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Of Faith.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, Part III.

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The righteousness of Christ, then, has been procured; but, as the apostle says, it comes "unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3, 22. He who keeps this in mind will be spared the vexations which the Wurttemberg superintendent Burk experienced. It seemed to him like a faulty circle: "I am to believe and thereby become righteous. But what am I to believe? This, that I am righteous. However, I cannot believe this before it is so. And yet it is not so, for I am first to become righteous." God be praised, the case is different. *This* we must believe, that Christ *has* redeemed us. And as God said to His covenant people through Isaiah: "I *have* redeemed thee, I *have* called thee by thy name; thou *art* Mine," Is. 43, 1, even so does He tell us through His apostle: "The handwriting that was against us is blotted out," Col. 2, 14; "He *purged* our sins," Heb. 1, 3; "We *are* reconciled," Rom. 5, 10. Eternal peace reigns; all strife is ended. Col. 1, 20. That saving faith apprehends *this* and nothing else St. Paul teaches in those texts in which he expressly and officially treats of justification. Rom. 4, 24. 25 he says that we are justified "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." And 1 Cor. 15, 1—4 he declares that one is saved by believing "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." And lastly, Gal. 2, 20, he describes his own faith as "the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is also the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession (Art. XII) and of the theologians.

"To believe" — what does that mean? Does it mean to take the death and resurrection of Christ for granted as one takes the battle of Pydna for granted? Most certainly not! Although it would be quite agreeable if Messrs. Strauss and Renan were ready

The Historical Significance of the Formula of Concord.

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II.

Four months after Luther's death, Duke Maurice of Saxony, in a secret treaty, made an agreement with the emperor to the effect that his administration would submit to the decrees of the Council of Trent, which had begun its sessions. A few days later the Pope contracted with the emperor that the latter begin to exterminate Protestantism; and in case this should lead to war, he was to receive considerable financial help from the Holy Father. Charles, whose world policy dominated his handling of local questions, by this time had his hands free to assert himself in the administration of German affairs. He determined upon a policy of strictly holding the members of the empire to the agreements they had made or to the edicts he had given. The Smalcald War was termed by him a punitive expedition to avenge the violations of the Regensburg agreement. His victorious conclusion of the war filled him with confidence for future undertakings as regarded both his relations with the Pope and with the German princes and governments. With skill and firmness he worked at the plan of bringing the council, which had adjourned to Bologna, back to Trent. With grim determination he worked at the plan of making the Protestant estates willing henceforth to be represented at the council. The Elector of Saxony, the head of the vanquished Smalcald Alliance, was outlawed, and Duke Maurice was appointed executioner and rewarded with the land and the office of the victim. Yet Maurice was not willing that the next diet should go on record as indorsing the emperor's council idea. Subsequent developments showed the Pope to be rather reluctant to fetch the emperor's chestnuts out of the oven; not until 1551 did the council meet again at Trent. On the other hand, in spite of Regensburg and in spite of the war the adherents of Rome among the German churches had sunk to 10 per cent., 70 per cent. being under Lutheran and 20 per cent. under Reformed administration. Further growth at least must be prevented. Since the ecclesiastic forces did not function quickly enough, Charles himself undertook to reduce the march of Protestantism to "marking time."

In February, 1548, before the Diet of Augsburg, Charles gathered a few government representatives of Catholic and of Protestant sections who were to propose ways and means of secur-

ing at least a temporary unity. When these officials could not agree, he appointed Bishop Pflug of Naumburg, Bishop Holding of Mayence, and the Protestant John Agricola of the Brandenburg court a commission for the same purpose. These three agreed on the basis of a memorial brought along by Pflug. Before bringing it before the diet, Charles secretly submitted it to the Protestant electors and to eminent Catholic members of the diet, among them Duke William of Bavaria. Maurice refused assent. Brandenburg and the Palatinate assented because poor Agricola had thought the document to be merely a sort of armistice binding on all parties. The proposition was adopted by the diet, and its embodiment in the minutes, in summer of 1548, constituted it a law for the width and breadth of the land. It is the Augsburg Interim.¹⁾ However, before this official recording, in the middle of May, Charles had had a sort of meeting of the estates in his lodging. The introduction to the document contained an admonition to the Romanists loyally to adhere to the doctrines and institutions of the "old Church" and an admonition for the Protestants either to return to the "old faith" or to act according to the Interim.

