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I.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE TRUTHFULNESS OF BIBLE HISTORY.*

It will be generally agreed that the above subject has the merit of timeliness. For some time past the assertion has been made, and it is being made in our own day with greater confidence and insistence than ever, that our Christian faith and historical facts have very little or nothing to do with each other. Most frequently this assertion is made with reference to some one particular event of Sacred History, which has for the time being become the subject of debate from the point of view of its historicity. Those who incline to doubt the historical truthfulness of some such narrative as, e.g., that of the supernatural birth or the resurrection of the Saviour, or at least incline to consider it an open question, are, when their skepticism awakens remonstrance from the conservative side, ever ready with the answer that Christianity is something too great and too deep, too inward, ideal and vital to be dependent in its essence on this or that single occurrence in the world of history. They protest that their own faith lives far superior to the level where such questions are discussed and decided, as to whether Christ was supernaturally conceived by the Virgin Mary or rose bodily from the grave on the third day. And they are not slow to make their own subjective faith in this matter the standard of

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V.

SCHWENCKFELD'S PARTICIPATION IN THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.*

First Article.

The eucharistic controversies of the Reformation, like the related Christological controversies of the ancient Church, present, on the whole, a disheartening picture; one in which the harsh uncharitableness, not to say the violent hatred, among brethren professing devotion to a common Lord is too seldom relieved by examples of heroic fidelity to religious convictions, combined with the conciliatory spirit of Christian love. In each case the conflict was followed by momentous and in part disastrous consequences in the spheres both of constructive theologizing and of ecclesiastical and political life. In each case, however, the issues involved must be said, when their full significance is realized, to have been worth the arduous attempt made to settle them.

* Schwencfeld's works have never been published in full. Four folio volumes which appeared shortly after his death contain his most important literary remains. They bear the following titles: (1) Epistolar Des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten Manns Caspar Schwencfeldts von Ossing, seliger gedachteis, Christliche Lehrhaffte Missiven oder Sendbrieff, die er in zeit seines Lebens vom XXV. Jare bis auff das LV. . . . geschrieben, etc., etc. Der Erste Theil. 1566. Pp. XXVII, 880. (2) Epistolar des Edlen von Gott hochbegnadeten Herren Caspar Schwencfelds von Ossing, . . . Christliche leerhaffte Sendbriefe und schrifften die er in Zeit seines lebens vom XXV. Jare an biss auff das LXI. . . . geschrieben, etc. Der Ander Theil in vier Bücher unterscheiden. 1570. Pp. 146 and 678. (The pages of this volume bear the caption, Sendbrief von der Bepstischen Leere und Glauben. It is the first of four books that were to have contained his correspondence in regard to the four great parties in the Church of his day, the Romanists, the Lutherans, the Zwinglians, and the Anabaptists. But the third four books or volumes never appeared.) (3) Das zweite Buch des aundern theils des Epistolar. Darinn Herren Caspar Schwencfeldts Sendbriefe begriffen, die er auf der Lutherischen Glauben, Leere, Sacrament und Kirchen, zum theil an Lutherische, zum theil sonst an guterzige Personen geschrieben. 1570. Pp. 1022. (4) Der Erste Theil Der Christlichen Orthodoxischen Bücher und schrifften des Edlen, theuren . . . . Caspar Schwencfelds von Hauss Ossing, etc., etc. 1564 Pp. 974. (The other parts of this series also never appeared.) These four volumes are cited in the following by the symbols A, B, C, D, respectively. The numerous smaller volumes containing material in regard to the eucharistic controversy are cited by the titles of the separate treatises or letters found in them.
The Lord’s Supper had, of course, been an important subject of controversy in the Middle Ages.* But it was reserved for the evangelical spirit of the sixteenth century not only to undermine the dogma of transubstantiation sanctioned by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, but also to bring into clearer prominence many a hitherto neglected factor of the problem concerning the sacramental feast. The issue was far from being merely liturgical. † The contest was so long and bitter just because it was rightly understood that the most precious treasures of the rediscovered Gospel were at stake. The mere statement of the controverted points led thinking men to connect their views of the Supper with the deepest verities of their faith. It lay in the nature of the case, therefore, that sooner or later nearly every dogmatic problem of the day would be related to the question which, above all others, was beginning to divide the Protestants.

In ascertaining the nature and value of the contribution made by any one of the reformers to the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper it is necessary, therefore, to consider his views both from the standpoint of the fundamental principles of his system of thought and in the light of his historical surroundings. For to none of the contestants did the eucharistic question appear as an end in itself, nor could any one of them attempt the solution of the problem without coming into conflict with various classes of opponents.

To these considerations special weight ought to be given in the case of Caspar Schwenckfeld.‡ For on the one hand he belongs to that class of theological writers who have had the misfortune of being seriously misunderstood because persistently

* Loos, however, in his article, “‘Abendmahl,’” in Hauck’s Realencyklopädie, I, p. 65, is unduly anxious to maintain that, barring Carstadt’s theory, the “positive thoughts of the Reformation period” concerning the eucharist are “not new.” The context, to be sure, restricts this generalization to more moderate bounds. Certainly so far as Schwenckfeld, for example, is concerned, Loos’ statement can be applied only to the finally accepted symbolic doctrines of the Supper. Cf. Goetz, Die Abendmahlsfrage in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung, p. 75, n. 2.

† It is interesting to observe, however, as Harnack reminds us (Dogmengeschichte, III, pp. 746, 762), that it is possible in a sense to construe Luther’s whole reformation as a “reformation of the public worship.” Rome had made the mass the very centre of her church service, and the work of the reformers in its negative but at the same time its most direct bearings was an attack in the name of subjective religion upon the citadel of the Romish liturgy.

‡ The spelling of the name is by no means uniform. Kriebel, The Schwenckfelders in Pennsylvania, p. 1, n. 1, cites thirteen variations, and others might be added. Schneider gives some valid reasons in favor of the consonantal combination ck and a final d instead of dt or only t. See his tract, Über den geschichtlichen Verlauf der Reformation in Liegnitz, etc., Abt. 1, p. 27, n. 10.
branded as "mystics.""* It is of course to be admitted that his religious life revealed itself more in the language of strong and deep feeling than in any clearly articulated system of dialectics. It is likewise true, as Dorner† reminds us, that it must have been easy for his contemporaries to represent his ideas as "only a perverse lot of the most wondrous idiosyncrasies." Moreover, he shows many points of contact and signs of kinship with some of the extreme spiritualistic fanatics. But for this very reason it is necessary to cast aside all prejudices and to lay hold of the inner connections, if such can be found, among these alleged fantastic and heterogeneous elements. Great credit is here due to Erbkmam,‡ whose treatment of Schwenckfeld is still, on the whole, the best; and to Baur,§ who with his usual critical acumen saw the possibility and the need of doing Schwenckfeld a needed service by bringing out more clearly the hidden speculative elements of his system.¶ These and other writers have accustomed students of Schwenckfeld to the double conviction, not only that his views have a coherence that makes them worthy of investigation, but that of all the dissenting thinkers of the German Reformation he is the most

* That the epithet in some sense may properly be applied to Schwenckfeld it would be idle to deny. But what after all is mysticism? Inge, in his Bampton Lectures (1899) on Christian Mysticism, ventures the assertion (p. 1): "No word in our language—not even 'Socialism'—has been employed more loosely than 'Mysticism,'" and in the Appendix he cites and criticises some twenty-six attempts by men of all schools of thought to define the term. With what propriety we may speak of Schwenckfeld as a mystic will, we hope, become thoroughly clear as we proceed. For the present it may be most advantageous to content ourselves with the statement that the word may as a matter of fact have a good as well as a bad sense.

