

Anabaptist History (Day 9) Michael Sattler and the Schleitheim Confession

Leonhard Schiemer
Source: Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia

Leonhard Schimer was brought up at Vöcklabruck and Vienna by God-fearing parents, and desired to enter the Catholic priesthood. But when he found little godliness in the life and teaching of the priests he joined the Barefoot Friars (Franciscans), noted for their piety. But again he found nothing but strife and hypocrisy; finally, having tried this life for six years he fled from the monastery at Judenburg, Styria. A kind citizen of that city gave him some clothing and a guilder for his needs. Now he began to wander about: first he went toNürnberg where he learned the tailor's trade (and probably met some of the leading men of the Radical Reformation). Thence he went to Nikolsburg, Moravia, to hear Hubmaier's teachings —having vigorously opposed them in his former days. From here he turned to Vienna to learn more about true Christianity from Hans Hut.

He was an early Anabaptists “Apostle/Evangelist “ He was arrested for his evangelism and eventually martyred. He was also a very spiritual writer. He stressed the necessity of having the inward presence of Christ within us to be considered real “Christians.”

His most famous quote about “The Flask.” John Howard Yoder considered this quote the golden gem of early Anabaptism:



- "A reply to those who say we drink something from a small flask, of which the devil himself does not know what it contains. ‘Very well, says Schiemer, let it be called a flask. But the drink in it is nothing but a contrite, crushed, and sad heart, pounded by the mortar of the cross. The grapes in it grew in God's vineyard and were pressed under the press of tribulation. From such a flask Christ drank on the cross. And as a flask is narrow at the top but wide at the bottom, thus is also the way of salvation: once a man has overcome all agony and tribulation the flask gets wide and he receives God's comfort and consolation.”

Schiemer teaches three kinds of grace:

The first grace is the Word given us by the Father as a divine light (the law). This divine light in man shows him what sin is (anzeigen was sind sey oder nit). Although this light is the same in all men, not all accept it and use it in the same way .

The second grace is Christ or divine righteousness (Gerechtigkeit). The first light is our taskmaster (Zuchtmeister), preparing us for the other light which is Christ (apparently Christ in us). But in order to see this second light one needs to go through the "furnace of suffering" (Luther: Feuer der Trübsal, Ecclesiastes 2:5, also I Peter 1:7, "gold tested by fire"; the Anabaptists changed the word into Schmelzofen der Gelassenheit), "for the uncrucified Christ is like untried metal" (Müller, 67 and 78). In other words, an untested faith is no faith at all. Thus the second grace might also be called "the cross."

The third grace, finally, is a grace of joy and rejoicing. It is the promise of the Holy Spirit and His glory. While the life of the "world" begins merrily but ends sadly, the life of a God-fearing man has a sad beginning but eventually the Holy Spirit comes to him anointing him with the oil of unspeakable joy.

With three graces he taught three baptisms:
As there are three kinds of grace there are also three kinds of baptism, well known from the Scriptures themselves: the first baptism is with the **Holy Spirit**, the second is with **water**, and the third with **blood**. Baptism with water is a confirmation of faith and an inner covenant with God. When one has written a letter he seals it. But no one would seal a letter without knowing what it contains. Whoever baptizes a child acts like a man who seals an empty letter.

He stressed the indwelling presence of God in us as our real salvation.



Michael Sattler:

"Michael Sattler was born about 1495 at Staufen near Freiburg in Baden." Educated at the University of Freiburg, Sattler entered the cloister of St. Peter near Freiburg as a monk, advancing to the position of prior of the cloister. As the prior it was his job to get the taxes from the Peasants.

In March of 1525 the Peasant revolt also take over St Peters Benedictine Monastery in the Black Forest. Through his studies of the scriptures and, no doubt, influenced by the new reformation theology in circulation, Sattler left the monastery in 1523 and was married. He marries Margaretta, a **former Beguin sister**. It was said that she was "a talented and clever little woman."



On November 6th, 1525, Michael took part in a disputation with Zwingli. This was the third disputation Zwingli had with his former disciples and he was losing his patience. The outcome was hardly in question. Michael was banished from Zurich and forced to promise, under oath, that he would not return. He labored in the faith in Horb and Rottenburg in Wurttemberg, later going to Strasburg in Alsace.

