

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession: Articles VII and VIII: Of the Church.

1] The Seventh Article of our Confession, in which we said that

A. the Church is the congregation of saints, they have condemned, and have added a long disquisition, that the wicked are not to be separated from the Church since John has compared the Church to *a threshing-floor on which wheat and chaff are heaped together*, Matt. 3, 12, and Christ has compared it to *a net in which* **2] there are both good and bad fishes**, Matt. 13, 47.

The Church is a fellowship of faith

It is, verily, a true saying, namely, that there is no remedy against the attacks of the slanderer. Nothing can be spoken with such care that it can escape detraction. **3] For this reason we have added the Eighth Article,**

B. lest any one might think that we separate the wicked and hypocrites from the outward fellowship of the Church,

C. or that we deny efficacy to Sacraments administered by hypocrites or wicked men.

Therefore there is no need here of a long defense against this slander. The Eighth Article is sufficient to exculpate us. For we grant that in this life

B. hypocrites and wicked men have been mingled with the Church, and that they are members of the Church according to the outward fellowship of the signs of the Church, i.e., of Word, profession, and Sacraments, especially if they have not been excommunicated. 4]

C. Neither are the Sacraments without efficacy for the reason that they are administered by wicked men; yea, we can even be right in using the Sacraments administered by wicked men. For Paul also predicts, 2 Thess. 2, 4, that *Antichrist will sit in the temple of God, i.e., he will rule and bear office in the Church.*

5] But the Church is not only the fellowship of outward objects and rites, as other governments, but it is originally a fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts. [The Christian Church consists not alone in fellowship of outward signs, but it consists especially in inward communion of eternal blessings in the heart, as of the Holy Ghost, of faith, of the fear and love of God]; which fellowship nevertheless has **outward marks** so that it can be

recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ. [Namely, where God's Word is pure, and the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the same, there certainly is the Church, and there are

Outward Marks

1. pure doctrine of the Gospel
2. Sacraments rightly administered

Christians.] And this Church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews [Christ is its Head, and] sanctifies and governs by His Spirit, as Paul testifies, Eph. 1, 22 sq., when he says: *And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, 6] the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.* Wherefore, those in whom Christ does not act [through His Spirit] are not the members of Christ. This, too, the adversaries acknowledge, namely, that **the wicked are dead members of the Church. Therefore we wonder why they have found fault with our description** [our conclusion concerning the Church] **7] which speaks of living members.**

Neither have we said anything new. Paul has defined the Church precisely in the same way, Eph. 5, 25f, that it should be cleansed in order to be *holy*. And he adds **the outward marks, the Word and Sacraments.** For he says thus: *Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might*

present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. In the Confession we have presented this sentence almost in the very words. Thus also the Church is defined by the article in the Creed which teaches us to believe that there is **a holy Catholic Church. 8]** The wicked indeed are not a holy Church. And that which follows, namely, *the communion of saints*, seems to be added in order to explain what the Church signifies, namely, the congregation of saints, who have with each other the fellowship of the same Gospel or doctrine [who confess one Gospel, have the same knowledge of Christ] and of the same Holy Ghost, who renews, sanctifies, and governs their hearts.

9] And this article has been presented for a necessary reason. [**The article of the Church Catholic or Universal, which is gathered together from every nation under the sun, is very comforting and highly necessary.**]

The Danger of Not Distinguishing

We see the infinite dangers which threaten the destruction of the Church.

In the Church itself, infinite is the multitude of the wicked who oppress it [despise, bitterly hate, and most violently persecute the Word, as, *e.g.*, the Turks, Mohammedans, other tyrants, heretics, etc. For this reason the true teaching and the Church are often so utterly suppressed and disappear, as if there were no Church, which has happened under the papacy; it often seems that the Church has completely perished]. Therefore, in order that we may not despair, but may know that the Church will nevertheless remain [until the end of the world], likewise that we may know that, however great the multitude of the wicked is,

yet **the Church [which is Christ's bride] exists**, and that Christ affords those gifts which He has promised to the Church,

to forgive sins,

to hear prayer,

to give the Holy Ghost, this article in the Creed presents us these consolations.

