

Seven Heads of Martin Luther: On the Eight Principal Points of Christian Faith

By Dr. Johannes Cochlaeus

To the Honorable and Distinguished, prudent and wise Burgermasters and Council of the City of Lubeck: I, Johannes Cochlaeus, Dr. etc., wish you the grace of God for good peace and Christian union

Honorable, prudent, wise, gracious, dear Sirs:

Last year I assembled several chapters from a German book of Martin Luther entitled, *Instructions for Visitors*, in a seven-part dialogue in Latin. I did it to show pious people, whose honor, bravery, virtue, and the salvation of their souls is dear, how inconstant and contradictory the monk is in his teaching. He himself recognizes that he is creating a new Christian church and striking down the old, which has withstood the test for over 1,500 years, and to crush it with such arrogance and mischief that he not only scorns, demolishes, and dishonors the doctors of holy scripture and illustrious universities like Paris, Louvain, Cologne, Leipzig, and the like, but also the holiness of the papacy, the Imperial majesty, and other high estates (which according to scripture he should honor and obey), and defiantly insulted and obscenely slandered, and touted his own teaching so much that it is nothing other than the clear gospel of Christ. He has also discarded, and with much falseness slandered, all the holy doctors who have written over the past thousand years, as well as their teachings and the holiness of their lives and miracles, which they have sealed with their blood. In addition, he has criticized several books of the Old and New Testaments and tossed them aside as worthless books, and he has set them aside so that the poor common people are in error and their thought, love, hope, and faith are miserably weakened and disrupted—so that he himself must recognize that the devil is wrathful and turns 100 confused people into 1,000—and creates so much confusion that almost nobody knows what to believe. However much he blames the enthusiasts and rabble-rousers, still the greatest guilt is his own, since he has created erudite enthusiasts and rabble-rousers with his fickle and self-contradictory writings. They lead the poor people astray and cause them to doubt, and it is as if they love or suffer, since he himself in fact waffles and says, in sum, that the devil is too sharp and powerful for us. He obstructs and hinders everywhere: when we are in scripture he creates so much ambiguity and quibbling in it that we become tired and stupid about it. He raises so much discord and duplicity about scripture that you are not going to know where scripture, faith, Christ or you yourself are. This is Luther's word and admission. Would it not have been better, if he had never started than speaking so shamefully and unrestrainedly about the German nation and saying that the devil was too wise and powerful? He has often said that he had battled and beaten the devil and had some salt with him once or twice. But unfortunately one has found, in many great cities where his teaching is openly preached, how much misfortune, misery, and division the devil has created through this monk and other apostates of his. Almighty God has, by means of your faithful leadership until now, protected your city with special grace (may God continue to do so), so that now, among Christian kings and princes and the people, Cologne and Lubeck enjoy special praise and honor among all other realms and trading cities on account of your steadfast faith. For that reason I, a poor and puny little sheep of Christ, have been compelled to urge you to remain steadfast to the end of the old Christianity and not allow new evangelists in your city.

For that reason you may want to take and consider this little extract. Given at Dresden, April 1, 1529.

The Seven Heads

Although they all speak from one mouth and in the books of a single monk, still this division is to be noted, namely:

Doctor speaks decisively in the first books.

Martinus follows soon after, rather verbosely in his writings.

Luther spreads heresy loosely as an enemy of the church.

Ecclesiastes, the preacher, out of whose 36 sermons Cochlaeus drew 500 erroneous articles.

Enthusiast, who is coarse and unstable, as Luther accuses other enthusiasts of being.

Barabbas like his type is rebellious against the princes and especially all the spiritual authorities.

Visitor who wants to improve and arrange all the above, who must return, as the others became more coarse and unchristian.

On Christian Doctrine. Chapter 1

VISITOR. Now we find in the doctrine, among other things, this thing especially concerning the faith by which we are to become righteous, but it is not sufficiently indicated how one is to arrive at this faith. And almost all of Christian doctrine flows from this, and without it no one knows what faith is or means. For Christ says in the last chapter of Luke that one should preach in his name repentance and forgiveness of sins, but many are now speaking only of forgiveness of sins and saying little or nothing of penance. And without penance there is no forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness of sins cannot take place without penance.

ENTHUSIAST. Oh what a new type of papist I'm hearing—even more than a papist, since according to the papists, a child received forgiveness of sins without penance through baptism. But you place a work, penance, before faith and before forgiveness of sins—which no papist demands from a child. But we say that neither the work of penance nor the sacrament justifies, but faith alone—which no papist desires from a child. But we say that neither the work of penance nor the sacraments justify, but faith alone. Scripture states (Romans 1[:17], Habakkuk 2[:4], and Hebrews 10[:38]) that the righteous lives from faith. It does not say that the righteous person lives from the sacraments or works of penance.

LUTHER. See, Visitor, that the pomp of works and human teachings deceives you, that you make an abuse of divine truth and your faith, since you must begin with faith in the sacraments without any works to be blessed; but the works follow the faith.

VISITOR. How much attention is there that one should teach nothing before faith except penance, and the doctrine that proceeds from faith, about which our opponents cannot say anything about our earlier teaching. Thus it is to be seen, since penance and law also belong to the common faith, that one must first believe that God exists, and orders, and frightens, and so on. So may it be for the simple common person that one lets such articles of faith remain under the name of penance, commandment, law, fear, etc. What the apostle says about justification by faith is different from believing in Christ: that is, he calls righteousness and forgiveness of sins, which faith in the promise and penance does not do; and thus the common man will misunderstand the word “faith” and raise useless questions about it.

BARABBAS. Now you are bringing back a two-fold faith (like the papists and Thomists). Watch out that that we do not say to you, as we did to Catharinus, that you are a real Thomist: a godless and Leviathan-like murderer of holy scripture.

LUTHER. You say, Visitor, something different from what you first taught us in the Psalter, where we said that faith was the head, the life, and the strength of all other works, and that no work was good unless it was done in faith. But now faith might not be; it might be a continuous and unmistakable delusion in which a person is aware above all else that one is pleasing to God and has a gracious and forgiving God in all that one does or deals with. A gracious God in good works and a forgiving one in evil ones: what kind of faith is that if not a delusion?

