

sought the counsel of Wittenberg. Only years after Luther's violent and vulgar malediction was Schwenckfeld goaded into publishing his Answer, being obliged to defend himself against charges made by Matthias Flacius Illyricus. The reply takes up each point made in Luther's brief but pungent text. The characteristically irenic in Schwenckfeld here comes as close to being ironic as we ever find it in this indefatigable but always equable controversialist. Only the first sections of the reply, dealing with the Lord's Supper and Christology, are here translated. At the center of Schwenckfeld's life and thought was the mystical Eucharist of his conversion experience. He explained it and defended it repeatedly and was baffled that so few really understood him. Yet they, in their turn, were perplexed that for all its alleged importance he did not participate in the Supper after 1526, when he announced his policy of suspension until more light should be shed by God on its proper celebration. In the meantime he distinguished between the mystical Eucharist and the sacramental recollection both of the Last Supper itself and of one's personal experience of receiving the Bread of heaven. The mystical experience of the divine Bread was theologically based on John, ch. 6, and on Augustine, the "old Christian Fathers," and even the *Decretum*. Schwenckfeld was also drawing upon the mystical tradition in which the body of Christ and the bride of Christ become one in the soul's acceptance of the divine. His Eucharistic "realism" was all the more emphatic for the reason that he held to the doctrine of the celestial flesh or primordial humanity of Christ, which was in his mind not creaturely and therefore everywhere potentially available for the spiritually perceptive believer. Schwenckfeld claims to have been the first to revive this doctrine from antiquity. He surely studied the Greek Fathers and may well have come on to the doctrine associated with Apollinaris and Apelles. In one version or another the celestial flesh was accepted by most of the Anabaptists and many of the Spiritualists, i.e., Servetus, Philips (Selection XI), Menno (Selection XII), and Hofmann (Selection IX).

The first part of this selection was translated by Selina Gerhard Schultz.

An Answer² to Luther's³ Malediction By Caspar Schwenckfeld

BEFORE APRIL 23, 1544

THE TEXT

[34] That Dr. Martin Luther gives me such an abusive, harsh, unapostolic blessing in answer* to my friendly, Christian petition and request is really not surprising, as it also is well to consider in the case of such a famous teacher out of what a

* Schwenckfeld reproduced this answer in the form of a malediction, at the head of his own *Answer*, as follows: (It is addressed, not to Schwenckfeld directly, but to the messenger Hermann Riegel, who had presumed to deliver Schwenckfeld's letter and tracts, and who was later imprisoned at Nuremberg and held for questioning.)

Dear sir messenger: Tell your master, Caspar Schwenckfeld, that I have received from you the booklet and the letter and would to God he would be silent.

Formerly he kindled a fire in Silesia against the holy sacrament, which is not yet extinguished and will burn upon him forever [cf. Luke 12:49]. In addition to this he continues with his Eutychianism and creatureliness, misleads the church, though God gave him no command, nor sent him. And the mad fool, possessed of the devil, does not understand anything; does not know what he is babbling. But if he will not cease, so let him leave me unmolested with his booklets which the devil excretes and spews out of him. And give him this as my final judgment and answer:

The Lord punish Satan in you, and your spirit which has called you, and your course which you are following. May all those who have part with you, Sacramentarians and Eutychians, together with you and your blasphemies, be your destruction, as is written [Jer. 23:21]: They ran and I did not call them, they spoke and I did not command them. December 6, 1543.

Martin Luther, by his own hand.

² The *Answer* is Document CCCQXXXIX of the *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, IX (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 29-59. The manuscript upon which this critical edition of the text is based was not printed by Schwenckfeld until 1555 when he was obliged to defend himself against Matthias Flacius Illyricus. An earlier and shorter version of the *Answer* is also preserved and has been edited as the first draft, *ibid.*, pp. 76-84.

³ Luther's Malediction of Schwenckfeld was written on December 6, 1543. It came forth as Luther's intemperate response to what seems to have

mind and heart it comes and what more may be concealed underneath it, for it is written [Luke 6:45]: The good man brings forth good out of the good treasure of his heart, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Furthermore, the Lord Christ in his Gospel [Matt. 5:44 f.] taught us otherwise, yea, more than the contrary, namely, that we love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and sincerely pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us, that we may be children of our Heavenly Father. But Dr. Martin Luther has forgotten the Gospel to such an extent that he not only does not bless them that curse him, not only does not do good to them that hate him, nor pray for them that insult him and persecute him (one is quite accustomed to his reproach and anger toward such of his adversaries; almost everyone speaks of it), but he also curses those who bless him and does evil to those who love him, persecutes those who pray for him, yea, and despises those who honor him and desire instruction from him, which is grievous to hear from such a man.

However, we commend his unevangelical answer and unapostolic blessing to our Lord Jesus Christ, the kind, gentle, and only real teacher of all believing hearts, who by the blessing of his grace can turn everything to our good, as he also knows how to use all things to his honor and glory. To him alone be honor, praise, victory, and triumph now and forever. Amen. But unto us be ridicule, insult, hate, shame, and dishonor, for the sake of his glorious name and his glory, as it is today, thank God.

