THE CHIEF THEOLOGICAL TOPICS

LOCI PRAECIPUI THEOLOGICI 1559

Second English Edition

Philip Melanchthon

Translated by J. A. O. Preus
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I AM PLEASED to provide a brief foreword to this second edition of Philip Melanchthon’s *Loci*. After nearly twenty years, it is good that this significant work by one of the framers of the Lutheran confessional corpus is receiving a much-improved presentation. Perhaps this will make his work more interesting to a new generation of people who have an interest in, and a stake in, the Lutheran Reformation.

In his Translator’s Preface to the first edition, written in 1991, J. A. O. Preus referred to his translation of the *Loci* as “this little contribution” to Melanchthon studies (p. xxiv). Perhaps it was not such a little contribution after all. The publication of Melanchthon’s *Loci* at that time made it accessible to a whole new generation of students who, even though there were several other editions of the book already available, were able to make use of a new, fresh translation of the specific edition that had the greatest influence on future generations of Lutherans. And that is why this was not a “little contribution.” Melanchthon’s *Loci* had a profound influence on Martin Chemnitz, who used it as the foundation for his own *Loci Theologici*. This in turn had a direct and lasting impact on the second generation of Lutheran theologians, and so on down to this day. Bringing this text to light for the English-speaking world is, in my opinion, no “little contribution.”

From a theological perspective, it is gratifying that this work is being reissued. Although it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to be completely objective about one’s father, I think it could fairly be said that my father made several significant contributions to the church. But I think his greatest, certainly his most lasting, was in his scholarly work and his translations of some of the key Lutheran confessors. He used to say that he doubted that people would long remember his leadership and the legacy he left The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as its president from 1969 to 1981. Hopefully, that may not ultimately be the case, but, sadly, he was probably correct.

But his true and lasting legacy to the church and the world will certainly be his scholarly output. And that is the way it should be for many reasons.
The theology of the Reformation and insight into those whom God raised up to bring about reform in the church in the sixteenth century simply supersedes the decisions and actions of church leaders, synods, and conventions, as important as those may be. Making Melanchthon’s great work, *The Chief Theological Topics*, available to the English-speaking world is an important part of that legacy.

Yet the legacy my father left through his scholarly work, the present volume included, is also quite personal. He poured himself into his work with a passion and joy I have seldom witnessed elsewhere. He truly loved his work of translating Melanchthon and Chemnitz and Luther. Possessed of extraordinary energy and enthusiasm for the task, he would work every morning before heading off to busy, hectic, and often stressful days of service. He worked on his scholarly projects every chance he had. My mother, Delpha, was often with him, providing a second set of eyes as they pored over the manuscripts, tracking down references, double-checking the translations. It has been fun re-reading his preface. Much of his keen wit, his sense of humor, and his insightfulness shine through so clearly. I ask the reader’s indulgence as a grateful son expresses appreciation for his dad, who was an inspiration both professionally and personally and whose legacy is clear and strong.

However, the legacy of Philip Melanchthon is less clear even after nearly five hundred years. My father did a good job of outlining the various positions Reformation scholars have taken on Melanchthon’s work in terms that remain relevant today. He also presented a good, and still relatively up-to-date, summary of the secondary research on Melanchthon. We do not need to repeat that here. Simply put, the historical opinion on Melanchthon is conflicted. Some see him as a defector to the core truths of the Reformation, a compromiser who in the end gave away far too much. Others see him as a defender of the unity of the church, who tried diligently to “keep it all together” through dialogue and (what he thought of as appropriate) compromise.

When judged on the basis of the current volume, however, Melanchthon can be seen as one who made a great, positive contribution to creating an organized presentation of the doctrines with which he dealt. He set the course for subsequent theological methodology, a method that has served the Lutheran Church well to this very day.

And though we certainly recognize, and reject, the errors into which Melanchthon fell, we cannot simply disregard the man who wrote several of our core confessional documents (the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope), as well as, of course, our most defining and identifying confessional document, the Augsburg
Confession. Melanchthon may have gone wrong in a number of areas, but Lutherans cannot part company completely with a man who could pen the clearest and simplest articulation of the “chief article of the Christian faith,” as he did in the Fourth Article of the Augsburg Confession: “They also teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ’s sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.”

I acknowledge with gratitude the careful work by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, who wrote the “Introduction to the Second Edition.” He has done excellent research on the text, and his translation of additional material from the Loci has made this edition more readable and more complete. His textual and historical notes will enable future readers to dig more deeply into the richness of Melanchthon’s work.

I would also like to acknowledge the fine work of Rev. Edward A. Engelbrecht, senior editor for Professional and Academic Books and Bible Resources. Without his efforts, the current volume would not have been possible. And the improvements he has made in the format and presentation of the work have enhanced its usefulness.

We should be grateful that Concordia Publishing House is making the investment in reissuing a work that, no matter how important, will nevertheless be read by a rather narrow spectrum of people. Without doubt, this investment will pay rich dividends in the long run, as it will make an important contribution to the future vitality of Lutheran reformational theology. But it is a costly investment, and we should be thankful to Concordia for its commitment.

One decade into the twenty-first century, Dr. Preus’s words in his original Translator’s Preface are as appropriate and relevant as they were when he wrote them: “I present this work to the church of the 21st century with the full knowledge that only a beginning has been made. It is my hope and prayer that others—younger and better scholars—will pick up this work and explore farther into the theology and life of this enigmatic, pious, orderly, academic, and somewhat feckless man—the ‘theologian without honor’—for the verdict is still out.” Indeed, the verdict is still out.

Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus
Executive Vice President for Mission Advancement
Bethesda Lutheran Communities
August 2010

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1 Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 37–95.
Introduction to the Second Edition

The Text of the Loci

Dr. R. J. A. O. Preus’s translation of Philip Melanchthon’s Loci Communnes (“Commonplaces”) was printed by Concordia in 1992 under the title Loci Communnes 1543.¹ The importance of having Melanchthon’s mature writings available in English should not be underestimated. After Martin Luther, no other man was so important for the Reformation of the Church as Philip Melanchthon. Considering his authorship of large parts of the Lutheran Confessions and his friendship and guidance of reformers outside of the Lutheran tradition, one can only welcome new opportunities to study his faith and thought. Now after nearly two decades, Concordia is bringing forth a new edition of this work by the “Praeceptor of Germany,” but this time with a few changes.