10] And it says *Church Catholic*, in order that **we may not understand** the Church to be an outward government of certain nations [that the Church is like any other external polity, bound to this or that land, kingdom, or nation, as the Pope of Rome will say],

but rather men scattered throughout the whole world [here and there in the world, from the rising to the setting of the sun], **who agree concerning the Gospel, and have the same Christ, the same Holy Ghost, and the same Sacraments, whether they have the same 11] or different human traditions.** And the gloss upon the *Decrees* says that the *Church in its wide sense embraces good and evil*; likewise, that **the wicked are in the Church only in name, not in fact; but that the good are in the Church both in fact and in name.** And to this effect there are many passages in the Fathers. For Jerome says: *The sinner, therefore, who has been soiled with any blotch cannot be called a member of the Church of Christ, neither him he be said to be subject to Christ.*

12] Although, therefore, **hypocrites and wicked men are members of this true Church according to outward rites** [titles and offices], yet when the Church is defined, it is necessary to define that which is **the living body of Christ**, and which is in name and in fact the Church [which is called the body of Christ, and has fellowship not alone in outward signs, but has **gifts in the heart, namely, the Holy Ghost and faith**]. 13] And for this there are many reasons. For it is necessary to understand what it is that principally makes us members, and that, living members, of the Church. **If we will define the Church only as an outward polity of the good and wicked, men will not understand that the kingdom of Christ is righteousness of heart**

and the gift of the Holy Ghost [that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, as nevertheless it is; that therein Christ inwardly rules, strengthens, and comforts hearts, and imparts the Holy Ghost and various spiritual gifts], but they will judge that it is only the outward observance of certain forms of worship and rites.

14] Likewise, what difference will there be between **the people of the Law** and the Church if the Church is an outward polity? **But Paul distinguishes the Church from the people of the Law thus, that the Church is a spiritual people, i.e., that it has been distinguished from the heathen not by civil rites** [not in the polity and civil affairs], **but that it is the true people of God, regenerated by the Holy Ghost.**

The People of the Law different from The Church (believers)

Among the people of the Law, apart from the promise of Christ, also the carnal seed [all those who by nature were born Jews and Abraham's seed] had promises concerning corporeal things, of government, etc. And because of these even the wicked among them were called the people of God, because God had separated this carnal seed from other nations by certain outward ordinances and promises; and yet, 15] these wicked persons did not please God. **But the Gospel [which is preached in the Church] brings not merely the shadow of eternal things, but the eternal things themselves, the Holy Ghost and righteousness, by which we are righteous before God.** [But every true Christian is even here upon earth partaker of eternal blessings, even of eternal comfort, of eternal life, and of the Holy Ghost, and of righteousness which is from God, until he will be completely saved in the world to come.]

16] Therefore, only those are the people, according to the Gospel, who receive this promise of the Spirit. **Besides, the Church is the kingdom of Christ, distinguished from the kingdom of the devil.** It is certain, however, that the wicked are in the power of the devil, and members of the kingdom of the devil, as Paul teaches, Eph. 2, 2, when he says that the devil *now worketh in the children of disobedience*. And Christ says to the Pharisees, who certainly had outward fellowship with the Church, *i.e.*, with the saints among the people of the Law (for they held office, sacrificed, and taught): *Ye are of your father, the devil*, John 8, 44. Therefore, the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is properly the congregation of saints. For the wicked are ruled by the devil, and are captives of the devil; they are not ruled by the Spirit of Christ.

17] But what need is there of words in a manifest matter? [However, the adversaries contradict the plain truth.] If the Church, which is truly the kingdom of Christ, is distinguished from the kingdom of the devil, it follows necessarily that the wicked, since they are in the kingdom of the devil, are not the Church; **although in this life, because the kingdom of Christ has not yet been revealed; they are mingled with the Church, and hold offices [as teachers, and other offices] in the Church.** 18] Neither are the wicked the kingdom of Christ, for the reason that **the revelation has not yet been made.** For that is always the kingdom which He quickens by His Spirit, whether it be revealed or be covered by the cross; just as He who has now been glorified is the same Christ who was before afflicted. 19]

The Kingdom of Christ Not Yet Revealed

1. And with this clearly agree the parables of Christ, who says, Matt. 13, 38, that *the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the Wicked One. The field, He says, is the world, not the Church.* **Thus John [Matt. 3, 12: He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff] speaks concerning the whole race of the Jews, and says that it will come to pass that the true Church will be separated from that people.** Therefore, this passage is more against the adversaries than in

favor of them, because it shows that the true and spiritual people is to be separated from the carnal people.