† Lehre von der Person Christi, p. 624.
‡ Geschichte der protestantischen Sekten, pp. 357-475.
§ Die christliche Lehre von der Versöhnung in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung (1838); Die christl. Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit, etc. (1843); Zur Geschichte der prot. Mystik, in Theol. Jahrbücher (1848).
¶ Baur of course had no intention of converting Schwenckfeld the mystic into Schwenckfeld the rationalist, but the transformation, easy enough in itself and doubtless most congenial to a mind like Baur's, may be said, in spite of the retention of the word "mysticism," to have been fairly accomplished. After all it is only a matter of taking Schwenckfeld's temperature at different times, now catching him in the warmth of a fervent piety and now finding him on the chilly heights of some abstract speculation. But though Baur (Theologische Jahrbücher, 1848, p. 527) professes to be able to distinguish the "speculative content of the ideas from the peculiar form in which they have found expression," he can scarcely be acquitted of the charge of reading into Schwenckfeld some of his own ideas as to how the reformer might have avoided apparent or real contradictions. Dorner (l.c., p. 625) gives a truer judgment: "Doch kann auch nicht behauptet werden, dass er sich stets gleich blieb oder dass nicht unlösbare Wider sprüche in seinem System liegen."
systematic.* Whatever estimate we may form of his "mysticism," we shall expect to discover in him at least somewhat more of logic and speculative strength than the traditional prejudices permitted some of the earlier historical writers to find.†

Not only, however, does the alleged mystical character of Schwenckfeld's theologizing necessitate our bringing his doctrine of the Supper into the closest possible relation to his whole system, but it is likewise more than ordinarily important, on the other hand, to interpret such views as his in the light of the historical situation in which he found himself. This is so not only because of the unusually extensive connections which he had with the most diverse parties in the Church,‡ but more particularly because every mystical movement in history is necessarily colored by the specific forms of religious deadness against which it rises to utter its protest.

Fortunately Schwenckfeld informs us with admirable fullness concerning his relations to his contemporaries.§ Born about 1490,ǁ of an ancient and aristocratic family in Ossig, near Lüben, in Silesia, reared a strict Catholic, educated at Liegnitz, Cologne, Frankfort-on-the-Oder, and, at other but unknown institutions, serving about twelve years at the courts of several Silesian princes, this deeply religious young nobleman became one of the first in


† See, e.g., Planck's capricious statement (Geschichte der Entstehung ..., unseres protestantischen Lehrbegriff's, Vol. V, Th. 1, p. 184): "Dies war wenigstens im Ganzen die Wendung, welche die Ideen Schwenckfelds genommen, oder dies war ungefähr die Form, in welcher sich seine Phantasie alles, was dabei für die Verunft undenkbar war, denkbar gemacht hatte. Es ist leicht möglich, dass sie sich zu Zeiten in seinem Kopf auf eine etwas verschiedene Art zusammengühten, denn Vorstellungen, die keinen vernünftigen Zusammenhang zulassen, sind der manngfaltigsten Zusammensetzung fähig.''

‡ In this fact lies the chief justification for Keller's assertion (Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien, p. 463): "Es wäre von der höchsten Wichtigkeit, die umfangreiche und interessante Correspondenz Schwenckfelds ans Licht zu ziehen; man würde überraschende Resultate daraus gewinnen.''

§ But his works present only meagre details as to his early life. Hoffmann's account, Caspar Schwenckfelds Leben und Lehre, I, extending to only 1524 and constituting the first of six parts of what may become an adequate biography, draws largely from other important sources. Keim and Gerbert present the leading facts concerning Schwenckfeld's career in southern Germany. Hamel, Zur Biographie Kaspars von Schwenckfeld, 1882, is minute but brief, extending to 1539. Arnold, Salig, Planck, Döllinger, Erbkm, etc., give only the salient biographical data.

ǁ Neither the date of his birth (1489 or 1490) nor that of his death (1561 or 1562) has as yet been fixed.
that section of Germany to embrace the evangelical cause.* Compelled in 1521 by reason of an affection of the ear to return to private life, he became a diligent student of the Scriptures.† He kept in touch with the leaders of the new movement, making several trips to Wittenberg and exchanging letters with Luther himself. Devoted heart and soul to the task of establishing the Reformation in Silesia, he secured in 1523 the able coöperation of a former notary and canon, Valentine Krautwald.

But irreconcilable differences soon arose between Schwenckfeld and the Wittenbergers, resulting in 1527 in a complete and irremediable rupture. It is therefore worth while ascertaining, at the very outset, the logic of this event, the real turning-point in his career as a reformer.

He had prided himself upon being an ardent disciple of Luther,‡ and though from the beginning he could not entirely agree with him,§ he never forgot the incalculable service the great reformer had rendered to the cause of religion.|| The force of sacred convictions, however, proved stronger than this sense of gratitude, deepened though it was by a peculiar reverence for his

* The exact date of his conversion cannot be fixed. Hoffmann, p. 10, is inclined to put it as early as 1517; Möller is at least safe in declaring that by 1510 Schwenckfeld had been won to the Lutheran cause (Kirchengeschichte, III, p. 444).

† Greek and Hebrew he seems to have acquired considerably later, certainly not before 1528. Cf. Erbkm, l.c., p. 363, n. 1. Hase is clearly in error, however, when he delares (Kirchengeschichte, III, 1, p. 300): 'Noch in seinem 64. Jahre lernte er Griechisch, um mit eigenen Augen zuzusehen, was Christus geredet habe.' Letters and treatises written long before this evince a considerable knowledge of the Greek Testament and the Fathers.

‡ C 300d (anno 1531): 'Ich habe mich der Lutherischen Lehre erkundet und seines Evangelii gebraucht mit möglichem Fleiss acht Jahre.' Cf. C. 574c: 'Denn ich habe, ohne Ruhm zu reden, in Doctor Luthers Büchern wohl so viel als Ihr studiert und (wollt mir's verzeihen) vielleicht ehe Ihr das a, b, c gelernt viel seiner Schriften mit möglichem Fleiss hinten und vorn gelesen, auch mit Gebet nach der Regel Pauli omnia probate fleissig erforst und bewäret.'