First, the date on the cover has been changed. The text of Melanchthon’s Latin Loci went through many editions (Bindseil counts seventy-five),² and the differences between the editions were sometimes very great. Dr. Preus made his translation of Melanchthon’s Loci as a result of his translation of the Loci Theologici (“Theological Topics”) of Martin Chemnitz. Chemnitz’s work includes thirteen of Melanchthon’s twenty-four loci, or chapters, as well as the appendix “On Marriage,” since Chemnitz’s book was essentially an unfinished commentary on Melanchthon’s Loci.³

So what edition of Melanchthon’s *Loci* was printed in Chemnitz’s *Loci*, and which one did Dr. Preus translate? When his translation of Chemnitz’s *Loci* was published, Dr. Preus remarked: “Whether Chemnitz himself actually appended this version of the *Loci Communes* to his lecture notes or it was the work of those who edited the *Loci Theologici*, the version of 1535ff. (the last and poorest as well as the longest) was added to the work of Chemnitz. Melanchthon’s work can be found in the *Corpus Reformatorum*, where it is exactly the same as in all the editions of Chemnitz’s work.” Here Dr. Preus says it was the 1535ff. edition of Melanchthon’s *Loci*, but later the work was published under the title *Loci Communes 1543*. Yet from this it is also clear that Dr. Preus translated Melanchthon’s loci 1–13 and the appendix “On Marriage” from Chemnitz and the other loci from *Corpus Reformatorum* 21:601–1050. A comparison shows that aside from minor typographical changes, which are normal in sixteenth-century printing, the Latin text of Melanchthon’s *Loci* in Chemnitz matches the text printed in *Corpus Reformatorum* 21. So the text we have in this English translation can be regarded as a faithful translation of the main body text in CR 21:601–1050.

The question remains: What edition is this? The editor of CR 21, Heinrich Ernst Bindseil, divides the editions of Melanchthon’s *Loci* into three “eras” (*aetates*), the first beginning with the edition of 1521, the second beginning with the edition of 1535, and the third beginning with the edition of 1543. But the text he prints as representative of the third era is not the edition of 1543. Bindseil writes:

But we will print these *Loci of the third era* not from the first edition, as was done in the *Loci* of the first and second era, but from that which is the *last edition of the author himself*, namely, the *Leipzig edition of 1559* (ed. 25). We will do this so that the reader can have those loci that were published with Melanchthon’s last hand. Because of this, the critical annotations in these *Loci* will not show very much of the difference from the later editions (as in the first and middle *Loci*), but for the most part will show the difference from the earlier editions.

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4 Albert Gootjes first brought to my attention that Dr. Preus had not translated the 1543 *Loci*. I am thankful to him for this insight.


6 This is also clear from Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes 1543*, trans. by J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 247 n. 1. The confusion on the dating of Melanchthon’s *Loci* is common, but understandable. F. Bente’s classic “Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church,” in *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 129, cites CR 21:658 as being from the 1543 *Loci*, when CR 21:657 n. 25 says that it is from the 1545–59 *Loci* editions.

7 CR 21:599–600: “Hosce vero Locos tertiae aetatis non ex Ed. principe, sicuti in Locis primae et secundae aetatis factum est, sed ex ea, quae ipsius auctoris extrema est, nempe *Editione Lipsiensis anni 1559*. (Ed. 25.) recudendos curabimus, ut lector hosce tales accipiat, quales Melanchthonis manu extrema editi sunt. Quapropter annotationes criticæ in his Locis multo minus
INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION  xv

Thus the present translation of Melanchthon's *Loci* sets forth the 1559 edition. In many places the 1559 edition is the same as the text of 1543, but on the other hand in many of the loci it is quite different, as can be seen from the footnotes in CR 21.

The second change we are making is the title. Although the title page of Chemnitz's Latin *Loci Theologici* referred to Melanchthon's *Loci* by the title *Loci Communes*, Melanchthon's 1559 *Loci* were actually printed under a slightly different title: *Loci Praecipui Theologici*, “The Chief Theological Topics.”

Third, a few historical corrections have been made to Dr. Preus's preface; the changes are indicated by square brackets.

Fourth, page ranges referring to Corpus Reformatorum, vol. 21, are being included in footnotes at the beginning of each locus so that scholars can easily find the Latin text that serves as the basis for this English translation.

Fifth, beginning in 1553, all editions of Melanchthon's *Loci* included an appendix entitled “Definitions of Terms That Have Been Used in the Church.” Since this was the only part of the 1559 *Loci* lacking in Dr. Preus's translation, I have translated it from CR 21:1066–1106 and include it in this new edition.

The Theology of the *Loci*

Martin Luther had high praise for Melanchthon's *Loci*. In his preface to *The Bondage of the Will* (1525), he wrote: “Philip Melanchthon's invincible little book on *Loci Theologici* ['Theological Topics']... in my judgment is worthy not only of immortality but even of the Church's canon.” And Luther's praise of Melanchthon's book did not stop there. A table talk from the winter of 1542–43 records Luther's praise of Melanchthon's *Loci*:

If anybody wishes to become a theologian, he has a great advantage, first of all, in having the Bible. This is now so clear that he can read it without any trouble. Afterward he should read Philip's *Loci Communes*. This he should read diligently and well, until he has its contents fixed in his head. If he has

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*posteriorum* Editt. (ut in Locis primis et mediis), sed maxima ex parte *priorum* Editt. varietatem exhibebunt.


10 WA 18:601.4–6 (cf. AE 33:16).
these two he is a theologian, and neither the devil nor a heretic can shake him. The whole of theology is open to him, and afterward he can read whatever he wishes for edification. . . .

There’s no book under the sun in which the whole of theology is so compactly presented as in the *Loci Communes*. If you read all the fathers and sententiaries you have nothing. No better book has been written after the Holy Scriptures than Philip’s. He expresses himself more concisely than I do when he argues and instructs. I’m garrulous and more rhetorical.11

Thus at least some of Luther’s friends and students continued to hear his praise of Melanchthon’s *Loci* at the beginning of the 1540s, when the expanded and revised second “era” of Melanchthon’s work had been in public for several years. The *Loci* of 1521 and 1536 also had a profound impact on the method (at least) of John Calvin’s 1539 edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.12

Scholars continue to debate whether Melanchthon should be praised for upholding Luther’s theology, praised for being a reformational theologian independent of Luther, praised as a humanist educator, blamed for blazing the trail to the Enlightenment, or even condemned for betraying the Reformation.13 In the years after Luther’s death (1546), Melanchthon’s teaching in the later editions of the *Loci* and elsewhere led to controversy and division within the Lutheran Church until the majority of Lutherans settled their differences according to God’s Word by means of the Formula of Concord (1577, published in the *Book of Concord* in 1580). The controversies surrounding Melanchthon centered on human free choice in spiritual matters, the necessity of good works for salvation, the Lord’s Supper, and ceremonies neither commanded nor forbidden by Scripture (adiaphora). The tinder for most of these fires can be seen in this present volume. As I discuss them below, I am doing so as a confessional Lutheran, that is, as one who believes that the *Book of Concord* of 1580 (Latin, 1584) is a correct

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11 AE 54:439–440, Table Talk no. 5511.
exposition of Holy Scripture and who consequently rejects theological positions that conflict with it.14