The twenty-six articles of the Interim partly define articles of faith and partly describe and prescribe rules of life and for public worship. They treat of man before and after the Fall, of redemption by Christ, of justification, of Christian love and good works, of confidence in forgiveness of sin, of churches and the marks of true churches, of the power and the servants of the churches, of the supreme bishop and other bishops, of the seven sacraments (Baptism, confirmation, penitence, Communion, extreme unction, holy orders, matrimony), of the sacrifice of the Mass, of the saints, of the memory of the dead, of communion with the Mass, of ceremonies, and of the use of the Sacraments. The phrases used to indicate what until further notice was to be taught concerning justification were so skilfully worded that both the Romanist and the Lutheran conception might be covered by them as far as they went. But everybody knew that the same terms did not mean the same thing to the papal theologians as they did to those of the evangelical Church. Furthermore, the carefully chosen compromise was felt to cast a shadow on this all-important part of the Lutheran faith and to obscure it. Assuagement in the Augsburg Interim, as far as the statement about the way to eternal life was concerned, was equivalent to revocation.

1) Druffel, *Briefe u. Akten z. Gesch. d. 16. Jahrh.*, v. 3, p. 42 ff. *Dtsche Ztschr. f. Gesch. wiss.*, N. F., v. 2, p. 39 ff.

The reception given the Interim was denouncement both in Rome and in Germany. In Rome there was chagrin because the emperor had undertaken to write a confession of faith, which was not a civil function. Besides, the document made concessions to the Protestants which the hierarchy was not willing to make. Communion *sub utraque* was to be permitted, and marriage of the clergy was not to remove the incumbent. The hierarchy did not consider the fact that the Hussites had been granted the *utraque* when Rome could not help herself, and that in spite of Constance. Nor did they consider the fact that exceptions to celibacy had been granted before. The point was that Rome did not intend to make such exceptions any more; that she was determined to set up a set of iron-clad definitions of dogma and practise, all of which was to be entirely in harmony with the development of the papacy that she was bending every effort to interpret every neutral statement in line with her position.

Of course, her fear as to possible imperial thoughts of compromise or imperial plans of tolerance was groundless. Charles's plan was merely to throw a sop to the Protestant party. The Interim was terminated by the Treaty of Passau, which was turned into the Religious Peace of Augsburg, 1555. Here legal recognition was granted to the Church of Rome *and* the Church of the Augsburg Confession. But when, in the early fifties, Charles saw his power dwindle and the ship of state drifting toward toleration, that course was so objectionable to him that he chose to abdicate. Much less could he have had plans of tolerance in 1548, when he was at the pinnacle of his power. No, the time of the Interim was sedulously to be employed to force back those seven-tenths of his German realm into the *milieu*, the atmosphere, the habits, and the garments which they had gotten away from and to force upon the estates the recognition of the imperial *power*. His plan was to have his son Philip follow his brother Ferdinand and to leave to the Spaniard a Holy Roman Empire united politically as well as ecclesiastically — one country, one monarch, one Church.

So the Germans had to learn Spanish ways. Circumspectly, relentlessly, brusquely, Charles set about to have the authorities enforce the Interim.

What did the Protestant authorities think about it? In the modern Bavarian Palatinate on the Rhine there was a little conglomeration of cities ruled by young Wolfgang of Zweibruecken. When his deputy at the Diet of Augsburg heard about the proposed Interim, he immediately reported back, "Our religion is done for."