§ B 193b: 'dass ich mit ihrem Evangelio nicht stimme, auch von Anfang nie gänzlich gestimmt habe.'

|| Nothing more beautifully reveals Schwenckfeld's nobility of character than the oft-repeated expressions of his grateful appreciation of Luther's world-historical importance, even after the latter had coined the vulgar nickname "Stenckfeld" and in other ways outdone himself in vituperative abuse. See especially C 499 sq., 599d, D 4, 5, 6, 526, and C 701d, where he informs Luther under date of October 12, 1543: 'Denn ob ich wohl nicht in allen Puncten euch kann unterschreiben, noch mit euch stimmen, so erkenne ich doch, dass ich euch nach Gott und der Wahrheit alle Ehre, Liebe, und Güte schuldig, weil ich eures Dienstes anfänglich mitgenossen, so wohl als ich Gott den Herrn für euch nach meinem armen Vermögen zu bitten noch nicht habe unterlassen.' Cf. C 745b, 690d.
spiritual father. Schwenckfeld perceived that his whole conception of Christianity differed so radically from Luther's that there was no possibility of a substantial agreement.* The common representation, not sufficiently modified even by Erbkam and Hahn that the divergencies of opinion related primarily and chiefly to the eucharistic controversy opened by Carlstadt in 1524 fails, as Baur has pointed out,† to look at the facts from the right angle. The causes of the break must be distinguished from its mere occasion. Prior to all questions about the nature of the Lord's presence in the sacramental ordinance or about the constitution of his person is the consideration of his very purpose or mission in the world. Nothing less than the whole problem of the nature of salvation—the question how the sinful soul may be reunited with God—was Schwenckfeld's basal concern. He could not accept Luther's explanation of the Supper, but this inability was only indicative of, and conditioned by, his inability to accept without safeguarding modifications the doctrine which his chief opponent came to regard as the article of a standing or falling Church, justification by faith alone. Implied in this, as we shall see, was a generically different view as to the Word, the Sacraments, and the Church, and likewise as to the nature of the process of salvation itself.

Schwenckfeld, we repeat, was governed at the outset by thoroughly practical considerations. He wanted the new presentation of the gospel to bring forth, in the lives of his fellow-men, an abundant fruit unto holiness. He was deeply grieved by some of those epigrammatic but easily misunderstood half-truths with which Luther so often sought to help his own and his partisans' faith. He feared, and his experience more and more justified his fears, that Luther's gospel was becoming popular at the expense, to some extent, of

* The influence on Schwenckfeld of the mystical Tauler and the German Theology only widened the gulf. Schwenckfeld (C 596a) speaks with admiration, though not with unconditional approval, of his teacher Tauler. The fact is that Schwenckfeld forsook Luther for Tauler, whereas Luther, in opposition to the fanatical excesses of some of the spiritualists, felt it necessary more and more to recede from Tauler and to check the subjective tendencies he had himself championed in the opening days of the Reformation. Even before the disturbances at Wittenberg, however, Luther's mysticism began to decline. It must be said to have reached its summit as early as 1518 or 1519. Cf. Hering, Die Mystik Luthers, etc., p. 292 sq.

† Theol. Jahrb., 1848, pp. 504–506; cf. also his Lehr' von der Versöhnung, p. 462. For whatever fault may be found with Baur's one-sided emphasis on the speculative elements in Schwenckfeld at the expense of the strictly practical, that is of the religious and moral as distinguished from the theological or philosophic interests that dominated the reformer, there can be no doubt that in the main his strictures upon Hahn and Erbkam are borne out by the facts.
sound morality.* He deplored the lack of good works, the absence of strict discipline, the interference of the avaricious princes in the affairs of the Church, and the manifestly false security of many professed Christians the chief article of whose creed was that their organization was the only one worthy of comparison with that of the Apostles. The Lutherans are often characterized, along with the Romanists, as Antichrist, because, according to him, they have no spiritual discernment, but mistake the letter for the spirit, a historical for a vital faith in Christ.†

The real nature and extent of the differences will become more apparent as we proceed. Enough has been said to give point to the present contention that the divergencies on the eucharistic question were after all only symptomatic of those deeper differences that concerned the very essence of the faith.‡

Unable as Schwenckfeld was to identify himself with the Lutheran movement, he had become too thorough a Protestant to find it possible to reenter the Roman Church. He is well aware, indeed, that his works were at times better received by the Romanists than by the Lutherans,§ and in 1528 he even declares that if only

* This does not mean, as the charge so often but falsely brought against Luther’s gospel maintains, that he furnished no adequate basis or motive for ethical conduct. On the contrary, no one of the reformers better understood either the need or the method of supplying morality with the motive power of a deep religious faith. But his words not seldom seemed to mock his principles, and unfortunately his devoted followers were apt to swear by the caricature of their leader rather than by his real self. Cf. Harnack, Dogmengeschichte, III, p. 784, n. 1, and Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, II, p. 244, n. 1.

† This charge has of course ever been a familiar expedient in the hands of spiritualistic heretics. For a well-selected list of passages from Schwenckfeld’s works concerning the undeniable ethical deficiencies of the German Reformation, see Döllinger, Die Reformation, I, pp. 257–280. The testimony of other writers, there given, shows by contrast Schwenckfeld’s fairness and moderation. Luther himself was as severe as any of the other censors (p. 295 sqq.).

‡ See, e.g., the Erklärung etlicher streitiger Artikel beim Missbrauch des Evangelii, etc., in D 375 sqq., where no one of the five “abused” articles explicitly refers to the eucharist. Cf. also C, pp. 1009–1012, where in parallel columns Schwenckfeld compares and contrasts twelve cardinal articles of his faith with those of the Lutherans, only two of the points dealing directly with the Supper and a third indirectly. The high Lutheran Kurtz (Kirchengeschichte, 9. Aufl., 2. B., p. 150) therefore fails to do justice to Schwenckfeld when he declares: “Was Schwenckfeld an der luth. Reformation so sehr zuwider, war nichts anders als ihre feste biblisch-kirchliche Objectivität.” Rather was it primarily the externalism of Luther’s movement that provoked his opposition and caused his deeply spiritual nature to develop a radically different conception of Christianity. To be sure, Schwenckfeld could not grasp Luther in his entirety, nor even do justice to his doctrine of justification. On the other hand, it ought not to be forgotten that Luther’s words were peculiarly liable to misinterpretation.

§ B 400ab.
he could have freedom of conscience he would rather join the former than the latter.* But the logic of his situation kept him true to Protestantism. He rejected the hierarchy, the priesthood, the mass, the confessional, and the ceremonialism of the Romish Church, as well as all her dogmas that clashed with his distinctive peculiarities. If the Lutherans made too much of the letter of Scripture to the neglect of its spirit, the Romanists made too much of meritorious works to the disparagement of genuine faith. Rome gave too much scope to the mere traditions of men. In fine, he was bound as a real Protestant to oppose Roman Catholicism.