[35] In order, however, that the truth of this matter and in addition also my innocence may the more readily be known, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I will reply briefly, by way of refutation and vindication, to Doctor Luther's accusation and malediction, in six⁴ points following. May it give him satisfaction.

been Schwenckfeld's last despairing effort to maintain some contact with one from whom he had learned so much. This last letter is Document CCCCXXIII, CS, VIII, p. 685, addressed to Luther, October 12 and embodying Schwenckfeld's reasoned corrections of Luther's most recent asserverations concerning Schwenckfeld in *Von den letzten Worten Davids* (Wittenberg, 1543). Schwenckfeld reproduced the Malediction at the opening of his *Answer*. The text is also printed in two variants in Luther's *Werke, WA, Tischreden*, V, 300 f. The language has been moderated in translation!

⁴ Only Points I to III are here translated. On Point II the best treatment in English is that of Frederick W. Loetscher, *Schwenckfeld's Participation in the*

I

That Dr. Luther writes that the messenger shall tell me in answer that he has received the booklets and the letters,⁵ I was very glad to hear and I hope that if he diligently reads and considers everything well, he will be reminded in his conscience of sundry things which may be of service to him and others, although some did not like to see that all this was submitted to him.

Perhaps the poor messenger also received his blessing as a gratuity.⁶ But the reason for it and whether it be just, will all be seen at that day when all of us shall be revealed before the judgment seat of Christ and each will receive according to his works (John 5:27-29; I Cor. 5:10; II Cor. 5:10; etc.).

Furthermore, Dr. Luther demands that I be silent, and writes: "Would to God he would be silent." What he means thereby is easy to understand, but if he would convince me by Holy Scripture and persuasive reasons that I am straying or mistaken in any point of Christian doctrine or faith, also with respect to life (which he had much better done than such malediction and indecency in answer to my friendly petition and request, according to the manner of Christian love), I would not only be willing to cease and desist from everything that is not right, but also praise and thank him for his love.

II. AN ACCOUNT OF FAITH CONCERNING THE HOLY SACRAMENT

To Dr. Luther's accusation that I kindled a fire against the holy sacrament which has not yet been extinguished and will burn upon me forever (although the apostles of Christ—for example, Peter with the sorcerer and Paul with the Corinthian and others who merited it—dealt far more mercifully), this in brief is my reply: I am not at all conscious of having ever transacted, spoken, done, or written anything against the holy sacrament or the Lord's Supper that was contrary or antagonistic to divine truth, the words of the Lord Christ, and his

Eucharistic Controversy of the Sixteenth Century (Philadelphia, 1906). On Point III the most helpful introduction to Schwenckfeld's Christology is Hans Joachim Schoeps, *Vom himmlischen Fleisch Christi* (Tübingen, 1951), 25-36.

⁵ Schwenckfeld's last letter to Luther was October 12, 1543; see above, n. 3; it is printed also in Luther's *Werke, WA, Briefwechsel*, X, 420 ff.

⁶ Allusion to Luther's possible implication in the arrest of the messenger in Nuremberg.

praiseworthy institution. Neither Martin Luther nor any other can prove this against me, and I hope that even today [36] I still hold and believe correctly and in a Christian manner about it. I am impelled to give account herewith of my opinion and faith as follows:

1. I let stand the words of the Lord about the meat and drink of his body and blood in the Supper, when, after the breaking of the bread, he says (I Cor. 11:24): This is my body which is broken for you, etc., and let them remain as God's words, words of life and spirit, in their simple, spiritual meaning and divine sense, unperverted and unchanged in every respect as they were spoken by Christ and described by the apostles and Saint Paul in the Holy Spirit. But I maintain that they are to be judged, interpreted, understood, and compared in accordance with the teaching and words of the Lord about his flesh and blood when he says (John 6:55): My flesh is meat indeed, etc., and (John 6:51) the bread that I will give is my body, etc.

2. I believe and confess that the body or the flesh of Christ which was given for us, and his blood which was shed for us in forgiveness of sin, is a true food, drink, and nourishment, yea, a true, quickening bread and drink, but not a corporal, corruptible food and drink, not an earthly and visible bread and wine, neither with, under, nor in, but intrinsically a heavenly, divine bread, a spiritual, everlasting food and drink unto eternal life for all souls believing in Christ and all children of God.

3. That such food and drink are truly eaten out of the living Word of God by the mouth of faith and partaken of in the Lord's Supper when the institution of Christ is rightly observed in the Christian church, according to his will, for the satiation of the soul and increase in the accessions of grace in the new, inner man.⁷

4. That the Lord Jesus Christ as the true heavenly high priest, through the Holy Spirit, himself invites to the Supper and himself gives and distributes to all believers his body and blood unto eternal life, as he previously promised such, saying (John 6:51): The bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. And prior thereto (John 6:27): Work not for the food that perisheth, but for that food which

⁷ Schwencckfeld here refers marginally to Augustine's *Tracts on St. John*: *Credere enim in eum, hoc est manducare panem vivum. Qui credit, manducat: invisibiliter saginatur, quia invisibiliter renascitur. Infans intus est, novus intus est: ubi novellatur, ibi satiatur.* Migne, *PL*, XXXV, col. 1607.