**Synergism.** As early as the 1535 *Loci*, Melanchthon used statements that could support synergism, the notion that the human being by obeying (or at least not resisting) the Word contributes to his salvation. In the 1535 *Loci* he wrote: “We do not say this to ensnare the consciences, or to deter men from the endeavor to obey and believe, or from making an effort. On the contrary, since we are to begin with the Word, we certainly must not resist the Word or God, but strive to obey it. . . . We see that these causes are united: the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the will, which is certainly not idle, but strives against its infirmity. In this manner ecclesiastical writers are accustomed to join these causes. Basil says: ‘Only will, and God will precede.’ God precedes, calls, moves, assists us; but let us beware lest we resist. . . . Chrysostom says: He who draws, draws him who is willing.”15 Beginning in 1548, two years after Luther’s death, Melanchthon included a definition of free choice with which Erasmus, Luther's opponent on the question of free choice, could have agreed. Bindseil comments: “For in this addition (p. 85 extr.) an Erasmian definition of free choice is found: that it is ‘the ability to apply oneself to grace.’ Because of this, Melanchthon was accused of ‘synergism’ by the followers of Flacius. This passage was added after Luther’s death and is found in all the editions that followed this one, as well as in [Melanchthon's] Works (Wittenberg, vol. 1, fol. 167) and in the Latin *Corpus doctrinae*.”16 Melanchthon quotes this definition of free will from the fathers and agrees with it (CR 21:659). In 1555, Melanchthon was questioned by Johannes Brenz and others about these statements, and was questioned again at the Colloquy of Worms in 1557. Melanchthon answered that he did not write these things in order to favor the synergists. He explained that by these statements he was not understanding the fallen human will unaided by God’s grace. Instead, his intention was to direct these words against secure people who do not feel the sting of sin and of their conscience, who misuse the teaching about our natural inability to save ourselves, and who hold to a Manichaean opinion in which some people are predestined to eternal damnation without any consideration of their faith and life. Melanchthon explained that he intended to direct these words against people who denied the obligation that all people have to make use of the means of grace.

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Consequently, most of Melanchthon’s friends either approved of his words or excused them, and made the point that these sorts of statements were in the editions of the *Loci* that had appeared while Luther was still living. They explained Melanchthon’s definition of free choice, saying that “the will of man illuminated by prevenient grace and equipped with new powers, stirred up and helped by the Holy Spirit, is the ‘ability to apply oneself to grace.”17 Despite such explanations, Melanchthon’s statements, included in the present edition of his *Loci*, were ambiguous or misleading enough to require a thorough explanation in the second article of the Formula of Concord. There we read:

> [T]he pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession have taught and contended that by the fall of our first parents man was so corrupted that in divine things pertaining to our conversion and the salvation of our souls he is by nature blind, that, when the Word of God is preached, he neither does nor can understand it, but regards it as foolishness; also, that he does not of himself draw nigh to God, but is and remains an enemy of God, until he is converted, becomes a believer, is regenerated and renewed, by the power of the Holy Ghost through the Word when preached and heard, out of pure grace, without any cooperation of his own.18

**Predestination.** Melanchthon’s view of predestination or election is closely related to his view of free choice. In his locus on predestination included in editions from 1543 through 1559, Melanchthon stated: “God has chosen us because He has decreed to call us to the knowledge of His Son, and He wills to make known to the human race His will and His blessings. Therefore He gives approval to and elects those who are obedient to His call.”19 And in the locus on free choice, in the part added in 1548 and included through 1559, he wrote: “Since the promise is universal and since in God there are not conflicting wills, it is necessary that there is some cause within us for the difference as to why Saul is rejected and David received, that is, there must be a different action on the part of the two men.”20 That is, according to Melanchthon, the determining factor for why some people are predestined to salvation and other people are predestined to condemnation lies within human beings themselves. Article XI of the Formula of Concord corrected this view and charted a course between Calvinist absolute double predestination and Melanchthon’s doctrine of a predestination that is a result of human compliance with the call of the Gospel: “And in this His counsel, purpose, and ordination God has prepared salvation not only

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18 FC SD II 5, in Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 881.
20 Below, p. 63; CR 21:659–70.
in general, but has in grace considered and chosen to salvation each and every person of the elect who are to be saved through Christ, also ordained that in the way just mentioned He will, by His grace, gifts, and efficacy, bring them thereto, aid, promote, strengthen, and preserve them.21

Good Works. Are good works necessary for salvation? This question became a source of much controversy in the years between Luther’s death and the Formula of Concord. As early as the 1535 edition of the Loci, Melanchthon had written that “good works are necessary for eternal life.”22 Controversy arose from this statement already at that time, and as a result, Melanchthon modified the wording in subsequent editions.23 In 1538, he revised the statement to say that “new spiritual obedience is necessary for eternal life,”24 and in 1543 he removed the words “for eternal life.” But at the same time, he retained the statement that good works are necessary to retain faith (CR 21:775). Certainly, his intention was to highlight what Luther had correctly written in the Smalcald Articles (abbreviated “SA”) III III 43–44: that manifest sins such as adultery, murder, and blasphemy drive away faith and the Holy Spirit. But stated the other way around, Melanchthon’s statements seemed to say that human beings contribute to the retention of salvation by their works. The teaching that good works are necessary for salvation returned in the Leipzig Interim, which for a while in 1548 looked like it would become the ecclesiastical law of the land. Melanchthon gradually became aware of the danger of such ways of speaking. In December 1553, he wrote: “New obedience is necessary; . . . but when it is said: New obedience is necessary to salvation, the Papists understand that good works merit salvation. This proposition is false; therefore I relinquish this mode of speech.”25 His opponents were not satisfied, however. Finally, in the fourth article of the Formula of Concord, the Church of the Augsburg Confession defined:

Accordingly, and for the reasons now enumerated, it is justly to remain settled in our churches, namely, that the aforesaid modes of speech should not be taught, defended, or excused, but be thrown out of our churches and repudiated as false and incorrect, and as expressions which were renewed in consequence of the Interim, originated from it, and were drawn into discussion in times of persecution, when there was especial need of a clear, correct confession against all sorts of corruptions and adulterations of the article of justification.26

21 FC SD XI 23, in Triglot Concordia, 1069.
22 “bona opera ita necessaria sunt ad vitam aeternam” (CR 21:429).
24 “haec nova spiritualis obedientia ita necessaria est ad vitam aeternam” (CR 21:429).
26 FC SD IV 29, in Triglot Concordia, 947.
**Lord’s Supper.** The doctrine of the Lord’s Supper became a huge controversy among Lutherans and also between Lutherans and the Reformed (followers of John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli). Among the Lutherans, it became obvious that Melanchthon did not agree with Luther’s doctrine of the Supper. Melanchthon’s eucharistic theology was characterized by his refusal to say that the bread in the sacrament is the body of Christ and the wine is His blood, as Luther had taught (SA III VI 1). Instead, the body and blood are with the bread and wine, according to Melanchthon.27 In the last years of Melanchthon’s life, from 1552–60, a public controversy raged with regard to the Lord’s Supper. Melanchthon rejected the teaching of Joachim Westphal and the ministers of Hamburg, who said that the bread in the Lord’s Supper is properly called the body of Christ and that the wine is properly called the blood of Christ. Melanchthon rejected this view as entailing “bread worship.”28 F. Bente relates:

