECENSION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

ARTICLE I. — OF GOD.

Our churches with one accord teach, that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the Divine essence, and concerning the three persons, is true, and ought to be confidently believed, viz.: that there is one Divine essence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; and yet, that there are three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the term person they use in the same sense in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject: to signify, not a part or quality of something else, but that which exists of itself.

ARTICLE II. — OF NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards Him, and with sinful propensities: and that this disease, or natural depravity, is really sin, and still causes eternal death to those who are not born again. And they reject the opinion of those who, in order that they may detract from the glory of the merits and benefits of Christ, allege that man may be justified before God by the powers of his own reason.

ARTICLE III. — OF THE SON OF GOD AND HIS MEDIATORIAL WORK.

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, assumed human nature, in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man, born of the Virgin Mary; who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original sin, but also for all the actual sins of men. Likewise that he descended into hell (the place of departed spirits), and truly arose on the third day; then ascended to heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of the Father, might perpetually reign over all creatures, and might sanctify those who believe in him, by sending into their hearts the Holy Spirit, who governs, consoles, quickens, and defends them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead, &c., according to the Apostolic Creed.



ARTICLE IV. — OF JUSTIFICATION.

They in like manner teach, that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works; but that they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith; when they believe, that they are received into favor, and that their sins are remitted on account of Christ, who made satisfaction for our transgressions by his death. This faith God imputes to us as righteousness. ROM. iii. 4



Page 93

ARTICLE V. — OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministerial office has been instituted, whose members are to teach the gospel, and administer the sacraments. For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, as means of grace, the Holy Spirit is given, who, in his own time and place (or more literally, when and where it pleases God), produces faith in those who hear the gospel message, namely, that God, for Christ's sake, and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe that on account of Christ they are received into (the divine) favor.

ARTICLE VI. — CONCERNING NEW OBEDIENCE (OR A CHRISTIAN LIFE).

They likewise teach, this faith must bring forth good fruits; and that it is our duty to perform those good works which God has commanded, because he has enjoined them, and not in the expectation of thereby meriting justification before him. For, remission of sins and justification are secured by faith; as the declaration of Christ himself implies: "When ye shall have done all those things, say, we are unprofitable servants."

The same thing is taught by the ancient ecclesiastical writers: for Ambrose says, "this has been ordained by God, that he who believes in Christ is saved without works, receiving remission of sins gratuitously through faith alone."

ARTICLE VII. — OF THE CHURCH.

They likewise teach, that there will always be one holy church. The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught and the sacraments are properly administered. And for the true unity of the church nothing more is required, than agreement concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary, that the same human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be everywhere observed. As Paul says: "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," &c.

ARTICLE VIII. — WHAT THE CHURCH IS.

Although the church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers; yet in the present life, many hypocrites and wicked men are mingled with them.

ARTICLE IX. — CONCERNING BAPTISM.

Concerning baptism, our churches teach, that it is "a necessary ordinance," [Note 1] that it is a means of grace, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God, and received into his favor.

ARTICLE X. — OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.



In regard to the Lord's Supper they teach that Christ is present with the communicants in the Lord's Supper, "under the emblems of bread and wine." [Note 2]

ARTICLE XI. — OF CONFESSION.

[As Private Confession and Absolution, which are inculcated in this Article, though in a modified form, have been universally rejected by the American Lutheran Church, the omission of this Article is demanded by the principle on which the American Recension of the Augsburg Confession is constructed; namely, to omit the several portions, which are rejected by the great mass of our churches in this country, and to add nothing in their stead.] [tr. note: bracketed in the original]



Page 94

ARTICLE XII. — OF REPENTANCE (AFTER BACKSLIDING).

Concerning repentance they teach, that those who have relapsed into sin after baptism, may at any time obtain pardon, when they repent. But repentance properly consists of two parts. The one is contrition, or being struck with terrors of conscience, on account of acknowledged sin. The other is faith, which is produced by the gospel; which believes that pardon for sin is bestowed for Christ's sake; which tranquilizes the conscience, and liberates it from fear. Such repentance must be succeeded by good works as its fruits.

ARTICLE XIII. — OF THE USE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Concerning the use of the sacraments our churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men; but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them. Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith in the promises which are exhibited and proposed by them.

