

teaching about faith in Christ. Accordingly monastic vows and 4 other traditions concerning distinctions of foods, days, etc.,⁷ by which it is intended to earn grace and make satisfaction for sin, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

XVI. CIVIL GOVERNMENT

It is taught among us that all government in the world and all 1 established rule and laws were instituted and ordained by God for the sake of good order, and that Christians may without sin 2 occupy civil offices or serve as princes and judges, render decisions and pass sentence according to imperial and other existing laws, punish evildoers with the sword, engage in just wars, serve as soldiers, buy and sell, take required oaths, possess property, be married, etc.

Condemned here are the Anabaptists who teach that none of the 3 things indicated above is Christian.⁸

Also condemned are those who teach that Christian perfection 4 requires the forsaking of house and home, wife and child, and the renunciation of such activities as are mentioned above.⁹ Actually, true perfection consists alone of proper fear of God and real faith in

for sins are opposed to the Gospel and the teaching about faith. Wherefore vows and traditions about foods and days, etc., in- 4 stituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless and contrary to the Gospel.

XVI. CIVIL AFFAIRS

Our churches teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works 1 of God and that it is right for Christians to hold civil office, to sit 2 as judges, to decide matters by the imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to swear oaths when required by magistrates, to marry, to be given in marriage.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists who forbid Christians to 3 engage in these civil functions. They also condemn those who place 4

⁷ Such fast days of the Roman Church as Fridays, ember days, days in Lent, etc.

⁸ The Anabaptists actually differed from one another in their attitudes toward the state, marriage, and economic life, but some took the negative position here indicated.

⁹ The notion of Christian perfection here referred to was embodied in monasticism (called the "state of perfection") and was embraced by some Anabaptists. See also Art. XXVII, below.

God, for the Gospel does not teach an outward and temporal but an inward and eternal mode of existence and righteousness of the heart. The Gospel does not overthrow civil authority, the state, 5 and marriage but requires that all these be kept as true orders of God¹ and that everyone, each according to his own calling, manifest Christian love and genuine good works in his station of life. Accordingly 6 Christians are obliged to be subject to civil authority and obey its commands and laws in all that can be done without sin. But 7 when commands of the civil authority cannot be obeyed without sin, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

XVII. [THE RETURN OF CHRIST TO JUDGMENT]

It is also taught among us that our Lord Jesus Christ will return 1 on the last day for judgment and will raise up all the dead, to 2 give eternal life and everlasting joy to believers and the elect but to 3 condemn ungodly men and the devil to hell and eternal punishment.

Rejected, therefore, are the Anabaptists who teach that the devil 4 and condemned men will not suffer eternal pain and torment.²

Rejected, too, are certain Jewish opinions which are even now 5

the perfection of the Gospel not in the fear of God and in faith but in forsaking civil duties. The Gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart, but it does not destroy the state or the family. On the 5 contrary, it especially requires their preservation as ordinances of God and the exercise of love in these ordinances. Therefore Chris- 6 tians are necessarily bound to obey their magistrates and laws except when commanded to sin, for then they ought to obey God 7 rather than men (Acts 5:29).

XVII. [THE RETURN OF CHRIST FOR JUDGMENT]

Our churches also teach that at the consummation of the world 1 Christ will appear for judgment and will raise up all the dead. To the godly and elect he will give eternal life and endless joy, 2 but ungodly men and devils he will condemn to be tormented 3 without end.

Our churches condemn the Anabaptists who think that there 4 will be an end to the punishments of condemned men and devils. They also condemn others who are now spreading Jewish opinions 5 to the effect that before the resurrection of the dead the godly will

¹ *Wahrhaftige Gottesordnung.*

² Taught, for example, by Hans Denck and Melchior Rinck.

making an appearance and which teach that, before the resurrection of the dead, saints and godly men will possess a worldly kingdom and annihilate all the godless.³

XVIII. FREEDOM OF THE WILL

It is also taught among us that man possesses some measure of freedom of the will which enables him to live an outwardly honorable life and to make choices among the things that reason comprehends. But without the grace, help, and activity of the Holy Spirit man is not capable of making himself acceptable to God, of fearing God and believing in God with his whole heart, or of expelling inborn evil lusts from his heart. This is accomplished by the Holy Spirit, who is given through the Word of God, for Paul says in I Cor. 2:14, "Natural man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God."

In order that it may be evident that this teaching is no novelty, the clear words of Augustine on free will are here quoted from the third book of his *Hypognosticon*:⁴ "We concede that all men have a free will, for all have a natural, innate understanding and reason. However, this does not enable them to act in matters pertaining to God (such as loving God with their whole heart or fearing him), for

take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being suppressed everywhere.

XVIII. FREE WILL

Our churches teach that man's will has some liberty for the attainment of civil righteousness and for the choice of things subject to reason. However, it does not have the power, without the Holy Spirit, to attain the righteousness of God—that is, spiritual righteousness—because natural man does not perceive the gifts of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:14); but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word. In Book III of his *Hypognosticon* Augustine said these things in so many words: "We concede that all men have a free will which enables them to make judgments according to reason. However, this does not enable them, without God, to begin or (much less) to accomplish anything in those things which pertain to God, for it is only in acts of this life that they have freedom to choose good or evil. By

³ Incited by Hans Hut and some Jews in Worms, Melchior Rinck predicted that the millennium would be ushered in during Easter, 1530.

⁴ *Hypognosticon contra Pelagianos et Coelestinianos*, III, 4, 5, ascribed to Augustine in older collections of his works.