Wolfgang's other representative was present at that meeting in the imperial lodging and protested, almost the only one.²⁾ In a touching letter Wolfgang explained to Charles why he could not accept the Interim. By parents and guardians he had been trained in the religion of the Augsburg Confession, and he believed it to be the true religion. He would willingly obey the emperor in temporal matters; but would not His Majesty kindly consider how hard it is for any one with the fear of God in his heart to give up his religious conviction? He was earnestly considering with his counselors what parts of the Augsburg decree could be accepted with good conscience, and since it was a very important affair, he asked for some time to consider it (this was early in June).³⁾ Charles commanded his presence at Augsburg, where he arrived two days after adjournment. On the way he had found that two thousand Spanish soldiers were billeted in Heilbronn, ready to lend emphasis to Charles's arguments. In an interview with the emperor the twenty-two-year-old prince begged him to spare his conscience for God's sake and to relieve him at least of some requirements of the act. In vain. His clergy commission reported that the prescribed doctrine of the Interim, in all things that touched upon salvation, came close enough to the doctrine prevailing in his realm, while others, *e. g.*, the statement on good works, penance, transubstantiation, were decidedly to be rejected. They imagined that a way out could be found by proclaiming, as before, the teaching of the Bible without attacking the Interim. Some of the Catholic ceremonies might be introduced, namely, such as were adiaphora. But they emphatically declared against the reintroduction of the Mass. Communion might be celebrated every Sunday and holiday, also twice or three times a week, but not without the presence of some communicants. The required sacerdotal garments for the Mass might be worn by the clergy after preparing the people for the new spectacle. Corpus Christi processions were totally rejected, while they were ready to obey precepts of fasting if given by the government as civic ordinances. Continually prodded by Charles, the young prince explained to his pastors the duress of the situation and submitted the question to them whether they would be willing to act according to the Interim, telling them that otherwise the emperor would force them to give up their charges. And when their refusal was reported to the bishops and the bishops themselves

2) K. Menzel, *Wolfgang v. Zweibruecken*. Muenchen. 1893.

3) The letter is given in Druffel, p. 117.

were to furnish men willing to carry out the demands of the new law, the Archbishop of Mayence replied the best thing for Wolfgang, as well as for his preachers and his subjects, would be to return to the "mother" Church.⁴⁾

It is remarkable with what speed the imperial chancellery conducted its correspondence about the enforcement of the Augsburg law. In the archbishopric Cologne ten months had elapsed between the deposition of the former and the appointment of the new prelate. In its territory was the city of Lippstadt, ruled by Count Simon and Count Bernard. On the very same day which witnessed the enactment into law of the Interim, Charles directed a letter to these two, demanding the immediate submission under the act (June 30, 1548). The dates, after three months of negotiations, are October 11, 23, and 29, November 7, 10, and 12. The last-named date is the day when the ministers who could not submit had to leave the city.⁵⁾

In the territory of Cardinal Otto of Augsburg there were places which, like Nuremberg, had hopes of a modification of the Interim.⁶⁾ July 7 the emperor urged a quicker pace and demanded that recalcitrants be penalized and that orating against the decree be stopped. In the city councils the Protestants were in the majority; but they were elderly men, who gradually were supplanted by men of the new generation who knew nothing of the sigh of relief with which their elders, twenty-seven years previous, had welcomed the new-old message. The neighborhood had suffered severely from Spanish troops in the late war. The council feared for their citizenry and started the enforcement. But they also had to reckon with public opinion and therefore sent out questionnaires.⁷⁾ Though the result of this straw vote caused the council to issue quieting assurances, such assurances were always followed by stricter methods. August 11⁸⁾ fasting in Lent and on Fridays and Saturdays was ordered under severe penalties; masses were provided for, confession to the priest was to be made; Protestant baptisms were forbidden. In December, 1548, Cardinal Otto was asked by Charles to enforce the Interim in his diocese. Otto was an indefatigable and most energetic champion for the Curia, determined to win back the evangelical parts of his territory.

4) Menzel, pp. 81—85.

5) H. Niemoeller, *Ref.-Gesch. von Lippstadt*; Halle, 1906.

6) *Corp. Ref.*, 7, 81.

7) Beck, *Beitr. z. Regiments- u. Verfassungsgesch.*, 1882, p. 38.

8) Beck. Other reports give different dates.

Pleading for support on the part of the secular power for his "Christian purpose," he circularized — all towns? No, only the Protestant towns. In the circular he not only demanded obedience to the Interim, but frequent reports as to how it was obeyed: whether their clergy had received Roman ordination, whether extreme unction was applied in the Roman way; whether penance was made; whether Mass was read according to the old traditional form; how and to whom Communion was administered; whether masses for the dead were read. By November, 1549, the main churches were entirely given over to the full Catholic cult. The Protestant Communion altar was destroyed, and a Roman Catholic high altar was erected. Lutherans were excommunicated. That does not look like the establishment of a temporary *modus vivendi*.

The emperor had written to the German bishops: "The masses shall not depend on their own judgment more than is right, but shall submit to the judgment of the emperor."⁹) Quite in harmony with this was the action of several city councils in this diocese: religion seemed to them a police affair. In Dinkelsbuehl,¹⁰) within three years, 2,000 gulden were imposed as fine on Protestants for having taken babies to Lutheran pastors for baptism. Over a hundred citizens were exiled. When Lutheran inhabitants began to visit churches of their faith in neighboring towns, the bishop forbade worship outside of the city limits and demanded that the Roman services be attended by the Protestants.