Michael and his wife then head to Strasbourg because of its reputation for religious freedom. Strasbourg won its independence from its ruler in the 13th and 14th centuries. Strasbourg had a democratic form of government. There in Strasburg he met **Hans Denk** and the reformed Protestant leader **Wolfgang Capito** and **Martin Bucer**. Capito likes Sattler and apparently wanted him to stay and work with them to bring in the reformation in Strasbourg.

Did Michael Consider Staying in Strasburg?

Eventually he realized that his conscience would not allow him to stay. Therefore he wrote the following letter:

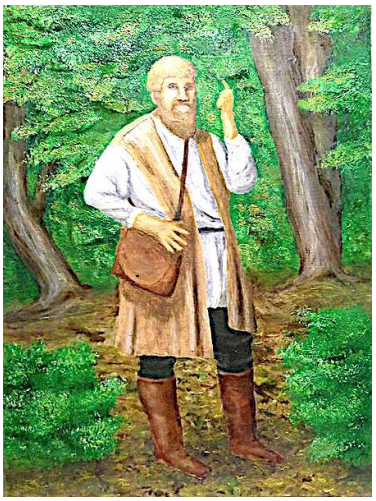
- "Grace and peace from God our Father through Jesus Christ our Savior. Dear brothers in God! As I recently spoke with you in brotherly moderation and friendliness on several points, which I together with my brothers and sisters have understood out of the Scripture, namely out of the New Testament, and you for your part as the ones asked, answered in similar moderation and friendliness as follows: Paul writes in 1 Timothy 1 that love is the end of the commandment, wherefore it is necessary that all of the commands of God be guided by the same. I am not able so to conceive, in my understanding and conscience, that this may be done as you do it with every point; namely with baptism, the Lord's Supper, force or the sword, the oath, the ban, and all the commandments of God. What hinders me is the following:
    - Christ came to save all of those who would believe in Him alone.
    - He who believes and is baptized will be saved; he who believeth not will be damned.
    - Faith in Jesus Christ reconciles us with the Father and gives us access to Him.
    - Baptism incorporates all believers into the body of Christ, of which He is the head.
    - Christ is the head of His body, i.e., of the believers or the congregation.
    - As the head is minded, so must its members also be.
    - The foreknown and called believers shall be conformed to the image of Christ.
    - Christ is despised in the world; so are also those who are His; He has no kingdom in this world, but that which is of this world is against His kingdom.
    - Believers are chosen out of the world; therefore the world hates them.
    - The devil is prince over the whole world, in whom all the children of darkness rule.
    - Christ is the Prince of the Spirit, in whom all who walk in the light live.
    - The devil seeks to destroy. Christ seeks to save.
    - The flesh is against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.

- Those who are spiritual are Christ's; those who are carnal belong to death and to the wrath of God.
- Christians are wholly yielded and have placed their trust in their Father in heaven without any outward or worldly arms.
- The citizenship of Christians is in heaven and not on earth.
- Christians are the members of the household of God and fellow citizens of the saints, and not of the world.
- But they are true Christians who practice in deed the teachings of Christ.
- Flesh and blood, pomp and temporal, earthly honor and the world cannot comprehend the kingdom of Christ.
- In sum: There is nothing in common between Christ and Belial.

Such considerations, and still much more of the same kind, which do not now come to mind, hinder me, my dear brothers, from understanding your general assertion on every subject—which you advocate with the words of Paul—cited above. Therefore, my beloved in God, I know of no comfort in all despair except to address a humble prayer to God the Father for you and for me, that He might be willing to teach us in all truth by His Spirit. Herewith I commend you to the Lord, for as I understand it, I can no longer remain here without doing a dishonor to God; therefore I must for the sake of my conscience leave the field to the opposition. I beg you herein, that you understand this as an act of Christian humility on my part. The Lord will ultimately dispose.

Be mercifully considerate, I pray you, of those who are in prison and do not permit a merciful judgment to be superseded by a blind, spiteful, and cruel one. Those who are in error (if that they were) are not to be coerced, but after a second admonition avoided. Christians admonish benevolently, out of sympathy and compassion for the sinful, and do not legalistically coerce persons [by torture] this way or that. May the Lord God have mercy on us all and give us His Spirit to lead us in the way, Christ Jesus, through whom we can again come into our kingdom, fatherland, and citizenship. The Lord be with all you dear brothers in God. Amen.

Michael Sattler, your brother in God the heavenly Father.



Now What?