They therefore condemn the opinion of those who maintain, that the sacraments produce justification in their recipients as a matter of course, [Note 3] who do not teach that faith is necessary, in the reception of the sacraments, to the remission of sins.

ARTICLE XIV. — OF CHURCH ORDERS, (OR THE MINISTRY.)

Concerning church orders they teach, that no person ought publicly to teach “or preach,” [Note 4] in the church, or to administer the sacraments, without a regular call.

ARTICLE XV. — OF RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES.

Concerning ecclesiastical ceremonies they teach, that those ceremonies ought to be observed, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the church, such as certain holy-days, festivals, &c. Concerning matters of this kind, however, men are cautioned, lest their consciences be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation. They are also admonished that human traditionary observances, instituted with a view to appease God, and to merit his favor, and make satisfaction for sins, are contrary to the gospel and the doctrine of faith “in Christ.” [Note 5] Wherefore vows and traditionary observances concerning meats, days, &c., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless, and contrary to the gospel.

ARTICLE XVI. — OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS.



In regard to political affairs our churches teach that legitimate political enactments are good works of God; that it is lawful for Christians to hold civil offices, to pronounce judgment, and decide cases according to existing laws; to inflict just punishment, wage just wars, and serve in them; to make lawful contracts; hold property; to make oath when required by the magistrate, to marry, and to be married.

Hence Christians ought necessarily to yield obedience to their civil officers and laws; unless they should command something sinful; in which case it is a duty to obey God rather than man. Acts v. 29.



Page 95

ARTICLE XVII. — OF CHRIST'S RETURN TO JUDGMENT.

Our churches also teach, that at the end of the world, Christ will appear for judgment; that he will raise all the dead; that he will bestow upon the pious and elect eternal life and endless joys, but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end.

ARTICLE XVIII. — OF FREE WILL.

Concerning free will our churches teach, that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the control of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedience: for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God: but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the word.

The same is declared by Augustine in so many words: "We confess that all men have a free will, which possesses the judgment of reason, by which they cannot indeed, without the divine aid, either begin or certainly accomplish what is becoming in things relating to God; but only in 'outward' [Note 6] works of the present life, as well good as evil. In good works, I say, which arise from our natural goodness, such as to choose to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to choose to have a friend, to have clothing, to build a house, to take a wife, to feed cattle, to learn various and useful arts, or to do any good thing relative to this life; all which things, however, do not exist without the divine government; yea, they exist and begin to be from Him and through Him. And in evil works (men have a free will), such as to choose to worship an idol, to will to commit murder," &c.

It is not possible by the mere powers of nature, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, to love God above all things, and to do his commands according to their intrinsic design. For, although nature may be able, after a certain manner, to perform external actions, such as to abstain from theft, from murder, &c., yet it cannot perform the inner motions, such as the fear of God, faith in God, chastity, patience, &c.

ARTICLE XIX. — OF THE AUTHOR OF SIN.

On this subject they teach, that, although God is the Creator and Preserver of nature, the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the devil and of wicked men, which, when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God: agreeably to the declaration of Christ, "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own." — JOHN viii. 44.

ARTICLE XX. — OF GOOD WORKS.



Page 96

Our writers are falsely accused [sic] of prohibiting good works. Their publications on the ten commandments, and other similar subjects, show, that they gave good instructions concerning all the different stations and duties of life, and explained what course of conduct, in any particular calling, is pleasing to God. Concerning these things, preachers formerly said very little, but urged the necessity of puerile and useless works, such as certain holy-days, fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, worship of saints, rosaries, monastic vows, &c. These useless things, our adversaries, having been admonished, now unlearn, and no longer teach as formerly. Moreover, they now begin to make mention of faith, about which they formerly observed a marvellous [sic] silence. They now teach, that we are not justified by works alone, but join faith to works, and maintain that we are justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than their former belief, and is calculated to impart more consolation to the mind. Inasmuch, then, as the doctrine concerning faith, which should be regarded as a principal one by the church, had so long been unknown; for all must confess, that concerning the righteousness of faith, the most profound silence reigned in their sermons, and the doctrine concerning works alone was discussed in the churches; our divines have admonished the churches as follows:-