[I Cor. 11:24]	Comparison: This	}	is my	}	body.
[John 6:51]	The bread that I will give				flesh.

abideth unto eternal life which the Son of Man shall give unto you, for him the Father, even God, hath sealed.

5. For which reason also the visible, revered sacrament of the Lord's bread and cup⁸ was instituted in the Supper by the Lord Jesus Christ before his departure, for thanksgiving and remembrance of the Lord, that the believers in Christ thereby might proclaim the death of the Lord and give praise, honor, and thanks for his bread and beneficence.

6. Therefore, it is essential that the divine work of the Lord Christ, that is, the feeding and the inner, spiritual eating in faith, be properly distinguished from the external, sacramental eating, the *gratias* or remembrance (or as Saint Augustine⁹ has it: *sacramentum* and *res sacramenti*, the bread of the Lord and the bread which is the Lord himself), through a spiritual judgment and understanding, in order that these two kinds of bread and drink in the entire sacramental transaction of the Lord's Supper, one for the inner, the other for the external, believing man, each in its place (*Ordnung*), may remain unmingled with the other; that the inner, spiritual precede¹⁰ and be contemplated, but the external, sacramental eating follow and be observed in proclaiming the death of the Lord; and that each be observed with fitting contemplation, earnestly and fervently, as is indicated by Holy Scripture.

This in brief is my understanding, faith, and confession of the Lord's Supper, of the spiritual nourishment of the soul, and of the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

It is, nevertheless, true that I, like many other goodhearted, God-fearing people, do not agree with Dr. Luther's [38] newly introduced understanding, practice, belief, and teaching

⁸ Schwencckfeld refers to this on the margin as the Eucharist, i.e., the *poculum benedictionis* (I Cor. 10:16).

⁹ Migne, *PL*, XXXV, cols. 1602; 1612; 1796.

¹⁰ Schwencckfeld on the margin quotes Augustine: "Believe and thou hast eaten."

about the Supper in many points. Firstly, he interprets¹¹ the words of the Supper contrary to the thought and will of the Lord, and does not let them remain with the one spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ in faith, but beyond that produces also a physical (*Leiplich*), oral eating, yea, two kinds of eating and drinking of the one body and blood of Christ, without certainty, without Scripture and proof; teaches about it thus, namely, that the body and blood of Christ is eaten and drunk in two kinds of, and different ways, once spiritually by the believing heart out of the Word, the other time physically by the physical mouth in the sacramental, visible bread which Paul [I Cor. 11:27] calls the bread of the Lord.

This, however, I regard as erroneous and false, because such physical eating of Christ and his body in external things not only cannot be authenticated by any Scripture, but such assertion is wrong because thereby the Christians are bewildered in the knowledge of Christ and are led away from the simplicity that is in Christ, contrary to Paul (II Cor. 11:3). Yea, the one Christ is made to be twofold and faith is divided, for we would have another Christ and also another way to salvation than the believing holy fathers, patriarchs, and prophets had under the Old Covenant who knew nothing of such physical eating of the body of Christ and the presence of his body in the bread, but as Paul says [I Cor. 10:3 f.; Heb., ch. 11; Eph. 4:5], One Lord, one faith.

Therefore, there is no other eating than the one spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ which is done by faith. Moreover, it is directly contrary and opposed to the entire content of the Holy Scriptures as well as the Kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as I pointed out and proved some time past in a separate booklet,¹² which Luther may have seen, and which if God be willing, shall be repeated, confirmed, and—concerning the entire article about the Lord's Supper—brought further to the light. For to feed the soul, as well as teaching, sanctifying, regenerating, etc., are offices of the Kingdom of Christ which, without him, no one can administer.

The second point in which I cannot agree with Dr. Luther is

¹¹ *Dasz diese Wort Christi "Das ist mein Leib" noch fest stehen wider die Schwärmegeister, Werke, WA 23, esp. pp. 258, 180, 188.*

¹² *Refutation of the Opinion that the Corporeal Presence Is in the Elements, Document LVI, January, 1528, GS, III.*

that he claims¹³ that the minister of the church can truly give, present, and distribute the body and blood of Christ [39] to the communicants, and not only the Lord Christ himself, but this is in direct opposition to the entire sixth chapter of John and the aforementioned words of the Lord when he (ch. 6:51) promises us a living bread which he (he himself) will give, and an incorruptible food which the Son of Man will give, who also alone is sealed thereunto by God the Father.

Some want to improve on this, writing and teaching that not the minister but Christ himself gives his body and blood, however, *with* the bread and wine and that he offers himself therewith. This as well as the previous is incorrect and false, against the heart and mind of Christ as well as against his divine glory.

