

it you will have made a heavenly beginning. And thereafter when you have begun to extol and praise the name of God, and to become grateful, then you will begin to love God from the whole heart and your neighbour as yourself. This is what Christ has taught us. If we truly believe, we will do this in truth. That which is further to be done the Holy Spirit will teach through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Almighty, eternal God! We ask you to give strength to all who hear your Word, that they may do what your Word teaches them. To those who truly hear, and who repent (*bereuen*) of all their sins, give them the power of the Holy Spirit, that they may resist sin until the end. This we also ask of Christ the Son, that he may intercede with the Father for us, that this may be imparted to us. O almighty, eternal God! That which we have not yet heard from Jesus Christ, and not yet done, grant unto us, and to all who crave it with the whole heart, to hear and to do. God, the heavenly Father, grant this through his Son Jesus Christ our Lord and through the power of the Holy Spirit, and may God be with us from now on, from eternity to eternity, Amen. Amen. May this be true.

## 8

Anonymous (Simon Schneeweiss?)

### Theological Refutation of Anabaptist Teaching (1528)\*

#### Introduction

This is an early refutation, anonymous as it stands. Karl Schornbaum, editor of the volume in which it is printed, suggests it may have been written by Simon Schneeweiss, who was court preacher in the Principality of Ansbach. The refutation reflects contact with the Anabaptism led and shaped by Hans Hut and Hans Denck, both of whom had died the year before.

If the author was Simon Schneeweiss, little is known or written about him. The one certainty is that he was a Lutheran; he signed the Smalcald Articles of 1537, written by Martin Luther. Other notables signing the document were Philip Melancthon, Urbanus Rhegius and Andreas Osiander from Nuremberg. Schneeweiss is listed as being pastor of the Church at Crailsheim, a town near Nuremberg.

#### Bibliographical Source:

[www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/concord/web/smc-03p.html](http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/concord/web/smc-03p.html) May 18, 2001.

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\*Source: Schornbaum, *Quellen V*, 253-60.

Translation: Priesen/Klaassen

## Theological Refutation of the Teachings of Anabaptists. (1528)

Answer to the first articles of these new fanatics.

That this self-invented superstitious opinion is a sect both against God's Word and his will, undertaken by themselves or inspired by an evil and not a good spirit, can be shown and proven as follows:

A sect is whatever willfully separates itself from the unity of the Christian church contrary to the divine Holy Word. It is in this sense that Holy Scripture customarily uses the word *heresim*, Titus 3[:10]: A heretic, whom in German we call a *Ketzer* should be avoided after the first and second admonition. You may be sure that such a one is subverted, and sins. He is already condemned.

For the word *heresis* in the Greek language means choose, select, separate. Thus *heresis* is a sect which thinks up and chooses its separate way and form in order to teach, believe and live outside of the unitedly-believing church. And the Scriptures command us strictly to avoid such a rabble or sect. Rom. 16[:17]: I appeal to you, brothers, etc. Also 1 Tim. 6[:3]; 1 Cor. 1. "Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" [1 Cor. 1:10].

In contrast, the true church of God or the Christian Church is gathered in a unified true faith, in which the blessing of the New Testament is offered to the believers through the preaching of the Gospel and through the holy sacraments. Such a congregation or church is one body, and as Paul says, Eph. 4[:5], has one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. Eph. 5[:25]: "Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." We are to cling to this church only, and outside of it there is no salvation. Holy Scripture testifies to this and supremely and fully proves it. In John 15[:4] Christ says: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, no more can you," etc. And as in the time of Noah everything that was outside the ark, which was built through God's Word and command, had to perish in the flood and die, so there is no salvation or life outside this church or congregation which Christ has redeemed through his blood, purified and justified, but only destruction and con-

demnation. John 10[:27]: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they know me." Luke 11[:23]: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that does not gather with me scatters," etc.

Secondly. Since this new fanaticism or sect does not believe or accept the books of Holy Scripture, neither the Old nor the New Testaments, and since by this means the sword, indeed all power to overthrow the heretical error of their followers is taken from us, it is necessary that they are first of all convinced, and with good reasoning forced to see, that one must believe only such Holy Scripture; that the faith, hope, love, and work of all Christians is to be ruled only according to this guideline, and that from this source all instruction, the nourishing and maintaining of the soul is to be obtained as from a fountain and treasure trove of divine wisdom and divine will.

The truth that Holy Scripture is the sole fruitful pasture of the lambs of Christ and the guideline by which all godly people are duty-bound to guide themselves in faith and life, and not to rely on new inspiration outside of it, can be proven briefly in this way:

If we are not permitted to ground or build an unchanging faith on the Holy Scripture of the Old and the New Testaments, and if we are to believe, to hope and to live according to new inspirations of God, effective at any special time, it must follow that the prophets falsely and unreasonably used the evidence and the authority of the books of Moses, etc. and also that Christ himself with his apostles falsely used the prophets. In addition, where they believe and confess that they are Christians and are baptized in the name of Jesus, they confess at the same time irrefutably that they are the children and heirs of a new covenant. Now the new covenant, that is, the covenant of Christ, is not only a new but an eternal covenant, which is sealed and confirmed with the blood, death, suffering of Christ. All who have been given their name in baptism in Christ are duty bound and obligated to keep its contents and to believe, love, hope, and live in accordance with it until the Son of Man will come to judge the quick and the dead, to liberate the blessed in God and to condemn the godless, to which the words of Christ in the gospels frequently and sufficiently testify.