First, that our works cannot reconcile God, or merit the remission of sins, grace, and justification: but this we can attain only by faith, when we believe that we are received into favor, for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed our mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by whom the Father can be reconciled. He, therefore, who expects to merit grace by his works, casts contempt on the merits and grace of Christ, and is seeking the way to God, in his own strength, without the Saviour; who nevertheless has told us, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This doctrine concerning faith, is incessantly inculcated by the Apostle Paul (Ephes. ii), "Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," not of works, &c. And, lest any one should cavil at our interpretation, and charge it with novelty, we state that this whole matter is supported by the testimony of the fathers. For Augustine devotes many volumes to the defence of grace, and the righteousness of faith, in opposition to the merit of good works. And Ambrosius, on the calling of the Gentiles, &c., inculcates the same doctrine. For thus he says, concerning the calling of the Gentiles: "Redemption by the blood of Christ is of little value, nor is the honor of human works subordinated to the mercy of God, if justification, which is of grace, is supposed to be merited by previous works, so as to be not the gift of him that bestows it, but the reward of him that earned it." But, although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, the consciences of the pious and timid find it a source



Page 97

of much consolation, for they cannot attain peace of conscience in any works, but in faith alone, when they entertain the confident belief that, for Christ's sake, God is reconciled to them. Thus Paul teaches us (Rom. v.), "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This whole doctrine must be referred to the conflict in the conscience of the alarmed sinner, nor can it be otherwise understood. Hence the inexperienced and worldly-minded are much mistaken, who vainly imagine that the righteousness of the Christian is nothing else than what in common life and in the language of philosophy is termed morality.

Formerly, the consciences of men were harassed by the doctrine of works, nor did they hear any consolation from the gospel. Some conscience drove into deserts, and into monasteries, hoping there to merit the divine favor by a monastic life. Others invented different kinds of works, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for their sins. There was therefore the utmost necessity, that this doctrine concerning faith in Christ should be inculcated anew; in order that timid minds might find consolation, and know that justification and the remission of sins are obtained by faith in the Saviour. The people are also now instructed, that faith does not signify a mere historical belief, such as wicked men and devils have; but that, in addition to a historical belief, it includes an acquaintance with the consequences of the history, such as remission of sins, by grace through Christ, righteousness, &c., &c.

Now, he who knows that the Father is reconciled to him through Christ, possesses a true acquaintance with God, confides in his providence, and calls upon his name: and is therefore not without God, as are the Gentiles. For the devil and wicked men cannot believe the article concerning the remission of sins. But they hate God as an enemy, do not call upon his name, nor expect any thing good at his hands. Augustine, in speaking of the word faith, admonishes the reader that in Scripture this word does not signify mere knowledge, such as wicked men possess, but that confidence or trust, by which alarmed sinners are comforted and lifted up. We, moreover, teach, that the performance of works is necessary, because it is commanded of God, and not because we expect to merit grace by them. Pardon of sins and grace are obtained only by faith. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith the heart of man is renovated, and new affections produced, that he may be able to perform good works. Accordingly, Ambrosius states, faith is the source of holy volitions and an upright life. For the faculties of man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, are replete with sinful propensities, and too feeble to perform works that are good in the sight of God. They are moreover under the influence of Satan, who urges men to various sins, and impious opinions, and open crimes; as may be seen in the examples of the philosophers who, though they endeavored to lead moral lives, failed to accomplish their designs, and were guilty of many notorious crimes. Such is the imbecility of man, when he undertakes to govern himself by his own strength, without faith and the Holy Spirit.



Page 98

From all this it is manifest, that our doctrine, instead of being charged with prohibiting good works, ought much rather to be applauded, for teaching the manner in which truly good works can be performed. For, without faith, human nature is incapable of performing the duties either of the first or second table. Without it, man does not call upon God, nor expect any thing from him, nor bear the cross: but seeks refuge amongst men, and reposes on human aid. Hence, when faith and confidence in God are wanting, all evil desires and human schemes reign in the heart; wherefore Christ also says, "without me ye can do nothing" (John xv.); and the church responds, Without thy favor there is nothing good in man.

ARTICLE XXI. — OF THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS.