ECCLESIASTES. These new papists are doing nothing different than the old papists, who do not want to suffer; that I believe and say that faith in Christ does all things and makes them right. With this statement I overthrow the monkey-game of the whole world, while it performs works.

LUTHER. You obviously do not know, Visitor, how much that has irritated Cochlaeus that this word “alone” is set next to “faith” (which neither Paul nor any other writer does), which some of us feel or say, it would be an outrage and unchristian to insert such a word and declare my error. But I have shown my reason and excuse myself.

ECCLESIASTES. I have also said at times that faith alone is not sufficient for God, since it must be payment for our redemption, while the Turks and Jews also believe in God, but they believe without means and payment.

LUTHER. But you’ve often said that where faith is, no sin can harm, and that faith alone is our transaction with God and that works do not enter into it. Also, Paul and all of scripture drive us to faith, so that one deals with God only through faith.

MARTINUS. But I have said, and I still say, that we must have contrition and pain, confession and good works, indeed that we must let our faith in the sacraments be the most outstanding good in seeking the grace of God.

DOCTOR. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when he said, “Do penance etc.,” meant that all our life should be a penance. But he does not just want inner penance, because the inward is nothing; it works outwardly in many ways of mortifying the flesh. Thus it follows that these three forms of satisfaction (fasting, prayers, and almsgiving) are penance to the Evangelicals. For fasting in itself contains every mortification of the flesh. Prayer involves every exercise of the

soul in contemplation, reading, listening, and prayer. Almsgiving is service and goodwill to the neighbor; thus one serves oneself in fasting, the Lord God in prayer, and the neighbor in alms. Through the first he conquers desire and appetites of the flesh and lives moderately and chastely. Through the second he conquers the pride of this life and lives faithfully. Through the third, the desire and concupiscence of the eyes, he lives piously in this world.

ECCLESIASTES. That is about monks and nuns and other papists who want to become blessed by doing good works. But I say to you that the way is narrow, if you want to come through it and press on through the rock, you must become poor. If you want to be burdened with works like Jacob's muscular brother, you will not prevail. That is why you must become small and narrow-minded and set aside the burden of works. Otherwise you will not come through.

DOCTOR. If that were true, we would have done wrong to the indulgence preachers, since we said that the people were better off making satisfaction on their own than by buying indulgences, since an indulgence is nothing other than a transfer of [the merit] of good works for the purpose of fulfilling satisfaction.

ENTHUSIAST. But we discarded this concept already in the *Babylonian Captivity*, since we asked all booksellers and readers to burn all our books about indulgences, and before that said that indulgences were the mischief of Romanist flatterers.

VISITOR. When you discarded everything and preached forgiveness of sins without penance, it follows that the people imagine that they have already received forgiveness of sins and are thus certain and fearless. This is an error and sin greater than all others before this time. And we should be concerned that (as Christ says at Matthew 12[:45]) the last will be more troublesome than the first.

ENTHUSIAST. No wonder we call you a new papist and say you've given up the ghost! You drive Christians from the faith and from freedom back to the old drudgery of confession, fear, and work, so that you leave no town believing in Christ and bring forth an irreparable bloodbath that tells the people, "Bring, bring, and conduct business with your sin."

COCHLAEUS

Here you see, honorable wise ones, how solid a foundation the poor man has in his teaching about faith, confession, and good works. I have often and heartily pointed out to him that he builds all his teaching on this false foundation of faith alone making one righteous and blessed—which is found nowhere in scripture. Your Excellencies may see how well he answered it in my Latin booklet *Against the Wittenberg Minotaur*—to which he has not further replied. But how could he seriously defend his obnoxiousness among the learned? He has long been condemned as an open heretic among us Christians; and his enthusiasts can also condemn him with the very words he speaks. Such disunity cannot and must not be from the Holy Spirit; it is instead loathsome Satan, etc. Such disunity comes not from one person (if we can say that about one with seven heads) but from Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and many others who have no common statement or sentiment about the sacrament (which I have also shown in another booklet about

Luther's seven dizzy heads). Now it is much more shameful that one person writes and teaches so often in contradiction to himself that the seven characters cannot write or teach harmoniously. But true children of the Christian church all harmoniously have one understanding of the sacrament and other matters of Christian faith wherever they are throughout all of Christendom, because they have only one Holy Spirit that Christ proclaimed and gave them for teaching all truth. But the heretics have the spirit of many enthusiasts, and it makes them disunited and errant as they plunge into scandal and depravity with pride and disobedience. God willing, they will be gone.

On Proclaiming the Gospel. Chapter 2

VISITOR. We have instructed and warned that the pastors are to preach the whole gospel, as is their duty, and not just one part without the rest. For God says (Deuteronomy 4[:2]) that one should not act by his own word. But these, since they do not preach confession, tear away a big part of scripture, while speaking about eating meat and similarly minor items.

ENTHUSIAST. What did the papists give you, such that you also challenge us in the gospel (which we regard in a special way)? I'm certain that Christ called me an evangelist and meant by that that my teaching is the best and also will be effective on the Day of Judgment; thus it is not my gospel but his.

BARABBAS. It is an attack to say that we scorn God's word, and it is an attack on us that could last a hundred years. But it will not endure that long. And the brighter the word is, the greater the challenge will be. I fear that it will harm all of Germany, and God cannot let this knavery go unpunished. He will not long tolerate it, for the gospel has never been so clearly preached since the apostles' time. Thus it matters for Germany that I must get to the root of the matter.

ECCLESIASTES. I notice, Visitor, that you've lost the spirit and are pretending to the papists and worldly princes to attack our gospel; but the world wants neither to hear such preaching nor to suffer, because the gospel is a hateful thing to preach.

VISITOR. Not so, dear brother. We have warned the pastors that they should carefully and openly instruct the people about confession, to have regret and pain over their sin and fear of God's judgment.

ENTHUSIAST. Warn our enemies the papists also. You know well how hard we have attacked them for teaching not faith but the doing of works. Christians should most of all be attentive to divine approval. They say, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." What is more outrageous than saying that salvation depends on everyone doing works, making vows, and following human teachings. In that we should practice our faith and never doubt that we are saved after being baptized.