Upon his failure to convince the most lenient and open Reformers, Bucer and Capito, Sattler went once again to the receptive and yet far more dangerous countryside in and around Horb and Rottenburg. These villages were located approximately seventy miles east of Strasbourg, in the still ardently Catholic area of Wurttemberg. (See Map in Cup and Cross pg 79)

Sattler was well aware of the need to somehow consolidate this flagging movement. The term "Anabaptists" was being loosely applied to libertarians, mystics, and even militant social rebels. Time may well be running out to implement the doctrines as agreed upon in Zurich by the Swiss Brethren.

On February 24, 1527, Sattler presided over a conference of Swiss Brethren held at Schleitheim in Canton Schaffhausen. He presented to this conference a document that clearly distinguished the differences between Anabaptism and the State churches, as well as differences with other rebaptizers who disobeyed Scripture. This document, called the Schleitheim Confession, was approved and adopted without a dissenting voice. It was copied and widely distributed in the underground Anabaptist communities. The confession was considered an important enough threat to the Reformers that both Zwingli and Calvin wrote separate works against it.

Michael Sattler Arrested:

Michael, Margaretha, and at least fourteen others were arrested on their way back to Horb in early March 1527. Soon after their apprehension, they were taken to the tower at Binsdorf. Michael was there until his trial at Rottenburg on May 15th.

Michael Sattler's Trial:

The following is a transcript from his trial, as related in Martyrs Mirror:

After a long trial on the day of his departure from this world, the articles being many, Michael Sattler requested that they would be read to him again and that he should have another hearing. This the bailiff, as the governor of his lord, opposed and would not consent to it.



Michael Sattler then requested permission to speak. After a consultation, the judges returned as their answer, that if his opponents would allow it, they (the judges) would consent. Thereupon

the town clerk of Ensisheim, as the attorney of said Governor spoke thus: "Prudent, honorable and wise Sirs, He has boasted of the Holy Ghost. Now, if his boast is true, it seems to me, it is unnecessary to grant him this; for if he has the Holy Ghost, as he boasts, the same will tell him what has been done here."

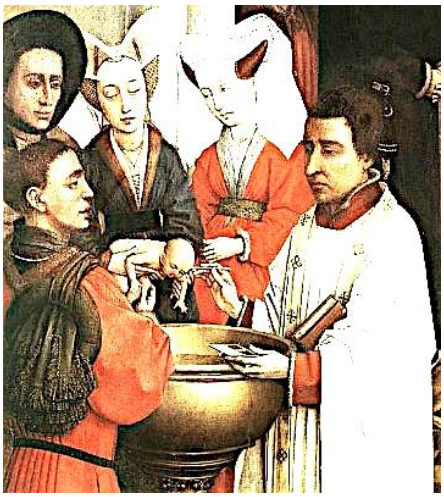
To this Michael Sattler replied: "Ye servants of God, I hope my request will not be denied; for said articles are as yet unknown to me." The town clerk responded: "Prudent, honorable and wise Sirs, Though we are not bound to do this, yet in order to give satisfaction, we will grant him his request that it may not be thought that injustice is done him in his heresy, or that we desire to wrong him; hence let the articles be read to him.
Articles or Charges Against Michael Sattler

- First, that he and his adherents have acted contrary to the mandate of the Emperor.
- Secondly, he has taught, held and believed that the body and blood of Christ are not present in the sacrament.
- Thirdly, he has taught and believed that infant baptism does not conduce to salvation.
- Fourthly, they have rejected the sacrament of extreme unction.
- Fifthly, they have despised and condemned the mother of God and the saints.
- Sixthly, he has declared that men are not to swear before the authorities.
- Seventhly, he has commenced a new an unheard of custom in regard to the Lord's Supper, placing the bread and wine on a plate, and eating and drinking the same.
- Eighthly, he has left the order, and married a wife.
- Ninthly, he has said that if the Turks should invade the country, no resistance ought to be offered them; and if it were right to wage war, he would rather take the field against the Christians than against the Turks; and it is certainly a great matter, to set the greatest enemies of our holy faith against us.

Thereupon Michael Sattler requested permission to confer with his brethren and sisters, which was granted him. Having conferred with them for a little while, he began and undauntingly answered thus:

- "In regard to the articles relating to me and my brethren and sisters, hear this brief answer:
- **First**, That we have acted contrary to the imperial mandate, we do not admit; for the same says that the Lutheran doctrine and delusion is not to be adhered to, but only the Gospel and Word of God. This we have kept; for I am not aware that we have acted contrary to the Gospel and the Word of God; I appeal to the words of Christ.
- **Secondly**, That the real body of Christ the Lord is not present in the sacrament, we admit; for the Scripture says: Christ ascended into heaven and, sitteth on the right hand of His heavenly Father whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; from which it

follows, that if He is in heaven, and not in the bread, He may not be eaten bodily. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9; Col. 3:1; Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1.