These miniatures are not presented on account of cruel treatment shown. They prove that the Augsburg legislation in reality, practically, was a whip to drive sheep gone astray back into the fold.

The move was not successful, for the law found stubborn resistance in most territories. Philip of Hessen was willing to accept it as a price for regaining his liberty. John Frederick of Saxony, also a prisoner, steadfastly refused. The North German free cities, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Saxony, the Palatinate, Brandenburg, and other states refused to introduce the Interim as it read. Many, many considered the slightest concession to Charles a betrayal of their faith. Almost all the prominent Lutheran theologians denounced it. Philip Melancthon wrote *Bedenken aufs Interim*, 32 pages; Osiander, his *Bedenken auf das Interim, seinem erbarn Radt seiner Oberkeit ueberreicht*, 44 pages; Amsdorf, *Antwort, Glaub und Bekenntnis auf das schoene und liebliche*

9) Druffel, I, No. 300.

10) Buerkstuemmer, p. 134.

Interim, 40 pages; E. Alber, *Ein Dialogus oder Gespraech etlicher Personen vom Interim*, 128 pages; C. Aquila, *Wider den spoettischen Luegner und unverschempten verleumbder M. Eislebium Agricolam. Noetige verantwortung und ernstliche warnung wider das Interim*, 12 pages; C. Azaria, *Wider den schnoeden Teuffel, der sich itzt abermals in einen Engel des Lichts verkleidet hat, das ist, wider das neue Interim*, 24 pages; *Bekennnisse und Erklarunge up dat Interim dorch der erbarn Stede [cities] Luebeck, Hamborch, Luenenborch . . . Superintendenten* (I. Crepinus), printed in Hamburg and Magdeburg. Also caricaturists and satirists lent pencil and pen to decry the ukase; e. g., *Pasquillus continens analysin seu expositionem adverbii Interim, quae est pars indeclinabilis a Satana et eius squamis elaborata ad animarum interitum*, and *Declinatio adverbii Interim: Interim, quae pars? Adverbium. Quid est adverbium? Est verbum Satanae coniunctum cum Verbo Dei ad decipiendas animas.*¹¹⁾ And the many doggerels with *Interim* — *Schalk hinter ihm*. Of course, such pasquils do not necessarily indicate depth of feeling, but they do show the spreading of interest taken in the matter.

Various things were attacked in such publications. S. Cephalus, in a booklet of 76 pages, furnishes "proof that those are wrong who forbid polemics against Antichrist's papacy with its horrors." Some railed against the claim that the exigencies of the times demanded acceptance; e. g., Amsdorf in *Dass itzund die rechte zeit sei, Christum und sein Wort zu bekennen, und auf keine andre zu warten sei*. The most active and most vehement writer probably was Matthias Flacius Illyricus (native of Istria), a colleague of Melancthon. But his darts were particularly directed against another interim; e. g., his *Wider den Auszug des Leipsischen Interim oder das kleine Interim*, Magdeburg 1549, 16 pages.

It will be remembered that Maurice of Saxony was not ready to have the Augsburg decree carried out in his lands. But in a series of conferences with the most noted members of his legislature and with a number of theologians (at Meissen, Torgau, Altzella) a document was framed which was to show how far the wishes of the emperor could be met without disloyalty to their faith. In December, 1548, the Saxon legislature accepted the document¹²⁾ at Leipzig, the Leipzig Interim. A new set of church principles

11) O. Melander, *Joco-Seria*, p. 663, quoted in Frank's *Gesch. d. prot. Theol.*

12) A full English translation is given in Jacobs's *Book of Concord*, Vol. 2, pp. 261—272.

(*Kirchenordnung*) based on this document remained unpublished because the papal and the imperial administration refused to acknowledge Maurice's right to make independent alterations in the Augsburg agreement. Summarizing excerpts of the Leipzig resolutions were to be issued piecemeal (the Short Interim, *das kleine Interim*). This modification of the Augsburg plan "maintained" the Lutheran standpoint on justification, sanctification, etc., but offered to yield to the Roman Church as far as ceremonies and neutral matters were concerned. The Lutherans were to promise to tolerate or even reintroduce the Mass (in Latin, excepting the reading of the Gospel-lesson), confirmation by the bishop, prescribed clerical dress, images, holidays, and fasting. The action of the Leipzig legislature was hastened by reports from the South to the effect that four hundred Protestant ministers had been exiled or dismissed by timid magistrates.