In the Opinion requested by the Elector, dated November 1, 1559, Melanchthon said: “To answer is not difficult, but dangerous. . . . Therefore I approve of the measure of the illustrious Elector, commanding silence to the disputants on both sides [Hesshusius and the Calvinist Klebitz], lest dissension occur in the weak church. . . . The contentious men having been removed, it will be profitable that the rest agree on one form of words. It would be best in this controversy to retain the words of Paul: ‘The bread which we break is the communion (κοινωνία) of Christ.’ Much ought to be said concerning the fruit of the Supper to invite men to love this pledge and to use it frequently. And the word ‘communion’ must be explained: Paul does not say that the nature of the bread is changed, as the Papists say; he does not say, as those of Bremen do, that the bread is the substantial body of Christ; he does not say that the bread is the true body of Christ, as Hesshusius does; but that it is the communion, i.e., that by which the union occurs (consociatio fit) with the body of Christ, which occurs in the use, and certainly not without thinking, as when mice gnaw the bread. . . . The Son of God is present in the ministry of the Gospel, and there He is certainly efficacious in the believers, and He is present not on account of the bread, but on account of man, as He says, ‘Abide in Me and I in you.’ Again: ‘I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.’ And in these true consolations He makes us members of His, and testifies that He will raise our bodies. Thus the ancients explain the Lord’s Supper” (C.R. 9, 961). No doubt, Calvin, too, would readily have subscribed to these ambiguous and indefinite statements.29

This is the background for why Melanchthon said so little in his locus on the Lord’s Supper. Already in the 1530s, Melanchthon had come to agree with

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29 Bente, "Historical Introductions," 180.
Martin Bucer’s view of the Supper, in which the bread is not the body of Christ, the body is not really connected with the bread, but rather the body is received in the Sacrament together with the bread. In 1540, Melanchthon altered the tenth article of the Augsburg Confession, on the Lord’s Supper, by removing the condemnation of opposing views.

In looking at the 1559 locus on the Lord’s Supper, one could ask whether there is anything here with which Calvin could disagree. Melanchthon writes: “Christ is truly present. Through this ministry He gives His own body and blood to those who eat and drink.” But Melanchthon does not discuss the Lord’s Words of Institution (e.g., Matt. 26:26–28). He does not reject a merely spiritualistic view of the “true presence” of Christ’s body and blood. On the other hand, nor does he polemicize against his Lutheran opponents. He always treats the Supper as a “ceremony.” His focus is on avoiding Roman Catholic abuses of the Sacrament, and so the principle that there is no Sacrament outside of the use instituted by Christ appears in the fourth point (below, p. 277; CR 21:869). That is, for Melanchthon, the abuse of the Sacrament makes it no sacrament at all. Overall, Melanchthon’s teaching on the Lord’s Supper in the 1559 Loci is not so much wrong as it is incomplete. The deficiencies would be remedied in the seventh article of the Formula of Concord.

Adiaphora. Locus 21, on ceremonies, dates from 1544, as can be seen toward the end of this locus itself: “Now we are in the 1,544th year after the birth of Christ.” This locus did not cause the controversy on “adiaphora” that was settled in the tenth article of the Formula of Concord. In and of itself, there is nothing in locus 21 that conflicts with FC X. This locus agrees also with Melanchthon’s earlier statements on ceremonies, as seen in Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession and of its Apology. Rather than this locus, Melanchthon’s compliance with the reinstitution of some Roman Catholic ceremonies in the so-called “Leipzig Interim” (December 1548) was what led to the controversy on “adiaphora” among Lutherans in the mid-sixteenth century.

Despite the controversies that arose from Melanchthon’s teaching both within the Loci and outside of them, this text continued to be highly esteemed among Lutherans. One of the fathers of the Formula of Concord, Martin Chemnitz, lectured on this text. His successor, Polycarp Leyser, took care to print not only Chemnitz’s lectures but also the latest edition of Melanchthon’s Loci as well, even though Chemnitz clearly refuted Melanchthon’s position at certain points. The Loci continued to be used as a theology textbook in electoral Saxony until Leonhard Hutter’s Compendium

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30 See below, p. 271; CR 21:863.
locorum theologicorum (1610) replaced it, thirty years after the Book of Concord was published. Even in our day, Melanchthon has solid, biblical teaching, aimed at consoling Christian hearts and kindling in them the love of God and of their neighbor.

Dr. Preus’s translation of the 1559 Loci has stood beside two other translations of different editions of Melanchthon’s great work. Clyde Manschreck translated the 1555 German edition of Melanchthon’s Loci, which itself was Melanchthon’s own translation, and Lowell Satre and Wilhelm Pauck translated the 1521 Latin Loci. May this new edition of the 1559 Loci, the final stage of the Praeceptor’s theology textbook, stand in honor beside them.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes


rites were not members of the church. These examples from history were written to teach the difference between the true and false church.

And now these words are part of the definition: “In which assembly God, through the ministry of the Gospel, is efficacious.” There are two noteworthy elements, not to be omitted, whenever a definition of the church is formulated. For we must not imagine the church without some knowledge of the promise concerning Christ and without the ministry; the church is not in an assembly where there is neither knowledge of the promise of Christ nor the voice nor the ministry of the Gospel. Therefore Aristides, Cicero, and others like them are not members of the church, even though they have outstanding civil virtues which God gives for the sake of rulers, for so long as He wills that the human race remain in this life. But these statements testify that there must be the knowledge of Christ in the church of God. See John 3:18, 36; 17:17; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 10:14.

Eph. 4:11, Christ sitting at the right hand of God, “also gives some prophets, some apostles, some pastors, [and] some teachers,” and He clearly says that the ministry of the Gospel must be preserved, so that “it be not tossed about by various winds of doctrine” [cf. v. 14]. Just as the Gentiles, when they do not hear the Word of God, fall into frightful ravings and gradually devise other gods and many portents and many prodigious expressions of worship, the same thing happens to heretics, [such as the] Manichaeans, the Anabaptists, etc., because they abandon the Word of God.

Therefore we should know that the church of God is the assembly which is bound to the voice or the ministration of the Gospel. And outside of this assembly, where there is no voice of the Gospel and no invocation of Christ, there are no heirs of eternal life, as it is written, “There is no other name . . . by which we must be saved” [Acts 4:12]. Thus also Isaiah says in 8[:16], “Seal the law among my disciples,” that is, I see that great darkness will follow, but I pray You, O God, that You preserve the hearers of [Your] prophets and seal in them Your doctrine given to the prophets, so that the Word and the true understanding of the Word not be quenched. Some churches remain and these are this assembly which retains Your Word uncorrupted which they have received from the prophets.

Therefore Isaiah in 8:20 [cf. Vulgate] adds the words, “To the law and to the testimony. They who do not speak according to this Word shall not have the morning light.” For the will of God is not understood except through the Word which He has given, and God wills to be known and invoked as He has revealed Himself.

Then we must also add this, that God is efficacious through this ministry, that is, through the voice of the Gospel [as it is] heard, read, and pondered He moves [our] minds by the Holy Spirit, wants us to assent, aids
those who assent, and renews eternal life in them. Thus it is written in Rom.
1[:16], “The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who
believes”; and 2 Cor. 3[:8], “The new covenant is the ministry of the Spirit.”
These points contain the saving doctrine and comfort, that is to say, when
we know that the promise of eternal life is truly offered in this way through
the Word.