The third controversial point is that Dr. Luther writes¹⁴ and teaches that the physical mouth, also of the godless communicant, eats the body of Christ physically, yea, that the betrayer, Judas, and his crowd actually ate the glorious body and blood of Christ and that all unbelievers even yet may eat and drink him without faith. For, as Luther says, Christ himself is present in the sacramental bread and wine of the altar, alive in body and blood, in which again I can in no wise agree or harmonize with Luther against divine truth and the glory of the regnant Lord Christ, because he wants to make the body of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blood of the New Eternal Covenant common to the unworthy and godless men, contrary to all Scripture.

The fourth point of the disagreement is that he does not let the teaching of Christ about his flesh, body, and blood and of the heavenly food and drink of eternal life, remain one and the same doctrine, but divides it into multiplicity and makes it repugnant to itself in that he separates¹⁵ the sixth chapter of John from the words of the Lord's Supper as if it did not belong thereto, contrary to all old teachings of the church, although the flesh and blood of which the Lord taught in John, ch. 6, is the flesh and blood of the body which he gives and distributes in the Supper to the believing disciples through his almighty living Word as a food unto eternal life.

The Lord Jesus Christ (John, ch. 6) spoke a prejudgment (*praesudicium*) with great earnestness and a certain and

¹³ *German Catechism (1529), Werke, WA, 30, I, 224.*

¹⁴ *On the Lord's Supper (1528), WA, 26, 288.*

¹⁵ *Das diese Wort Christi, WA, 23, 182.*

irreproachable one about the bread and drink [40] as well as about the manner of the eating and drinking of his body, flesh, and blood, which he in no wise changed or recanted before his death at the Last Supper, neither for the sake of the sacrament nor his death on the cross, nor for any other reason, but much rather renewed, repeated, clarified, and confirmed, as he is the eternal, unchanging truth which cannot deny itself. He is the Amen Amen. In him there is no yes and no. But in him is yes, also all promises of God are yes in him, and in him is the Amen, as Saint Paul (II Cor. 1:20) said: May he graciously grant that such be well recognized and considered.

Hence it is in no wise to be thought that Christ taught and held divine truth inconsistently, yea, two opposing opinions on one thing, about one food and drink of his one body, flesh, and blood, as little as he wanted to feed, give to drink, or nourish with his one body and blood in a twofold manner.

The fifth point is that without Scripture and proof I cannot agree with Dr. M. Luther when he writes¹⁶ and teaches that our Lord Christ placed the strength and power of his passion in the visible sacrament, that one shall fetch, seek, and find it there and he who has a bad conscience because of sin shall fetch and seek there in the sacrament consolation, salvation, and forgiveness of sin, which also I do not consider right. For what is this other than crying out a new indulgence with the holy sacrament and establishing a false confidence thereby. The Lord Christ and his apostles taught nothing about this. It is also in direct opposition to the use and institution of the sacrament, for Christ says (I Cor. 11:25): This do in remembrance of me.

The sixth point wherein I do not know how to agree with Luther is that he writes¹⁷ that the revered sacrament imparts life, grace, and salvation, yea, that it is a fountain of life and salvation. And as also others of his party,¹⁸ out of want of understanding of the institution of Christ and the correct usage, write and teach quite ineptly that the communicants, through the receiving of the sacrament, satisfy the hunger of the soul, attain the righteousness of God, and receive a powerful impression for the betterment of life, all of which is quite wrong and does not harmonize with the truth, [41] as it also is contrary

¹⁶ *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525), WA, 18, 203 f.

¹⁷ *Von Anbeten des Sakraments* (1523), WA, 11, 443.

¹⁸ Schwenckfeld on the margin refers to Gervasius Schuler, preacher in Memmingen, whom he met in 1534; cf. Document CLIX, CS, V.

to all Scripture, also to true faith. The effect or the consequences of the work sufficiently show such futility among the communicants of this time, because none of those things happen in their conscience which are being promised in, and ascribed to, the Supper.

Furthermore, in the booklet *Admonition for the Sacrament* Luther writes¹⁹ that the sacrament is a fire which kindles the cold hearts; that it is a gracious, powerful thing full of benefit and healing, besides innumerable and unutterable heavenly riches of which one can partake without any cost and trouble if one attends; yea, if one merely thinks a little about it and prepares for it, it will kindle, incite, and draw a heart to it, says Dr. Luther.

But what is this other than perverting the laudable institution of Christ, binding salvation to the work out of the *opus operatum*, and making an idol out of the sacrament? It is setting up thereby a false confidence and fornication of the souls, if one wants to place the sacrament, symbol, or sign on a par with Christ Jesus, the only giver of all grace and salvation, with great offense to his honor and glory, in that one wants to appropriate that which is specifically Christ's, the ruler at the right hand of his Father, and also that one wants to appropriate it to the use of the sacrament and to teach that forgiveness of sin can thereby be sought or procured—not to mention the elevation or adoration which has been practiced this long time.