ECCLESIASTES. This gospel of yours, if it is correct, means that we have wrongly included the pope, the bishops, monks, and priests in the ban, since they have not preached the faith but rather good works, and so all Germany has not had the correct gospel until now.

VISITOR. Say what you will, one should not ignore that great and necessary item, confession.

LUTHER. See that you do not make a Moses out of Christ, Visitor, or a law or manual out of the gospel. That has already happened, and you can hear it in various prefaces of St. Jerome. The gospel actually does not want us to become pious and saved through our works but only by faith in Christ, who alone has conquered sin, death, and hell for us.

ECCLESIASTES. Our Visitor sounds like Luke in his Gospel, when he talks about works as the way to righteousness, like the tax collector seeking forgiveness of sins and righteousness through prayer and beating his chest.

LUTHER. First you must know that we have to dismiss the idea that there are four Gospels and no more than four. But John's Gospel is the fine chief Gospel and the others are quite different and held higher. Thus St. Paul and St. Peter in their letters pass over the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

ENTHUSIAST. What are you saying, Luther? Do you want to be one of the heavenly prophets who say that you must listen to the voice of God? That has nothing to do with scripture. Bible, Boor, Babble.

LUTHER. If I'm not a prophet, I'm still certain for myself that the word of God is with me and not the papists.

ENTHUSIAST. But I know that we, who have and know the gospel, no matter what poor sinners we are, have the right spirit or, as Paul says, the first-fruits of the spirit, if not the fullness of the spirit.

ECCLESIASTES. But who are the false prophets of our time?

LUTHER. You are asking that? Do not you know how many books I have written against them? Against Karlstadt, Müntzer, Zwingli, and other enemies of the sacrament, and against the Anabaptists, who previously were my best companions, my brothers, my children, my golden friends, and who knew nothing bold either from Christ or the gospel that Luther had not already written.

ECCLESIASTES. Then no one can know who has the spirit. But in sum, briefly, it is the pope and his whole retinue who all teach what is against God.

MARTINUS. Dear brother, you know that six years ago I wrote quite differently to Pope Leo, specifically that I wished to hear his voice as the voice of Christ. He may take or discard my writing; for that reason I have also disregarded all that I am and have.

ENTHUSIAST. But it is a stupid submission, since you appeal to him shortly afterward, as from a godless one, heretic, tyrant, and antichrist.

MARTINUS. I have not done that before, except from counsel and inclination from those who do not do it, or who seek unrest and novelties, as I have written to them or they have requested of me. I am certainly not held in esteem or high regard; thus I must not praise it in any way; instead there is nothing I would like more than an overturning of such scandal and evil.

DOCTOR. Dear brother, such honor, praise, shaming, quarreling, or contradicting is not at all evangelical. Whoever lives strictly evangelically prays willingly and gladly, and the works of the gospel are not called “external” but rather come from within, which is why they are called godly works, for they are works of grace and the spirit. Christ speaks of this (Matthew 5[:20]): “Unless your righteousness is better than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

J. COCHLAEUS

What can Your Excellencies see or do here about the gospel? You want everything from Luther’s teachings and new sects and groups to be considered evangelical, while you live in no way according to the gospel, as the Doctor above states. You do not preach the gospel correctly, as the Visitor complains. While Luther wants to have more than four evangelists, the Enthusiast also wants to be one. Luther also [wants to be] a prophet. The Ecclesiast does not want St. Luke’s Gospel to be that important, because it has so much about good works. But Barabbas wants all of Germany to embrace his rebellious gospel (which he regards as clearer than what the apostles preached). But whatever good has been done until now can be found in the preface to Emser’s New Testament, clearly explained with steadfast and lucid truth. May God give grace so that the princes and leaders of the German nation may honestly and carefully see themselves in the same faith they had before, before this Barabbas’ menacing and bloodthirsty prophecy harms all of Germany.

On the Ten Commandments. Chapter 3

VISITOR. The pastors want to preach the Ten Commandments often and thoroughly, explaining and invoking them—and not just the demand, but also how God will punish those who do not obey. God regularly does punish people in this life, and these examples are written, and one should present them to the people.

ENTHUSIAST. You are really one of us enthusiasts, if you read and exalt Moses and present the people with how Moses governed the people with commandments. You want to be wise and smart and know more than what is contained in the gospel, minimizing faith and introducing something new.

DOCTOR. Do not dismiss Moses, dear brother, since you called the Ten Commandments a truly holy demand.

ENTHUSIAST. Dear Doctor, we do not want to have Moses as a ruler or lawgiver any more, and God does not want that either. Moses is an intermediary for the Jewish people, to whom alone he has given the law. One has to shut the mouths of the rabble-rousers, when they speak of Moses that way. Moses does not mean that for us.

LUTHER. Consider what you are doing, Enthusiast: if you discard Moses, you have to accept the pope in order to preserve the distinction between blood relations and your kin’s family, as God explains in Leviticus 18[:19-23].

ENTHUSIAST. If I accept Moses in one commandment, then I have to accept all. Thus, it follows that if I recognize Moses as a master, I have to let myself be circumcised, wash my clothes according to the Jewish manner, and eat and drink in that way, dress accordingly, and all the rest.

LUTHER. Why did we translate the five Books of Moses into German? Did our peasants and stable-boys already know well that the word of God endures forever? How can you dismiss it?

ENTHUSIAST. Our rabble-rousers rush toward saying that everything that they read in Moses is to be taken as spoken by God, who cannot lie. Thus one says, "God has spoken; who will speak against it?" Then they hunt after such statements like a pig after truffles. But God's word here, God's word there, I must know and take seriously to whom the word of God is being spoken. It is very different when you are far from being those to whom God speaks.

LUTHER. Do not you know, Enthusiast, how sternly we attacked some of the papists, who answered that Paul wrote about both kinds in the sacrament, but only to the Corinthians and not to the whole church? Thus we say, "What depraved or mad thing could that be?" Thus we say that it is far, far from us to hold that there is one letter in all of Paul that does not apply to the whole church. And one can easily say the same of any other book in the Bible.

