

Three Articles on Christian Worship

Out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ and with a fervent desire to be faithful to him in our service as stewards of the mysteries of God entrusted to us (1 Cor 4:1), we humbly offer the following affirmative theses (“we confess”) and antitheses (“we reject”) concerning a number of points of contention among our pastors and churches regarding the theology and practice of Christian worship.

We firmly believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God’s inspired, written Word, the sole source and norm of all Christian teaching. As ordained pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we reaffirm our unreserved subscription to the Lutheran Confessions contained in *The Book of Concord* of A.D. 1580, that they are a true and faithful exposition of the Word of God and are binding upon us because they are in agreement with the Scriptures. In the spirit of our Lutheran Symbols, our testimony is presented *in statu confessionis* within the holy, Christian church.

ARTICLE I: WORSHIP, I.E., DIVINE SERVICE

WE CONFESS:

1. That the Lord speaks, and we listen. His Word gives what it promises, and faith receives what its Lord bestows (1 Sam 3:10; Heb 1:1, 2:1; AC XX, 23; Ap IV, 48).
2. That the chief article of the divine Word is the justification of sinners by the grace of God, for Christ’s sake, received through faith alone (Lk 24:44-49; Jn 5:39-40; Rom 3:21-26; 1 Cor 2:2; AC IV; SA II, I, 1-3; SA II, II, 1, 7).
3. That such saving faith is imparted and sustained by the Holy Spirit only when the blessed Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacred sacraments are administered according to their institution by Christ (Rom 10:17; AC V; SA III, VIII, 3, 9-10).
4. That these precious means of grace are the *sine qua non* of corporate Christian worship, both because of Christ’s evangelical mandate to preach the Word, to absolve, to baptize, and to receive his body and blood; and because of his eternal promise to be present with his church and to serve and bless his faithful gathered around pulpit, font and altar (Mt 26:26-28; Mt 28:16-20; Jn 20:19-23; AC VII, 1-2).
5. That this ministry of Word and sacrament is the true and chief worship. It is *Gottesdienst*, divine service. It is the service of God to us whereby he gives himself and his good gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. The preaching of Christ’s pure Gospel and the right administration of his sacraments are the heart of public worship, and faith’s reception of God’s gracious promises is the highest worship of God (Jn 6:29; Ap IV, 49-51, 154, 310; Ap XV, 42).

6. That such divine service is biblical, evangelical and catholic. It is grounded in and flows from the Word of God, and its heart is the proclamation of the pure gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Christ. It is, thus, truly *catholic*, truly *Lutheran* (Book of Concord, Preface, par. 3; Ap IV, 57).
7. That Christ's people, having received God's gracious gifts in the divine service, offer their sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. This sacrifice is the fruit of faith, produced by and through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God. Therefore, even such sacrifice is, indeed, God's work! (Jn 15:1-8; Rom 12:1; AC VI; LC I, 84).

WE REJECT:

1. All false theologies and practices of worship which obscure or deny the chief article of justification by God's grace through faith in Christ (Ap IV, 2-10).
2. All false theologies and practices of worship which diminish divine service and elevate the sacrifice of man's prayer, praise and thanksgiving (Tr 44).
3. All anthropocentric emphases which seek either to exist alongside of or to replace the service of the living Savior given through the means of grace, received by faith in the midst of the gathered body of believers. All such emphases only bewilder the flock and obscure the honor and glory of Jesus Christ (Ap IV, 49-60).
4. All human attempts to deny or diminish divine service. All such worship is false and confuses the radical distinction between Law and Gospel. It makes what is God's work man's and, therefore, relies on our "own preparations and works" apart from the external Word (Gal 2:20-21; Phil 2:12-14; Eph 2:8-10; Col 3:16; AC V, 4; Ap IV, 155-159, 310).

ARTICLE II: LITURGY

WE CONFESS:

1. That the original meaning of the word "liturgy" (*leitourgiva*) for the early Christian communities of faith is its proper meaning for Christendom, namely, an act of public service for the sake of the world, for the sake of all creation (Ap XXIV, 78-83).
2. That this public service is not rendered, in the first place, by the clergy or by the laity, although they both participate in the liturgy according to their respective roles. Rather the chief Server in the liturgy, the real Liturgist, is our Lord Jesus Christ. He is truly present in the communal gathering of his people, continuing his high-priestly office through his called and ordained servants of the Word in the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of his sacraments. In that context and through these means, he distributes the salvation he won for the world. He enables us to receive his gifts in faith, and only from that faith to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and to go forth into the world as his agents in the world (Lk 10:16; Mt 18:20; Lk 22:27; Heb 7:24; 10:19-25; AC V, 1-3; Ap XXVIII, 18-19).

3. That the liturgy, according to its “Gospel sense,” is none other than the divine service which Jesus, our God, provides for his church for the sake of all creation. As such, the liturgy is divine. It is not adiaphora; it is absolutely necessary for the life and salvation of the world. It is handed down from one generation to the next and is viable for all times, for all places, and for all peoples regardless of any differences, be they geographical, ethnic, cultural, social, etc. Our spiritual forefathers who wrote *The Book of Concord* were careful not to apply the word “adiaphoron” to the liturgy for this very reason (1 Cor 11:23; 15:3; Ap IV, 49; Ap XXIV, 80-81).
4. That it is spiritually and confessionally misleading to apply the word “liturgy” to the “rites and ceremonies” of the church’s worship or to equate the former with the latter.
5. That catechesis is the vital link between evangelization and participation in, and reception of, the blessings of the divine liturgy (Mt 28:16-20; Ap XV, 49-52; Ap XXIV, 49-51).

WE REJECT:

1. Any definition, discussion and use of the term liturgy which fails to emerge from and acknowledge its “Gospel sense.”
2. Any attempt to reduce the issue of liturgy to a mere matter of “style versus substance” rather than a doctrinal issue of greatest importance. For the liturgy concerns the Gospel itself and the deliverance of God’s gracious forgiveness of sins, which is the glory and honor of Christ (Ap IV, 155-158).
3. Any teaching or practice which maintains that the divine liturgy is human and man-made, or that it is essentially a sacrifice which the church offers to God, or that it is the church’s obedient ascription of praise to the majesty of a sovereign God (Ap XXIV, 59).
4. Any teaching or practice which argues Christ’s liturgy (his public service to his people in communal worship) is culturally limited and bound, irrelevant from one society or from one group in a society to the next society/group, and hence in need of societal or cultural adaptation, i.e., a “traditional” divine service for believers and a “contemporary” divine service for unbelievers/seekers.

ARTICLE III: RITES, CEREMONIES, AND ADIAPHORA

WE CONFESS

1. That ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies are the component parts of the divine liturgy—the words and practices involved in conducting the divine service. “Rites” generally refer to the words in the liturgy and their order in the service. “Ceremonies” generally refer to everything connected with conducting a rite, from bodily expressions (speaking, singing, kneeling, bowing, making the sign of the cross, etc.) to observing the church year, to the ornaments, symbols, and material objects employed in the church’s worship (church buildings, the altar, crucifixes, candles, vestments, etc.). Ceremonies are solemn religious objects and actions (AC XXVI, 40-45; SD X, 8).