2. Christ also speaks of the outward appearance of the Church when He says, Matt. 13, 47: *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, likewise, to ten virgins*; and He teaches that the Church has been covered by a multitude of evils, in order that this stumbling-block may not offend the pious;

3. likewise, in order that we may know that the Word and Sacraments are efficacious even when administered by the wicked. And meanwhile He teaches that these godless men, although they have the fellowship of outward signs, are nevertheless not the true kingdom of Christ and members of Christ; **20**] for they are members of the kingdom of the devil.

Neither, indeed, are we dreaming of a **Platonic state**, as some wickedly charge, but we say that **this Church exists, namely, the truly believing and righteous men scattered throughout the whole world**. [We are speaking not of an **imaginary Church**, which is to be found nowhere; but we say and know certainly that this Church, wherein saints live, is and abides truly upon earth; namely, that some of God's children are here and there in all the world, in various kingdoms, islands, lands, and cities, from the rising of the sun to its setting, who have truly learned to know Christ and His Gospel.] **And we add the marks: the pure doctrine of the Gospel** [the ministry or the Gospel] **and the Sacraments**. And this Church is properly the pillar of the truth, 1 Tim. 3, 15. **For it retains the pure Gospel**, and, as Paul says, 1 Cor. 3, 11 [:"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"], **the foundation, i.e., the true knowledge of Christ and faith**.

Although among these [in the body which is built upon the true foundation, *i.e.*, upon Christ and faith] **there are also many weak persons, who build upon the foundation stubble that will perish, i.e.**, certain unprofitable opinions [some human thoughts and opinions], which, nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, are both forgiven them **21**] and also corrected. **And the writings of the holy Fathers testify that sometimes even they built stubble upon the foundation, but that this did not overthrow their faith**.

Errors which don't overthrow faith

But most of **those errors which our adversaries defend, overthrow faith**, as, their condemnation of the article concerning the remission of sins, in which we say that the remission of sins is received by faith. Likewise it is a manifest and pernicious error when the adversaries teach that men merit the remission of sins by love to God, prior to grace. [In the place of Christ they set up their works, orders, masses, just as the Jews, the heathen, and the Turks intend to be saved by their works.] For this also is to remove "the foundation," *i.e.*, Christ. Likewise, what need will there be of faith if the Sacraments justify *ex opere operato*, **22**] without a good disposition on the part of the one using them? [without faith. **Now, a person that does not regard faith as necessary has already lost Christ**.

Errors which do destroy faith

Again, they set up **the worship of saints**, call upon them instead of Christ, the Mediator, etc.] But just as the Church has the promise that it will always have the Holy Ghost, so it has also the threatenings that there will be wicked teachers and wolves. But that is the Church in the proper sense which has the Holy Ghost. Although wolves and wicked teachers become rampant [rage and do injury] in the Church, yet they are not properly the kingdom of Christ. **Just as Lyra also testifies**, when he says: *The Church does not consist of men with respect to power, or ecclesiastical or secular dignity, because many princes and archbishops and others of lower*

rank have been found to have apostatized from the faith. **Therefore, the Church consists of those persons in whom there is a true knowledge and confession of faith and truth.** What else have we said in our Confession than what Lyra here says [in terms so clear that he could not have spoken more clearly]?

23] But the adversaries perhaps require [a new Roman definition], that the Church be defined thus, namely, that it is **the supreme outward monarchy of the whole world, in which the Roman pontiff necessarily has unquestioned power, which no one is permitted to dispute or censure** [no matter whether he uses it rightly, or misuses it], **to frame articles of faith; to abolish, according to his pleasure, the Scriptures** [to pervert and interpret them contrary to all divine law, contrary to his own decretals, contrary to all imperial rights, as often, to as great an extent, and whenever it pleases him; to sell indulgences and dispensations for money]; **to appoint rites of worship and sacrifices; likewise, to frame such laws as he may wish, and to dispense and exempt from whatever laws he may wish, divine, canonical, or civil;** and that from him [as from the vicegerent of Christ] the Emperor and all kings receive, according to the command of Christ, the power and right to hold their kingdoms, from whom, since the Father has subjected all things to Him, it must be understood, this right was transferred to the Pope; therefore the Pope must necessarily be [a God on earth, the supreme Majesty,] lord of the whole world, of all the kingdoms of the world, of all things private and public, and must have absolute power in temporal and spiritual things, and both swords, the spiritual and temporal. 24] **Besides, this definition, not of the Church of Christ, but of the papal kingdom, has as its authors not only the canonists, but also Daniel 11, 36ff [Daniel, the prophet, represents Antichrist in this way.]**