For if these new fanatics believe in Christ and confess that his is the way, the justice and the truth, then they must also consistently, undeniably and indisputably agree that Christ rightly and reasonably bids the Jews, in John 5[:39], to search the Scriptures, and elsewhere chides them as ignorant of the Scripture [Matt. 22:29]. From this it must follow clearly that only Holy Scripture is the rock and foundation of the

faith of all believing Christians, on which they build without doubt, and the only protection on which their comfort, salvation, wisdom and instruction depends. John 20[:30]: "And Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God," etc. 2 Tim. 2[:3:15]: "And how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." Rom. 15[:4]: "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness we and by encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." 2 Pet. 1[:19]: "So we have the prophetic message fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this," etc., etc.

Further, in Mark 12[:24] Christ scolds the Sadducees by saying: "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know not the Scriptures?" etc. In sum, the entire Holy Scripture is everywhere full of these and other irrefutable witnesses that one should obtain knowledge of the truth and divine will, all godly teaching, and the test of good and evil spirits from Holy Scripture alone. John 7[:38]: "Let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture has said, out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." Also, in Luke 16[:29, :31] Abraham says: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." And soon after: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded through one rose from the dead."

Thirdly. They reject the outward office of the ministry and count and confess it powerless to forgive sin. This is altogether a terrible error and the great cunning of Satan himself, with which he will attack the evangelical kingdom of Christ unless he is prevented from doing so, and unless his claim is disproved and rejected with good reasons. That this opinion is an altogether pernicious and terrible error, godless and contrary to Holy Scripture can be shown as follows: Firstly, always ever and ever it has been God's usage and custom to impart the treasure of his divine gifts among his own by the use of visible means and outward persons. Scripture shows this in many places, especially, however, in 2 Sam. 12, where God, through his prophet Nathan, forgives David his sins. In the second book of Kings, chapter 18, and Isaiah 38 he does the same for Hezekiah, king of Judah, through the agency of the prophet Isaiah. He has acted similarly in the new covenant and has ordained and commanded that this be done always henceforth to the end of the world. In Matt. 16[:19] Christ commits to Peter the keys, that is, the power to forgive sins and to bind. In chapter 18[:18-19] he

says to his disciples, or in the persons of his disciples to all Christians: "Truly I tell you, Whatever you bind on earth," etc. Also John 20[:23]: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them." Further, in Acts 2[:38] Peter says to those who had been drawn to Christ through his external office of preaching: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." It can further be persuasively shown from Acts 26[:15] that through the outward office of the preacher and the visible dispensing of the holy sacrament forgiveness of sins is given. In that passage Christ appears to Paul, who was still rejecting and persecuting the church, and addresses him thus: "Arise and stand on your feet, for that is why I have appeared to you," etc. See also Acts 10[:6]. Further, in Luke 24[:46] it is written: "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations." Acts 10[:42] "And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead." 1 Cor. 4[:1]: "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ, and stewards of God's mysteries." That is the Gospel, through which the treasures of God are offered to us and carried home. In 1 Cor. 3[:9] we read that the apostles or preachers are servants through which you have become believers, etc. Rom. 10[:14-17]: "How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?" And soon after: "How are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ." Further, the holy apostle Paul also boasts, that through his office of preaching he has begotten the Corinthians in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 4[:15]. Similarly he says to the Galatians, Gal. 4[:19]: "My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." Also in John 17[:20] Christ says, "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word".

Fourthly. They accept baptism and approve of it as right, not on the strength or on the assured authority of Holy Scripture, but on their dreams and visions. This is a godless opinion, and contrary to all Holy Scripture, and is also opposed to all reason. Even a person with average intelligence can judge how ridiculous it is to thrust Holy Scripture from its place as unworthy of attention, and to set up and put faith in nothing but visions and dreams. And this after all Christians have for

so many centuries adhered to it in unified faith! Such rejection is not only strictly forbidden by God in his Word, but is also contrary to all reason. Holy Scripture commands and warns in many places that no vision or dream is to be credited now that the fullness of time has arrived and the whole will of God has been revealed through Christ. For example, Deut. 13[:3]: "you must not heed the words of those prophets or those who divine by dreams." Also Lev. 19[:31] "Do not turn to mediums or wizards; do not seek them out, to be defiled by them." Also Jer. 27[:9]: "You, therefore, must not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers." Lev. 20[:27] says that if dreamers are found with you they must be killed [misquoted, ed.]. Not only do their dreams not yield anything godly or good; rather they obviously strive against God's Word and all Christian order ordained by God. Such dreamers and visionaries are not only to be considered liars and spirits of Beelzebub, but are nowhere to be tolerated with their godless interpretations and expositions. Even if the vision or dream exhibits nothing contrary to God's Word, as in the case of this vision by which he confesses and accepts baptism as useful, yet the intent is godless and an insufferable horror. That is, that he approves of baptism not because of Scripture which orders, institutes, and inaugurates it but because of his vision; not because of the divine Word, but because of his baseless dreams.