2. That rites and ceremonies are to be observed in public worship because the public ministry of the Word and the sacrament always involves something physical and concrete; and because humans are composed of body and soul so that what affects the one affects the other. Therefore, rites and ceremonies are an integral part of public worship (1 Cor 14:40; 1 Tim 4:4-5; AC XV, 1; Ap XXVIII, 17).
3. That rites and ceremonies in the church's public worship outwardly proclaim what the church believes and teaches, as the ancient Latin maxim declares: *Lex supplicandi statuat legem credendi* ("The rule of praying establishes the rule of believing"). As we worship so we believe, and as we believe so we worship (Rom 10:8-10; Col 3:16-17; Ap XXIV, 25-27, 34-35; Ap XXVII, 55-56).
4. That ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies in worship publicly testify to the truth as well as to error, assist the spiritual growth of the faithful and their instruction in the Scriptures, help safeguard purity of doctrine among God's people, and provide for good order and peace, evangelical decorum, dignity, reverence and devotion in the gathering of the church (1 Cor 11:26; AC Abuses, 6; AC XXIV, 2-4; AC XXVI, 40; AC XXVIII, 53-55; Ap VII/VIII, 33, 40; Ap XV, 1, 13, 20; Ap XXIV, 3; Ap XXVIII, 15; Ep X, 1).
5. That church usages which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the Word of God are adiaphora. Genuine adiaphora are not indifferent or unimportant, however, but are matters which are not subject either to a divine command or prohibition. For various reasons, an adiaphoron may, indeed, be important and very good (Acts 16:3; Gal 2:1-5; Ap XV, 52; Ep X, 2-3; SD X, 5)
6. That while absolute uniformity in human rites and ceremonies is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church, the churches of the Evangelical Lutheran Reformation emphatically align themselves with the retainment and use of the traditional rites and ceremonies of the church catholic. Observance of such traditional church usages is urged on the basis of the Gospel and our new life of faith, freedom and love in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 14:33-38; AC VII, 3-4; AC Faith and Doctrine Conclusion, 3; AC XXIV, 1-2; Ap XV, 21, 38-40, 44; Ap XXIV, 1; Ep X, 5).
7. That while the community of God in every place and at every time has the authority to change, reduce, or to increase ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies according to its circumstances, such liberty should not be abused but exercised moderately. Unnecessary innovations should be avoided, and nothing should be changed in the accustomed rites without good reason lest frivolity replace reverence, offense be given, disorder created, sectarianism promoted, historic continuity severed, and the doctrinal catholicity of the Church of the Augsburg Confession made doubtful (Gal 5:1, 13; AC XXVI, 40; Ap XV, 21, 38-42; Ep X, 4-5; SD X, 9, 30).
8. That in times of persecution or when the confession of the pure Gospel and the faith of God's people are at stake, rites and ceremonies under dispute are no longer adiaphora (Acts 16:3; Gal 2:1-5; Ep X, 6, 12; SD X, 5, 10-14).

WE REJECT:

1. Any suggestion that human rites and ceremonies are necessary for salvation, for making satisfaction for sins, for propitiating God and meriting his grace (Gal 4:8-10; Ap XV, 3-5, 9, 29, 31; Ap XXIV, 4-6; SA III, XV, 1-2).
2. The notion that worship consists in the observance, in and of itself, of ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies (AC XXVIII, 52; Ap VII/VIII, 32).
3. Any demand for uniformity in church usages on the basis of legal compulsion, and any condemnation of churches because they have fewer or more external ceremonies so long as there is mutual agreement in doctrine in all its articles as well as in the right administration of the holy sacraments (AC XXVI, 27-29, 39; Ep X, 7; SD X, 31).
4. Any desire and effort to reprimatinate church rites of the past solely for the sake of reprimatination and not in the service of the Gospel; or to deny changes and modifications to ecclesiastical usages when they please God and edify his church (Ap XXIV, 40-41; Ap VII/VIII, 33; Ap XXVIII, 6; Ep X, 4; SD X, 9).
5. The denial that rites and ceremonies have any direct bearing on Christ's service to his church in public worship (LC I, 94).
6. Any discussion of and decision regarding church usages which fail to recognize and esteem the large amount of scriptural texts and references within the traditional service rites handed down from church generation to generation, to wit: Invocation—Matthew 28:19; Confession and Absolution—Psalm 32:5, Psalm 124:8, John 20:19-23, 1 John 1:8-9; Kyrie—Luke 18:38; Hymn of Praise—Luke 2:14, Revelation 4:11, 5:9-10, 13; Salutation—Ruth 2:4; Offertory—Psalm 51:10-12; Lord's Prayer—Matthew 6:9-13; Sanctus—Psalm 118:26, Isaiah 6:2-3, Matthew 21:9, John 12:13; Verba—Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; Agnus Dei—John 1:29; Nunc Dimittis—Luke 2:29-32; Benediction—Numbers 6:24-26; and also the various Prayer Offices, Introits and Graduals from the Psalms and the New Testament.
7. Any discussion of and decision regarding church usages which betray a creative, individualistic, and culturally conditioned approach to the same at the expense of the corporate and transcultural perspective and practice of the universal church (2 Cor 4:1-6; Ap VII/VIII, 33).
8. Any innovation and departure from the historic rites of the Christian church which rationalize the same on the basis of an alleged need for more attractive, user-friendly, attention-keeping, more effective, more relevant and more contemporary worship (Rom 12:2; Gal 1:10-12; SA III, VIII, 3, 5-6, 9-10).
9. The shameful neglect, wherever it exists, on the part of the church's pastors to grow in their understanding of and appreciation for ecclesiastical rites and ceremonies and to catechize and instruct God's people in the meaning and proper use of such rites and ceremonies (1 Tim 4:13-16; 2 Tim 4:1-5; Ti 2:1; AC XV, 2; AC XXVI, 41; SC Preface, 4-6).

10. Any irresponsible and inaccurate application of the adiaphoristic principle in discussing and rendering decisions regarding church usages (AC XXVI, 41).
11. Any posture, explicit or implicit, which suggests that Evangelical Lutheran pastors, despite their ordination vows to abide by the Lutheran Confessions, are free to disregard the wise and godly counsel of our Confessions to retain historic church usages and to maintain uniformity in rites and ceremonies (AC XXVI, 40).
12. Any posture or practice which fails or refuses to recognize the identity and integrity of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in all its teachings and practices as a confessing movement within “the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church” (Nicene Creed; AC Conclusion, 4-7).

It is our prayer that under God’s blessing the witness offered in the above articles will assist our walking together as Christian brothers and pastors in our beloved synod, to the growth of Christ’s kingdom of grace and to the honor of him who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Nihil contra scripturam aut ecclesiam catholicam.

Friday of Pentecost XIII, A.D. 1997
August 22, 1997

Rev. Stephen F. Long, Pastor
St. John Lutheran Church
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Rev. Jon D. Vieker, Pastor
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Rev. Rodney E. Zwonitzer, Pastor
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Dearborn, Michigan

Addendum of Scriptural and Confessional References

All scriptural references are quoted from the *New International Version*, unless otherwise noted. All references to *The Book of Concord* are quoted from the “Tappert Edition,” unless otherwise noted. *Emphasis* has been added to those portions of the confessional references especially pertaining to the points at hand.

1 Cor 4:1—Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God (NKJV).

ARTICLE I: WORSHIP, I.E., DIVINE SERVICE

WE CONFESS:

1. 1 Sam 3:10—The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Heb 1:1, 2:1—In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways . . . We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

AC XX, 23 (German)—Instruction is also given among us to show that the faith here spoken of is not that possessed by the devil and the ungodly, who also believe the history of Christ’s suffering and his resurrection from the dead, *but we mean such true faith as believes that we receive grace and forgiveness of sin through Christ.*

Ap IV, 48—Our opponents imagine that faith is only historical knowledge and teach that it can exist with mortal sin. And so they say nothing about faith by which, as Paul says so often, men are justified, because those who are accounted righteous before God do not live in mortal sin. *The faith that justifies, however, is no mere historical knowledge, but the firm acceptance of God’s offer promising forgiveness of sins and justification.* To avoid the impression that it is merely knowledge, we add that *to have faith means to want and to accept the promised offer of forgiveness of sins and justification.*

2. Lk 24:44-49—[Jesus] said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Jn 5:39-40—You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

Rom 3:21-26—But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

1 Cor 2:2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

AC IV (German)—It is also taught among us that *we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us.* For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says in Romans 3:21-26 and 4:5.