Roman definition: --in fellowship with the supreme Pope --outward rites
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25] Now, if we would define the Church in this way [that it is such pomp, as is exhibited in the Pope's rule], we would perhaps have fairer judges. For there are many things extant written extravagantly and wickedly concerning the power of the Pope of Rome, on account of which no one has ever been arraigned. **We alone are blamed, because we proclaim the beneficence of Christ [and write and preach the clear word and teaching of the apostles], that by faith in Christ we obtain remission of sins, and not by [hypocrisy or innumerable] rites of worship devised by the Pope.** 26] Moreover, Christ, the prophets, and the apostles define the Church of Christ far otherwise than as the papal kingdom. 27] **Neither must we transfer to the Popes what belongs to the true Church, namely, that they are pillars of the truth, that they do not err.** For how many of them care for the Gospel, or judge that it [one little page, one letter of it] is worth being read? Many [in Italy and elsewhere] even publicly ridicule all religions, or, if they approve anything, they approve such things only as are in harmony with human reason, and regard the rest fabulous 28] and like the tragedies of the poets.

1. Wherefore we hold, according to the Scriptures, that the Church, properly so called, is the congregation of saints [of those here and there in the world], who truly believe the Gospel of Christ, and have the Holy Ghost.

2. And yet we confess that in this life many hypocrites and wicked men, mingled with these, have the fellowship of outward signs, who are members of the Church according to this fellowship of outward signs, and accordingly bear offices in the Church [preach, administer the Sacraments, and bear the title and name of Christians].

3. Neither does the fact that the Sacraments are administered by the unworthy detract from their efficacy, because, **on account of the call of the Church, they represent the person of**

Christ, and do not represent their own persons, as Christ testifies, Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me*. [Thus even Judas was sent to preach.] When they offer the Word of God, when they offer the Sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ. Those words of Christ teach us not to be offended by the unworthiness of the ministers.

29] But concerning this matter we have spoken with sufficient clearness in the Confession that **we condemn the Donatists and Wyclifites, who thought that men sinned when they received the Sacraments from the unworthy in the Church**. These things seem, for the present, to be sufficient for the defense of the description of the Church which we have presented. Neither do we see how, when the Church, properly so called, is named *the body of Christ*, it should be described otherwise than we have described it. For it is evident that the wicked belong to the kingdom and body of the devil, who impels and holds captive the wicked. These things are clearer than the light of noonday; however, if the adversaries still continue to pervert them, we will not hesitate to reply at greater length.

30] The adversaries condemn also the part of the Seventh Article in which we said that

The Marks of the Church

1. **“to the unity of the Church it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments;**
2. **nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites, or ceremonies instituted by men should be alike everywhere.”**

Here they distinguish between *universal and particular rites*, and approve our article if it be understood concerning particular rites; they do not receive it concerning universal rites. [That is a fine, clumsy distinction!] 31] **We do not sufficiently understand what the**

Universal or Particular Rites?

adversaries mean. We are speaking of true, i.e., of spiritual unity [we say that those are one harmonious Church who believe in one Christ; who have one Gospel, one Spirit, one faith, the same Sacraments; and we are speaking, therefore, of spiritual unity], without which faith in the heart, or righteousness of heart before God, cannot exist. For this we say that similarity of human rites, whether universal or particular, is not necessary, because the righteousness of faith is not a righteousness bound to certain traditions [outward ceremonies of human ordinances] as the righteousness of the Law was bound to the Mosaic ceremonies, because this righteousness of the heart is a matter that quickens the heart. To this quickening, human traditions, whether they be universal or particular, contribute nothing; neither are they effects of the Holy Ghost, as are chastity, patience, the fear of God, love to one’s neighbor, and the works, of love.