Melanchthon, at that time, though repelled by the Augsburg book, that "peace between sheep and wolves," ready to die rather than approve the "Augsburg Sphinx," yet also had the principle that no one must lend a hand in devastating his country and turning the Church into a desert. That led him to give weight to external consideration in deciding questions of conscience. Nine years before he had published a little volume, *Vom ampt der weltlichen Fuersten, das in [ihnen] aus befelch des wort Gottes gebueren woell, alle Misbreuch in iren Kirchen abzuthun*. Now, officially, as head of the Wittenberg University, he advised his prince to give the public worship in his land and the relation between people and Church and between people and pastor such color and shape and temperature as would hardly distinguish them from those of the papacy.¹³⁾

Lutheran opponents asked, "Would *Luther* have taken such a position?" Did their former Elector John Frederick show such an attitude? A thousand voices thundered, No! And Melanchthon was charged with counterfeiting Lutheranism. Flacius, on his knees before the Wittenberg faculty, had pleaded with it to remain firm. During the conference at Altzell he vainly had urged the rector of the university to have the *corpus academicum* publish an official resolution against yielding in matters of religion. He wrote — spoken words are evanescent — to his colleague Melanchthon, calling upon him brusquely not to compromise the school which had been a distributor of truth, by concessions to the "god-

13) *Etiamsi non probabo, tamen vel tacebo, vel cedam, vel feram quidquid accidet.* (*Corp. Ref.*, VI, 880.)

less Athithophels and servants of Antichrist.”¹⁴) Melanchthon had not taken the advice and the gifted, high-minded young teacher of Hebrew, Flacius, who had been a beloved guest in the home of Melanchthon, whom he greatly admired, protested by giving up his position at the university and leaving the city without any prospect of future income. Magdeburg, where he settled, became the “chancellery of God.” The opposition to the Leipzig Interim became opposition to Melanchthon and his adherents and was organized by Flacius: Philippists against Gnesio-Lutherans (gnesio = original, genuine). The issue was the assertion of Flacius that the admission of the Catholic ceremonial had violated the essence of Protestantism. In his *De Veris et Falsis Adiaphoris* the Illyrian argues: An adiaphoron is a thing which in its nature is indifferent. In religion the various parts of order of worship belong here (*adiaphora ecclesiastica*). When there is an expressed command of God concerning such, the thing is settled; if not, the Church may decide on such as tend to help build up the true faith. When “adiaphora” are not constructive, but destructive, they lose their character as adiaphora. The Leipzig Interim has introduced such. It reckons among adiaphora, things that do not belong there because they are contrary to God’s Word;¹⁵) *e. g.*, conceding to Antichrist the rule of the Church, distinguishing between Mass and Communion, polytheism in veneration of saints, multiplicity of Christs in the persons of the priests, extreme unction and holy orders as sacraments. And what in the Interim really is adiaphoron has been violently foisted upon the Church against her will and has thus lost its character of being a matter indifferent.

Even when, a few years later, the Interim had been abolished, polemics continued. And though Melanchthon wrote¹⁶) an admission that he had been wrong (*Vincite! Cedo; fateor hac in re a me peccatum esse*), the leader of the Gnesio-Lutherans, not satisfied with the victory of the truth, insisted on humiliating public retractions.¹⁷) Two things stand out in these years. The one is the blindness of the defenders of the Interim, who did not foresee

14) *Epistola M. F. Ill. coram exhibita Dr. Philippo ante Celsensia comitia.*

15) Calvin, in a letter to Melanchthon, took the same position: “*Adde quod eorum, quae tu media facis, quaedam cum Dei Verbo manifeste pugnat.*” (*Ep. ad Mel.*, 1551.)

16) *Corp. Ref.*, VIII, 839.

17) Cp. the Coswick Action in *Corp. Ref.*, IX, 23.

the psychological effect on their parishioners if they were to be accustomed for years to a form of church-life which for centuries had spelled papacy. The other is the formation of theological parties within the Church, both covered by the Augsburg Confession, the two catechisms of Luther, and the Smalcald Articles. Were these symbols, perhaps, not sufficient? *(To be continued.)*