SA II, I, 1-3—*The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, "was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). He alone is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "God has laid upon him the iniquities of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Moreover, "all have sinned," and "they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, by his blood" (Rom. 3:23-25).*

SA II, II, 1, 7—*The Mass in the papacy must be regarded as the greatest and most horrible abomination because it runs into direct and violent conflict with this fundamental article. Yet, above and beyond all others, it has been the supreme and most precious of the papal idolatries, for it is held that this sacrifice or work of the Mass (even when offered by an evil scoundrel) delivers men from their sins, both here in this life and yonder in purgatory, although in reality this can and must be done by the Lamb of God alone, as has been stated above. There is to be no concession or compromise in this article either, for the first article does not permit it. . . . The Mass is and can be nothing else than a human work, even a work of evil scoundrels (as the cannon and all books on the subject declare), for by means of the Mass men try to reconcile themselves and others to God and obtain and merit grace and the forgiveness of sins. It is observed for this purpose when it is best observed. What other purpose could it have? Therefore, it should be condemned and must be abolished because it is a direct contradiction to the fundamental article, which asserts that it is not the celebrant of a Mass and what he does but the Lamb of God and the Son of God who takes away our sin."*

3. Rom 10:17—Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

AC V (German)—*To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this. Condemned are the Anabaptists and others who teach that the Holy Spirit comes to us through our own preparations, thoughts, and works without the external word of the Gospel.*

AC V (Latin)—*In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, and the Holy Spirit produces faith, where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel. That is to say, it is not on account of our own merits but on account of Christ that God justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake. Gal. 3:14, "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Our churches condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Spirit comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.*

SA III, VIII, 3, 9-10—*In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts—that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and who therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures or spoken Word according to their pleasure. . . . In short, enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil.*

4. Mt 26:26-28—While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying,

“Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mt 28:16-20—Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Jn 20:19-23 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

AC VII (German)—It is also taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. *This is the assembly of all believers among who the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.* For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word.

5. Jn 6:29—Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Ap IV, 49-51, 154, 310—It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. *Faith is that worship which receives God’s offered blessing; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers. Paul clearly shows that faith does not simply mean historical knowledge but is a firm acceptance of the promise (Rom. 4:16): “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may be guaranteed.”* For he says that only faith can accept the promise. He therefore correlates and connects promise and faith. . . . And the account here shows what he calls “love.” *The woman came, believing that she should seek the forgiveness of sins from Christ. This is the highest way of worshiping Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to him. By looking for the forgiveness of sins from him, she truly acknowledged him as the Messiah. Truly to believe means to think of Christ in this way, and in this way to worship and take hold of him.* Moreover, Christ used the word “love” not toward the woman but against the Pharisee, because Christ contrasted the whole act of reverence of the Pharisee with that of the woman. He chides the Pharisee for not acknowledging him as the Messiah, though he did show him the outward courtesies due a guest and a great and holy man. *He points to the woman and praises her reverence, her anointing and crying, all of which were a sign and confession of faith that she was looking for the forgiveness of sins from Christ.* It was not without reason that this truly powerful example moved Christ to chide the Pharisee, this wise and honest but unbelieving man. He charges him with irreverence and reproves him with the example of the woman. What a disgrace that an uneducated woman should believe God, while a doctor of the law does not believe or accept the Messiah or seek from him the forgiveness of sins and salvation! . . . *Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God.* We cannot offer anything to God unless we have first been reconciled and reborn. *The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness.* About this worship Christ speaks in John 6:40, “This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.” And the Father says (Matt. 17:5), “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

Ap XV, 42—Among our opponents, there are many regions where no sermons are preached during the whole year, except in Lent. *But the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel.* When our opponents do preach, they talk about human traditions, the worship of the saints, and similar trifles. This the people rightly despise and walk out on them after the reading of the Gospel. A few of the better ones are now beginning to talk about good works, but they say nothing about the righteousness of faith or about faith in Christ or about comfort for the conscience. In their polemics they even attack this most salutary part of the Gospel.

6. Book of Concord, Preface, par. 3—Subsequently many churches and schools committed themselves to this confession as the contemporary symbol of their faith in the chief articles in controversy over against both the papacy and all sorts of factions. They referred and appealed to it without either controversy or doubt in a Christian and unanimous interpretation thereof. *They have held fast and loyally to the doctrine that is contained in it, that is based solidly on the divine Scriptures, and that is also briefly summarized in the approved ancient symbols, recognizing the doctrine as the ancient consensus which the universal and orthodox church of Christ has believed, fought for against many heresies and errors, and repeatedly affirmed.*

Ap IV, 57—*This service and worship is especially praised throughout the prophets and the Psalms.* Even though the law does not teach the free forgiveness of sins, the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price. Therefore they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament.

7. Jn 15:1-8—“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Rom 12:1—Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

AC VI (German)—*It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God’s sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God.* For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ, as Christ himself says, “So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants’” (Luke 17:10). The Fathers also teach thus, for Ambrose says, “It is ordained of God that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, and he shall have forgiveness of sins, not through works but through faith alone, without merit.”

LC I, 84—Secondly and most especially, *we keep holy days so that people may have time and opportunity, which otherwise would not be available, to participate in public worship, that is, that they may assemble to hear and discuss God’s Word and then praise God with song and prayer.*

WE REJECT:

1. Ap IV, 2-10—*In this controversy the main doctrine of Christianity is involved; when it is properly understood, it illumines and magnifies the honor of Christ and brings to pious consciences the abundant consolation that they need.* We therefore ask His Imperial Majesty kindly to hear us out on this important issue. For since they understand neither the forgiveness of sins nor faith nor grace nor righteousness, our opponents confuse this doctrine miserably, they obscure the glory and the blessings of Christ, and they rob pious consciences of the consolation offered them in Christ. To substantiate our Confession and to refute the objections of our opponents, we shall have to say a few things by way of preface so that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, the opponents’ and our own, might be recognized. All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises. In some places it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ; this it does either when it promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for his sake, or when, in the New Testament, the Christ who came promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life. By “law” in this discussion we mean the commandments of the Decalogue, wherever they appear in the Scriptures. For the present we are saying nothing about the ceremonial and civil laws of Moses. Of these two doctrines our opponents select the law and by it they seek forgiveness of sins and

justification. For to some extent human reason naturally understands the law since it has the same judgment naturally written in the mind. But the Decalogue does not only require external works that reason can somehow perform. It also requires other works far beyond the reach of reason, like true fear of God, true love of God, true prayer to God, true conviction that God hears prayer, and the expectation of God's help in death and all afflictions. Finally, it requires obedience to God in death and all afflictions, lest we try to flee these things or turn away when God imposes them. Here the scholastics have followed the philosophers. Thus they teach only the righteousness of reason—that is, civil works—and maintain that without the Holy Spirit reason can love God above all things. As long as a man's mind is at rest and he does not feel God's wrath or judgment, he can imagine that he wants to love God and that he wants to do good for God's sake. In this way the scholastics teach men to merit the forgiveness of sins by doing what is within them, that is, if reason in its sorrow over sin elicits an act of love to God or does good for God's sake. *Because this view naturally flatters men, it has produced and increased many types of worship in the church, like monastic vows and the abuses of the Mass; someone has always been making up this or that form of worship or devotion with this view in mind.*

2. Tr 44—The doctrine of repentance has been completely corrupted by the pope and his adherents, who teach that sins are forgiven on account of the worth of our work. Then they bid us to doubt whether forgiveness is obtained. *Nowhere do they teach that sins are forgiven freely for Christ's sake and that by this faith we obtain the remission of sins. Thus they obscure the glory of Christ, deprive consciences of a firm consolation, and abolish true worship (that is, the exercise of faith struggling against despair).*

3. AC IV, 49-60—It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. *Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessing; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers.* Paul clearly shows that faith does not simply mean historical knowledge but is a firm acceptance of the promise (Rom. 4:16): "That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may be guaranteed." For he says that only faith can accept the promise. He therefore correlates and connects promise and faith. It will be easy to determine what faith is if we pay attention to the article of the Creed on the forgiveness of sins. So it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, and was raised unless we add this article, the purpose of the history, "the forgiveness of sins." The rest must be integrated with this article, namely, that for Christ's sake and not because of our own merits the forgiveness of sins is bestowed upon us. For why did Christ have to be offered for our sins if our merits make satisfaction for them? *In speaking of justifying faith, therefore, we must remember that these three elements always belong together: the promise itself, the fact that the promise is free, and the merits of Christ as the price and propitiation. The promise is accepted by faith; the fact that it is free excludes our merits and shows that the blessing is offered only by mercy; the merits of Christ are the price because there must be a certain propitiation for our sins.* Scripture contains many pleas for mercy, and the holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. *And so at every mention of mercy we must remember that this requires faith, which accepts the promise of mercy. Similarly, at every mention of faith we are also thinking of its object, the promised mercy. For faith does not justify or save because it is a good work in itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy. This service and worship is especially praised throughout the prophets and the Psalms.* Even though the law does not teach the free forgiveness of sins, the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price. Therefore they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament. The frequent references to mercy and faith in the Psalms and the prophets belong here; for example, "If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand?" (Ps. 130:3). Here the psalmist confesses his sins, but he does not lay claim to any merit of his own. He adds, "There is forgiveness with thee" (v. 4). Here he comforts himself with his trust in God's mercy. He quotes the promise: "My soul waits for his word, my soul hopes in the Lord," that is, because thou has promised the forgiveness of sins I am sustained by thy promise. Therefore the patriarchs, too, were justified not by the law but by the promise and faith. It is strange that our opponents make so little of faith when they see it praised everywhere as the foremost kind of worship, as in Ps. 50:15: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." *This is how God wants to be known and worshiped, that we accept his blessings and receive them because of his mercy rather than because of our own merits. This is the greatest consolation in all afflictions, and our opponents take it away when they despise and disparage faith and teach men to deal with God only by works and merits.*

4. Gal 2:20-21—I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!” Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,

Phil 2:12-14—Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing . . .

Eph 2:8-10—For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Col 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

AC V, 4 (German)—*Condemned are the Anabaptists and others who teach that the Holy Spirit comes to us through our own preparations, thoughts, and works without the external word of the Gospel.*

Ap IV, 155-159, 310—*In this way, therefore, he praises her entire act of worship, as the Scriptures often do when they include many things in one phrase.* Later we shall take up similar passages, like Luke 11:41, “Give alms; and behold, everything is clean.” *He demands not only alms, but also the righteousness of faith.* In the same way he says here, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much,” that is, *because she truly worshiped me with faith and with the acts and signs of faith. He includes the whole act of worship; but meanwhile he teaches that it is faith that properly accepts the forgiveness of sins, though love, confession, and other good fruits ought to follow.* He does not mean that these fruits are the price of propitiation which earns the forgiveness of sins that reconciles us to God. *We are debating about an important issue, the honor of Christ and the source of sure and firm consolation for pious minds—whether we should put our trust in Christ or in our own works. If we put it in our works, we rob Christ of his honor as mediator and propitiator. And in the judgment of God we shall learn that this trust was vain and our consciences will then plunge into despair.* For if the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation do not come freely for Christ’s sake, but for the sake of our love, nobody will have the forgiveness of sins unless he keeps the whole law, because the law does not justify so long as it can accuse us. Justification is reconciliation for Christ’s sake. Therefore it is clear that we are justified by faith, for it is sure that we receive the forgiveness of sins by faith alone. Now let us reply to the objection of the opponents referred to above. They are right when they say that love is the keeping of the law, and obedience to the law certainly is righteousness. But they are mistaken when they think that we are justified by the law. We are not justified by the law; but we receive the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation by faith for Christ’s sake, not for the sake of love or the keeping of the law. From this it necessarily follows that we are justified by faith in Christ. . . . *Thus the service and worship of the Gospel is to receive good things from God, while the worship of the law is to offer and present our goods to God. We cannot offer anything to God unless we have first been reconciled and reborn. The greatest possible comfort comes from this doctrine that the highest worship in the Gospel is the desire to receive forgiveness of sins, grace, and righteousness.* About this worship Christ speaks in John 6:40, “This is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.” And the Father says (Matt. 17:5), “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.”

ARTICLE II: LITURGY

WE CONFESS:

1. Ap XXIV, 78-83—Our opponents also refer us to philology. From the names for the Mass they take arguments which do not deserve a lengthy discussion. It does not follow from the fact that the Mass is called a sacrifice that it grants grace *ex opere operato* or that it merits the forgiveness of sins for those to whom it is transferred. The Greeks call the Mass “liturgy,” and this, they say, means “sacrifice.” Why do they not mention the old term “communion,” which shows that formerly the Mass was the communion of many? *But let us talk about the term “liturgy.” It does not really mean a sacrifice but a public service. Thus it squares with our position that a minister who consecrates shows forth the body and blood of the Lord to the people, just as a minister who preaches shows forth the gospel to the people, as Paul says (1 Cor. 4:1), “This is how one should regard us, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the sacraments of God,” that is, of the Word and sacraments; and 2 Cor. 5:20, “We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” Thus the term “liturgy” squares well with the ministry. It is an old word, ordinarily used in public law. To the Greeks it meant “public duties,” like the taxes collected for equipping a fleet. As Demosthenes’ oration Leptines shows, it is completely taken up with public duties and immunities: “He will say that some unworthy men have found an immunity and have avoided public duty.” They used it this way in the time of the Romans, as the rescript of Pertinax on the law of immunity shows: “Even though the number of children does not excuse parents from public duties.” A commentator on Demosthenes says that “liturgy” is a kind of tax to pay for the games, ships, care of the gymnasium, and similar public responsibilities. In 2 Cor. 9:12 Paul uses this word for a collection. Taking this collection not only supplies what the saints need but also causes many to thank God more abundantly. In Phil. 2:25 he calls Epaphroditus a “minister to my need,” which surely does not mean a sacrificer. *But further proofs are unnecessary since anyone who reads the Greek authors can find examples everywhere of their use of “liturgy” to mean public duties or ministrations. Because of the diphthong, philologists do not derive it from lite, which means prayers, but from leita, which means public goods; thus the verb means to care for or to administer public goods.**

2. Lk 10:16—“He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

Mt 18:20—For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”

Lk 22:27—For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

Heb 7:24—But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood.

Heb 10:19-25—Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

AC V, 1-3 (German)—*To obtain such faith God instituted the office of the ministry, that is, provided the Gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, when and where he pleases, in those who hear the Gospel. And the Gospel teaches that we have a gracious God, not by our own merits but by the merit of Christ, when we believe this.*

Ap XXVIII, 18-19—For Christ wants to assure us, as was necessary, that the Word is efficacious when it is delivered by men and that we should not look for another word from heaven. “*He who hears you hears me” cannot be applied to traditions For Christ requires them to teach in such a way that he might be heard, because he says, “hears me.” Therefore he wants his voice, His Word to be heard, not human traditions. Thus these asses take a statement that supports our position and contains the deepest kind of comfort and teaching, and they misapply it to these trifles, distinction of foods and clothing and the like.*

3. 1 Cor 11:23; 15:3—For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread . . . For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

Ap IV, 49—It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. *Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessing; the righteousness of the law is that worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshiped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers.*

Ap XXIV, 80-81—It does not really mean a sacrifice but a public service. *Thus it squares with our position that a minister who consecrates shows forth the body and blood of the Lord to the people, just as a minister who preaches shows forth the gospel to the people, as Paul says (1 Cor. 4:1), "This is how one should regard us, as ministers of Christ and dispensers of the sacraments of God," that is, of the Word and sacraments; and 2 Cor. 5:20, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." Thus the term "liturgy" squares well with the ministry.*

5. Mt 28:16—Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Ap XV, 49-52—*This subject of traditions involves many difficult and controversial questions, and we know from actual experience that traditions are real snares for consciences. When they are required as necessary, they bring exquisite torture to a conscience that has omitted some observance. On the other hand, their abrogation involves its own difficulties and problems. But our case is plain and simple because our opponents condemn us for teaching that human traditions do not merit the forgiveness of sins, and they require so-called "universal rites" as necessary for salvation. Here Paul is our constant champion; everywhere he insists that these observances neither justify nor are necessary over and above the righteousness of faith. Nevertheless, liberty in these matters should be used moderately, lest the weak be offended and become more hostile to the true teaching of the Gospel because of an abuse of liberty. Nothing should be changed in the accustomed rites without good reason, and to foster harmony those ancient customs should be kept which can be kept without sin or without great disadvantage. This is what we teach. In this very assembly we have shown ample evidence of our willingness to observe adiaphora with others, even where this involved some disadvantage to us. We believed that the greatest possible public harmony, without offense to consciences, should be preferred to all other advantages, but we shall have more to say about this whole issue when we discuss vows and ecclesiastical authority.*

Ap XXIV, 49-51—If the use of the sacrament were the daily sacrifice, we could lay more claim to observing it than our opponents because in their churches mercenary priests use the sacrament. *In our churches the use is more frequent and more devout. It is the people who use it, and this only when they have been instructed and examined. They are instructed about the proper use of the sacrament as a seal and witness of the free forgiveness of sins and as an admonition to timid consciences really to trust and believe that their sins are freely forgiven.* Thus, since we keep both the proclamation of the Gospel and the proper use of the sacraments, we still have the daily sacrifice. And as for outward appearances, our church attendance is greater than theirs. *Practical and clear sermons hold an audience, but neither the people nor the clergy have ever understood our opponents' teaching. The real adornment of the churches is godly, practical, and clear teaching, the godly use of the sacraments, ardent prayer, and the like.* Candles, golden vessels, and ornaments like that are fitting, but they are not the peculiar adornment of the church. If our opponents center their worship in such things rather than in the proclamation of the Gospel, in faith, and in its struggles, they should be classified with those whom Daniel (11:38) describes as worshiping their God with gold and silver.