- **Thirdly**, As to baptism we say: Infant baptism is of no avail to salvation; for it is written **that we live by faith alone**. Again: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Peter likewise says: The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:17; Mark 16:16; I Pet. 3:21.
- **Fourthly**, We have not rejected the oil; for it is a creature of God, and what God has made is good and not to be refused; but that the pope, the bishops, monks and priests can make it better, we do not believe; for the pope never made anything good. That of which the epistle of James speaks is not the pope's oil. Gen. 1:11; I Tim. 4:4; James 5:14.
- **Fifthly**, We have not condemned the mother of God and the saints; for the mother of Christ is to be blessed among all women; for to her was accorded the favor of giving birth to the Saviour of the whole world. But that she is a mediatress and advocatess, of this the Scriptures know nothing; for she must with us await the judgment. Paul said to Timothy: Christ is our Mediator and Advocate with God. As regards the saints; **we say that we who live and believe are the saints;** which I prove by the epistles of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians; and in other places where he always writes: To the beloved saints. Hence we that believe are the saints; but those who have died in faith we regard as the blessed. Luke 1:28; Matthew 1:21; I Tim. 2:5; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Rev. 14:13.
- **Sixthly**, We hold, that we are not to swear before the authorities: For the Lord says: Swear not; but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay. Matt. 5:34; James 5:12.



- **Seventhly**, When God called me to testify of His Word, and I had read Paul, and also considered the unchristian and perilous state in which I was; beholding the pomp, pride, usury, and great whoredom of the monks and priests, I went and took unto me a wife, according to the command of God; for Paul well prophesies concerning this to Timothy: In the latter time it shall come to pass that men shall forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. I Cor. 7:2; I Tim. 4:3.
- **Eighthly**, If the Turks should come, we ought not to resist them; for it is written: Thou shalt not kill. **We must not defend ourselves against the Turks and others of our persecutors,** but are to beseech God with earnest prayer to repel and resist them. But that I said, that if warring were right, I would rather take the field against the so-called Christians, who persecute, apprehend and kill pious Christians, than against the Turks, was for this reason: The Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith; and is a Turk after the flesh; but you, who would be Christians, and who make your boast of Christ, persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks after the spirit.
- **In conclusion**: Ye ministers of God, I admonish you to consider the end for which God has appointed you, to punish the evil, and to defend and protect the pious. Whereas, then, we have not acted contrary to God and the Gospel, you will find that neither I nor my brethren and sisters have offended in word or deed against any authority. Therefore, ye ministers of God, **if ye have not heard or read the Word of God**, send for the most learned, and for the sacred books of the Bible, of whatsoever language they may be, and let them confer with us in the Word of God; and if they prove to us with the Holy Scriptures, that we err and are in the wrong, we will gladly desist and recant and also willingly suffer the sentence and punishment for that of which we have been accused, but if no error is proven to us, **I hope to God, that you will be converted, and receive instruction**." Wisd. 6:4; Acts 25:8; Rom. 13:4; Acts 25:11.

Upon this speech the judges laughed and put their heads together, and the town clerk of Ensisheim said: "O you infamous, desperate villain and monk, shall we dispute with you? The hangman shall dispute with you, I assure you."
Michael said: "God's will be done."

The town clerk said: "It were well if you had never been born."
Michael replied: "God knows what is good."
Town Clerk: "You arch-heretic, you have seduced the pious; if they would only now forsake their error, and accept grace."
Michael: "Grace is with God alone."
One of the prisoners also said: "We must not depart from the truth."
Town Clerk: "You desperate villain and arch-heretic, I tell you if there were no hangman here, I would hang you myself, and think that I had done God service."
Michael: "God will judge aright."
Thereupon the town clerk said a few words to him in Latin, what we do not know.
Michael Sattler answered him Judica.

The town clerk then admonished the judges and said: "He will not cease from this talk today; therefore my Lord Judge, proceed with the sentence; I will commit it to the law."
The judge asked Michael Sattler whether he also committed it to the law.
Michael replied: "Ye ministers of God, I am not sent to judge the Word of God; we are sent to bear witness of it, and, hence, cannot consent to any law, since we have no command from God concerning it; but if we can not be discharged from the law, we are ready to suffer for the Word of God whatever sufferings are, or may be imposed upon us all for the sake of the faith in Christ Jesus our Saviour, as long as we have breath within us; unless we be dissuaded from it by the Scriptures."