ENTHUSIAST. There are two types of statements in scripture: the first does not apply to me or concern me at all; the other does apply to me, and me alone, as a firm rock left for me. It does not tell me that I should stand still, while the rabble-rousers go about introducing something new and saying that one must also obey the Old Testament. They also raised a sweat among the peasants, harming their wives and children.

LUTHER. You should at least not discard the Fifth Book of Moses, since it contains a really masterful explanation of the Ten Commandments; nothing else in life is so completely and correctly ordered.

ENTHUSIAST. I'll tell you something else: the Ten Commandments weren't given to us, but only to the Jews, because God says in the Second Book of Moses [Exodus 20:2], "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of servitude." Now he has not brought US out of Egypt, but only the Jews. Also, Paul and the New Testament abrogate the Sabbath, leading us to see that the Sabbath was given to the Jews alone and that it was a strict command to them.

DOCTOR. You see in my sermons on the Ten Commandments that the Sabbath is given as a figure (as Paul says, in Colossians 2[:17]), as a foreshadowing of things to come.

MARTINUS. Is it certain, Enthusiast, that the highest, greatest, and chief commandment in the Decalogue is the first; and that it encompasses works like faith, hope, charity, fear of God, and what God is? Does not that apply to us?

ECCLESIASTES. I can honestly remind you, Enthusiast, that if the Ten Commandments do not apply to us, we have complained unreasonably against the pope and the sophists about placing themselves and their statements before us in place of God's Ten Commandments.

ENTHUSIAST. Dear brother, let me be content with Moses, since if I accept one part of Moses, I am responsible for all, as Paul says (Galatians 5[:3]). But no smidgeon of Moses applies to us.

BARABBAS. I have written the same about the thieving peasants, namely that it does not help them at all that they say that according to Genesis 1-2 all things are free and shared and that we're all equally baptized, since Moses does not apply in the New Testament.

ENTHUSIAST. We understand it differently, as we create sects and mobs and spew among the people, into the common horde, saying without distinction, "God's word! God's Word!" It is called that, dear people, when it is directed at you.

LUTHER. But how often have you joined us in going after the pope and his laws with Deuteronomy 4[:2], "You should not add anything to my word, which I say to you, or take anything away."

ENTHUSIAST. There are more refined people and many great preachers, who cannot preach about Moses, being witless, frenzied, ranting, and raving, chattering to the people, "God's word! God's word!" while they lead the poor people astray and throw them into their graves.

J. COCHLAEUS

Where does the word of God reside that Luther has until now praised so highly and often? I have no pity on the willful monk who has for so long invoked the word of God against the pope and councils, and who now makes fun of it saying, "God's word here, God's word there." Turks and Tartars never speak or write as mockingly about the word of God or the Ten Commandments, as this Enthusiast here does. There have been certain heretics, like Marcionites and Manichaeans, who discard the Old Testament completely, who never wrote so disdainfully and haughtily about the word of God. This Enthusiast goes farther than they do and says whatever he wants. Who gave him the power to control, minimize, and discard Moses and the word of God? When he likes it, it applies, and when he does not, it does not. Lucifer himself is not as arrogant and haughty toward the word of God as this monk. "It does not apply here." In his book on marriage he wants to show, from the Third Book of Moses [Leviticus 18], that having your sister's child is godly and Christian and that he wants his brother's or sister's daughter. But in which laws has the Old Testament bound or not bound us Christians? Which councils and holy fathers and doctors have sufficiently known and ordered that we must play with this monk's abuse? Your Excellencies will surely know how highly this monk esteems the word of God in his letter against Worms, since he says he trusts neither the whole empire nor a future council—and now tosses it audaciously into the muck.

On the Fear of God. Chapter 4

VISITOR. The pastors should punish certain extreme forms of depravity like divorce, drunkenness, envy, and hate and show how God himself punished them. Thus he can show that there is no doubt that he lives according to so high a standard that none could be better. Thus he

would stimulate and encourage the people in fearing God, confession, and contrition, and that bold and fearless life will be punished. Thus Paul says (Romans 3[:20]), “Through the law comes knowledge of sin,” and knowing sin is nothing other than genuine contrition.

ENTHUSIAST. I have shown above at length that the law does not apply, only the gospel.

LUTHER. The Law of Moses does not promise forgiveness of sin or eternal things, only temporal goods like the land of Canaan.

MARTINUS. You know that the gospel commands us also to confession, the beginning of which is contrition. For God was so intent on making persons righteous that he first damned them, and because he wanted to build them up, he broke them, and to heal them he weakened them, and to give them eternal life he killed them, as he says in 2 Kings 2 and Deuteronomy 32. But he does that when he crushes and humbles persons and makes them recognize their sins and tremble, so that the poor sinner says [Psalm 38:3], “There is no strength in my bones when confronted with my sins.”

LUTHER. Martinus, you do not know how rich a Christian or a baptized person is when he cannot lose his salvation, no matter how much he sins or does not want to believe, since no sin can damn him, but only lack of faith. But contrition and penance for sin, and satisfaction afterward, and all other extra practices and care for others will leave you quickly and make you unhappy, when you forget godly truth and acceptance, since the devil appears in you then.

MARTINUS. But I know one who endured the pain of purgatory on earth, so great and gruesome that no one wanted to write or speak about it, not believing that he was being punished and that God appeared horribly wrathful to him and to all creatures. There is no escape or consolation, inner or outer: only accusation and culpability.

ECCLESIASTES. In the monasteries and universities we must listen and study what a hard judge Christ is, since he is in truth nothing but a mediator between God and humans.

DOCTOR. Contrition, which one has upon reflection, reckoning, and suffering when contemplating one’s sins in bitterness of the soul, and moderating the weight, number and impurity of sins: this contrition makes one a hypocrite, indeed an even greater sinner.

ENTHUSIAST. I consider it an unfortunate doctrine, teaching people to be contrite over their sins after contemplating suffering and payment.