WE REJECT:

2. Ap IV, 155-158—In this way, therefore, he praises her entire act of worship, as the Scriptures often do when they include many things in one phrase. Later we shall take up similar passages, like Luke 11:41, “Give alms; and behold, everything is clean.” He demands not only alms, but also the righteousness of faith. In the same way he says here, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, because she loved much,” that is, because she truly worshiped me with faith and with the acts and signs of faith. He includes the whole act of worship; *but meanwhile he teaches that it is faith that properly accepts the forgiveness of sins*, though love, confession, and other good fruits ought to follow. He does not mean that these fruits are the price of propitiation which earns the forgiveness of sins that reconciles us to God. *We are debating about an important issue, the honor of Christ and the source of sure and firm consolation for pious minds—whether we should put our trust in Christ or in our own works. If we put it in our works, we rob Christ of his honor as mediator and propitiator. And in the judgment of God we shall learn that this trust was vain and our consciences will then plunge into despair.* For if the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation do not come freely for Christ’s sake, but for the sake of our love, nobody will have the forgiveness of sins unless he keeps the whole law, because the law does not justify so long as it can accuse us. Justification is reconciliation for Christ’s sake. Therefore it is clear that we are justified by faith, for it is sure that we receive the forgiveness of sins by faith alone.
3. Ap XXIV, 59—*Since the priesthood of the New Testament is a ministry of the Spirit, as Paul teaches in 2 Cor. 3:6, the only sacrifice of satisfaction it has for the sins of others is the sacrifice of Christ.* It has no sacrifices like the Levitical which could be transferred to others *ex opere operato*; but it offers to others the Gospel and the sacraments so that thereby they may receive faith and the Holy Spirit and be put to death and made alive. The ministry of the Spirit contradicts any such transfer *ex opere operato*. *Through the ministry of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit works in the heart. Therefore this ministry benefits people when he does work to give them new birth and life.* This does not happen by the transfer of one man’s work to another *ex opere operato*.

ARTICLE III: RITES, CEREMONIES, AND ADIAPHORA

WE CONFESS

1. AC XXVI, 40-45 (German, [Latin])—*We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church.* At the same time, however, the people are instructed that such *outward forms of service* do not make us righteous before God and that they are to be observed without burdening consciences, which is to say that it is not a sin to omit them if this is done without causing scandal. [*Latin—Many traditions are nevertheless kept among us (such as the order of lessons in the Mass, holy days, etc.) which are profitable for maintaining good order in the church. At the same time men are warned that such observances do not justify before God and that no sin is committed if they are omitted without scandal.*] The ancient Fathers maintained such liberty with respect to *outward ceremonies, for in the East they kept Easter at a time different from that in Rome.* When some regarded this difference a divisive of the church, they were admonished by others that it was not necessary to maintain uniformity in such *customs*. Irenaeus said, “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy unity in faith,” and there is a statement in Dist. 12 that such disagreement in *human ordinances* is not in conflict with the unity of Christendom. Moreover, the Tripartite History, Book 9, gathers many examples of dissimilar church usages and adds the profitable Christian observation, “It was not the intention of the apostles to institute holy days but to teach faith and love.”

SD X, 8—We believe, teach, and confess that *true adiaphora or things indifferent, as defined above, are in and of themselves no worship of God or even a part of it, but that we should duly distinguish between the two, as it is written, “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the precepts of men” (Matt. 15:9).*

2. 1 Cor 14:40—But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

1 Tim 4:4-5—For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

AC XV, 1 (German)—*With regard to church usages that have been established by men, it is taught among us that those usages are to be observed which may be observed without sin and which contribute to peace and good order in the church, among them being certain holy days, festivals, and the like.*

Ap XXVIII, 17—*This is the simple way to interpret traditions.* We should know that they are not necessary acts of worship, and *yet we should observe them in their place and without superstition*, in order to avoid offenses.

3. Rom 10:8-10—But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Col 3:16-17—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Ap XXIV, 25-27, 34-35—The rest are eucharistic sacrifices, called “sacrifices of praise”: the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, yes, all the good works of the saints. These sacrifices are not satisfactions on behalf of those who bring them, nor can they be transferred to merit the forgiveness of sins or reconciliation for others *ex opera operato*. Those who bring them are already reconciled. The sacrifices of the New Testament are of this type, as Peter teaches in 1 Pet. 2:5, “A holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices.” Spiritual sacrifices are contrasted not only with the sacrifices of cattle but also with human works offered *ex opera operato*, for “spiritual” refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit within us. Paul teaches the same in Rom. 12:1, “Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” *“Spiritual worship” is a worship in which the spirit knows and takes hold of God, as it does when it fears and trusts him. Therefore the contrast is not only with Levitical worship, where cattle were slaughtered, but with any worship where men suppose they are offering God a work ex opera operato.* The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches the same (13:15): “Through him let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,” with the interpretation, “that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.” He commands them to offer praises, that is, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, and the like. These are valid, not *ex opera operato* but because of faith. We see this from the phrase, “Through him let us offer,” namely, through faith in Christ. *In short, the worship of the New Testament is spiritual; it is the righteousness of faith in the heart and the fruits of faith.* Thus it abrogates Levitical worship. Christ says in John 4:23, 24, “The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” This passage clearly condemns the notion that the sacrifices are valid *ex opere operato*, and it teaches that worship should be in spirit, in faith, and with the heart. . . . They quote another passage from Malachi (3:3), “And he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord.” This passage clearly requires the offerings of the righteous; therefore it does not support the notion of ceremonies *ex opera operato*. The offerings of the sons of Levi (that is, of those who teach in the New Testament) are the proclamation of the Gospel and its good fruits. Thus Paul speaks in Rom. 15:16 of “the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit,” that is, so that the Gentiles may become offerings acceptable to God through faith. The slaughter of animals in the Old Testament symbolized both the death of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel, which should kill this old flesh and begin a new and eternal life in us. *But our opponents always apply the term “sacrifice” only to the ceremony. They omit the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and things like that, though it was for these that the ceremony was instituted.* The New Testament requires sacrifices of the heart, not the ceremonial sacrifices for sin offered by a Levitical priesthood. They also refer to the daily sacrifice: as there was a daily sacrifice in the Old Testament, so the Mass ought to be the daily sacrifice of the New Testament. Our opponents will really achieve something if we let them defeat us with allegories, but it is evident that allegory does not prove or establish anything. *We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and thanksgiving. Taken together, these are the daily sacrifice of the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted because of them and ought not to be separated from them.* Therefore Paul says (1 Cor. 11:26), “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you

proclaim the Lord's death." From the Levitical analogy it does not follow at all that there must be a ceremony that justifies *ex opera operato* or that merits the forgiveness of sins when applied to others.

Ap XXVII, 55-56—*Here we shall not discuss their whole ceremonial worship—lessons, chants, and the like—which could be tolerated if they were used as exercises, the way lessons are in school, with the purpose of teaching the listeners and, in the process of teaching, prompting some of them to fear or faith.* But now they imagine that these ceremonies are the worship of God to merit the forgiveness of sins for them and for others. That is why they multiply these ceremonies. *If they undertook them in order to teach and exhort the hearers, brief and pointed lessons would be more useful than these endless babblings.* Thus the whole monastic life is full of hypocrisy and false opinions. In addition to all this, there is the danger that those who belong to these chapters are forced to agree with the persecutors of the truth. Therefore there are many serious and cogent reasons that release good men from this way of life.