Between Romanism and Lutheranism Schwenckfeld sought to establish the "Reformation of the Middle Way." He declares: "There are now in general two leading parties that misuse the Gospel of Christ, inasmuch as the one departs in many particulars to the left, and the other to the right, from the only straight and true way of the Lord. The first party is that of the papacy, that despises the Gospel of Christ with his saving ministry, and will not perceive the salutary grace of God that has been manifested nor the clearer light of revealed truth, but abides and perseveres, in doctrine and life, in its old errors."† "The other party consists of those whom God has in these days granted a gracious light, in which they to a certain extent perceive what is right and Christian, but who by no means live up to this light, although they wish to be regarded as evangelical; indeed, they make the Gospel minister to their pride, greed, lust, and ambition, to their crimes and misdeeds, to serve as a defense for their sinful living. These, much as they pretend to be better and more evangelical than others, are rather a dishonor, disgrace, and mocking-stock to the evangelical truth and name, while they live unevangelically, without the fear of God and without regard for man, in spite of all their praise for the Gospel."‡

In many important respects, however, Schwenckfeld must be conceived not as a mediator between Romanism and Lutheranism, but as the spokesman of a more advanced reform movement. He often speaks of the Anabaptists as a third party in the Church of his day, and it cannot be doubted that there was an inner kinship between him and them. He was in unmistakable sympathy with their disciplinary zeal. He had come under the influence of

* C 645d.
† D 356d.
‡ D 360a. Cf. also p. 710c, on the right mean between the papacy and Lutheranism, and C 655d.
their spiritualistic individualism, and heartily shared their tendency to make light of the sacraments. He early counseled the abolition of infant baptism, or at least the reduction of the sacrament to a mere "ecclesiastical baptism," to be later reinforced by the true baptism of the Spirit. During his many wanderings in southern Germany he preferred to labor in fields that had been visited by Anabaptists. So closely related, in fact, are the subjective tendencies of Schwenckfeld and these more radical leaders that he has been regarded by some as a real adherent of this party.†

But he cannot justly be classified with the Anabaptists. He wanted toleration for them,‡ but this was only in keeping with his advanced ideas concerning the freedom of conscience in matters of religion.‡

He did, to be sure, confess: "The Anabaptists are for this reason more to my liking, because they concern themselves somewhat more than many of the learned for the divine truth."§ But he declares explicitly that he is no adherent of this sect,‖ and that he will never become one.¶ It is a fact, moreover, that the Anabaptists themselves rejected his views and persecuted him.** He, on the other hand, was opposed to their pitiable legalism, their ecclesiastical externalism and exclusiveness, and their lack of "spiritual knowledge."††

Schwenckfeld commonly speaks, in the last place, of a fourth Christian Church or sect of his day, the Zwinglians. From their mediating position between the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand and the Anabaptists on the other, one might suppose that the persecuted nobleman would have found some way of coming to terms with this party. But here too the differences concerning the eucharist were only of secondary importance.

At first, to be sure, the mediators of southern Germany, especially

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* Keller, e.g., says: "obwohl die ganze Welt wusste, dass Schwenckfeld im Grunde ein Wiedertäuer war." See Die Reformation, etc., p. 463.
† A 98, and compare the Latin letter to Bucer published by Schneider, Ueber den geschichtlichen Verlauf der Reformation in Liegnitz, etc., Abt. I, Beilage III, p. 37.
‡ See, e.g., A 78 sq., 869 sq., 874 sqq. It is in view of such strong assertions that Dr. Hartranft, Prospectus concerning the Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum, 1884, speaks of Schwenckfeld as the man "who of all the leaders of the Reformation penetrated furthest into the spirit of religious liberty, who asserted its principles with unequivocal faithfulness and unflinching courage."
§ C 307b.
‖ Cf. D 375, 16a, A 490a.
¶ B 155c.
** C 1012 and D 371 sqq.
†† A 513, 801-808.
Bucer, Capito, and Zell of Strassburg, cordially received him.* In 1524 Oecolampadius of Basel even ventured, in his contest with the Wittenbergers, to publish, without the author's consent or knowledge, a letter of Schwenckfeld's that contained some characteristic anti-Lutheran views. Zwingli afterwards did the same with Schwenckfeld's first treatise—it was a letter to some Strassburg friends—on the Lord's Supper. But however much the Silesian might have in common with the Swiss as against Luther, there was no possibility of agreeing in any positive view of the eucharist. Schwenckfeld, moreover, took as much offense at Zwingli's as at Luther's doctrine of predestination.† In fact the antagonisms here, as in the case of the Romanists, Lutherans, and Anabaptists, involved the basal elements of the Christian faith.‡

In no one of the four chief branches of the divided Church, therefore, could Schwenckfeld feel at home. "'Why should any one be surprised,' he inquires, 'if I or any other simple-minded man should now concern himself about the Christian Church and try to find where it is, inasmuch as among the four leading Churches one openly condemns the others? The papal Church condemns the Lutheran, the Lutheran condemns the Zwinglian, the Zwinglian persecutes the Anabaptists, and the Anabaptists condemn all others. But inasmuch as Christ is not divided, and his Spirit is a spirit of concord and not of dissension, He cannot, it is manifest, be ruling in all at the same time.'"§ It would be doing Schwenckfeld a grave injustice, therefore, to attribute to him any vain desire to found a new sect.|| He repeatedly avers that he has no pleasure in being regarded as the head of the 'Schwenckfelders.'" It was loyalty to his convictions, as he understood the truths of revelation, that compelled him to maintain this four-cornered contest. Attacked and persecuted by all the great parties, he defended himself by means of an astonishing literary activity. Having left Silesia late in 1528 or early in 1529, in order not to be a source of trouble to his friend and patron, the Duke of Liegnitz, he spent the

* Gerbert, Geschichte der Strassburger Sectenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation, 1889, is especially to be consulted on Schwenckfeld's relations to these men. See p. 135 for Capito's favorable judgment of the Silesian as late as 1534.
† He called it a dogma Platonicum and a fatum Stoicum; D 418ab, cf. 407a, 415 sq.
‡ Schwenckfeld seldom names Calvin, and doubtless he knew little of his distinctive doctrines. Their views in many particulars, as we shall have occasion to observe, present striking resemblances. But the presuppositions, it is needless to add, are irreconcilably different.
§ A 95cd.
|| C 571b.
rest of his life in southern Germany, roaming from city to city, gathering his followers in quiet conventicles, answering the many letters of inquiry addressed to him, gaining special influence among the nobles and the lowly, and inspiring all with his own spirit of toleration, courage, and sincerity.

Such, in broad outline, is the historical situation in which Schwenckfeld developed and sought to popularize his peculiar conception of the rediscovered Gospel. Unable to identify himself with any of the leading movements of religious thought, he was nevertheless deeply influenced by them all. His spiritualistic tendencies were everywhere colored, as was inevitable, by the theological formulas of the age. His characteristic opinions are the product of his peculiar "mysticism," influenced by the types of thought in the four chief branches of the Church as known to him, Romanism, Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Anabaptism.

It is our purpose, therefore, to examine his views from the precise angle from which this historical situation constantly compelled him to set them forth, from the standpoint of the eucharistic controversy.

It will be most advantageous to begin with Schwenckfeld's conception of the sacraments in general. This will introduce us to the presuppositions of his whole system of thought, and enable us to estimate aright his positive contribution to the many-sided discussion of the Supper.

Our author's language concerning the nature of the sacraments is not devoid of that carelessness as to terminology which renders so many of his statements difficult of interpretation. At first sight, indeed, it might appear that, at least so far as "the means of grace" are concerned, there is little room for doubt as to his precise meaning. The many misrepresentations of his views, however, clearly prove that the matter is not so simple as a casual reading might lead one to suppose. Occasional utterances, taken apart from their context, have been made to support the extreme assertion that he deprived the sacraments of all objective content, efficacy, and worth whatsoever. On the other hand, there are statements which would not be out of place in any fair exposition of the Reformed or even the Lutheran doctrine of the means of grace. Manifestly we must, if possible, find a logical mean between such apparently contradictory views.