Concerning the invocation of saints our churches teach, that the saints ought to be held in remembrance, in order that we may, each in his own calling, imitate their faith and good works; that the emperor may imitate the example of David, in carrying on war to expel the Turks from our country; for both are kings. But the sacred volume does not teach us to invoke saints or to seek aid from them. For it proposes Christ to us as our only mediator, propitiator, high priest, and intercessor. On his name we are to call, and he promises, that he will hear our prayers, and highly approves of this worship, *viz.*: that he should be called upon in every affliction (1 John ii.): "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father," &c.

This is about the substance of our doctrines, from which it is evident that they contain nothing inconsistent with the Scriptures. Under these circumstances, those certainly judge harshly, who would have us regarded as heretics. But the difference of opinion between us (and the Romanists) relates to certain abuses, which have crept into the (Romish) churches without any good authority; in regard to which, if we do differ, the bishops ought to treat us with lenity, and tolerate us, on account of the confession which we have just made.

Note 1. German reading.

Note 2. German reading.

Note 3. Ex opere operato, from the mere outward performance of the act.

Note 4. German reading.

Note 5. German reading.

Note 6. German copy.



INDEX.

Absolution, form of, 99, 100.

Additions, no heterogeneous ones to be made to the divinely constituted church, 18.

Alterations in Augsburg Confession by Melancthon, 54.

American, Lutheran, has no reference to place of birth, 9.

American Recension, Digest of, 61.

----- originated from respect to Augsburg Confession, 44.

Anecdote of the Leyden cobbler, 16.

----- of Melancthon's mother, 14.

Apology to Augsburg Confession, 25.

Apostles' Creed, when and by whom formed, 20.

Arnold on the diet at Augsburg, 55.



Page 99

Athanasian Creed adopted, 21.
Augsburg Diet, Papists predominant at, 55.
----- Melancthon's alarm at, 55.
----- subscription to, not required in Luther's time, 22.
----- itself a disclaimer of error, 30.
----- practice of requiring assent to, rejected, by the fathers of Pennsylvania Synod fifty years ago, 39.
Augsburg Confession, disadvantages under which it was prepared, 47.
----- dissented from by Dr. Lochman, 39.
----- parts of, omitted by him in his edition, 40.
----- dissented from by many of our principal divines, 41, 42.
Aurifaber's narrative of Augsburg Diet, 78.

Bachman, Dr., dissents from Symbolical books, 42.
Baptism, its influence on adults, 143-144.
----- infants, 144, 145, 146.
Baptismal Regeneration, see Regeneration baptismal.
Basel, Synod of, it conceded both kinds, 76.
Bible, Luther's deep sense of obligation to, 46.
----- true and infallible symbol, 41.
Bishops, Reformers willing again to submit to them, 58.
Bohemians claim eucharist entire, 76.

Campegius, Letter of Melancthon to, 51.
Canon of the mass, 73, 77.
Ceremonies of the mass, 64.
Church of Christ, importance of the, 17.
----- no essential additions to be made to her, 18.
Confession, Dr. Plank on, 102.
----- private, unscriptural, 103.
----- how performed, 98-100.
Concessions, Melancthon's, 54, 49.
----- of the Reformers to Papists, 49.
Concluding remarks, 161-68.
Controversy, religious, sometimes necessary and useful, 13.
----- how it should be conducted, 16.
----- the present commenced by Old Lutherans, 8.
Creed of the Council of Nice, 20.
Creeds not commanded by the Bible, 19.



- only inferential, 19.
- human, all uninspired, 23.
- not all changes in, to be deprecated, 45.
- must be conformed to Bible truth in every age, 23, 29.

Definite Platform, its origin, 26.

- its authors not agitators, 26.
- not a new rejection of errors, 43.
- retains more of the Augsburg Confession than the General Synod's Pledge, 15.
- adopted by several Synods, 15.
- misunderstood, 28.
- an unofficial proposal till adopted by Synods,--right to make it, 32.
- claimed no authority till adopted, 32.

Denomination, a Christian bound not to defend, but to reject the errors of its symbols, 38.

Depravity natural, a scriptural doctrine, 6, 7.

Design of this work, 3, 4.

Disadvantages attending the preparation of Augsburg Confession, 48.

Disclaimer, Synodical, 63.

Doctrine, fundamental, list of, 5.

Duty of a church to test her creed by Scripture, 23.

- to alter her creed if found erroneous, 29, 162-68.