4. 1 Cor 11:26—For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

AC Abuses, 6 (Latin)—*However, it can readily be judged that nothing contributes so much to the maintenance of dignity in public worship and the cultivation of reverence and devotion among the people as the proper observance of ceremonies in the churches.*

AC XXIV, 2-4 (German)—Meanwhile no conspicuous changes have been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass, except that in certain places German hymns are sung in addition to the Latin responses for the instruction and exercise of the people. After all, the chief purpose of all ceremonies is to teach the people what they need to know about Christ.

AC XXVI, 40 (German)—*We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions* (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church.

AC XXVIII, 53-55 (German)—*What are we to say, then, about Sunday and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies? To this our teachers reply that bishops or pastors may make regulations so that everything in the churches is done in good order,* but not as a means of obtaining God's grace or making satisfaction for sins, nor in order to bind men's consciences by considering these things necessary services of God and counting it a sin to omit their observance even when this is done without offense. So St. Paul directed in 1 Cor. 11:5 that women should cover their heads in the assembly. He also directed that in the assembly preachers should not all speak at once, but one after another, in order. *It is proper for the Christian assembly to keep such ordinances for the sake of love and peace, to be obedient to the bishops and parish ministers in such matters, and to observe the regulations in such a way that one does not give offense to another and so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church.*

Ap VII/VIII, 33, 40—But as the different length of day and night does not harm the unity of the church, so we believe that the true unity of the church is not harmed by differences in rites instituted by men, *although we like it when universal rites are observed for the sake of tranquility.* So in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord's day, and the other more important feast days. *With a very thankful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances, especially when they contain a discipline that serves to educate and instruct the people and the inexperienced . . .* In fact, Paul calls such opinions "doctrines of demons." To determine the apostles' wish and intention, therefore, we must consult their writings, not merely their example. *They observed certain days,* not because such observance was necessary for justification but *to let the people know when to assemble. When they assembled, they also observed other rites and a sequence of lessons.* Frequently the people continued to observe certain Old Testament customs, which the apostles adapted in modified form to the Gospel history, like the Passover and Pentecost, *so that by these examples as well as by instruction they might transmit to posterity the memory of these great events.*

Ap XV, 1, 13, 20—*In Article XV they accept the first part, where we say that we should observe those ecclesiastical rites which can be observed without sin and which are conducive to tranquillity and good order in the church.* They completely condemn the second part, where we say that human traditions instituted to appease God, to merit grace, and to make satisfaction for sin are contrary to the Gospel. . . . What need is there of a long discussion? The holy Fathers did not institute any traditions for the purpose of meriting the forgiveness of sins or righteousness. *They instituted them for the sake of good order and tranquility in the*

church. . . . Although the holy Fathers themselves had rites and traditions, they did not regard them as useful or necessary for justification. They did not obscure the glory or work of Christ but taught that we are justified by faith for Christ's sake, not for the sake of these human rites. They observed these human rites because they were profitable for good order, because they gave the people a set time to assemble, because they provided an example of how all things could be done decently and in order in the churches, and finally because they helped instruct the common folk. For different seasons and various rites serve as reminders for the common folk.

Ap XXIV, 3—We do not want to belabor this point, but we leave it up to the judgment of the reader. We mention this only in passing in order to point out that our churches keep the Latin lessons and prayers. *The purpose of observing ceremonies is that men may learn the Scriptures and that those who have been touched by the Word may receive faith and fear and so may also pray.* Therefore we keep Latin for the sake of those who study and understand it, and we insert German hymns to give the common people something to learn that will arouse their faith and fear.

Ap XXVIII, 15—In the Confession we nevertheless added the extent to which it is legitimate for them to create traditions, namely, that they must not be necessary acts of worship *but a means of preserving order in the church, for the sake of peace.* These must not ensnare consciences as though they were commanding necessary acts of worship. This is what Paul teaches when he says (Gal. 5:1), “Stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has set you free, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

Ep X, 1—There has also been a division among theologians of the Augsburg Confession *concerning those ceremonies or church usages which are neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God but have been introduced into the church in the interest of good order and the general welfare.*

5. Acts 16:3—Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Gal 2:1-5—Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Ap XV, 52—*This is what we teach. In this very assembly we have shown ample evidence of our willingness to observe adiaphora with others, even where this involved some disadvantage to us. We believed that the greatest possible public harmony, without offense to consciences, should be preferred to all other advantages, but we shall have more to say about this whole issue when we discuss vows and ecclesiastical authority.*

Ep X, 2-3—The chief question has been, In times of persecution, when a confession is called for, and when the enemies of the Gospel have not come to an agreement with us in doctrine, may we with an inviolate conscience yield to their pressure and demands, *reintroduce some ceremonies that have fallen into disuse and that in themselves are indifferent things and are neither commanded nor forbidden by God,* and thus come to an understanding with them in such ceremonies and indifferent things? One party said Yes to this, the other party said No. 1. To settle this controversy we believe, teach, and confess unanimously that *the ceremonies or church usages which are neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God,* but which have been introduced solely for the sake of good order and the general welfare, are in and for themselves no divine worship or even a part of it. “In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men” (Matt. 15:9).

SD X, 5—We should not consider as matters of indifference, and we should avoid as forbidden by God, ceremonies which are basically contrary to the Word of God, even though they go under the name and guise of external adiaphora and are given a different color from their true one. *Nor do we include among truly free adiaphora or things indifferent those ceremonies which give or (to avoid persecution) are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from that of the papists, or that we are not seriously opposed to it. Nor are such rites matters of indifference when these ceremonies are intended to create the illusion (or are demanded or agreed to with that intention) that these two opposing religions have been brought into agreement and become one body, or that a return to the papacy and an apostasy from the pure*

doctrine of the Gospel and from true religion has taken place or will allegedly result little by little from these ceremonies.

6. 1 Cor 14:33-38—For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

AC VII, 3-4 (German)—*It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places.* It is as Paul says in Eph. 4:4, 5, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

AC Faith and Doctrine Conclusion, 3 (Latin)—. . . nor have the rites of all the churches ever been the same.

AC XXIV, 9, 7, 2 (German)—*We are unjustly accused of having abolished the Mass. Without boasting, it is manifest that the Mass is observed among us with greater devotion and more earnestness than among our opponents.* Moreover, the people are instructed often and with great diligence concerning the holy sacrament, why it was instituted, and how it is to be used (namely, as a comfort for terrified consciences) in order that the people may be drawn to the Communion and Mass. The people are also given instruction about other false teachings concerning the sacrament. *Meanwhile no conspicuous changes have been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass, except that in certain places German hymns are sung in addition to the Latin responses for the instruction and exercise of the people.*

Ap XV, 21, 38-40, 44—*For these reasons the Fathers kept ceremonies, and for the same reasons we also believe in keeping traditions.* We are amazed when our opponents maintain that traditions have another purpose, namely, to merit the forgiveness of sins, grace and justification. What is this but honoring God “with gold and silver and precious stones,” believing that he is reconciled by a variety of vestments, ornaments, and innumerable similar observances in the human traditions. . . . *We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and promote tranquillity, and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify.* Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. *We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are.* Among our opponents, unwilling celebrants and hirelings perform Mass, and they often do so only for the money. When they chant the Psalms, it is not to learn or pray but for the sake of the rite, as if this work were an act of worship or at least worth some reward. *Every Lord’s Day many in our circles use the Lord’s Supper, but only after they have been instructed, examined, and absolved. The children chant the Psalms in order to learn; the people sing, too, in order to learn or to worship. . . . From this description of the state of our churches it is evident that we diligently maintain church discipline, pious ceremonies, and the good customs of the church.*

Ap XXIV, 1—To begin with, we must repeat the prefatory statement that *we do not abolish the Mass but religiously keep and defend it. In our churches Mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved. We keep traditional liturgical forms, such as the order of the lessons, prayers, vestments, etc.*

Ep X, 5—*But in this matter all frivolity and offenses are to be avoided, and particularly the weak in faith are to be spared (1 Cor. 8:9-13; Rom. 14:13ff).*

7. Gal. 5:1, 13—It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery . . . You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love.