It also is unscriptural, incorrect, and false when Martin Luther teaches that Christ bound his bidding and doing to the words of the minister although the Lord does not command more than that one shall do this (namely, break the bread) in remembrance of him, as also Saint Paul clearly explains it, saying (I Cor. 11:26): As often as ye eat of this bread and drink of this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death until he come.

It is also incorrect and contrary to the Word of the Lord when Luther writes²⁰ that Christ binds himself to the Word in the sacrament, that one can find, lay hold of, and have him there and say: Here I have you, etc., which the [42] Lord himself calls a deception, and faithfully warned his disciples against it when he says (Matt. 24:23): If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or there; believe it not, etc.; (Luke 17:23): And they shall say unto you, Lo, there! Lo, here!

¹⁹ *Vermahnung zum Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi* (1530), WA, 30, II, 618; see exact quotation below in text at n. 24.

²⁰ *Das diese Wort Christi*, WA, 23, 150.

go not away nor follow them. This has been written of elsewhere.

The seventh controversial point follows: That Dr. Luther's²¹ and his colleagues' newly introduced interpretation and practice of the Supper undeniably is contrary to Paul's principle of probation (*Proba Pauli*) when he writes about the observance of the holy sacrament and about the feast or celebration of the Lord's Supper in a good, pious manner, and says (I Cor. 11:27-29): Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body of the Lord, and previously: Whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

One no longer wants to consider such words and severe sentence of the Holy Spirit in Paul, but calls, allures, admonishes everyone, young and old, regardless of what is appropriate for such an act. And not much real reverence, love, and ardor are felt. Yea, one drives, threatens, frightens, and chases everything, without any sense, without any examination (*Proba*), also without any ceremony and discrimination, into the Supper, contrary to all Scripture, there to procure indulgence, grace, and forgiveness of sin, also even righteousness and the improvement of one's life. Yet actually nothing fundamental comes of it all, for everyone must confess that, with respect to the consciences, matters have scarcely ever been worse.

At one time it was taught that the spiritual eating must precede, as Luther himself in a *Sermon on John VI*²² wrote, namely: "The bread on the altar is merely a symbol, like baptism, and is of no value, unless one has already eaten the living, heavenly bread inwardly." Thus wrote Martin Luther formerly [1524]. But now only the external sacrament is the important thing, with the *Hoc facite*²³ which is to accomplish it alone without any further reflection.

And [43] in order that one may warm oneself and lay off the cold and disinclination of the heart and awaken and strengthen faith, he offers consolation, mercy, and grace to all who attend (be they worthy or unworthy), yea, to all sinners.²⁴ "Here at

²¹ Schwenckfeld on the margin says: Luther glosses [WA, 10, II, 38] right on the margin to the effect that proving one's self is to feel one's faith, etc.

Now he has it that one should believe that grace and indulgence are first to be fetched at the sacrament.

²² Cf. WA, 18, 136.

²⁴ *Vermahnung*, WA, 30, II, 618.

²³ "This do ye"; I Cor. 11:25.

the sacrament you must rub yourself and hold onto it," Luther writes in his *Admonition*; "there is a fire which can kindle the hearts." He wants the sacrament to kindle the hearts, although the longer they remain [at the sacrament] the colder they become in their love of God and neighbor, in fact, the longer the worse they become, as is plainly evident. Furthermore, he also writes in the same place²⁵ that whoever only goes with him [Luther] to the sacrament is secure and free of all error and of all satanic deception. On the other hand, he curses all who do not attend, with pestilence, fever, and all kinds of sickness, hunger, war, dissension, discord, and unrest.²⁶

In reality the Supper or sacrament of the altar has become not only a snare for the conscience and an offense to the Christ-believing soul, but a cloak for all error, all sin, and godless being, as well as a furtherance to and confirmation of the old unrepentant life and accursed way of the flesh (like the Mass). May God be graciously merciful! Do what you will [say the Lutherans], only go to the Supper and everything will be simple; and as soon and as often as you come again after falling, everything will be forgiven you! Thus do many at this time deal with the Supper.

Whoever notices such a grievous misuse and idolatry and the error therein and contradicts it by Holy Scripture or desists from it and points instead to the knowledge of Christ, and whoever also inquires about the correct understanding and basis of the Lord's Supper, must be a hypercritical ponderer, a sectary, or factious spirit, yea, a desecrater of the sacrament and not a Christian. He must be, as Luther writes, "a desperate heathen and worse than a Turk"; again, "a fanatic, devil, or child of the devil." In some places he is driven from country, city, wife and child, house and home, and decried and banned as an enemy of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. When such a one dies, they would like with all their might to bury him under the gallows.

Should not a devout and God-fearing heart and conscience ponder over this? Yea, rightly have a horror of it, since all this is unapostolic, just as their assertion is in contradiction to the will and institution of the [44] Lord Jesus Christ: untheological and against the correct Christian observance of his holy Supper or sacrament.

All this, I say, which has been mentioned in the seven points, I shall not, nor can, with good conscience accept from Dr.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 605.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 625.