Page 100

----- cannot be to deny the truth, 162.

Elevation of the host, long retained by Luther, 65. Endress, Dr., disavows parts of the Augsburg Confession, 41. Episcopal Church in America changed her standards, 30. Eucharist, the symbols on, 148, 149, 150. ----- real presence of Christ's body in, refuted, 151-52. ----- supposed sin-forgiving power of, not scriptural, 153-54. Exorcism, altered interpretation of, 155. ----- long retained in some parts of the church, 155, &c. ----- Koellner, Guericke, other authorities, 156. ----- ascertained facts in the case, 160. Faber, his attempted refutation of Augsburg Confession, 76. Faith, a living, always required for pardon, 130. Forgiveness of sin belongs to God alone, 104, &c. Form of Concord rejected by a large part of the Lutheran Church, 24. ----- acknowledges the right of altering confessions, 38. Fuhrman on the mass, 68. Fundamental doctrine, what? 4. Funk on Private Confession, 98.

General Synod, liberality of her basis, 9.
Golden age of the Christian church, 20.
Gospel, life of the, the true life of a church, 37.

Hagenbach, Dr., on bodily presence in the supper, 60.
Hazelius, Dr., on the Diet of Augsburg, 55.
----- Dr., dissents from the Augsburg Confession, 42.
History of American Lutheran Church, 93.
Host, elevation of, long retained, 65.

Improvement of erroneous creeds creditable to a church, 45.
Investigation the safeguard of religious truth, 14.

Jacobsen, Professor, on Confession, 102.
Jonas, Justus, Luther's Letter to, 54.
Justification, faith and not the sacraments the immediate condition of, 130.

Keys, power of, 100, 101.
Knapp, Dr., not symbolic, 59.
----- on the eucharist, 60.
----- influence of the sacraments defined, 133.
Koecher, Dr., views of the duty of a church to correct her confession, 45.

Larger Catechism of Luther rejected, 25.
Latin hymns in the mass, 82.



Life, the true, of the church, what? 37.

Lintner, Dr., dissents from the Augsburg Confession, 42.

Lochman, Dr., omits large portions of the Augsburg Confession in his recension, 40.

Lord's Supper, see Eucharist.

Luther, the Protestant princes abstain from consulting him during the Diet at Augsburg, 50.

----- progressive reformer, 65.

----- his use of the word mass, 71, &c.

----- engaged in constant controversy, 14.

----- was originally pledged to the whole Romish system, 21.

----- enlightened by the study of Scripture, 21.

----- never signed any confession of faith, 22.

----- his defiance of papists, 54.

----- his letter to Lazarus Spengler, 71, to Hausmann, 71, to Jonas, 72.

----- acknowledges the imperfection of the reformation, 35.

----- his oath of obedience to Papacy, 21.

----- his sense of obligation to the Bible, 46.

Lutheran Church, American, founded on Independent or Congregational, or Republican principles, 32, 33.



Page 101

- Mass, closet, early rejected, 65.
 ----- public, rejected after Augsburg diet, 66.
 ----- ceremonies of, retained by Augsburg Confession, 66, 68.
 ----- its nature, 69, 71.
 ----- reformers trained to its Papal use, 70.
 ----- the usus loquendi of the word, 71, 72, 81-90.
 ----- distinct from sacrament or Lord's Supper, 71, &c., 74.
 ----- Canon of, what, 73.
 ----- Luther's definition of, 74.
 ----- meaning, in the symbols, 81, &c., 90.
- Mann, Rev., misapplies the word heretic, 26.
 ----- misapprehends the profession of the New School Lutherans, 33.
- Melancthon, his concessions to Popery, 53, 54.
 ----- Luther's rebuke for his concessions, 53, 54.
 ----- on the mass, 74-78.
 ----- Letters to Luther, 75, 76, 77, 48. [sic]
 ----- advice to his mother, 14.
 ----- did not regard the Augsburg Confession as perfect, 23.
 ----- ready to submit to Romish bishops again, 35.
 ----- describes his danger and depression at the Diet, 49.
 ----- complains about the indifference of the princes to consult Luther, 50.
 ----- his remarkable letter to Campegius, 51.
- Methodists, Episcopal, made extensive changes in the Thirty-nine Articles, 31.
- Miller, Dr. G. B., dissents from the Augsburg Confession, 42.
- Mosheim, Dr., 68, 132.
- Murdock, Dr., on the mass, 68.
- Natural Depravity, a Scriptural doctrine, 6, 7.
 ----- ----- reality of it taught by the author, 6, 7.
- New creed, advocated by some, 44.
- Our church, right or wrong, an unchristian motto, 38. Obedience, offered to the Romish church by Melancthon, to obtain peace, 52.
- Pardon or justification, faith the condition of, 130.
- Peculiarities of our church when scriptural, to be retained, 38.
- Plank, Dr., on confession, 102.
- Platform, Definite, see Definite Platform.
- Political institutions less important than the church, 17.