In the first place, therefore, full justice must be done to Schwenckfeld's unequivocal opposition to the term Gnadenmittel. Only a few of the numberless passages can be cited. "In fine, the doe-
trine of means is an old sophistical doctrine, by which the hearts are turned away from Christ in heaven down toward the creatures,* in order there to find grace.' † "We on the contrary affirm that all who seek salvation through creaturely means or external things, no matter what they may be called, and not exclusively through the sole mediator, the man Jesus Christ, are false teachers and lead away from Christ, who is the only way, the door, means and mediator, through whom we draw nigh unto God.' ‡ "Christ will give us himself through the Holy Spirit, not through bodily means or men, but through himself, in order that we by daily eating in faith his flesh and blood may have fellowship with him and become partakers of his nature and essence.' § "God must himself, apart from all external means, through Christ move the soul, speak to it, work in it, if we are to have any experience of salvation and eternal life.' || "Just as the Head is the Saviour of the whole body, so he [i.e., any reader of Ephesians 5] will soon find that here no bodily, external means or instrument can intervene as little as between the vine and its branches.' " Again, we are told "that the Eternal and Almighty God, whom nothing can resist, does not work through means or instruments like a cobbler or tailor, but he acts freely and effects our salvation through himself, in Christ His Son, although he also uses the service of the creatures to the praise of his grace and for the good of man; but he is not bound thereto.' **

Schwenckfeld's application of these basal principles to the sacrament of the Supper resulted, as is well known, in his dispensing altogether with the observance of this ordinance. The fierce disputes about the eucharist that prevailed even among the seven factions of the Lutherans themselves, † † and in general the attention, one-sided and excessive as he thought, that was paid to external rites, led the reformer to counsel his followers to abstain, for the time being, from all participation in this act of worship. ‡ ‡

Schwenckfeld's depreciatory views and practice concerning the Supper have their close parallel, as might be expected, in his teach-

* For Schwenckfeld's peculiar idea of creaturehood, see below.
† C 486d, 487.
‡ C 507c.
§ A 868d.
|| A 768b.
¶ A 866c.
** A 424c; cf. C 86b, 482c, 486d, 507c, 532b, 997b, 1005b.
† † C 250d. 
‡ ‡ For his self-justification in this so-called Stillstand, see such passages as A 736 sq., 761, B 225c, C 274b, 640d, 895a, 983a.
ings concerning baptism. We have already seen that in common with the Swiss radicals he rejected the baptism of children.* But even in the case of adults there may be no necessity, either of means or of precept, for this sacrament. It all depends, as we shall find, upon the far-reaching distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" transaction, between the "baptism by the Spirit" and the "baptism by water." Whether Schwenckfeld's view of this rite is a "high" or a "low" one will depend, manifestly, upon which of the two aspects of the sacrament he has in mind.† For the present it may suffice to say that the above statements about the utter uselessness of external means of grace, in the ordinary sense of the term, apply as much to the one sacrament as to the other.

Again, Schwenckfeld's theory of the Church is likewise influenced by this fundamental dualism between the inner realities of religion and their external signs. It cannot be denied that he lacked all interest in ecclesiastical organizations. The fact that he was the real founder of conventicles among the dissenters of the German Reformation is no refutation of this assertion. His followers have, moreover, maintained their independent existence to this day. But these facts cannot be traced to any teaching of his as to the need or utility of a corporate church life. On the contrary, as Gerbert remarks: "'Schwenckfeld lacked every tendency toward ecclesiasticism; in fact, he entered into a decided opposition to the Protestantism that was shaping itself into Churches.'"‡ His spiritualism shared in this respect the defects of all genuine mysticism: the benefits of communal life for the individual are not duly appreciated. With no talent for adminiitration and no desire for the separate organization of his adherents, he was content, for the sake of the peace of Christendom, to work quietly on a small scale, and to trust to the power of his teachings for the defeat of his better marshaled foes. With his opposition to all external ecclesiasticism,

* C 288–293 gives thirty reasons against pedobaptism. But this issue was not a burning one for him. He declares: "'Mir ist auch für meine Person gar Nichts am Kindertauf gelegen; man tante oder taufe nicht, so lass ich's dabei bleiben, wollte lieber dass dieser Artikel noch zur Zeit geschwiegen würde'" (C 286d).

† It may here by way of anticipation be admitted, therefore, that Schwenckfeld in his use of the term "'sacrament" often employs an undistributed middle. He professes to adopt Augustin's definition (In Joann., 80 : 3)—"'accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum etiam ipeum tanquam verbum visibile'"—but ere long either the elementum or the verbum is spiritualized: the former becomes the Holy Ghost or the latter the Eternal Word.

‡ L.c., p. 135; cf. p. 170.
he was only partially successful in realizing the importance of the Church as a factor in the salvation of the world.*

But we must go even farther. The Scriptures themselves seem to be endangered. The Pauline antithesis between the letter and the spirit is applied in a manner which at least gives color to the charge that Schwenckfeld rejected the normative authority of the Bible. Certainly, if only his most radical assertions were considered, there would be little to differentiate him from the most fanatical of the extremists. There is no end to the criticism of the Buchstäbler who, in mastering only the letter of Scripture, fail to discern its real, spiritual content. Schriftgelehrte and Gottesgelehrte are generally separated by precisely the whole diameter in a given sphere of speculation. In endless variety through all his numerous works runs this polemic against the alleged deification of the letter of Scripture by all four of the great Church parties. The external word is not the real Word. The preached Gospel is not the true Evangel, the genuine Mysterium. The Scriptures are not to be identified out of hand with the Word of God.†

It is plain that we have here fallen upon a fundamental line of thought whose ramifications we may expect to encounter at every step of our progress. We have in fact begun to lay bare the very heart of Schwenckfeld's gospel. As in many another theological system, so also in his, the Word and sacraments are indissolubly linked together. To ascertain the true nature of his theory of the sacraments, therefore, we are bound to examine his views concerning the Word of God. But the identification of the Word with the Son at once raises the larger question, What did he think of Christ?

Schwenckfeld reveals himself as a genuine disciple of the Reformation by his clear grasp of the central importance in Christianity of the Redeemer's person and work.‡ As some of the passages

* Meanwhile, however, his admitted partial success may serve to remind us that his subjectivism was not of that extreme kind that cut itself loose absolutely from the historic past. Here too, in other words, we may expect to find a more satisfactory aspect of his doctrine of the Church than that commonly ascribed to him and necessitated, it would seem, by some of his own statements.

† The passages on these points are literally innumerable. They disprove the thesis of Loofs (Dogmengeschichte, p. 373) about the 'damals nirgends angefochtene Gleichsetzung von hl. Schrift und Wort Gottes.' Cf. Harnack, Dogmeng., III, p. 791.