Luther or any of his party, contrary to such bright, clear testimony of Holy Scripture, nor can I agree or harmonize with it. I also regard it as being very detrimental to our regnant (*Regirenden*) Lord Jesus Christ and his glory and office, also to the free course of grace and the nature of the New and eternal Covenant; in the first place because his holy, glorified, divine body²⁷ would be essentially in the earthly, visible bread, and the blood of Christ truly in the material corruptible wine; and in the second place because his body and blood would be received, eaten, and drunk in a twofold manner, both physically and spiritually, yea, even without faith, as Luther teaches,²⁸ by the unworthy and godless mouth.

For it would follow that the unique, single (*ainfaltige*) Christ would not always remain the same one Christ, and his body, flesh, and blood not always a true food and drink, nor a quickening flesh and blood. Indeed, the final conclusion and decision of the Lord about the food and drink of his body, flesh, and blood would be invalid when he says (John 6:56; 58): He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him, and he that eateth this bread shall live forever.

This one conclusion of the Lord Christ proves sufficiently that Luther and others certainly must be teaching wrongly about the eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ and are dealing quite censurably with the institution of Christ. For, whereas and since this examination (*Proba*) does not occur, nor show in the works of the communicants, there must necessarily (if the pronouncement of Christ is to be true and right, which it undoubtedly is) be something amiss; and nothing but God's judgment and chastisement is at hand.

Therefore, I cannot agree at all with Dr. Luther nor his colleagues in the article of the holy sacrament, for the above-mentioned reasons and for many others. For, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, I know no other Christ than him who now reigns in the glory of God his Father and is full of life, spirit, grace, and blessedness, our high priest and the only forgiver of sin. In him also dwells all the fullness of God

²⁷ Schwenckfeld does not in the present work more than as here advert to his characteristic doctrine of the heavenly flesh of Christ. But see below, Part III. Cf. Hofmann, below, p. 198. Schwenckfeld wrote: "They both [Hofmann, Franck] have taken their errors from our truth, like spiders who suck poison out of a beautiful flower." *CS*, V, pp. 522 f.

²⁸ *Of the Lord's Supper*, *WA*, 26, 288.

bodily (Col. 2:9), who is made higher than the heavens and has nothing to do with the unbelieving, godless [45], and unworthy (II Cor. 6:15; Heb. 7:26 f.), but is righteousness, sanctification, food and drink, nourishment, and complete satiation unto eternal life of the chosen believers and is present in the Holy Spirit with grace, with them as the head of his body and members.

Moreover, according to the Holy Scriptures and the words of the Lord which are spirit and life, I know of no other eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper than of the one spiritual eating and drinking which takes place in the mystery of the true and living faith, as I have not otherwise written and maintained for many years and as I also today, God be praised, hold and believe with good assurance.

At the same time I in no wise disdain nor reject the visible sacrament of the Lord's Supper on account of the mystery and spiritual transaction of Christ's which he brings to the memory of the believers as in the words: "This do in remembrance of me," but in its place I regard it highly and reverently.

To remain [for the moment] with the commemoration, which is the *representatio*²⁹ of the Fathers, out of which they [Scholastics and Lutherans alike] have made a symbolical eating, etc. (of which, however, the Scripture says nothing), although I cannot regard or accept it [the elements] as God, nor as the Lord Christ himself [with the Catholics],³⁰ nor with Luther and his colleagues, as the fountain of life and salvation, nor as a divinely kindled fire and righteousness—nevertheless I give to Christ only and alone as is right the divine honor of justification and salvation due him, and I give to the holy sacrament (in correct usage) its benefit, office, place, and reverence, yea, all that the Holy Scriptures give. And as stated, I distinguish, through faith, the entire sacramental transaction of the Lord's Supper, spiritually, as also I point to and warn as to the proper understanding of the words and to the knowledge of Christ Jesus, according to my poor ability, and admonish thereto.

If, then, Dr. Luther calls this kindling a fire [cf. Luke 12:49], I should wish to God that it already burned in many hearts to the honor of Christ and the eradication of error, also that it illuminated every one in order that all kinds of misuse,

²⁹ The meaning here is not entirely clear. One of the three manuscripts refers to Jerome's *Commentary on Matthew* for *representatio*. In Texts B and C this paragraph as far as "although" is omitted.

³⁰ In the doctrine of transubstantiation.

false faith, violation, and idolatry would become manifest thereby, and that Jesus Christ the Son of God, our Saviour (who is the [46] only food and nourishment of our languishing heart, soul, and conscience), would be understood, recognized, and known according to the spirit in the glory of God his Father and, in his Heavenly Kingdom, as the ruling king of honor.

From this it is readily perceived what our dissension with Luther and his party is in this matter, and that it is not merely about the sacrament or Supper, but more about the real meaning and understanding of the words of the Lord about his body and blood in the Supper and about the correct observance of the holy sacrament, and also about that which Paul demanded of the attendants or guests, all of which they smear over and obscure in their vexation (*ahnfechtung*), as they also ignore the pure doctrine of the saving knowledge of Christ, and in its stead confirm and introduce a false reliance on the conscience,³¹ that is, idolatry, together with an erroneous faith and a pernicious misuse and indulgence with the sacrament.