AC XXVI, 40 (German)—*We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church.*

Ap XV, 21, 38-42—*For these reasons the Fathers kept ceremonies, and for the same reasons we also believe in keeping traditions. . . . We gladly keep the old traditions set up in the church because they are useful and*

*promote tranquillity, and we interpret them in an evangelical way, excluding the opinion which holds that they justify. Our enemies falsely accuse us of abolishing good ordinances and church discipline. We can truthfully claim that in our churches the public liturgy is more decent than in theirs, and if you look at it correctly we are more faithful to the canons than our opponents are. Among our opponents, unwilling celebrants and hirelings perform Mass, and they often do so only for the money. When they chant the Psalms, it is not to learn or pray but for the sake of the rite, as if this work were an act of worship or at least worth some reward. Every Lord's Day many in our circles use the Lord's Supper, but only after they have been instructed, examined, and absolved. The children chant the Psalms in order to learn; the people sing, too, in order to learn or to worship. Among our opponents there is no catechization of the children at all, though even the canons give prescriptions about it. In our circles the pastors and ministers of the churches are required to instruct and examine the youth publicly, a custom that produces very good results. Among our opponents, there are many regions where no sermons are preached during the whole year, except in Lent. *But the chief worship of God is the preaching of the Gospel.**

Ep X, 4-5—2. *We believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every locality and every age has authority to change such ceremonies according to circumstances, as it may be most profitable and edifying to the community of God. 3. But in this matter all frivolity and offenses are to be avoided, and particularly the weak in faith are to be spared (1 Cor. 8:9-13; Rom. 14:13ff).*

SD X, 9, 30—*We further believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every place and at every time has the right, authority, and power to change, to reduce, or to increase ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it does so without frivolity and offense but in an orderly and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most profitable, beneficial, and salutary for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the edification of the church.* Paul instructs us how we can with a good conscience give in and yield to the weak in faith in such external matters of indifference (Rom. 14) and demonstrates it by his own example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:10). . . . *We also reject and condemn the procedure whereby matters of indifference are abolished in such a way as to give the impression that the community of God does not have the liberty to use one or more ceremonies at any time and place, according to its circumstances, as may in Christian liberty be most beneficial to the church.*

8. Acts 16:3—Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Gal 2:1-5—Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

Ep X, 6, 12—*We believe, teach, and confess that in time of persecution, when a clear-cut confession of faith is demanded of us, we dare not yield to the enemies in such indifferent things, as the apostle Paul writes, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1). "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers, for what fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14). "To them we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved for you" (Gal. 2:5). In such a case it is no longer a question of indifferent things, but a matter which has to do with the truth of the Gospel, Christian liberty, and the sanctioning of public idolatry, as well as preventing offense to the weak in faith. In all these things we have no concessions to make, but we should witness an unequivocal confession and suffer in consequence what God sends us and what he lets the enemies inflict on us. . . . When such external ceremonies and indifferent things are abolished in a way which suggests that the community of God does not have the liberty to avail itself of one or more such ceremonies according to its circumstances and as it may be most beneficial to the church.*

SD X, 5, 10-14—We should not consider as matters of indifference, and we should avoid as forbidden by God, ceremonies which are basically contrary to the Word of God, even though they go under the name and guise of external adiaphora and are given a different color from their true one. *Nor do we include among truly free adiaphora or things indifferent those ceremonies which give or (to avoid persecution) are designed to give the*

impression that our religion does not differ greatly from that of the papists, or that we are not seriously opposed to it. Nor are such rites matters of indifference when these ceremonies are intended to create the illusion (or are demanded or agreed to with that intention) that these two opposing religions have been brought into agreement and become one body, or that a return to the papacy and an apostasy from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and from true religion has taken place or will allegedly result little by little from these ceremonies. . . . We believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God. In such a case we should not yield to adversaries even in matters of indifference, nor should we tolerate the imposition of such ceremonies on us by adversaries in order to undermine the genuine worship of God and to introduce and confirm their idolatry by force or chicanery. It is written, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1). And again, "But because of false brethren secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we did not yield submission even for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you" (Gal. 2:4, 5). Paul is here speaking of circumcision, which at that time was a matter of indifference and which in his Christian liberty he employed in other instances (Acts 16:3). But when false prophets demanded circumcision and abused it to confirm their false doctrine that the works of the law are necessary for righteousness and salvation, Paul said that he would not yield, not even for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel might be preserved. Thus Paul yielded and gave in to the weak as far as foods, times, and days were concerned (Rom 14:6). But he would not yield to false apostles who wanted to impose such things on consciences as necessary, even in matters that were in themselves indifferent. "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath" (Col. 2:16). When Peter and Barnabas in a similar situation yielded to a certain extent, Paul criticized them publicly because they had not been straightforward about the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:14). For here we are no longer dealing with the external adiaphora which in their nature and essence are and remain of themselves free and which accordingly are not subject either to a command or a prohibition, requiring us to use them or to discontinue them. Here we are dealing primarily with the chief article of our Christian faith, so that, as the apostle testifies, the truth of the Gospel might be preserved (Gal. 2:5). Any coercion or commandment darkens and perverts this article because the adversaries will forthwith publicly demand such matters of indifference to confirm false doctrines, superstition, and idolatry and to suppress the pure doctrine and Christian liberty, or they will misuse them and misinterpret them in this direction.

WE REJECT:

1. Gal 4:8-10—Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!

Ap XV, 3-5, 9, 29, 31—We expected our opponents to defend human traditions on other grounds. *We did not think that they would actually condemn the doctrine that we do not merit grace or the forgiveness of sins by the observance of human traditions.* Now that they have condemned this doctrine, we have an easy and simple case. Here our opponents are openly Judaizing; they are openly replacing the Gospel with doctrines of demons. *Scripture calls traditions "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1) when someone teaches that religious rites are helpful in gaining grace and the forgiveness of sins. This obscures the Gospel, the blessing of Christ, and righteousness of faith.* The Gospel teaches that by faith, for Christ's sake, we freely receive the forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God. Our opponents, on the other hand, set up these traditions as another mediator through which they seek to gain the forgiveness of sins and appease the wrath of God. . . . *These men believe that God is reconciled and gracious because of the traditions and not because of Christ. Thus they rob Christ of his honor as the mediator . . .* Against this deceptive appearance of wisdom and righteousness in human rites, let us therefore arm ourselves with the Word of God. *Let us know that they merit neither the forgiveness*

of sins nor justification before God, and that they are not necessary for justification. . . . Nor do bishops have the power to institute rites as though they justified or were necessary for justification.

Ap XXIV, 4-6—This has always been the custom in the churches. Though German hymns have varied in frequency, yet almost everywhere the people sang in their own language. *No one has ever written or suggested that men benefit from hearing lessons they do not understand, or from ceremonies that do not teach or admonish, simply ex opere operato, by the mere doing or observing. Out with such pharisaic ideas!*

SA III, XV, 1-2—*The assertion of the papists that human traditions effect forgiveness or sins or merit salvation is unchristian and to be condemned.* As Christ says, “In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men” (Matt. 15:9), and it is written in Titus 1:14, “They are men who reject the truth.” When the papists say that it is a mortal sin to break such precepts of men, this, too, is false.