The town clerk said: "The hangman shall convince you; he shall dispute with you, arch-heretic."
Michael: "I appeal to the Scriptures."
Then the judges arose, and went into another room, where they remained for an hour and a half, and determined on the sentence. Matt. 6:10; John 16:2; I Cor. 4:5; John 1:8; Job 27:3; Acts 25:11.

In the meantime, some in the room treated Michael Sattler most unmercifully, heaping reproach upon him.
One of them said: "What have you in expectation for yourself and the others, that you have so seduced them?" With this, he also drew forth a sword which lay upon the table, saying: "See,

with this shall they dispute with thee." But Michael did not answer upon a single word concerning his person, but willingly endured it all.
One of the prisoners said: "We must not cast pearls before swine." Matt. 27:14; 7:6.
Being also asked, why he had not remained a lord in the convent,
Michael answered: "According to the flesh I was a lord; but it is better so." He did not say more than what is recorded here, and this he spoke fearlessly.
The judges having returned to the room, the sentence was read. It was as follows:

"In the case of the Governor of his Imperial Majesty versus Michael Sattler, judgment is passed, that Michael Sattler shall be delivered to the executioner, who shall lead him to the place of execution, and cut out his tongue; then throw him upon a wagon, and there tear his body twice with red hot tongs; and after he has been brought without the gate, he shall be pinched five times in the same manner."

After this had been done in the manner prescribed, he was burned to ashes as a heretic. His fellow brethren were executed with the sword, and the sisters drowned. His wife, also, after being subjected to many entreaties, admonitions and threats, under which she remained very steadfast, was drowned a few days afterwards. Done the 21st day of May, A. D. 1527.

The Noble Army of "Heretics", Bill Jackson, adds:
Michael Sattler, [an Anabaptist]...was 'committed to the executioner...[and taken] to the square and they first cut out his tongue, and then forged him fast to a wagon and there with glowing iron tongues twice tear pieces from his body, then on the way to the site of execution five times more as above and then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic' Sattler, who had given a true and skillful testimony at the trial, was thus handled. Even after the pieces were torn from his body and a part of his tongue cut out, Sattler still prayed for his persecutors and admonished the officials to repent and be converted. As he was dying, Sattler raised the two fore-fingers of his hands giving the signal to the brethren, as he had arranged, that a martyr's death was bearable. From his seared lips, the crowd heard him say, 'Father, I commend my spirit into Thy hands.' Then he fell asleep.



The plaque reads, *The Baptist Michael Sattler was executed by burning after severe torture on the 20th of May, 1527 here on the "Gallows Hill". He died as a true witness of Jesus Christ. His wife Margaretha and other members of the congregation were drowned and burned. They acted"*

- *for the baptism of those who want to follow Christ*
- *for an independent congregation of the faithful*
- *for the peaceful message of the Sermon on the Mount*

Michael Sattler's final words were: "...I have not been sent to judge the word of God. We have been sent to bear witness to it. That is why we will submit to no other law....in that we cannot escape the judgement of this court we are ready to suffer the suffering that is our lot for the good of the Word of God.

Congregational Order:

Earliest Anabaptists confession possibly written in Zollokon, Switzerland.

Since the almighty eternal and merciful God has made His wonderful light break forth in this world and [in this] most dangerous time, we recognize the mystery of the divine will, that the Word is preached to us according to the proper ordering of the Lord,[70] whereby we have been called into His fellowship. Therefore, according to the command of the Lord and the teachings of His apostles, in Christian order, we should observe the new commandment,[71] in love one toward another, so that love and unity may be maintained, which all brothers and sisters of the entire congregation should agree to hold to as follows:

1. The brothers and sisters should meet at least three or four times a week, to exercise themselves, in the teaching of Christ and His apostles and heartily to exhort one another to remain faithful to the Lord as they have pledged.

2. When the brothers and sisters are together, they shall take up something to read together. The one to whom God has given the best understanding shall explain it,[74]the others should be still and listen, so that there are not two or three carrying on a private conversation, bothering the others. The Psalter shall be read daily at home.

3. Let none be frivolous in the church of God, neither in words nor in actions. Good conduct shall be maintained by them all also before the heathen.