What, however, results from the idolatry and such misuse of the Supper? This: God's punishment with pestilence, sickness, famine, war, blindness, ignorance, and all kinds of evil, etc. This is amply described for us in Holy Scripture (as, specifically, I Cor. 11:17-22), although they will not take the blame and would like to put it upon other innocent ones who desist from such idolatry and misuse. Likewise they would like to make poor me suspect for everyone as though I opposed the holy sacrament simply because I admonished them concerning their misuse and error or also abstained from it.

But briefly, my booklets, and among others my *Confession of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*,³² particularly also an *Apology*³³ whereby I answered Dr. [John] Faber in this matter, are still extant. Herein I explained myself sufficiently about the true and the false understanding and faith, together with the reasons for the error and the apostasy in the article of the Lord's Supper, and also of the right understanding of the words: This is my body, etc. Up to this time no one has confuted these tractates, nor taught me better by Holy Scripture. In them it will also be found that I do not deny the food and drink

³¹ The text reads: *ain falsch vertrauen der gewissen.*

³² *A Catechetical Confession of the Lord's Supper*, Document G (May-June, 1530), *CS*, III, 712 ff.

³³ *The First Apology*, Document LXXX (January, 1529), *CS*, III, 391 ff.

of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper nor in any way disdain or abrogate the sacrament of the altar in correct Christian usage, but that, according to the evidence of Holy Scripture, through a spiritual judgment, I appropriately distinguish the spiritual [inward] eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ from the [external] grace, that is, the thanks [47]giving [for the nourishment], the praise, and the remembrance of the Lord.

I also place together or compare the words of the Lord at the Supper about his body and blood with John, ch. 6, about the same body, flesh, and blood (as all old Christian teachers did and as is to be found in the *Decretum*)³⁴ and understand and interpret one through the other, the lesser through the greater, the last through the first; and one can readily see from the tracts and information mentioned and also from a comparison of the Gospels what I maintain concerning the holy sacrament, how I believe and confess it (and, as I hope, in the certainty of faith) according to the mind and meaning of the Lord—correctly, clearly, and Christlike.

Briefly, I also maintain and believe what Saint Augustine wrote about it, in *Tract XXVI on John VI*,³⁵ and subsequently in *Tract LIX*,³⁶ with clear, plain words, about two kinds of bread, thus: The believing disciples of the Lord ate the bread, the Lord, but Judas ate the bread of the Lord against the Lord; they received life, but Judas pain or punishment; for he who eats unworthily, eats damnation unto himself. Thus writes Augustine.

This is also, as stated, my understanding of and distinction between the two kinds of bread, food, and drink in the whole sacramental transaction of the Lord's Supper. [I stand] with Augustine, to whom, next to the Bible, I appeal; and since he has been accepted by the Christian church, I hope to remain unmolested therein with all Christians.

Therewith Luther's calumny about the fire kindled against the holy sacrament is refuted on the basis of truth. Also his misunderstanding and newly introduced conception of the Lord's Supper (of which he together with his associates is unable to give either a fundamental account or an argument

³⁴ On the margin Schwenckfeld, who had studied canon law, cites the *Corpus juris canonici*, where it in its turn refers to Augustine's dictum: The sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace. *Corpus juris canonici* (Paris, 1705), I, 457.

³⁵ Migne, *PL*, 35, col. 1611.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 1796.

from Scripture or necessity) has been briefly characterized and disproved.

[48] For certainly Dr. Luther has not, with understanding and truth, brought out the correct sense and the real meaning of the teaching of Christ about his body and blood in his Supper. The same is true in other matters. As his instability (which is noticed by many people and can be proven from their own books) obviously also shows, he and his associates up to this time have taught, before God, and written without foundation and without certainty in this matter.

Although they indeed boast that they have restored to the laity the other kind, namely, the cup, it can be shown that up to this day they have never understood nor correctly interpreted nor put into plain language the words of the Lord which he spoke to his disciples after passing the cup, as they also do not know wherein the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood of Christ truly and intrinsically consists. And if they should say that it consists or occurs in faith, they should explain well what such faith is, what its type and nature can do, and also which office that faith pursues; upon what and whither it directs itself; and what its object or aspect is; yea, how the eating is accomplished; how one eats a glorified body; where one must get it; how such eating is felt and perceived; again, how one presses through or comes to drinking the blood of the New, eternal Covenant; how it is drunk to the quickening and cleansing of the soul so that we are fed and satiated thereby unto eternal life.

The great rabbis should previously concern themselves about this and distinguish the body of the Lord correctly and consider well what kind of guests belong to the Supper of the Heavenly King, Jesus, and thereby clearly teach of an unchanging foundation, should also first learn for themselves in the Lord's School, if they would observe the Supper worthily and spread the Table of the Lord properly; for it is undeniable, and is found in all the old Christian teachers, that in the sacramental transactions one shall concern oneself first of all about that which is spiritual, and pay attention to the faith and the discrimination of the body of the Lord in the Supper, that is, to the knowledge of Christ according to the Spirit. . . .