‡ There was, to be sure, a latent tendency to make more of the 'person' than of the 'work,' that is, to permit the objective atonement of the historic Jesus unduly to recede from view behind the incarnation considered as the great redemptive fact. This was, moreover, a logical necessity in his system. At the same time it must be said that the tendency was in part overcome by the reformer's conscientious study of the Biblical basis of justification by faith. It is an inac-
already cited will have made clear, Christ is regarded as the only possible mediator between man and God.* No saints can share this relationship with him.† In the Biblical phrase "through Christ" the very preposition promotes his jealous regard for the honor of the Son as an absolutely divine Saviour.‡ No theologian, in fact, has ever more strongly recognized both the supernatural and the Christocentric character of Christianity.§ Hence the numberless reminders that to know Christ aright is life's chief duty.¶ The whole Gospel is conceived as a fourfold revelation of the promises and prophecies concerning Christ, of their actual fulfillment, of his glorification, and of our participation in him.¶¶ Firmly and squarely, therefore, Schwenckfeld took his stand upon the ultimate and comprehensive basis of the Reformation, the principle that salvation flows not from man but from God through Christ. What then constitutes the essential difference between him and his diverse antagonists? The answer is found in his characteristic doctrine of the spiritualistic mediatorship of Christ, which affected the whole range of his thought and fixed a gulf between him and his opponents on all questions pertaining to the Scriptures, the Church and the Sacraments. We therefore proceed, in the light of this central fact, to take a second survey of these related subjects, reproducing as faithfully as possible the polemic bearings of his system.

First in the order of thought, as also in the order of importance, is the antinomy between the Scriptures and the Word of God. And on this, as on most of the other issues, the chief opposition was directed against the party from whom he had learned most, the Lutherans.

Luther had rediscovered the Christian religion by rediscovering the central truth of the Gospel, the revelation of God’s grace in

* See also A 47ab, 547b, 583 sqq., 767.
† D 102, 290.
‡ D 292, cf. 339b.
§ See e.g., A 327 sq., 725c, D 287, 595, 647, 655, 698.
¶ A 239, 631, 641 sq., 664, 907 sqq. See the treatise (D 77–91), Ermahnung zur wahren und seligmachenden Erkenntnis Christi.
¶¶ A 860–865.
Jesus Christ. Deeply influenced by the German mystics—they were, of course, the legitimate representatives of vital piety in those days, in opposition to that official system of scholastic theology, mediaeval asceticism and sensuous ecclesiasticism that had all but converted religion into a flat moralism—he none the less was saved from all ecstatic excesses by the safeguards of a profoundly ethical spirit that never failed to ground the assurance of its pardon, the joy of its salvation, upon the objectively revealed truth of God, and therefore upon the historic work of Christ. His pearl of greatest price was his faith, the assurance, based upon the Scriptures, that he by the merit of Christ was standing in the favor of God. But in the light of his personal experience, and especially under pressure from the Romanists, his enemies on the right wing, Luther was now led to criticise and indeed to subvert the traditional theory of the magical ex opere operato efficacy of the sacraments. In fact the very existence of these rites, regarded in any proper sense of the term as means of grace, was endangered. Reduced in number from seven to two (or three),* they furthermore became mere external signs of the one true sacrament, the Word.† Gauged by his principle, "faith constitutes the power of the sacrament," their value is seen to be reduced practically to nothing.‡

But Luther in those first days of heroic defense and aggression went much farther. It is well known with what boldness and scorn of logical consequences he could apply the criterion of his own religious experience to the books of the New Testament, namely, whether or not they made Christ their chief concern.§ He did not hesitate, therefore, to lay threatening hands upon the letter of Scripture, whenever it seemed impossible to bring the text into harmony with the facts of his own religious life. The very term "Word of God" had not from the first that fixed content and

* See the treatise, De Captivitate Babylonica, which is not only epoch-making in the history of the sacraments in general, but also fundamental to Luther's development of the doctrine of the Supper in particular.
† Cf. Thimme, Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Sakramentslehre Luthers, in the Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, 1901, p. 754. On the general subject of Luther's doctrine of the sacraments consult also Kahunis, Die Lehre vom Abendmahl, Göbel, in Theologische Studien und Kritiken, 1843, 2. H., pp. 333 sqq., and the histories of doctrine, especially Seeberg.
‡ Cf. his Unterricht an die Beichtkinder (anno 1521): "Das göttliche Wort, in der Bulle verdammt, ist mehr denn alle Dinge, welches die Seele nicht mag entbehren, mag aber wohl des Sacraments entbehren; so wird dich der rechte Bischof Christus selber speisen, geistlich, mit demselben Sacrament. Lass dir nicht seltsam sein, ob du dasselbe Jahr nicht zum Sacrament gehest" (St. Louis Ed., Vol. XIX, col. 812).
§ Literally "drive Christ" ("Christum treiben"); Preface to the Ep. of James.
value which it later acquired. He had freely employed the Augustinian distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" Word.* It is idle to speculate as to what he might have done with this formula had it not, in the hands of the fanatics, imperiled his whole achievement. The fact remains, however, that not only in his critical remarks on the New Testament books, but in many an occasional utterance as well, he countenanced the separation, so dear to the mystic's heart, between the Scriptures and the Word of God, between the "outer" and the "inner" Word.†

It was with such aspects of Luther's original teachings that Schwenckfeld was in perfect accord.‡ In this sense he interpreted the immediate past. "Thus our doctores in the beginning taught the true view of the Word of God and his divine ordinance, and built upon the one solid foundation, namely, upon the eternal living Word Christ which is with the Father. They accordingly taught that faith and eternal salvation are not bound to any external word or work nor given through any external means, but, as God's work, gift, and pure grace, they come without means from God and the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, who as the head flows into them as the members of his body."§ And for this very reason Schwenckfeld frequently expresses his disapproval of the reactionary tendency that took hold of Luther about the year 1522. "Thereafter, however, when they began to quarrel so much and give their carnal desires so much scope in the things of God; after the controversy on the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ had arisen, . . . . they inverted the true order in the work of God, in the spread of his Word, and in man's justification, and in this and many other respects they held and taught views contrary to their former doctrine and books, so palpably indeed that one could fairly lay hands on the discrepancy."||

That Luther's view of the Word and sacraments did in fact

* It ought at once to be added, however, that Luther soon succeeded in establishing a definite and fixed relation between the two: the former is, to all intents and purposes, bound to the latter.


‡ It would be instructive to carry out in detail the resemblances—often enough, of course, they are merely verbal and superficial—between Schwenckfeld and Luther before the outbreak of the Wittenberg disturbances. Cf. Hase (Kirchengeschichte, III, 1, p. 300): "Er hielt eine Richtung fest, das innere Geisteschristenthum, die früher auch in Luther eine Macht war."