Nor should we imagine that there was faith in Socrates, Plato, Xenophon,
Cicero, and others like them, because they had a certain knowledge of the
law of God. For this is still not knowledge of Christ. But the church is simply
and completely bound to the promise of Christ. It is necessary above all
things to call upon the name of Christ, and in all those who are capable of
being taught there must be knowledge, invocation, and confession of the
Son of God. The church has been such since the beginning, from [the time
of] Adam, after the promise was given, an assembly sometimes large, some-
times small, which in confidence in the promise of God received the remis-
sion of sins and rightly called upon God.

But after this is established, that in the church there must be the voice
of the Gospel and the ministry, then questions arise regarding the persons.
Is the church bound to the bishops and their colleges, which are said to hold
the office of the ministry? Likewise, is [the church] bound to a regular suc-
cession of bishops and colleges?

I reply: The church is bound to the very Gospel of God, because, in
order that it may be proclaimed in the ministry, God raises up some men
from time to time who teach correctly, as it says in Ephesians 4, even if,
among these, some have more light, others less. But when the ministers
or bishops or colleges or others teach things which are in conflict with the
Gospel and the doctrine of the apostles, it is necessary to follow the rule
of Paul: “If any one teach another Gospel, let him be accursed” [Gal. 1:8].
From this rule we can judge that the church is not bound to certain titles or
a regular succession. For when those who hold the power of orders err, they
must not be heeded.

This statement is correct, but unwelcome to political people who see dis-
putes arising thence [and] therefore, with an eye on rulers and human states,
transform the church by imitation into a kingdom. Just as the kingdom of
France is the mass of people subject to the French king, who in their laws
and places of law courts are distinct from other nations, fortified by gar-
risons, bound to a regular succession of kings and of necessity in the courts
obedient to the laws and interpretation of the king, whose interpretation
has validity because of [his] authority, so also many imagine that the church
is the mass of people subject to the one Roman pope, distinct from other
nations by ceremonies which the popes have established, and bound to a
regular succession of bishops and to the interpretation of Scripture which the pope or councils have handed down. For since dissensions often arise regarding what has been written, they say that there must be another sure rule, that is the voice of a ruler, just as in a secular kingdom the voice of the king has the authority to interpret the laws. These things are plausibly said among rulers. For human reason loves this kind of picture of the church—a picture that is in agreement with secular opinions, and rulers understand that their authority is increased by this view, and they believe that this form is quite useful for peace.

The godly also know that in this imitation, or rather, unhappy imitation, there are many errors. We must agree that the church is a visible assembly, but it is not the kingdom of the popes but an assembly like a company of scholars. For God wills that the church not be absolutely hidden in secret places or that it be unknown, but He wills that it be listened to; He wills that His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, be acknowledged; He wills that He be invoked always by some part of the human race; He wills to gather out of the human race an inheritance for His Son. Therefore it is written, “Their sound has gone out into all the earth” [Ps. 19:4]. And Christ Himself says in Ps. 2[:7], “I will talk about the precept.” Therefore the voice of the Gospel and of the ministry of the Word will remain, and there will be some visible assembly of the church of God, but it will be like a school assembly. There is order, there is a distinction between those who teach and those who hear, and there are grades: Some are apostles, others are pastors, others teachers, and it is correct to understand the words, “Tell it to the church” [Matt. 18:17], of a visible gathering. But first we must see who the members of this visible church are. For those who condemn the clear truth of the Gospel and exercise violence to establish manifest errors are not members of this gathering, of which it is written: “Tell it to the church.” Nor, finally, should we accept this, that most of their decisions must be given preference. Because, though there are many who believe correctly and have kept the light of the Gospel, yet there are many more who openly contradict the Gospel either out of weakness or doubt, like the apostles themselves for a long time held on to the dream of a worldly empire. Therefore who will be the judge when a dissension arises about a statement of Scripture, since then there is need for the voice of one who settles controversy?

I reply: The Word of God itself is the judge and to it is added the confession of the true church. For some godly always follow the Word as the seat of authority, and with the confession of those who are stronger the weak are aided, as Christ says, “And you, when you are converted, strengthen your brothers” [Luke 22:32]. In this way controversies over doctrine are settled. And though the majority do not heed this true judge and the true
confession, as also ancient examples show often happens, God, the judge of
the church, finally settles controversy, destroying blasphemers, as when the
greater part of the Jews opposed Jeremiah and later the apostles, blasphem-
ers were finally destroyed.

There is, therefore, some difference between the judgment seats of the
church and secular judgment seats. For in the civil realm either the monarch
alone makes pronouncements by his own authority or the opinion of the
majority prevails in the senate. But in the church the position which is in
agreement with the Word of God and the confession of the faithful prevails,
whether they are more numerous or less numerous than the ungodly. Thus
the ancients condemned Paul of Samosata and later Arius. The judge was the
Word of God, that is, testimonies brought from the Gospel in good faith and
without sophistry which convinced all but a prejudiced judge; but still also
the weak were then greatly aided in expressing themselves by the confession
of the stronger, namely, of those who had heard the apostles or their dis-
ciples, that is those of whom it was clear that they had been faithful guard-
ians of doctrine, such as, Polycarp, Irenaeus, [and] Gregory [Thaumaturgus]
of Neocaesarea. Their disciples [in turn] had heard from them that Logos
indicates a person. Later they themselves, after comparing statements of the
Gospel, acknowledged that this was the natural meaning [of the statement]
which they had heard from [their teachers]. Some also not only learn from
those who went before them but also are strengthened as by those who are
stronger. Thus Peter of Alexandria refuted Meletius [and] cited the Gospel,
which very clearly teaches that fallen ones who amend their lives should be
received; but at the same time he was helped by the examples of the earlier
church which had always received those who had previously fallen.

Thus we declare regarding the baptism of infants: We have clear testi-
monies in Scripture which affirm that outside the church there is no salva-
tion. Therefore we bring infants into the church. Further, we are also aided
by the testimonies of the early church. Thus the Word of God is the judge
and to it is added the pure confession of antiquity. For God wills that in the
church there be the ministry of the [spoken] word. Hence we must heed
the church as teacher, but faith and prayer rely on the Word of God, not on
human authority. We must learn from the church that Logos in the account
in John 1 indicates a person, but we believe that the Son of God is by nature
God, and we call upon Him because He Himself revealed this and taught it
in the Gospel.

We must ponder this distinction, lest we despise the church when it
teaches, and yet we must know that the judge is the Word of God itself. Thus
we must beware of pitfalls in both directions: on the one hand, lest a tyranny
of corrupt practice be established, and yet on the other, lest we give free
rein to audacious minds which, if they will not heed the true church, devise
notions which do not have the testimony of any era in the church, as in our
time Servetus, Campanus, the Anabaptists, and many others have done. Let
us learn to love, respect, and honor the church when it teaches and seek the
testimonies of the church in its periods of greater purity, as is indicated in
a very lovely way in the allegory of Samson (Judg. 14:18), “If you had not
plowed with my heifer, you would not have discovered [my riddle],” that
is, unless you had heard the church, which is the guardian of the Word of
God, working in the ministry, the Word of God would be entirely unknown
to you. And Ps. 68:26, “Bless God the Lord in the congregations [churches]
from the fountains of Israel,” that is, from the ministry of the prophets and
apostles.