4. When a brother sees his brother erring, he shall warn him according to the command of Christ, and shall admonish him in a Christian and brotherly way, as everyone is bound and obliged to do out of love.

5. Of all the brothers and sisters of this congregation none shall have anything of his own, but rather, as the Christians in the time of the apostles held all in common, and especially stored up a common fund, from which aid can be given to the poor, according as each will have need, and as in the apostles' time permit no brother to be in need.

6. All gluttony shall be avoided among the brothers who are gathered in the congregation; serve a soup or a minimum of vegetable and meat, for eating and drinking are not the kingdom of heaven.



7. The Lord's Supper shall be held, as often as the brothers are together, thereby proclaiming the death of the Lord, and thereby warning each one to commemorate, how Christ gave His life for us, and shed His blood for us, that we might also be willing to give our body and life for Christ's sake, which means for the sake of all the brothers.

Schleitheim Confession 1527

Cover Letter

[NOTE: this translation was done by John H. Yoder, based on a version of the text prepared by Heinold Fast for *Quellen zur Geschichte der Taufer in der Schweiz,* and published by Herald Press in 1977].

“May joy, peace, mercy from our Father, through the atonement[1] of the blood of Christ Jesus, together with the gift of the Spirit -- who is sent by the Father to all believers to [give] strength and consolation and constance in all tribulation until the end, Amen, be with all who love God and all children of light, who are scattered everywhere, wherever they might have been placed by God our Father, wherever they might be gathered in unity of spirit in one God and Father of us all; grace and peace of heart be with you all. Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord; first and primordially we are always concerned for your consolation and the assurance of your conscience (which was sometime confused), so that you might not always be separated from us as aliens and by right almost completely excluded,[3] but that you might turn to the true implanted members of Christ, who have been armed through patience and the knowledge of self, and thus be again united with us in the power of a godly Christian spirit and zeal for God.

It is manifest with what manifold cunning the devil has turned us aside, so that he might destroy and cast down the work of God, which in us mercifully and graciously has been partially begun. But the true Shepherd of our souls, Christ, who has begun such in us, will direct and teach the same unto the end, to His glory and our salvation, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters, we who have been assembled in the Lord at Schleitheim on the Randen make known, in points and articles, unto all that love God, that as far as we are concerned, we have been united[6] to stand fast in the Lord as obedient children of God, sons and daughters, who have been and shall be separated from the world in all that we do and leave undone, and (the praise and glory be to God alone) uncontradicted by all the brothers, completely at peace.[7] Herein we have sensed the unity of the Father and of our common Christ as present with us in their Spirit. For the Lord is a Lord of peace and not of quarreling, as Paul indicates.[8] So that you understand at what points this occurred, you should observe and understand [what follows]:

A very great offense has been introduced by some false brothers among us, whereby several have turned away from the faith, thinking to practice and observe the freedom of the Spirit and of Christ. But such have fallen short of the truth and (to their own condemnation) are given over to the lasciviousness and license of the flesh. They have esteemed that faith and love may do and permit everything and that nothing can harm nor condemn them, since they are "believers."

Note well, you members of God in Christ Jesus, that faith in the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ is not thus formed; it produces and brings forth no such things as these false brothers and sisters practice and teach. Guard yourselves and be warned of such people, for they do not serve our Father, but their father, the devil.

But for you it is not so; for they who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with all its lusts and desires.You understand me well, and [know] the brothers whom we mean. Separate yourselves from them, for they are perverted. Pray the Lord that they may have knowledge unto repentance, and for us that we may have constance to persevere along the path we have entered upon, unto the glory of God and of Christ His Son. Amen."

The Seven Articles:

The articles we have dealt with, and in which we have been united,[15] are these: baptism, ban, the breaking of bread, separation from abomination, shepherds in the congregation, the sword, the oath.

Notice concerning baptism

I. Notice concerning baptism. Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and the amendment of life and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that they might rise with Him; to all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us; hereby is excluded all infant baptism, the greatest and first abomination of the pope. For this you have the reasons and the testimony of the writings and the practice of the apostles.[16] We wish simply yet resolutely and with assurance to hold to the same.

We have been united as follows concerning the ban

II. We have been united as follows concerning the ban. The ban shall be employed with all those who have given themselves over to the Lord, to walk after [Him][17] in His commandments; those who have been baptized into the one body of Christ, and let themselves be called brothers or sisters, and still somehow slip and fall into error and sin, being inadvertently overtaken.[18] The same [shall] be warned twice privately and the third time be publicly admonished before the entire congregation[19] according to the command of Christ (Matthew 18).[20] But this shall be done according to the ordering of the Spirit of God before the breaking of bread.[21] so that we may all in one spirit and in one love break and eat from one bread and drink from one cup.