§ C 339ed.

|| L.r., p. 340c.
suffer a retrogressive transformation cannot be denied.* We cannot go into the details of this reaction. Only a few of the more striking passages may be cited in order that we may the better understand Schweneckfeld's polemic.† "God deals with us in two ways: externally through the oral word and through bodily signs (baptism and the eucharist). Inwardly he deals with us through the Holy Spirit and faith together with other gifts; but always in due order and measure, so that the external things shall and must precede, and the internal things come after and through the external ones; in such wise, that he has determined to give the internal things to no one save through the external things; for he will give no one the Spirit or faith without the external word and sign which he has appointed for that purpose."‡ Very characteristic is his assertion: "God lets the Word of the Gospel go forth and the seed fall into the hearts of men. Where the seed is lodged in the heart, there is the Holy Spirit to regenerate; there is produced another man, other thoughts, other words and works."§ How much importance is at times attached to the *verbum vocale* may be seen in the following statement: "The fingers which baptized me are not the fingers of a man but of the Holy Spirit, and the mouth and word of the preacher which I heard are not his but the word and sermon of the Holy Spirit.''

*Thimme, *l.c.*, p. 876, is inclined to think that the differences between the earlier and the later Luther on the subject of the sacraments have been unduly emphasized as against the confessedly common and permanent elements. After all, it is a question of having an adequate standard of measurement. To a man of Schweneckfeld's type the differences, even as Thimme represents them, would necessarily appear to constitute a lamentable relapse toward Rome. That Reformed theologians will in this matter agree with Harnack's severe criticism of Luther goes without saying. Harnack, *Dogmeng.*, II, p. 792 sqq.

† Otto, *Die Anschauungen vom heiligen Geiste bei Luther* (Göttingen, 1898), has an excellent section on the relation of the Word and Spirit in Luther.

‡ *Luthers Werke*, St. Louis Ed., XX, col. 202. The Augsburg Confession gave classical expression to this view (Schaff, *Creeds*, III, p. 10): "Nam per Verbum et Sacramenta, tanquam per instrumenta, donatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui fidem efficit, ubi et quando visum est Deo, in illo, qui audient Evangelium." Luther himself in the *Schmalkald Articles* maintained (Hase, *Libri Symbolici*, P. Secunda, Artt. Smalci, VIII, 3): "Et in his, qua vocale et externum verbum concernunt, constanter tenendum est, Deum nemini Spiritum vel gratiam suam largiri, nisi per verbum et cum verbo externo et precedente, ut ita premuniamus nos adversus Enthusiastas, id est, spiritus, qui jaetitant, se ante verbum et sine verbo spiritum habere, et adeo Scripturam sive vocale verbum judicant, reflectunt et reflectunt pro libito." He went so far as to say (ibid., VIII, 9): "Et nullos Prophetas, sive Elias sive Eliseus, Spiritum sine decalogo sive verbo vocali accepit.''

§ St. Louis Ed., IX, col. 1163.

|| This and many other equally remarkable passages may be found in Otto, *l.c.*
But it is needless to multiply the evidences: in the genuinely Lutheran conception the Spirit is bound to the Word and the sacraments, and these contain in themselves the supernatural grace which produces saving effects in the believing heart.* More and more the visible sign had been magnified until, in alleged conformity with the commandment of God, the external sacrament is identified as a *verbum visibile* with the Word, and this in turn is made the real manifestation of God's grace.

Against this conception of Christianity, in which he rightly divined a retrogression toward Rome, Schwenckfeld opposed first of all a generically different theory of the Word. The distinction between the "inner" and the "outer" Word assumes a basal importance. The following passage contains the heart of the matter: "The Word, therefore, when the servants of the Spirit preach or teach, is of two kinds, but with a marked difference in the transactions: one which is of God and itself God, which also richly lives and works in the servant's heart; that is the inner Word, and is in reality nothing other than Christ in the Holy Spirit. It is inwardly revealed and heard by the new man with the believing ears of the heart. The other, which serves this inner Word with voice, sound and expression, is called the oral or external Word, and this is heard with carnal ears, even those of the natural man, and is written and read in letters. But he who has read or heard only that and not also the inner Word has not heard the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of grace, nor has he received or understood it."† Corresponding, then, to the inner and the outer Word are two kinds of hearing, two kinds of faith, two kinds of knowledge of Christ, two kinds of Biblical exegesis: that of the letter and that of the Spirit. The prime requisite is a spiritual apprehension of the Gospel, *i.e.*, of Christ the Word.

But of what account, then, are the Scriptures? That they are in no case to be regarded as "means of grace," in the ordinary sense of the term, we have already seen. But Schwenckfeld's repugnance to the term *Gnadenmittel* must not mislead us into supposing that he took the position of the extreme radicals on this question.

* The adjective "believing" is of course all-important in the Lutheran statement. Schwenckfeld indulged in much unwarranted criticism of his opponents because of his misapprehension of the nature of their "faith."
† A 767ab; see the whole letter, pp. 761-780. Cf. D 241, 330, 361, 563, 630bc, 887a, and the tract *Vom Unterschiede des Worts des Geistes und Buchstabens*. This dualism concerning the Word colors the whole work of Schwenckfeld. It is based, as we shall find, upon a philosophic dualism between God and the creature world.
We must do justice, in turn, to what we may regard as the higher elements of his view.

The Bible, it is clearly recognized, comes from God.* It is inspired by the Holy Spirit.† In numberless passages Schwenckfeld seeks to clear himself from the charge that he is a despiser of the sacred oracles. He repudiates the calumny of his enemy Flacius Illyricus, who charged him with teaching that "faith is not according to the Holy Scripture, but the Holy Scripture must be directly conformed to faith."‡ The Scriptures should be faithfully read and diligently preached.§ Catechetical instruction in them ought to be revived.|| Picture books dealing with Biblical events ought to be printed for the special benefit of children.

But still weightier considerations must be brought forward. Schwenckfeld unequivocally asserts the normative and binding authority of the Scriptures. To be sure the contrary, as has been noted, seems at times to be the case. None the less the Bible was his last court of appeal. On all the controverted points of the age he went directly to the Scriptures.** With him as with his opponents the final question was simply the exegetical one.‖‖ He never presumes to place his Christian consciousness in a position of higher authority than that of the written Word.+++ He ex-