Popular Theology, reference to, 93.
Presbyterians changed their confession, 31.
Private confession, how performed, 98.
----- rejected, 25.
Public confession substituted for private, 25.
Puseyism, 131.
----- flatters the vanity of ministers, 131.

Question, the true state of, 17.

Rationalism, unjustly charged on some American writers by Germans, 7, 8.
Recension, American, digest of, 61.
Reformation, time of, at the diet, not favorable to the formation of a full, impartial creed, 22, 47.
Reformers, progressive, 57, 58, 65.
----- fallible men, 35.
Refutation, papal, of Augsburg Confession, 79.
----- distinguishes between mass and eucharist, 79.
Reinhard, Dr., not symbolic, 59, 132.
Reply to Rev. Mann's general observations, 22-24.
Responsibility, fearful, of disseminating error in creeds, 34.
Right of ministers to dissent from the Augsburg Confession conceded, 43.
Reformer's, the, if living would themselves reject these errors, 35.
----- were educated till adult age in all the



Page 102

superstitions

of Rome, 37.

Regeneration, baptismal, 135, &c.

----- taught by the symbolical books, 135, 136, 137.

----- taught by the Reformers, 138-140.

----- taught by the early theologians, 140, &c.

Regeneration, baptismal, influence of this doctrine on the pulpit, 141, &c.

Rufinus' report on the origin of the Apostles' creed, 19.

Romanists and Puseyites in error, 18.

Sabbath, views of the Reformers on, 107, 111, 112, &c.

----- Ruecker, Hengstenberg, Waler, on, 108, 109.

Sacraments, their relation to pardon or justification, 9.

Schaeffer, Dr. F. C., dissents from the Augsburg Confession, 41.

Schaff, Dr., an inadvertence corrected, 5, 6.

Schultz, Dr., on German theology, 60.

Scriptures, why better understood more than three centuries ago, 36.

Siegel, on history of the mass, 69; confession, 102.

Sin, pardon of, belongs to God, 104, &c.

Smalcald Articles, more decided, 55.

----- rejected by Sweden and Denmark, 25.

Smaller Catechism of Luther, rejected in Sweden, 25.

Spalatin, his abstract of Augsburg Confession, 79.

----- distinguishes between mass and Lord's Supper, 79.

Standpoint of the American Lutheran Church, 35.

Storr, Dr., 59.

Symbolism, Post-Lutheran and Ultra-Lutheran, 164.

Symbolic, what makes a book such, 160, 161.

Symbols, departure of German theologians from, 59.

Symbolic System, when introduced, 22.

----- no part of original Lutheranism, 163.

Symbol, the mother, of Protestantism retained, 44.

Synods, General, doctrinal basis defended, 4.

Theologians, German, unsymbolic, 59.

Theological Seminary, liberality of her doctrinal basis, 9.

Topics discussed in this work, 4.

Truth fears not investigation, 44.

Ultra-Lutherans must unchurch the Lutherans of Luther's lifetime, 25.



War on the Platform by Old Lutherans, offensive and not defensive war, 25. Western Synods, the Platform primarily designed for them 27. Word of God, the inspired, complete, 18. ----- the only creed used in the apostolic age, 18.

Zwingle's Confession, 75.

[tr. note: after the index, the copy transcribed includes a 12 page catalog of books available from the publisher T. Newton Kurtz, Baltimore, Maryland which, in accordance with Project Gutenberg guidelines, was not transcribed. The introductory statement, however, is transcribed below; the first 9 lines all appeared in different type fonts and sizes.]

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