True Spiritual Unity requires
Faith in the heart
Not
Human Traditions

32] Neither were the reasons trifling why we presented this article. **For it is evident that many [great errors and] foolish opinions concerning traditions had crept into the Church. Some thought that human traditions were necessary services for meriting justification** [that without such human ordinances Christian holiness and faith are of no avail before God; also that no one can be a Christian unless he observe such traditions, although they are nothing but an outward regulation]. And afterwards they disputed how it came to pass that God was worshiped with such variety, as though, indeed, these observances were acts of worship, and not rather outward and political ordinances, pertaining in no respect to righteousness of heart or the worship of God, which vary, according to the circumstances, for certain probable reasons,

sometimes in one way, and at other times in another [as in worldly governments one state has customs different from another]. Likewise some Churches have excommunicated others because of such traditions, as the observance of Easter, pictures, and the like. Hence the ignorant have supposed that faith, or the righteousness of the heart before God, cannot exist [and that no one can be a Christian] without these observances. For many foolish writings of the Summists and of others concerning this matter are extant.

33] But just as the dissimilar length of day and night does not injure the unity of the Church, so we believe that

the true unity of the Church is

A. not injured by dissimilar rites instituted by men;

B. although it is pleasing to us that, for the sake of tranquillity [unity and good order], universal rites be observed, just as also in the churches we willingly observe the order of the Mass, the Lord's Day, and other more eminent festival days. And with a very grateful mind we embrace the profitable and ancient ordinances, especially since they contain a discipline by which it is profitable to educate and train the people and those who are ignorant [the young people].

34] But now we are not discussing the question whether it be of advantage to observe them on account of peace or bodily profit. Another matter is treated of. **For the question at issue is, whether the observances of human traditions are acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God.** This is the point to be judged in this controversy, and when this is decided, it can afterwards be judged whether to the true unity of the Church it is necessary that human traditions should everywhere be alike. **For if human traditions be not acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God, it follows that also they can be righteous and be the sons of God who have not the traditions which have been received elsewhere.** *F. i.*, if the style of German clothing is not worship of God, necessary for righteousness before God, it follows that men can be righteous and sons of God and the Church of Christ, even though they use a costume that is not German, but French.

35] Paul clearly teaches this to the Colossians, 2, 16. 17: *Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.* Likewise, 2, 20–23 sqq.: *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances (touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using), after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have, indeed, a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility.*

36] For the meaning is: Since righteousness of the heart is a spiritual matter, quickening hearts, and

it is evident that human traditions do not quicken hearts,

and are not effects of the Holy Ghost,

as are love to one's neighbor, chastity, etc.,

and are not instruments through which God moves hearts to believe, as are the divinely given Word and Sacraments,

but are usages with regard to matters that pertain in no respect to the heart, which perish with the using,

we must not believe that they are necessary for righteousness before God. [They are nothing eternal; hence, they do not procure eternal life, but are an external bodily discipline,

The Instruments which God uses to create faith are not Human Traditions, but Word and Sacraments
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which does not change the heart.] And to the same effect he says, Rom. 14, 17: *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness 37] and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* But there is no need to cite many testimonies, since they are everywhere obvious in the Scriptures, and in our Confession we have brought together very many of them, in the latter articles. And the point to be decided in this controversy must be repeated after a while, namely, whether human traditions be acts of worship necessary for righteousness before God. There we will discuss this matter more fully.

38] The adversaries say that **universal traditions are to be observed because they are supposed to have been handed down by the apostles.** What religious men they are! **They wish that the rites derived from the apostles be retained; they do not wish the doctrine of the apostles to be retained. 39] They must judge concerning these rites just as the apostles themselves judge in their writings.** For the apostles did not wish us to believe that through such rites we are justified, that such rites are necessary for righteousness before God. The apostles did not wish to impose such a burden upon consciences; they did not wish to place righteousness and sin in the observance of days, food, and the like. **40]** Yea, Paul calls such opinions *doctrines of devils*, 1 Tim. 4, 1. Therefore the will and advice of the apostles ought to be derived from their writings; it is not enough to mention their example. **They observed certain days, not because this observance was necessary for justification, but in order that the people might know at what time they should assemble. They observed also certain other rites and orders of lessons whenever they assembled.** The people [In the beginning of the Church the Jews who had become Christians] retained also from the customs of the Fathers [from their Jewish festivals and ceremonies], as is commonly the case, certain things which, being somewhat changed, the apostles adapted to the history of the Gospel, as the Passover, Pentecost, so that not only by teaching, but also through these examples they might hand down to posterity the memory **41]** of the most important subjects. But if these things were handed down as necessary for justification, why afterwards did the bishops change many things in these very matters? For, if they were matters of divine right, it was not lawful to change them by human authority.