2. AC XXVIII, 52 (German)—. . . as St. Paul writes in Gal. 5:1, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand fast, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” For the chief article of the Gospel must be maintained, namely, that we obtain the grace of God through faith in Christ without our merits; *we do not merit it by services of God instituted by men.*
AC XXVIII, 52 (Latin) . . . as it is written in the Epistle to the Galatians, “Do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” It is necessary to preserve the chief article of the Gospel, namely, that we obtain grace through faith in Christ *and not through certain observances or acts of worship instituted by men.*

Ap VII/VIII, 32—We certainly had weighty reasons for presenting this article, for it is clear that many foolish opinions about traditions have crept into the church. Some have thought that human traditions are devotions necessary for meriting justification. *Later they debated how it happened that they had come to worship God in so many ways, as though these observances were really acts of devotion rather than outward rules of discipline, completely unrelated to the righteousness of the heart or the worship of God.* For good and valid reasons, these vary according to the circumstances, one way or another. Similarly, some churches have excommunicated others because of such traditions as the observance of Easter, the use of icons, and the like. *From this the uninitiated have concluded that there can be no righteousness of the heart before God without these observances. On this issue there are many foolish books by the summists and others.*

3. AC XXVI, 27-29, 39 (German)—In Acts 15:10, 11 Peter says, “Why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” *Here Peter forbids the burdening of consciences with additional outward ceremonies, whether of Moses or of another.* In 1 Tim. 4:1, 3 such prohibitions as forbid food or marriage are called a doctrine of the devil, for it is diametrically opposed to the Gospel to institute or practice such works for the purpose of earning forgiveness of sin *or with the notion that nobody is a Christian unless he performs such services. . . . Thus fasting in itself is not rejected, but what is rejected is making a necessary service of fasts on prescribed days and with specified foods, for this confuses consciences.*

Ep X, 7—*We believe, teach, and confess that no church should condemn another because it has fewer or more external ceremonies not commanded by God, as long as there is mutual agreement in doctrine and in all its articles as well as in the right use of the holy sacraments,* according to the familiar axiom, “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith.”

SD X, 31—*In line with the above, churches will not condemn each other because of a difference in ceremonies, when in Christian liberty one uses fewer or more of them, as long as they are otherwise agreed in doctrine and in all its articles and are also agreed concerning the right use of the holy sacraments,* according to the well-known axiom, “Disagreement in fasting should not destroy agreement in faith.”

4. AC XXIV, 40-41 (German)—*Since, therefore, no novelty has been introduced which did not exist in the church from ancient times, and since no conspicuous change has been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass except that other unnecessary Masses which were held in addition to the parochial Mass, probably through abuse, have been discontinued, this manner of holding Mass ought not in fairness be condemned as heretical or unchristian.* In times past, even in large churches where there were many people, Mass was not held on every day that the people assembled, for according to the Tripartite History, Book 9, on Wednesday

and Friday the Scriptures were read and expounded in Alexandria, and all these services were held without Mass.

Ap VII/VIII, 33—But as the different length of day and night does not harm the unity of the church, *so we believe that the true unity of the church is not harmed by differences in rites instituted by men*, although we like it when universal rites are observed for the sake of tranquility. So in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord's day, and the other more important feast days. With a very thankful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances, especially when they contain a discipline that serves to educate and instruct the people and the inexperienced.

Ap XXVIII, 6—In this article of the Confessions we included various subjects. But our opponents' only reply is that bishops have the power to rule and to correct by force in order to guide their subjects toward the goal of eternal bliss, and that the power to rule requires the power to judge, define, distinguish, and establish what is helpful or conducive to the aforementioned goal. *These are the words of the Confutation, by which our opponents inform us that bishops have the authority to create laws which are useful for attaining eternal life. That is the issue in controversy.*

Ep X, 4—*We believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every locality and every age has authority to change such ceremonies according to circumstances, as it may be most profitable and edifying to the community of God.*

SD X, 9—*We further believe, teach, and confess that the community of God in every place and at every time has the right, authority, and power to change, to reduce, or to increase ceremonies according to its circumstances, as long as it does so without frivolity and offense but in an orderly and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most profitable, beneficial, and salutary for good order, Christian discipline, evangelical decorum, and the edification of the church.* Paul instructs us how we can with a good conscience give in and yield to the weak in faith in such external matters of indifference (Rom. 14) and demonstrates it by his own example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:10).

5. LC I, 94—Note, then, that the power and force of this commandment consist not of the resting but of the sanctifying, so that this day should have its own particular holy work. Other trades and occupations are not properly called holy work unless the doer himself is first holy. But here a work must be performed by which the doer himself is made holy; this, as we have heard, takes place only through God's Word. *Places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship are therefore instituted and appointed in order that God's Word may exert its power publicly.*

6. Invocation:

Mt 28:19—Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .

Confession and Absolution:

Ps 32:5—Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Ps 124:8 Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Jn 20:19-23—On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

1 Jn 1:8-9—If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Kyrie:

Lk 18:38—He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Hymn of Praise:

Luke 2:14—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Rev 4:11, 5:9-10, 13—"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." . . . And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." . . . Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Salutation:

Ru 2:4—Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!"

Offertory:

Ps 51:10-12—Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Lord's Prayer:

Mt 6:9-13—"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. "

Sanctus:

Ps 118:26—Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.

Is 6:2-3—Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Mt 21:9—The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest!"

Jn 12:13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! " "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

Verba:

Matt. 26:26-28—While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mk 14:22-24—While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

Lk 22:19-20—And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

1 Cor 11:23-25—For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Agnus Dei:

Jn 1:29—The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Nunc Dimittis:

Lk 2:29-32—“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

Benediction:

Num 6:24-26—“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” ‘

7. Ap VII/VIII, 33—But as the different length of day and night does not harm the unity of the church, so we believe that the true unity of the church is not harmed by differences in rites instituted by men, although we like it when universal rites are observed for the sake of tranquility. So in our churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord’s day, and the other more important feast days. *With a very thankful spirit we cherish the useful and ancient ordinances*, especially when they contain a discipline that serves to educate and instruct the people and the inexperienced.

8. Rom 12:2—Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

2 Cor 4:1-6—Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Gal 1:10-12—Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

SA III, VIII, 3, 5-6, 9-10—In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that *God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before*. Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts—that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and who therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures or spoken Word according to their pleasure. . . . *All this is the old devil and the old serpent who made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve. He led them from the external Word of God to spiritualizing and to their own imaginations, and he did this through other external words*. Even so, the enthusiasts of our day condemn the external Word, yet they do not remain silent but *fill the world with their chattering and scribbling*, as if the Spirit could not come through the Scriptures or the spoken word of the apostles but must come through their own writings and words. . . . In short, *enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendants from the beginning to the end of the world*. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and *it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy*, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. *Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil*.

9. 1 Tim 4:13-16—Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

2 Tim 4:1-5—In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the

truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Ti 2:1—You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

AC XV, 2 (German)—*Yet we accompany these observances with instruction* so that consciences may not be burdened by the notion that such things are necessary for salvation.

AC XXVI, 41 (German)—*At the same time, however, the people are instructed* that such outward forms of service do not make us righteous before God and that they are to be observed without burdening consciences, which is to say that it is not a sin to omit them if this is done without causing scandal.

SC Preface, 4-6—*How will you bishops answer for it before Christ that you have so shamefully neglected the people and paid no attention at all to the duties of your office? May you escape punishment for this! You withhold the cup in the Lord's Supper and insist on the observance of human laws, yet you do not take the slightest interest in teaching the people the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, or a single part of the Word of God. Woe to you forever! I therefore beg of you for God's sake, my beloved brethren who are pastors and preachers, that you take the duties of your office seriously, that you have pity on the people who are entrusted to your care, and that you help me to teach the catechism to the people, especially those who are young. Let those who lack the qualifications to do better at least take this booklet and these forms and read them to the people word for word in this manner . . .*

10. AC XXVI, 41 (German)—*At the same time, however, the people are instructed that such outward forms of service do not make us righteous before God* and that they are to be observed without burdening consciences, which is to say that it is not a sin to omit them if this is done without causing scandal.
11. AC XXVI, 40 (German)—*We on our part also retain many ceremonies and traditions* (such as the liturgy of the Mass and various canticles, festivals, and the like) which serve to preserve order in the church.
12. Nicene Creed—And I believe one holy, Christian, and apostolic church.

AC Conclusion, 4-7 (Latin)—Nothing has here been said or related for the purpose of injuring anybody. Only those things have been recounted which it seemed necessary to say in order that it may be understood that *nothing has been received among us, in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Scripture or to the church catholic*. For it is manifest that we have guarded diligently against the introduction into our churches of any new and ungodly doctrines. In keeping with the edict of Your Imperial Majesty, *we have desired to present the above articles in order that our confession may be exhibited in them and that a summary of the doctrine taught among us may be discerned. If anything is found to be lacking in this confession, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures.*