I have spoken of the definition of the church and of the question as to
where the church is to be sought, namely, wherever the voice of the Gospel
is proclaimed uncorrupted, especially where it pertains to the foundation,
as Paul says, that is, where the articles of faith are taught in their wholeness
and without corruption and where manifest cults of idols are not defended.
Now, since there is a great weakness even in the saints in this life, some have
more [and] some less light. Hence Basil, Ambrose, Epiphanius, Augustine,
Bernard, and many others, even if they correctly held to the foundation,
yet from time to time they said something ill-advisedly in regard to human
rites, so that by the practice of their era some of the contagion spread to all
people. Therefore Paul commands that we consider particularly the foun-
dation, and he indicates that many true members of the church have some
weakness and some failings.

[In 1 Cor. 3:11] he says, “No other [foundation] can be laid than that
which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.” In this statement he includes
the uncorrupted knowledge of all the articles of faith and the prohibition of
the worship of idols. Then there follows [v. 12] that one man builds on [the
foundation] gold, another straw. Thus Polycarp built gold on the founda-
tion, that is, he explained the necessary doctrine in his refutation of Marcion
concerning the essence of God, the cause of evil, and many other articles,
and he performed the acts of worship which had been commanded by God
and, above all, he governed the church well and adorned [his] confession
with marvelous steadfastness under torture. All of these things are included
in the word “gold.” But Basil and many others built straw on the founda-
tions. To be sure, they did retain the articles of faith, but they still estab-
lished monastic rites and preferred these practices to civil life and spread the
notion in the minds of people, so that they thought that [such things] are the

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2 Servetus and Campanus were both prominent Antitrinitarians of the era. Campanus was
also an Anabaptist. Servetus was put to death by Calvin for his views, and Campanus was
imprisoned.
worship of God. And then many erred much more when they imagined that such ceremonies merit the remission of sins.

Furthermore, Paul says [in 1 Cor. 3:13], “Fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.” For he is alluding to building material. Gold is not consumed by fire, but straw easily succumbs to flames and quickly burns up. Thus doctrine, discussed and disputed in [a time of] testing, remains true and necessary and comforts minds, as now all the godly joyously embrace the tested doctrine of the righteousness of faith and perceive it to be a great comfort. But on the other hand, the monastic rites disappear because they are now perceived as not being profitable either for knowledge of God or for morals. I have mentioned these things so that Paul’s statement may be carefully considered and so that human weakness which still is often observed in the true members of the church, may be lamented and that we may wisely judge the statements of writers and recognize what things are to be condoned and what things are not to be condoned.

In order that the difference between the church and [civil] states may be seen more clearly, let [this] comparison be made: In the empires of the world these three things are necessary: order, glory, and protection. Thus in the kingdom of France there is order, so that there is one king at whose death it is necessary to be subject to the one who succeeds in regular succession. Then there are certain laws and courts of certain places and ranks of the princes and the common people. The glory consists in the excellence of counsel and powers and in victories, because, since peace is never certain, as Plato says, in empires peace is an empty word. For either restless citizens or enemies always cause tumult. It is necessary that there be many glorious successes and victories for those who govern; otherwise rulers are quickly overthrown. Defenses are armies and the means necessary for domestic rule and for waging war.

These three things are different in the church than in empires.

1. There is order, because there is indeed one head, who gives life and eternal blessings to the church, namely, the Son of God. But this Head is not now seen with physical eyes nor does He hold an assembly limited to some single place; and though there is no [ranking] order, there is always the ministry of the Gospel. And by divine law obedience is owed to ministers of the Gospel in all matters which the Gospel prescribes. However, this order is not bound to a regular line of succession, but when the bishops and ministers defend errors and idols, they are to be avoided. Further, there are degrees of gifts, as when Paul excels Barnabas. These degrees must be considered, so that we may love and honor individuals adorned with their gifts.

2. The church does not always have secular glory, that is, material victories such as it had when Saul at the time of David overcame hostile armies,
but for the most part the church has been, is, and will be subject to the cross; and yet it has marvelous glory of wisdom and virtues and of many miracles which are not seen by the ungodly. Its highest honor is that it knows and prays to the true God. For there are always some true members of the church who keep the foundation, even if there is also a great number of weak people who, because they rightly invoke God, still have great honor. As for the rest, it was said above that they are not members of the church who stubbornly defend errors which conflict with the foundation, even if they use the name and title of the church as a pretext.

Then there are the great victories of all who rightly pray, because they are not destroyed by the traps of the devil, the terrors of tyrants, and other trials; and there are many daily miracles of frequent deliverance in great perils, many of which take place because of the prayers of the church; for example, Paul knows that he and his ship are saved by God, even if others thought that it was saved by chance.

A great glory is happiness in vocation, studies, counsels and judgments, just as on the other hand parricide of church or fatherland is the height of depravity and calamity and the turpitude to be avoided most of all.

3. Finally, there are no visible defenses of the church bound to certain places, that is, after the destruction of the [political] state of Israel the church in this life has neither kings nor armies nor any one certain or perpetual seat. Thus Christ says, “The Son of Man has no place to lay His head” [Matt. 8:20]. For it is the will of God that the church be under the cross, that its cases be evaluated in a different court, which are not the writings of the philosophers, but only revealed in the Gospel.

Now, though God does from time to time raise up certain kings for a time for the defense of the church, as He raised up Cyrus, Constantine, and others, yet He did not always join kingdoms to the church to defend it, but wanted it to pray and hope for the whole body’s defense from heaven, as it says in Isa. 46[:3–4], “I bear you in My womb . . . I shall also carry the aging church.” Hosea 1[:7], “I will save you not by bow nor by sword but by the Lord your God.” What is sadder than this sight? The church is at loose ends and [its] scholars are in exile. And though God provides fair reception here and there, yet the power of the enemies of the Gospel is greater, and it is uncertain how strong the defenders are and how long they will last. Cyrus fostered the church, Cambyses and Darius oppressed [it]. We should ponder this form of the church in order to understand the dangers and at the same time to learn that the church is gathered, preserved, restored, [and] defended not by human counsels or defenses, but by the power of God, just as in Paradise Adam and Eve again were delivered from sin and the tyranny of the devil. Therefore there is always present the Son of God as the guardian
of His church, as He said, “I am with you even to the end of the world” [Matt. 28:20].

Against the Donatists

We have described the visible church, in which we have said that there are many unregenerate mixed with the saints, but at this point it is necessary that the evil people be discerned. Some believe correctly in regard to doctrine, and they are not enemies of the Gospel or heretics, but they only have some weaknesses in morals. If such people have not been excommunicated, even though they are called dead members, they still are in the outward fellowship of the church, and when they carry out the duties of teaching or administering the sacraments, the ministries are valid and efficacious and one is permitted to use them.

Therefore we must vigorously attack the error of the Donatists, who contend that neither the Gospel nor any sacrament is efficacious if the morals of the minister are corrupt. In opposition to this error one must cling to clear views.