VISITOR. The people should be carefully warned that saving faith is impossible without sincere and honest contrition and fear of God, as is written in Psalm 110 [111:10] and Ecclesiasticus 1[:14], “Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.” And Isaiah says at the end, “What does God alone see in a frightened and contrite heart?” [Isaiah 66:2] Where there is no contrition, there is a feigned faith.

ENTHUSIAST. We have a better teaching: penance does not start with contrition and suffering over one’s sins but with love of righteousness.

VISITOR. True faith should bring consolation and peace with God. Such consolation and peace are not felt where remorse and terror are, as Christ says (Matthew 11[:5]): preaching is for the poor.

J. COCHLAEUS

Here Your Excellencies can easily gather that it was much better when we first recognized the monk's error concerning obedience to the pope and the Christian church. The pope indicated several articles in a bull, of which the sixth was what the Doctor said above. We have seen this in him for a long time, until the people have fallen so far from consideration and fear of God that now, as the Visitor, must call his people back to contrition and pain, penance and confession of sins, and fear of God. For many of his followers have not confessed in many years or truly done penance for their sins, consoling themselves only with faith. But that by itself is dead without works accompanying it (James 2[:17, 26]).

On Good Works. Chapter 5

VISITOR. The third part of the Christian life is doing good works such as chastity, loving and helping your neighbor, not lying, not deceiving, not stealing, not murdering, not being eager for revenge, not asserting your own authority, and the like. The Ten Commandments should be preached again, because all good works are included in them.

ECCLESIASTES. Our learned doctors do that, when they want to understand the Holy Spirit and say that good works belong to faith and that faith is not sufficient for blessedness. Thus it is not true that faith alone without works makes us blessed, and works do not help us at all toward righteousness or salvation.

DOCTOR. I have often preached, and discarded the false illusion, saying that we should with all care have contrition and pain over our sins, doing penance and good works. For faith in the sacrament remains the foremost good and inheritance by which we reach the grace of God and then do many good works.

ECCLESIASTES. That obviously renders all our acts worthless, so that we must have Christ alone. For where faith is, sin will do no harm, for it makes us one with Christ.

MARTINUS. But I say that all works, no matter how good they are and how appealingly they shine, do not flow from grace and count for nothing. Not completely worthless, because God rewards good works that take place outside of God's grace in this life with prosperity, honor, strength, power, happiness, friendship, art, prominence, etc. But none of that achieves eternal life.

ECCLESIASTES. Are you saying that good works that do occur in God's grace merit eternal life?

MARTINUS. That is easily understood from that.

ECCLESIASTES. But you are quite wrong, dear Martin, since even our best work, which we imagine brings help and consolation from God, is reckoned to us as sin, as the Prophet says in Psalm 108[109:4]: “His prayer should become a sin.”

DOCTOR. But you are even more wrong, dear Ecclesiastes, because we know that what is written endures regarding the useless tree that bears no fruit. I have taught the people better by telling them that they should be modest on feast days and spend the time in prayer and good works, for that is how God and his kingdom are honored. And while the brotherhood should be a particular collection of [those doing] good works, it has bothered me that it has become a money-making operation.

LUTHER. In how many books have I shown than a person sins in doing good works?

ENTHUSIAST. I have shown likewise that the righteous person sins in all good works.

VISITOR. This is lofty talk that the novice laypeople cannot understand. People should teach their children to go to the school benches.

BARABBAS. I have decided to stop my ears and let the blind, ungrateful creatures, who seek in me nothing but causes of offense, smother in their own vexation until they had to rot.

ENTHUSIAST. I want to say something else. When the pope said to me that a good work done the best it can is a venial sin, I refuted it and modified it: a good work done the best it can is a venial sin against the mercy of God. It is actually a mortal sin according to the judgment of God.

VISITOR. That means it is evil, since we call good works not only those that benefit the neighbor but also are commanded by God. Thus they are pleasing to God; and God does not like those who do not do them.

ENTHUSIAST. Whatever take issue with my statement or article takes issue with the verse in Isaiah 64[:6] also: “We have all become unclean, and all our righteousness becomes like a foul stinking rag.” Also the verse Ecclesiastes 7[:20]: “There is no righteous person on earth, who does good deeds and yet does not sin.”

ECCLESIASTES. The more you sin, the more God will pour grace upon you. When you do not want to groom yourself like a cat with good works so that God will accept you, you will not straighten out. For scripture praises God for casting sin aside and casting it into the sea.

VISITOR. If you want to oppose us so arrogantly, we won't fail to seek help and counsel from our gracious rulers.

BARABBAS. The princes only want to lead with the sword, grabbing God by the beard, who in turn wants to smack them in the mouth.

J. COCHLAEUS

Your Graces see here how the enemy of the human race has misused the seven heads of this wretched monk and confused him with so many contradictions to the eternal shame of the German nation and the irredeemable loss and disgrace of souls. The ancient and crafty serpent

knows well that the human is created by God to praise God through good works and earn benefits for eternal life, and that God will reward each one according to his works (Psalm 61[62:12]; Romans 2[:6-8]; and 1 Corinthians 3[:8, 14]). He knows also that a tree that does not bring forth fruit should be cut down and thrown into the fire (Matthew 3[:10] and 7[:19]). Thus he fights all these years against good works by means of this wondrous instrument. And as a result, many of us Germans live every day like beasts: without thought, without fear of God, without veneration of the holy sacrament, without any care of practice of good works—simply in the appetites of the body and freedom of the flesh, exactly as if Christ had not openly said (John 5[:29]): “those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” And Paul [wrote] (Colossians 1[:10]): “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.”

On Prayer to God. Chapter 6

VISITOR. The pastors and preachers should often encourage the people to pray, because that is the fulfillment of the commandment. Prayer is seeking God’s help in all afflictions. And they should teach the people what prayer is and how one should pray. First, they should teach that God has commanded prayer. Thus just as it is a great sin to murder, so is it a sin not to pray to or desire God.

ECCLESIASTES. But we have already said that praying is also a sin, as it states in Psalm 108[109:4]: “and his prayer should become a sin.”

ENTHUSIAST. We have similarly shown from scripture that a good work, even if done at its best, is sin.