42] Before the Synod of Nice, some observed **Easter** at one time and others at another time. Neither did this want of uniformity injure faith. Afterward the plan was adopted by which our Passover [Easter] did not fall at the same time as that of the Jewish Passover. But the apostles had commanded the Churches to observe the Passover with the brethren who had been converted from Judaism. Therefore, after the Synod of Nice, certain nations tenaciously held to the custom of observing the Jewish time. But the apostles, by this decree, did not wish to impose necessity upon the Churches, as the words of the decree testify. **For it bids no one to be troubled, even though his brethren, in observing Easter, do not compute the time aright.** The words of the decree are extant in Epiphanius: *Do not calculate, but celebrate it whenever your brethren of the circumcision do; celebrate it at the same time with them, and even though they may have erred, let not this be a care to you.* Epiphanius writes that these are the words of the apostles presented in a decree concerning Easter, in which the discreet reader can easily judge that the apostles wished to free the people from the foolish opinion of a fixed time, when they prohibit them from being troubled, **43]** even though a mistake should be made in the computation. Some, moreover, in the East, who were called, from the author of the dogma, Audians, contended, on account of this decree of the apostles, that the Passover should be observed with the Jews. Epiphanius, in refuting them, praises the decree, and says that it contains nothing which deviates from the faith or rule of the Church, and blames the Audians because they do not understand aright the expression, and interprets it in the sense in which we interpret it, because the apostles did not

consider it of any importance at what time the Passover should be observed, but because prominent brethren had been converted from the Jews, who observed their custom, and, for the sake of **44]** harmony, wished the rest to follow their example. **And the apostles wisely admonished the reader neither to remove the liberty of the Gospel, nor to impose necessity upon consciences, because they add that they should not be troubled even though there should be an error in making the computation.**

45] Many things of this class can be gathered from the histories, in which it appears that a want of uniformity in human observances does not injure the unity of faith [separate no one from the universal Christian Church]. Although, what need is there of discussion? The adversaries do not at all understand what the righteousness of faith is, what the kingdom of Christ is, **when they judge that uniformity of observances in food, days, clothing, and the like, which do not have the command of God, is necessary.** **46]** But look at the religious men, our adversaries. For the unity of the Church they require uniform human observances, although they themselves have changed the ordinance of Christ in the use of the Supper, which certainly was a universal ordinance before. But if universal ordinances are so necessary, why do they themselves change the ordinance of Christ's Supper, which is not human, but divine? But concerning this entire controversy we shall have to speak at different times below.

47] **The entire Eighth Article has been approved,** in which we confess that hypocrites and wicked persons have been mingled with the Church, and that the Sacraments are efficacious even though dispensed by wicked ministers, because the ministers act in the place of Christ, and do not represent their own persons, according to **48]** Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me.* **Impious teachers are to be deserted** [are not to be received or heard], **because these do not act any longer in the place of Christ, but are antichrists.** And Christ says Matt. 7, 15: *Beware of false prophets.* And Paul, Gal. 1, 9: *If any man preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed.*

49] Moreover, Christ has warned us in His parables concerning the Church, that when offended by **the private vices**, whether of priests or people, we should not excite schisms, as the Donatists have wickedly done. **50]** As to those, however, who have excited schisms, because they denied that priests are permitted **to hold possessions and property**, we hold that they are altogether seditious. **For to hold property is a civil ordinance. It is lawful, however, for Christians to use civil ordinances, just as they use the air, the light, food, drink. For as this order of the world and fixed movements of the heavenly bodies are truly God's ordinances and these are preserved by God, so lawful governments are truly God's ordinances, and are preserved and defended by God against the devil.**