Concerning the breaking of bread

III. Concerning the breaking of bread, we have become one and agree[22] thus: all those who desire to break the one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all those who wish to drink of one drink in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, they must beforehand be united[23] in the one body of Christ, that is the congregation of God, whose head is Christ, and that by baptism. For as Paul indicates,[24] we cannot be partakers at the same time of the table of

the Lord and the table of devils. Nor can we at the same time partake and drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils. That is: all those who have fellowship with the dead works of darkness have no part in the light. Thus all those who follow the devil and the world, have no part with those who have been called out of the world unto God. All those who lie in evil have no part in the good.

So it shall and must be, that whoever does not share the calling of the one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one spirit, to one body together with all the children of God, may not be made one loaf together with them, as must be true if one wishes truly to break bread according to the command of Christ[25].

We have been united concerning the separation

IV. We have been united concerning the separation that shall take place from the evil and the wickedness which the devil has planted in the world, simply in this; that we have no fellowship with them,[26] and do not run with them in the confusion of their abominations. So it is; since all who have not entered into the obedience of faith and have not united themselves with God so that they will to do His will, are a great abomination before God, therefore nothing else can or really will grow or spring forth from them than abominable things. Now there is nothing else in the world and all creation than good or evil, believing and unbelieving, darkness and light, the world and those who are [come] out of the world, God's temple and idols. Christ and Belial, and none will have part with the other.

To us, then, the commandment of the Lord is also obvious, whereby He orders us to be and to become separated from the evil one, and thus He will be our God and we shall be His sons and daughters.[27]

Further, He admonishes us therefore to go out from Babylon and from the earthly Egypt, that we may not be partakers in their torment and suffering, which the Lord will bring upon them. From all this we should learn that everything which has not been united[29] with our God in Christ is nothing but an abomination which we should shun.[30] By this are meant all popish and repopish[31] works and idolatry,[32] gatherings, church attendance[33], winehouses, guarantees and commitments of unbelief,[34] and other things of the kind, which the world regards highly, and yet which are carnal or flatly counter to the command of God, after the pattern of all the iniquity which is in the world. From all this we shall be separated and have no part with such, for they are nothing but abominations, which cause us to be hated before our Christ Jesus, who has freed us from the servitude of the flesh and fitted us for the service of God and the Spirit whom He has given us.Thereby shall also[35] fall away from us the[36] diabolical weapons of violence--such as sword, armor, and the like, and all of their use to protect friends or against enemies--by virtue of the word of Christ: "you shall not resist evil."[37]

We have been united as follows concerning shepherds in the church of God

V. We have been united as follows concerning shepherds in the church of God. The shepherd in the church shall be a person according to the rule of Paul,[38] fully and completely, who has a good report of those who are outside the faith. The office of such a person shall be to read and exhort and teach. warn, admonish, or ban in the congregation, and properly to preside among the sisters and brothers in prayer, and in the breaking of bread,[39] and in all things to take care of the body of Christ, that it may be built up and developed, so that the name of God might be praised and honored through us, and the mouth of the mocker be stopped.

He shall be supported, wherein he has need, by the congregation which has chosen him, so that he who serves the gospel can also live therefrom, as the Lord has ordered.[40] But should a shepherd do something worthy of reprimand, nothing shall be done with him without the voice of two or three witnesses. If they sin they shall be publicly reprimanded, so that others might fear.[41]

But if the shepherd should be driven away or led to the Lord by the cross,[42] at the same hour another shall be ordained[43] to his place, so that the little folk and the little flock of God may not be destroyed, but be preserved by warning and be consoled.

We have been united as follows concerning the sword

VI. We have been united as follows concerning the sword. The sword is an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ. It punishes and kills the wicked and guards and protects the good. In the law the sword is established[44] over the wicked for punishment and for death and the secular rulers are established to wield the same.

But within the perfection of Christ only the ban is used for the admonition and exclusion of the one who has sinned, without the death of the flesh,[45] simply the warning and the command to sin no more.

Now many, who do not understand Christ's will for us, will ask; whether a Christian may or should use the sword against the wicked for the protection and defense of the good, or for the sake of love.