BARABBAS. The sixth duty of priests is praying for others; but Christ has given the Lord’s Prayer to all us Christians, so the papist priesthood is an outright lie propagated from outside God’s church, because what they want priests to do most is pray for the laity. There is your Dagon and the only god of your paunch.

MARTINUS. You are too coarse, Barabbas. The priests and religious celebrate Mass every day, pray every hour, and exert themselves with the word of God in their studies, reading, and hearing. Thus they are also free, endowed by fees so they are not bound to work.

BARABBAS. Dear Martin, see that while they alone want to be the ones who pray for the people, they have become, thanks to the marvelous counsel of God, nothing other than pictures of praying people. For whoever is in the whole collection of colleges, monasteries, and benefices prays. They probably have the words of the prayers on their lips and think they have the collection of songs like David. But he knows it is a cacophony of song and knows it when it says, “This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.” [Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8; Mark 7:6]

MARTINUS. When priests and the religious sing and read, they also say the prescribed confession and prayer out loud and dutifully. Their obedience is almost at its best in this and

close to another work of bodily obedience. For there is so much unspoken grace in the word of God that even when spoken just with the mouth and without thought (in the spirit of obedience), it is a fruitful prayer, and it brings woe to the devil.

BARABBAS. Let Christ be the judge, as he says that God is a spirit and whoever prays to him prays in spirit. From that it follows that the pope and his papists have their own priesthood and rite for praying; but they are neither priests nor praying people, but rather masks and images of priests and praying people.

MARTINUS. But it helps, when you hear the word and understand its reason, to consider and pray properly. No one should give preference to his heart to want to pray without the word; he should be well versed in the practice and experience of casting away foreign thoughts. I do not dismiss oral prayer or the words, and no one should dismiss it but instead accept it with much thanks as a special and great gift of God.

ENTHUSIAST. You know well, Martin, that we have told about the seventh appearance of the Roman antichrist, what he is and sent into the churches, that the daytime is spent in great toil so that they never pray.

BARABBAS. Thus this undeniable sentence stands: in the New Testament there can be no visible priests who are different from the laity.

MARTINUS. But Christ teaches us to pray for all spiritual prelates, especially for those who have given us God's word, because if it had not been given to them, we would then be asking God for it.

ECCLESIASTES. It is foolish that we would want to give precedence to the work and faith of others, and say that nuns, monks, and priests, with their songs that they practice at night in the monastery, might help others and share their treasury [of merit].

MARTINUS. From the law of love, everyone is commanded to be responsible for everyone else. And the Apostle says to bear the burden of another, and thus will you fulfill the law of Christ. Thus confraternities, in which the brothers are in community with each other and share their concerns and works, are large and small prelates—also monasteries, orders, hospitals, and parish churches. But that cannot be true where works for others are not sufficient or help in praising God.

VISITOR. God is so generous that he not only wants to help those who seek him but has also commanded us to pray at Luke 18[:1-8] and many other places, and people should know that God has also told us that he hears us (Matthew 7[:7], Luke 11[:8]), "Ask and it will be given to you." We should rely on such words and not doubt that God hears our petition, as Christ says at Mark 11[:24].

DOCTOR. Prayer is a special exercise of faith, which makes prayer so pleasing that either the prayer is answered or something better is given. For as James says [1:6], "Whoever asks for something from God should not be doubtful in faith; but whoever doubts will never believe that he received something from God."

LUTHER. God has never done anything with people (and still does not) contrary to the word of promise; and in return we can do nothing else with God except through faith in the word of promise. God neither notices nor rewards works.

VISITOR. The prayer of the sinner or hypocrite who does not repent over his sin and hypocrisy is indeed not heard. For it is said of those (Psalm 18[41]), they call upon the Lord but there is no help, for he answers them not. But those who have remorse and believe that God and Christ forgive: their sin and hypocrisy will not be allowed to harm them.

LUTHER. Free will is a fictitious thing and a name without an object, for it is stated that no one accomplishes anything, good or evil but one's own power. Rather all things happen from necessity, as Wyclif's article, condemned at Constance, rightly teaches. What are we praying to God for, since he himself works and does good and bad in us?

VISITOR. You are wrong and far too impudent, Luther, for a person has free will in his own power to do or leave off doing external works, impelled either by law or punishment. Pastors should also instruct the people that one should desire something temporal or eternal from God; indeed they should warn them that God holds out to each what each one has to do.

J. COCHLAEUS

Has there ever been, I know well, one night in which everyone had the manifold and contradictory dreams that this monk enthuses about regarding prayer, or a poet so versatile in his fabrications as this Enthusiast is in such a serious matter, necessary for the salvation of the soul? Indeed no fables and old wives' tales are so strongly and so often contradictory as this seven-headed dialogue about lofty and godly things. I'm certain that there is no simple woman more inconstant, no scoundrel more frivolous, no false prophet more dishonest, no enthusiast more changeable than this new evangelist appears to be. I also hold that no Turk or Tartar has blasphemed God so blatantly as Luther here does, when he says that no person has in their own power the intention to do good or evil, but rather that God does everything in us, good and bad. In fact no master would willingly have tolerated some knave speaking dishonestly or equivocally in a message. If someone wants to be a doctor, an apostle and evangelist of the Germans, constantly tolerating and permitting the all the change and vagueness that he shows in his published books, like a drunken blockhead or a suckling who can neither go nor stand still. When were the common folk more astray or doubtful in almost all matters of the sacraments of our holy faith than they are now? It is no wonder, since so many enthusiasts are tolerated, and Luther wavers so often from one view to the other and then openly wants people to burn his earlier books. If that is actually evangelical or from the Holy Spirit, then everyone can think and consider however they feel.

On Feast Days. Chapter 7

VISITOR. The third commandment demands that the Sabbath be kept holy.¹

¹ Cochlaeus' "feyertag" means every feast day, but the Commandment of course refers to the Sabbath.

ENTHUSIAST. But we have shown above with many reasons and from this commandment that Moses and his commandments do not apply to us, only the Jews.

VISITOR. If God has not commanded us to observe external ceremonies the same way as the Jews, since we do not wish to do any manual labor, still there should be some observance, so that we hear and teach God's word and the people can come together at specific times.