III. OF THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST:

REFUTATION OF THE CHARGES OF EUTYCHIANISM

[49] Though Dr. Luther writes further in his answer: "In addition to this he continues with his Eutychianism and creatureliness, misleads the church, though God gave him no command, nor sent him" (he means me), I cannot understand what he means here with "Eutychianism" and whether or not, as with others, he means thereby the denial of the humanity of Christ. I know very well, however, that elsewhere, for example in *On the Councils and the Churches* published in 1539, he writes of Eutyches³⁷ that it was not Eutyches' view to consider Christ only a divine Person and nature and not a man, but rather that he held Christ to be true God and man and that he simply did not wish to ascribe the *idiomata* or properties of deity to his humanity. Thus all prophets, all Scripture, ascribing to Christ or the Messiah an eternal Kingdom and salvation from sins, are all against Eutyches; for all of them say that the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent (Gen., ch. 3).—Thus Dr. Luther writes about Eutyches.³⁸

Now if this is what it was for him and this is also what he further means by Eutychianism, then surely our antagonists or opponents, indeed, all who hold Christ the Man in glory as a creature under God and of less honor and power than God are much more to be accused of Eutychianism than I. Indeed, they must agree with Eutyches incontestably because they maintain and defend precisely this.

But if he now calls it Eutychianism when only one nature in Christ is believed in and his humanity is denied, then he himself proves, as also all others who read my writings or hear us, that he unjustly charges me therewith even against his own better knowledge. Since my whole activity and altercation has had to do exclusively with the humanity of Christ, with his true body, blood, and flesh and their properties, status, essence, and majesty in glory against those who want to rob his humanity of this splendor—how can I, then, deny the humanity of Christ and blood and flesh, or maintain only one nature, namely, only the Word in Christ, and make out of the human nature a divine nature, as they allege? This has never in my whole life come

³⁷ Eutyches was the Monophysite Archimandrite of Constantinople against whom the Council of Chalcedon in 451 defined Christ as one Person in two natures.

³⁸ *WA*, 50, 594 ff.

into my mind, that is, that I should not hold and confess Christ as a hero (*heldt*) with two natures to be true God and true man.

[50] Therefore, let M. Luther turn with his Eutychianism whichever way he will and at the same time seize upon whatever help he may; he will still not be able, with all other opponents, to make me out truthfully to be a Eutyches or any other heretic, thanks be to God! Indeed I have already cleared myself of this in a letter,³⁹ which should have been quite sufficient for him to have felt obliged to let drop the charge of Eutychianism in his [most recent] writing. But of what help is righteousness? For resentment and injustice have gotten the upper hand even though in the end, as the prophet says (Ps. 94:15): But right will remain right and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

But what did Luther himself write in his *Confession of Truth Concerning the Supper*,⁴⁰ also in the book against the fanatics on the body and flesh of Christ?⁴¹ This: that the flesh of Christ is pure spirit and that his flesh was not born of flesh. Indeed, he writes that it is a blasphemy if one says that Christ's flesh is born of flesh and is flesh; and again, that the body of Christ must not be flesh but rather spirit because he was conceived of the Holy Ghost. Also that the body of Christ back in the days of his flesh was at once in heaven and on earth, indeed, that it was present in all the ends of the earth.⁴² For all this I let him answer, although by any person it could well be looked upon and interpreted as much more of a Eutychianism or some other ancient heresy than my own belief and confession.

In addition to this, I recognize nothing of creation or creatureliness in Christ but rather a new divine birth and natural Sonship (*kindtschafft*) of God. Wherefore I cannot consider the Man Christ with his body and blood to be a creation or a creature. Rather, I believe and confess with Scripture that he is wholly God's only begotten Son and that Christ, the Son of God, his Heavenly Father, the whole Person indivisibly (*unzertailig*) God and Man, was born in time of the Virgin Mary; also that he suffered and died for us upon the cross in personal unity and wholeness, and as such rose again and ascended into heaven, that he sits at the right hand of God and rules also in his human nature wholly with God his Father

³⁹ The letter of October 12, 1543, Document CCCXXIII, CS, VIII.

⁴⁰ WA, 26, 349 ff.

⁴¹ *Das diese Wort Christi*, WA, 23, 200.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 140; 144.

in divine glory, unity, and essence from which he will come to judge, etc.

But, as to what others with their purported creature in Christ have brought forth from their philosophy and the old scholastic opinions, corrupted or stirred up, that is, those who do not hold the Man Jesus Christ in [51] personal unity as the born Son of God but rather as a creation or a creature, and who do not want to accord to him the rank and honor of the other Person in the Trinity of God—maybe they would like to label me and others with "creature," as though we were causing an unnecessary squabble or introduced ancient errors, but the truth is now as clear as day, of which all unpartisan devotees thereof may easily avail themselves!