Fifthly. They do not believe that in our Lord's Supper the actual body and the blood of Christ is present, nor that it may be given to the hungry and the thirsty, that is, the believers by a man. This is no wonder, since they give no credence to the whole Scripture. If, as was indicated in another article, they could through God's grace be brought to the point of accepting Holy Scripture, believing it, and allowing themselves to be shown and convinced, then one could present to them the words of Christ appended to the Supper, which are accepted by all godly people. One could present an earnest and thorough explanation to them and induce and bring them to a right and godly knowledge of the Supper with the majesty of the eternal Word of Christ. Since, however, this has been done in recent times by many in many places against the fanatics in valid and fruitful ways, and since thorough refutation of this error (where it might be necessary) can be obtained from these books, we consider it superfluous to write more about it at present. Nevertheless, the words of Christ at the Supper (This is my body, etc.) are to be presented and carefully explained to them briefly. Use especially the words of Paul in 1 Cor. 10[:16]: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" etc. From this saying

of Paul especially it can be concluded that the body of Christ and his holy blood are present not only with God, as the fanatics dream but also in the Supper in essence, and are distributed according to the order of God.

Some fanatic may confess that he believes the body and the blood of Christ to be present in the Supper, but that since the beginning of his sect he has not wanted to receive it, nor would receive it in future until God commanded him. This kind of personal presumption and dreaming is overthrown and condemned by the clear words of Christ himself. For Christ does not command us that we should deprive ourselves of this spiritual food or to limit our participation until he gives us further faith for the need of our soul without neglect. He says: "Take and eat," etc. "Do this in remembrance of me, hereby declare my death," etc. Thus every Christian must in faith obey the command once given and shall not wait for any other. For the covenant of Christ is an eternally valid covenant in which God has revealed all his divine treasures completely, and presented them to his own. It is such a complete covenant that nothing can be added or removed by anyone. The fullness and sum of all divine promises and will is completely contained in this covenant and is presented as instruction to all those of right faith. We are nowhere commanded to expect any further command outside of this instruction at any time in the future, neither in dream nor in vision. It follows that such intention is nothing but devilish, erring speculation and inspiration. Again, as in the case of infant baptism, the fanatic contradicts himself when he says that the actual body and blood are present in Christ's Supper, and that to receive it is good, but not because of the institution of Christ nor the word of God, but because of his visions and dreams.

Sixthly. They hold in common and contribute their goods each according to his good will, and yet urge no one to deliver or give up all his goods or a certain amount, as the Anabaptists enforce. We do not consider this to be a misdemeanour worthy of any heavy or severe punishment at the present time. Nor can we attack or condemn it especially heavily with Holy Scripture. Yet one is concerned that if such small beginnings were to continue and were to be allowed and tolerated, that they might in time increase and cause larger and wider harm. Therefore we judge that this intent, although small and not in itself sufficiently punishable, should be dealt with and forbidden by suitable, tolerable means, so that out of it in time there might not arise greater harm.

Lastly. Looking at the fanaticisms of this new sect, it seems that they do not believe in Christ, nor think that the suffering of the Son of God was sufficient payment for sin nor eternal reconciliation of believers with God the Father. One of them says: Why Christ suffered he did not know, but God does. With this statement he admits that he has little or no regard for Christ. A Christian who has put on Christ in justifying faith does not doubt. He believes steadfastly, knows, is sure, and confesses that not only God but also he, together with all the elect knows why and for what reason Christ suffered and shed his holy blood. He knows that it was done for the forgiveness of the sin of all believers and for their redemption, purification and sanctification. At all times he stands in good, unshakable hope and trust that he is well off and, together with Christ is a co-heir of all the godly heritage with God the Father because of the mercy of Christ which he has earned and accomplished for us through his holy suffering. He believes that after this sorrowful misery and life he will possess eternal life and the heavenly fatherland full of joy. For thus says Paul, 1 Cor. 2[:12]: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."

## 9

Lamprecht Penntz

### Recantation Procedures (1528)\*

#### Introduction

Lamprecht Penntz was a baker by trade. He and his wife were both named in a directive from the government of Ferdinand I to the district governor of Hertenberg in June 1528. By this time the case of Lamprecht Penntz had already been discussed once. A report in mid-May had informed the governor of Hertenberg that a fleeing Anabaptist woman had been to see her brother in Telfs and had also met with Lamprecht. Perhaps after this meeting the baker went home and persuaded his wife to join the Anabaptists, too. The sources are not clear on this. We do know, however, that by June both Lamprecht and his wife were in prison in the district of Hertenberg because they were Anabaptists.

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\*Source: Grete Mecenseffy, ed. *Quellen zur Geschichte der Täufer, Österreich II Teil* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1972), 173.

Translation: Linda Huebert Hecht