ENTHUSIAST. But we have shown among the twelve appearances of the antichrist that the ninth indicates the uselessness and unfairness of feast days, since every day can be one of working or celebrating.

BARABBAS. If you have, Visitor, any scriptural text for feast days that show where you may and may not, then you know how much we have used scripture to show that human laws and traditions do not bind us.

VISITOR. The pastors should also not quarrel over whether one feast should take place and the other not; rather, each should maintain his customs in peace, as long as they do not do away with all ceremonies.

BARABBAS. Why not all, since you do not have a single scriptural warrant? Because we are not merely responsible for not observing them, but rather, for the sake of our salvation, we should do away with them altogether, as Paul tells us (Romans 16[Romans 14]; 1 Corinthians 10; Galatians 3-5; Colossians 2; etc.) and all the Prophets have taught us to shun all human teachings and traditions.

MARTINUS. However much the physical ceremonies that we let remain as our handiwork and effort, for which we come to church, go to Mass, hear God's word, and lead others to Christianity is not commanded to us by God, as the apostle says (Colossians 2[:16-17]), still it is ordered within Christianity for the sake of the incomplete Christians and workers that the young also come to God's word.

BARABBAS. But I say that, for the sake of such human traditions, all bishops, abbots, seminaries, and monasteries should be overthrown, even driven out and expelled from the land.

LUTHER. Eight years ago I suggested that all feasts should be abolished and only Sunday observed. But if someone wanted to observe a feast to Our Lady and the major saints, they should all be on Sunday, or held only on Mass mornings, so that the rest of the day could be a work day. Thus one would not abolish it, whether the pope declares it a feast or grant a dispensation or holiday.

MARTINUS. Not so, Luther, because the other work of God's fourth commandment is to honor and obey the divine mother the holy Christian church, the spiritual power, whatever she gives, binds, declares, orders, forbids, releases, and that we should govern ourselves by. And just as we honor, fear, and love our earthly parents, so should we allow our spiritual authorities to have the right over all things that do not go against the first three commandments.

BARABBAS. What are you saying, you hypocrite? Are you saying this on the same page where you contradict yourself and say that there are still a few feast days and celebrations that are better

to keep than to do away with? Do not you instead say above that it would be good to have fewer holy days? David teaches us throughout Psalm 118[119] that we should hide from human laws and traditions and flee from them as the greatest misery on earth.

MARTINUS. You do not see, Barabbas, how brave Christ is in the churches, to keep from straying those who might stray when we do not fall into error ourselves.

BARABBAS. A blessed conscience knows and does not doubt that the church demands or orders nothing without or beyond the word of God. Whoever dares to do otherwise is not of the church but makes himself a separate church.

DOCTOR. How long are you going to quarrel among yourselves? I want to tell you the real meaning. The church keeps feast days for the sake of God's word for those who are incomplete, which old persons who are not yet dead have; for them it is necessary that they observe with special intention offices, holy days, vigils, fasts, works, prayers, disciplines, and the like so that they may thus come to fullness of the inner person. One should observe saints' days in five parts, as we find in the decretals, namely hearing Mass, hearing the sermon, praying, sacrificing, and being contrite for sins. And in all of these one should not follow one's own judgment or fantasy or thought, but rather the teaching and instruction of the churches, and subject one's own sense to the service of Christ. For it is written: "He who trusts his own heart is a fool." [Proverbs 28:26] The church cannot err, but it is possible that someone errs in his thoughts.

J. COCHLAEUS

Whoever is not moved and aroused by the Lutheran addition to this chapter, in trembling and shaking, should recognize whom he follows and how strongly he has sinned against the church for the past ten years, as he has clearly and completely ignored God and is following a wayward sense. It must be a blind irrationality to prefer following this frivolous, inconstant, and disobedient monk (who lives in open sin, reproaches and slanders all, and has never performed a miracle) to following the highest authorities, the pope and emperor, the councils, and all of Christendom that has held power for 1,500 years now to command and forbid. But who has given power to this monk to institute or prohibit feast days? He is neither pope nor bishop and has no common authority to institute or forbid. As he has for the past few years confessed in saying, shamelessly and arrogantly (in a way that I am not), I want it said among the learned men of the holy church. He has much less power among these to state or deny these things. God willing, I will be worthy some day of the last and most minor part of the church.

On the Merit of the Saints. Chapter 8

VISITOR. It is also not necessary for anyone to dispute subtly about merit and whether God grants it for our works. It is enough to teach that God gives sustenance and sufficiency, while one has the promise apart from our merit.

ENTHUSIAST. Where are you creeping to with merit and rewards for good works? You know perfectly well how strongly we proved from scripture that the righteous person sins according to God's judgment in all good works.

VISITOR. So much screeching that good works avail nothing. It would be so much better, if we urged people to do good works and stopped with the nasty disputations.

ECCLESIASTES. Nature does not need us to do good works for the sake of piety or righteousness; instead, it wants to merit or avoid something. But that is false and a sin before God. And Paul asserts (Romans 3[:10]) from Psalm 13[14:1] that no person is righteous before God.

MARTINUS. If you had proper faith, nothing might be in you or befall you that isn't completely pleasing to God, for it must all be good and meritorious. For Paul says this at Romans 8[:28]: "We know that all things serve the holy ones of God."

ECCLESIASTES. We should not be pious in order to merit or avoid something, for all persons are day laborers and bargainers for things, not acting like sons and heirs.

MARTINUS. Have not you yourself taught that there is merit, so that when you give a poor person one gulden, it is as if you are giving a hundred to the saints?

LUTHER. But I taught something better: that all our works mean nothing to God or are all alike, because God asks for nothing in terms of works and does not need them, but he does need his words to be regarded properly by us.

ECCLESIASTES. Who seeks piety more than the person who seeks and finds God himself; but the one who seeks reward and flees punishment never finds God, for he makes the reward his God. For whatever the reason one does something, that is their God.

DOCTOR. Dear brother, you should know that God has given us commandments so that we can acquire merit through them. Because whoever is not obedient gains no merit. Where there is no commandment, there is no obedience. And since there is no command to buy indulgences for souls, it is better to heed the conscience in meritorious works, so that one may achieve what others buy indulgences for.