In Matt. 13[:47–48] Christ compares the church to a net in which are both good and bad fish. Likewise He says that the tares will remain in the church even to resurrection [Matt. 13:40]. Again, “As in the days of Noah,” etc. [Matt. 24:37]. From these statements it is clear that in the church there always was, is, and will be even to the resurrection a great number of evil people.

Therefore, since there are wicked people in the church and since hypocrisy cannot be recognized by human judgment, there can even be hypocrites in the ministry. Accordingly, faith would be made unsure if the power of the Gospel and the sacraments were to depend on the worthiness of the minister. Therefore we must understand that the Gospel and the sacraments are efficacious because of the promise of God [and] not because of the person of the minister. Christ therefore calls our minds and our faith away from the person of the minister to Himself when He says, “He that hears you hears Me” [Luke 10:16], as if He were saying that the Gospel is not yours and it is not your work to save the hearers, but it is God’s work, who in this marvelous way, when the voice of the Gospel is spread, gathers to Himself the eternal church. As John also says, “I baptize you with water, but another will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Spirit” [Matt. 3:11], that is, the Gospel and the sacraments are efficacious because of Christ and through Christ. There is also cited this statement of Christ, “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat,” etc. [Matt. 23:2]. These words mean that even if there are hypocrites in the ministry, yet the function itself is valid, if only they sit in the seat of
Moses, that is, they should teach the doctrine which has been given by God, they should not sit in another seat, and they should not set forth a doctrine which is in conflict with faith.

This whole case against the Donatists has been fully treated by Augustine in many books, and in [his] Epist. 166 [(105), PL 33.400–401] he repeats this argument: If the power of the Gospel and the sacraments should depend on the worthiness of the minister, our faith would be made unsure. Therefore, in order that faith might be certain, it is necessary to reject and condemn the fanatic ravings of the Donatists.

This error was also refuted by Gregory of Nazianzus who used this simile: The shape of the little image is the same, whether it be engraved on a gold or an iron ring. Likewise the ministry is the same, he says, whether good or evil men hold [the office]. It is necessary to point out these things regarding the Donatists, so that [the godly] may be fortified against such ravings and may learn to understand the power of the ministry. For also in our age the Anabaptists revive the errors of the Donatists and impiously reject ministries while professing that they have established a church in which there are no evil people, just like the Circumcellions, while actually they have brought together a large rabble of the worst thieves, as the example of Münster shows, which is a good reminder that good minds should exercise great care and diligence that they not approve false notions, and that they should consider that from one error manifold and incurable ravings gradually arise. Therefore what is to be done? Should open sins of ministers of the Gospel be covered up? I reply: Those who are polluted with open sins should be excommunicated by the common voice of the church, as Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 put the incestuous man out of the church. And Christ in Matt. 18[:17] says, “Tell it to the church.” And that strictness must not be relaxed, but if it is relaxed, yet the ministry is valid, as has been said.

Furthermore, the magistrates who bear the sword must use the laws to punish those crimes such as adultery, murder, and the like.

But in addition to public crimes there are weaknesses in the manners of all people; one is more wayward or more given to anger, another is more indulging or less temperate than he should be, another is more intent upon wealth, one is criticized for his pride, another for being dilatory. Finally all have some weaknesses of their own. In regard to these common behavior patterns, when [open] wrongdoing is not involved we should understand that the general rule for the godly person to follow is: Know [but] do not hate the manners of a friend. Again, “Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you” [Luke 6:37]. Again, “Love covers all sins” [Prov. 10:12]. And particularly must one be patient with the less-than-perfect manners of godly rulers and
teachers, as Christ commands us to wash one another’s feet [John 13:14], that is, to improve such weaknesses among us with mutual gentleness.

Now, it is common slanderously to exaggerate the faults of rulers; therefore the Holy Spirit so often commands us to honor them, as it is said so earnestly in the Epistle to the Hebrews [13:17], as if [the author] were saying that the task of governing in itself is difficult and troublesome, but when there is added to it the stubbornness of inferiors, the trouble doubles. For as Herodotus says, as much as war differs from peace, so much does sedition differ from war; thus it is harder for a ruler to fight both with his own [subjects] and with others, and in an otherwise difficult office he is hindered by the very ones by whom he should be helped. Therefore also Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:12–13, “We pray that you believe that those who rule excellently should be loved because of the ministry and that you should be at peace with them.” Finally, there are many precepts which deal with this matter. Even as Ham was punished [Genesis 9] for ridiculing [his] father, so [people] should understand that they will all pay the penalties to God if they are troublesome to ministers who teach them correctly if there be some weakness in manners, as it was said to Abraham, “I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you” [Gen. 12:3]. This pattern undoubtedly pertains to the church and those who teach correctly. Therefore we should understand that a person should not leave the church over the morals of the teachers nor should a schism be created if there is no error in doctrine.

But there are other evil people, polluted with false ideas, who defend godless doctrine and oppose the truth and kill pious men because of [their] profession of the true doctrine. Thus at the time of Jeremiah, [Judas] Maccabaeus, [and] Christ there were priests [and] their followers who openly contradicted the true doctrine and killed the saints. With such a group, even if it holds its power through tyranny, the saints should have no fellowship, and they have the right to be guilty of schism, because God’s command is, “Flee idolatry” [1 John 5:21]. Likewise, “If anyone will teach another Gospel, let him be anathema” [Gal. 1:8]. For this reason the apostles withdrew from Caiaphas and his company.

We must make a careful distinction here. The ministry is not changed, even if the morals of some are wicked, but when false doctrine is defended and idolatry supported, then the ministry itself is changed. Hence one must leave the ministry of those who corrupt the doctrine. And though the principal part of the ministry is teaching, yet sometimes also those who corrupt the doctrine possess a part of the ministry, such as the administration of one of the sacraments. Thus the Israelites retained circumcision, even though they later added ungodly practices. Caiaphas and the Pharisees retained circumcision, [and] though in other matters they embraced serious errors,
explained with these words: Sin is defect or inclination or action that conflicts with the Law of God and makes a creature guilty of eternal wrath, unless there is remission because of the Mediator.

**Free choice** *[Liberum Arbitrium]*, or freedom of will in God, is the ability by which God in His uprightness can, of His own accord and without any necessity or coercion, create things or not create, and make various works, and preserve created things or abolish them, and govern them in different ways according to His wisdom, yet in such a way that He does not depart from His own uprightness.

**Freedom of the human will before the fall** *[Libertas voluntatis humanae ante lapsum]* is the ability by which Adam was able to remain in the uprightness with which he had been created and to obey God, and without any coercion to turn away from God.

**Freedom of the human will after the fall** *[Libertas voluntatis humanae post lapsum]*, even in the unreborn, is the ability by which man can control his locomotive faculty, that is, to command his external members to do acts that agree with the Law of God or acts that do not agree or various acts of both kinds. But he cannot take doubts away from his mind and depraved inclinations from his heart without the light of the Gospel and without the Holy Spirit. When he is drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can obey and resist. Therefore there is greater freedom when reborn hearts are controlled by the Holy Spirit, as Paul says [Rom. 8:14]: “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” And then, freedom is the ability by which reborn man can obey the Holy Spirit who governs him, and cannot only control his locomotive faculty but can also keep movements that please God in the heart, if the Word of God and the Holy Spirit are added, and can resist by means of depraved movements, and can of his own accord without coercion depart from the Word of God and will things that are contrary to the Word of God. For example, Saul and David fell of their own accord, by their own will, and without coercion.