The answer is unanimously revealed: Christ teaches and commands us to learn from Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart and thus we shall find rest for our souls.[46] Now Christ says to the woman who was taken in adultery,[47] not that she should be stoned according to the law of His Father (and yet He says, "What the Father commanded me, that I do")[48] but with mercy and

forgiveness and the warning to sin no more, says: "Go, sin no more." Exactly thus should we also proceed, according to the rule of the ban.

Second, is asked concerning the sword: whether a Christian shall pass sentence in disputes and strife about worldly matters, such as the unbelievers have with one another. The answer: Christ did not wish to decide or pass judgment between brother and brother concerning inheritance, but refused to do so.[49] So should we also do.

Third, is asked concerning the sword: whether the Christian should be a magistrate if he is chosen thereto. This is answered thus: Christ was to be made king, but He fled and did not discern the ordinance of His Father.[50] Thus we should also do as He did and follow after Him, and we shall not walk in darkness. For He Himself says: "Whoever would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."[51] He Himself further forbids the violence of the sword when He says: "The princes of this world lord it over them etc., but among you it shall not be so."[52] Further Paul says, "Whom God has foreknown, the same he has also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son," etc.[53] Peter also says: "Christ has suffered (not ruled) and has left us an example, that you should follow after in his steps."[54]

Lastly, one can see in the following points that it does not befit a Christian to be a magistrate: the rule of the government is according to the flesh, that of the Christians according to the Spirit. Their houses and dwelling remain in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven. Their citizenship is in this world, that of the Christians is in heaven.[55] The weapons of their battle and warfare are carnal and only against the flesh, but the weapons of Christians are spiritual, against the fortification of the devil. The worldly are armed with steel and iron, but Christians are armed with the armor of God, with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and with the Word of God. In sum: as Christ our Head is minded, so also must be minded the members of the body of Christ through Him, so that there be no division in the body, through which it would be destroyed.[56] Since then Christ is as is written of Him, so must His members also be the same, so that His body may remain whole and unified for its own advancement and upbuilding. For any kingdom which is divided within itself will be destroyed.[57]

We have been united as follows concerning the oath

VII. We have been united as follows concerning the oath. The oath is a confirmation among those who are quarreling or making promises. In the law it is commanded that it should be done only in the name of God, truthfully and not falsely. Christ, who teaches the perfection of the law, forbids His [followers] all swearing, whether true or false; neither by heaven nor by earth, neither by Jerusalem nor by our head; and that for the reason which He goes on to give: "For you cannot make one hair white or black." You see, thereby all swearing is forbidden. We cannot

perform what is promised in the swearing, for we are not able to change the smallest part of ourselves.[58]

Now there are some who do not believe the simple commandment of God and who say, "But God swore by Himself to Abraham, because He was God (as He promised him that He would do good to him and would be his God if he kept His commandments). Why then should I not swear if I promise something to someone?" The answer: hear what the Scripture says: "God, since he wished to prove overabundantly to the heirs of His promise that His will did not change, inserted an oath so that by two immutable things we might have a stronger consolation (for it is impossible that God should lie").[59] Notice the meaning of the passage: God has the power to do what He forbids you, for everything is possible to Him. God swore an oath to Abraham, Scripture says, in order to prove that His counsel is immutable. That means: no one can withstand and thwart His will; thus He can keep His oath. But we cannot, as Christ said above, hold or perform our oath, therefore we should not swear.

Others say that swearing cannot be forbidden by God in the New Testament when it was commanded in the Old, but that it is forbidden only to swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, and our head. Answer: hear the Scripture. He who swears by heaven, swears by God's throne and by Him who sits thereon.[60] Observe: swearing by heaven is forbidden, which is only God's throne; how much more is it forbidden to swear by God Himself. You blind fools, what is greater, the throne or He who sits upon it?

Others say, if it is then wrong to use God for truth, then the apostles Peter and Paul also swore.[61] Answer: Peter and Paul only testify to that which God promised Abraham, whom we long after have received. But when one testifies, one testifies concerning that which is present, whether it be good or evil. Thus Simeon spoke of Christ to Mary and testified: "Behold: this one is ordained for the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign which will be spoken against."[62]

Christ taught us similarly when He says:[63] Your speech shall be yea, yea; and nay, nay; for what is more than that comes of evil. He says, your speech or your word shall be yes and no, so that no one might understand that He had permitted it. Christ is simply yea and nay, and all those who seek Him simply will understand His Word. Amen.[64]

Anabaptist History (Day 10) The Swiss Brethren and the Doctrine of Torture and Persecution