BARABBAS. You are speaking here against Christian freedom, for people should not be enslaved by their consciences, either with laws or with commandments.

DOCTOR. You are way off, Barabbas, since going from what is permitted toward what is commanded is to be surer: for obedience is certain and freedom is fallible.

MARTINUS. You are right, dear Doctor, because God's commandment is incomparably more worthy of obedience than that which is issued by humans, since there is merit in obeying the commandment but not human law.

ECCLESIASTES. You say a lot about merit but you do not consider that you are discarding God's mercy and pushing us toward wanting to seek God's righteousness with good works—which is most of all to be avoided.

MARTINUS. But I made the case against Dr. Eck that the merits of Christ are a treasury of the church and that we are sealed by the merits of the saints. That is certain.

ECCLESIASTES. You did that wrong, Martinus, because there is only one mediator between God and humanity (as Paul says in 1 Timothy 2[:5]), Jesus Christ, through whose merit alone we and all the saints are blessed. Thus I would not give a dime for St. Peter's merit, because he couldn't even help himself apart from what he had with his faith in Christ.

DOCTOR. That is a blatant blasphemy, because all the saints make all things possible, and God has given it to you through them, if you believe or accept that you have received it. For what are the beloved saints other than drops of dew or drops in the hair and skin at night (Song of Songs 5[:2]).

ECCLESIASTES. If this is the case with the merits of saints, I say for myself that when I see the heavens open, and I am worthy of being taken up to heaven with straw, one thing I will not do is say, "Look, I earned this!"

BARABBAS. But I have said that the time of the peasants' uprising was so remarkable that a prince might merit heaven with a bloodbath than another might with prayer.

ECCLESIASTES. But you did not speak correctly, for God gives us heaven for nothing, not because of our works.

J. COCHLAEUS

From this chapter Your Excellencies may easily recognize how wretchedly this monk has led us astray for all these years on the matter of the merit and rewards for good works that pious persons and the dear saints have done. What has he gotten right? Really nothing good, since the Visitor now himself acknowledges that a youth was never more sacrilegious than what we now see (he says), how disobedient and how disrespectful of his elders he is. For that reason, doubtless many plagues, wars, rebellions, and other evils have come into the world. This he himself admits. But what is the fault of his disobedient, rebellious, and contradictory writing? Who has been more scornful toward all the virtues and good works? Who has ignored the schools and all education more than he with all those blasphemous books against learning and the universities? Here Your Excellencies see what his coarse Ecclesiastes said about good works and the merits of the dear saints. I have given just a small portion of the coarse material that he has preached in his sermons against learning and good works. What is necessary is for us to write many books, while his three heads—Visitor, Martinus, and Doctor—dismiss them as lame obscenities and see them as error? But when all seven heads blast in one horn, what is enough for us against them all is the clear word of Christ (Matthew 20[:8]): "Call the worker and give him his pay." Mark 9[:41]: "Whoever gives you a cup of cold water in my name while you are of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not be without his reward." And Luke 10[:7]: "The worker is worthy of his pay." Paul too says (1 Corinthians 3[:8]), "Each will receive his reward according to his work." And chapter 9[:17]: "When I do this willingly, I have a reward, etc."

EPILOGUE

Honorable. Esteemed, and wise Gentlemen: I do not want to burden or trouble you any further now with this seven-headed monk. You easily find in these eight chapters that it is not the Holy Spirit (which is one with God) but the evil spirit of Satan—indeed the whole legion of evil spirits—that has spoken and written for the past ten years through this monk, as his Imperial Majesty has openly demonstrated with faithful warning in the Edict of Worms. Many, thus warned, avoided the monk's grasp. And many learned and honorable persons have been revolted by his inconsistent and contradictory writings, like those I have often pointed out and attacked over the years. But it has never been so clearly stated as it is in this dialogue, the like of which has never been heard or seen as long as Christianity has existed. I say that to give Luther not fame but shame, and to warn the common people so that your praiseworthy city and honorable people may, with this friendly instruction and admonition, remain faithful to universal Christianity to the end. For it becomes clearer and clearer every day that the sacrilege and arrogance of this monk will come to a bad end. And a native Wittenberg resident once told me that Luther himself has often said to the chancery that he does not want it to do anything, if he didn't initiate it. He also says that many people in Wittenberg secretly want Luther to be like a wolf and head into the woods, and also that the peasants around Wittenberg often curse his inconstancy. Until now he has not done as much, with all his books and sermons, as the city of Wittenberg did, in steadfast fashion and purpose, with its new ban. Rather he wavers and falters these days from one path to another, so that the common man and the poor simple people have no idea where he is going. In fact the monk writes and prattles on constantly, as long as he thinks he can, that his favor and following grow daily. New sects rise up against him, but also many of his own following have had misgivings about his hand-scythe and blasphemous pamphlet about secret letters, which he wrote against Duke George of Saxony, without any basis or sincere purpose, as frivolously as possible and with definite lies and blasphemy. Now he trots along like a blind old horse and does not know where he is going to be at the end. Now he writes in two sermons that we're sinners in the Holy Spirit, since we condemn and attack his teaching, whereas it is obvious that there is no greater blasphemy and sacrilege than he himself shows in his seven heads. He also wants people to leave their fathers, mothers, brothers, children, and sisters and join him, while he himself attaches to almost nothing and then heartily rebukes it. It is well-earned reward for his changeable arrogance that like a new messiah he compares his teachings to Christ's, as if they were not his, but God's—which is actually not the most outrageous blasphemy that he heretically and openly condemns God's teachings and sets himself up as a new Christ, as if we had to receive a new law from him (as the Jews had to receive a new law from Christ). He knows perfectly well that Christ remains with his church to the end of the world and has warned us against such false prophets (Matthew 7[:15]). And even if we had written nothing against him, still we would know the rotten fruit that has come from his new gospel in all the sects and rebellions, such that Germany had not endured in the previous 700 years. May God protect you, Honorable Councilors, and the honorable assembly of the praiseworthy city of Lubeck.

Your humble servant, Dr. Johannes Cochlaeus