**The Gospel** *[Evangelium]* is the preaching of repentance and the promise, which reason does not know naturally but has been revealed by God, in which God affirms that He surely forgives the sins of those who believe in the Son, and He does this gratuitously, not because of any merits or worthiness of ours but because of the obedience of the Son, and He gives them the imputation of righteousness and reconciliation, in which the Son of God, by the voice of the Gospel, consoles and quickens the hearts of believers and frees them from eternal death and makes them
temples of God, after having given them the Holy Spirit, who hallows them and kindles movements such as the Holy Spirit Himself is, and gives to believers the inheritance of eternal life: that because of Him, gratuitously, they have the forgiveness of sins, the imputation of righteousness and reconciliation and the inheritance of eternal life.

**Virtue** [*Virtus*] in all of nature is the true conformity of the movements of the heart and of all powers with God, just as was revealed in the Law, and it is has to do with this principal purpose [*finem*]: that due obedience may be given to God and that He may be praised according to the passage [Matt. 5:16]: “Let your light shine before men, that they may glorify your Father in heaven.” And, indeed, it is the conformity that God Himself creates, since He is all in all, sowing His light toward us, and this is truly called “virtue.” For discipline in a depraved nature, even if it is aided by heroic movements, as in Scipio, nevertheless is only a shadow of whatever virtue it may be, covering the external deformity, as the leaves of a fig tree covered the deformity of Adam and Eve. Therefore virtue or discipline is the rational governance of the locomotive faculty according to the Law of God. In some it is stronger, in others weaker, just as in Scipio this virtue is stronger than in Alexander, even though heroic impulses are in both.

**Universal righteousness** [*Iustitia Universalis*] is obedience according to all laws, just as Aristides is named “righteous.” And Scripture often speaks in this way concerning the righteousness of the Law, when it wants universal obedience to be understood.

**Particular righteousness** [*Iustitia Particularis*] is the virtue that renders to each his own.

**Faith** [*Fides*] is assenting to every word of God that He has given to us and, in it, to the promise of grace promised because of the Son of God. By this assent the promise of the forgiveness of sins and of reconciliation is grasped. And it is trust, which rests in God because of the Mediator, by which we are lifted up among true terrors, we sense life and joy in God, and we come to God and call upon Him, having recognized His mercy and presence, crying out: “Abba, Father,” just as it says [in Rom. 5:1]: “Having been justified by faith, we have peace.” Again [Rom. 9:33]: “Everyone who believes in Him shall not be put to shame.” This is the true definition of faith. Paul speaks of it when he says [in Gal. 3:24]: “We are justified by faith.” And at the same time Paul includes knowledge and assent in the thinking power [*potentia cogitans*], and trust in the will. It should also be known that ideas function by grasping, but trust in the
heart and will is a movement by which we rest in the object grasped. The ancients said that faith is a virtue that grasps \textit{virtus apprehensiva}, because it forms images when it looks at an object. But the definition of faith is something else, since it is said only about the knowledge of the history, such as is in the wicked, which is knowing the history and assenting to it. This is not a whole faith, but mutilated, because it does not assent to the divine promise that pertains to you. The devils and Judas believe the promise of reconciliation is offered to others but not to themselves. Therefore they do not believe all the articles of faith, but they reject the article “I believe there is the forgiveness of sins,” that is, that it was promised for me too.

**Love** \textit{[Dilectio]} is obedience according to all the precepts of God with faith and trust in the mercy promised because of the Mediator, and joy in God. For it says in 1 John 5[:3]: “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” It does not displease me if this statement is applied to it: “God is love,” that is, God is the one who loves us supremely because of the Son in the same sort of order that His wisdom has sanctioned, and He makes in us the same sort of love and order that is in Him. Yet God the Creator and creatures must be discerned; for example, in an angel God creates wisdom and love, which are light created and kindled by God.

**Hope** \textit{[Spes]} is the sure expectation of eternal life, which will be given freely because of the Mediator, and it is the expectation of the soothing of calamities in this life according to the counsel of God. And notice the difference between faith and hope. Faith acknowledges, wills, and accepts forgiveness and reconciliation in the present, when hearts are made alive amid terrors through the Son of God, to whom they look by faith. Hope is wanting future liberation, which is not yet present, and resting in the future good that has been offered. For the will does not rest except in a demonstrated good, either present or future. It is customary to name these three the “theological virtues”: faith, hope, and love. But there are many others that are necessary in everyone, but which can be referred to these.

**Patience** \textit{[Patientia]} is wanting to obey God in enduring adversities, which He commands us to bear, and doing nothing because of grief against His commandments; not defecting from Him; not falling into desperation and the hate of Him; not unjustly harming people because of grief; at the same time also retaining faith amid calamity and the hope of God’s help, and in this faith and hope feeling the soothing of grief, as Paul says
Boasting [Gloria] is the approval of the conscience that judges rightly and the approval of others who judge rightly. Concerning this boasting, it says in 2 Cor. 1[:12]: “This is our boasting, the testimony of our conscience.” And in Gal. 6[:4]: “Let each one test his own work, and then he will have boasting in himself and not in others,” that is, let each one do the duties of his vocation rightly, because when he does it, he will have boasting in himself, that is, the truthful approval of an uninjured conscience; let him not desire to gain reputation in unjust ways, by the error of others, namely, by the foolish applause of the erring or by disparagement. For example, Fabius correctly boasts, that is, he has the truthful approval of his conscience, even if it displeases the multitude. This true approval of conscience is a good thing and something to be sought after, because it is truth, not a lie. And God wants us to be truthful in judging, as Joseph ought to affirm that he did not touch the wife of his master. Scipio ought to retain the distinction between honorable and shameful, and when he acted shamefully, he ought to reject the act. And by the order implanted by God even in nature, rejection is followed by grief in the heart. Again, when he acted rightly, he ought to acknowledge what was done rightly and what was done honorably from the contrary. And approval that judges rightly is followed by joy in the heart. By the wisest counsels of God, this was established in such a way that man would understand the distinction between honorable and shameful, and from this would discern God from other natures and acknowledge sins and control his behavior. Therefore Solomon said [in Prov. 22:1]: “A good name is better than great riches.” Therefore boasting, according to this true definition, is something good, which should be sought. Augustine's saying is well-known: “I need a good conscience because of God; I need a good reputation because of my neighbor.”

One should diligently consider that this definition mentions “right judgment.” Many things are included here. Alexander does not judge rightly when he thinks he has so many victories by his own powers, when he does not rightly call upon God, and when he does not show thankfulness to God, but rather takes the license to do all wicked crimes because of his successes and oppresses others unjustly, etc. He errs in judgment and attributed more to himself then was due. Thraso’s vanity can be seen more clearly. He does not judge rightly because he lies openly, attributing falsities to himself. But Joseph judges rightly, for he keeps the order and knows that a person is righteous through mercy because of the