* A 441, D 545a.  † D 868b.  ‡ C 464b; cf. D 545, 868.
§ C 486: "Und am ersten dass Philippi [Melanchthons] Beschuldigung nicht wahr ist, dass ich das Hören, Lesen, Betrachten des geschriebenen oder mündlichen Evangelii verwerfe oder sage, dass Gott nicht dabei (wenn's im Glauben geschieht) mit Gnaden wirke." The following is decisive on the question of preaching the Word (B 162c): "Der Predigt halben wünscht er, dass nicht allein in den Kirchen, sondern auch in Hause, auf den Märkten und Dächern zu Wasser und Land, der Name Jesu Christi recht bekannt werde, ja dass in der ganzen Welt das Evangelium Jesu Christi und der Reichtum seiner Gnaden verkündigt, ausgebretet, und gepredigt werde.''
|| B 368d, 373d.
" B 380; see also the whole tract, Ein kurzer Bericht von der Weise des Catechismi, by Val. Krautwald.
** Cf. A 28d: "'Also muss man auch bald wenn einem ein streitiger Punkt wird vorgeworfen, zur Bibel laufen, das Vorderste und das Hinderste (und nicht allein den blosen Spruch) dabei wohl besichtigen, bedenken, und ansehen, so wird man es oft viel anders finden als es sich mancher lässt einbilden.'" Cf. C 77d.
‖‖ His works abound in expositions of Biblical passages. His exegesis is, to be sure, influenced by the allegorical tendencies of the time, but it fairly attains the average level of sobriety and moderation. And however difficult it may be for us to harmonize some of his extreme utterances as to the inner and outer Word, the fact must never be lost sight of that after all he gets his "theology" from the same book as his opponents.
+++ It is manifestly a perversion when Kurtz (Kirchengeschichte, 9. Aufl., II, p. 150) declares "he elevated over the external Word of God in the Scriptures the inner Word of the Spirit of God in man."
pressly denies that he wished to have Scripture conformed to his faith, rather than have his faith conformed to the Scriptures. To be sure he often speaks slightly of the humanistic culture of his day. But the secret of his attitude toward the Bible is to be found in his conviction that the book was being radically misunderstood by his opponents because of their lack of true faith. *Philosophia, Frau Hulda, Vernunft, Dialectica, Rhetorica, and Grammatica were wrestling the Scriptures to the Church’s destruction.* The prime requisite, therefore, is to be taught of God.† To this end the Spirit must illuminate and sanctify the reader’s mind. For the oral Word is not enough.‡ Preaching may reach the ear without touching the heart.§ The external Word is not a mediator of salvation,‖ but when rightly, i.e., spiritually understood, it is a source of the real knowledge of Christ, which is the one thing needful. One passage may serve to give the contents of many: ‘‘Accordingly the Gospel of Christ is also spoken of, preached, written, and understood in such a double manner (although before God there is only one Gospel, just as there is only one Christ), namely, according to the letter and according to the Spirit. At one time the Scripture speaks of the Gospel according to the external service; at another, according to the inner mystery and divine essence; or according to history and according to the power of God. The Gospel according to history, or according to the [external] service, and outside of us, is the discourse or outward sermon concerning Christ, given or heard by the servant or preacher, without the coöperation of the Holy Spirit, only in the letter, and grasped by human reason and with practice and diligence fastened in the memory, without any renewing or fructifying of the heart. This is not as yet the true Gospel, indeed scarcely a picture, copy, shadow, or evidence of the true living Gospel of

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* Of the many passages dealing with his distrust of reason, see e.g., A 234ed, 257, 438, 515, 828, B 294, 446, C 117, 252, 728, C 1016, D 159, 874.
† See the treatise, Vom Unterschied der Schriftgelehrten und Gottesgelehrten; was auch Schriftgelehrte und Gottesgelehrte heissen. Schenkel, Das Wesen, etc., III, 98, not inaptly declares: ‘‘Gelehrte und Verkehrte sind ihm sinnverwandt.’’
‡ B 349c, C 235b, 535c.
§ C 457 sq. shows how Luther himself had admitted this, but later with his adherents had relapsed from this position.
‖ A 765. This however does not mean, as Dr. Hodge (Syst. Theology, I, 82) interprets Schweneckfeld’s view of the Bible, that ‘‘the Scriptures are not, even instrumentally, the source of the divine life.’’ Logically indeed Schweneckfeld was bound to come to this conclusion. But it was characteristic of him to shrink from the extremes to which the strict logic of his system would have driven him. The ordinary doctrinal phrases can never with justice be applied to him. His thought is cast in a different mould.
Christ, no matter how skillful, learned, and eloquent the preacher may be. Therefore the Gospel of Christ, to speak strictly, is nothing other than the joyful, comforting good news of redemption and eternal salvation, which the angel of the great council, Jesus Christ, brings through the Holy Spirit to an afflicted heart, which he first punishes for sin, and calls to repentance, and to which he then proclaims the divine peace purchased by his blood,' etc.*

But of course the decisive question is not whether the "external Word" needs the accompaniment of the "inner Word" or not, but rather whether or not the latter may dispense with the former. Schwenckfeld's opponents, it is plain from his defensive attitude, accused him of rejecting the Scriptures. But it is equally clear that his assertion of the need of a spiritual understanding of the Word neither exhausts the à priori possibilities of the case nor constitutes a complete statement of the actual facts. The specific question must be answered, Is there any spiritual knowledge possible apart from the written Word?

The resemblance in this particular between Schwenckfeld and the Quakers is too obvious not to have been a subject for frequent comment. Barclay,† indeed, maintains that the teaching of Schwenckfeld and Fox was identical on three important points: first as to the "Inward Light, Life and Word"; secondly as to "Immediate Revelation"; and lastly as to the inability of any external bodily act to convey a spiritual reality to the soul. But neither is there any historical conjecture traceable between Schwenckfeld and the Friends, nor can there be said to be anything more than a general correspondence and similarity between their ideas; both represent more or less extreme reactions against ecclesiasticism, sacerdotalism, and sacramentarianism. As against the orthodox Quakers, Schwenckfeld taught a peculiar Christology which gives his whole system a different complexion; and as against the heterodox Quakers he held a far more moderate position concerning the nature, purpose and extent of the Inner Light. Now and then, indeed, he uses the language of the most radical spiritualists. Especially does this seem to be the case when statements are divorced from their contexts. The following is a characteristic negation: "It is here evident, therefore, that the true saving knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ comes from no other source than a gracious divine revelation. . . . . That is, that the Son of God, Christ, can be rightly

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†The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, p. 237 sqq.
known neither through human reason, nor through Scripture, nor out of any external thing."* It is well known, moreover, how strenuously he insisted that his unique interpretation of the words "this is my body" was due to special revelation.† This was one of the specific charges brought against him by Capito and Blaurer during his sojourn in southern Germany.‡ But what after all is his doctrine of "revelation"? The context of the passage last quoted is too important to leave unnoticed: "That is, that the Son of God, Christ, can be rightly known neither through human reason, nor through Scripture, nor out of any external thing, although the Holy Scriptures and the created things bear witness to him."§ In fact the "light" so highly prized is naught but what the Apostle Paul prays may be given his Ephesian readers, "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" in the knowledge of Christ.|| "That is what the Lord Christ means by hearing and learning the Word of the Father and coming to Christ, and as he says, 'they shall all be taught of God.' This some incorrectly refer to the Scriptures; they dislike also the word revelation, regarding it indeed as a dream, a fancy, a fanatical excess, although in very truth it is the living doctrine of God from His Spirit in the believing heart."¶ The revelation of spiritual truth, therefore, comes not from the natural man's interpretation of the Scriptures but only from the real Word Christ himself, through his Spirit operating now with and now without the letter of the Scriptures or any external thing. Thus was left open, to be sure, a way of retreating, if need were, to the extremes of mere subjectivism. But the practical issues of the day made him retain a strong hold upon the sacred text: the spiritual as distinguished from the literal interpretation of the Scriptures is the heart and core of his doctrine concerning "revelations" to the individual Christian. He was opposed to Luther's idea that the Spirit never operates savingly except through the Word, and that the *verbum* itself is *illustrens*, i.e., that the Scriptures contain within themselves a supernatural and divine power, so that their efficacy is independent of the special accompaniment of the Spirit.** But that he did not quite reproduce the

* A 427d.
† More generally the term used is "Offenbarung"; but occasionally we find "gnädige Heimsuchung."
‡ See Heyd's article, "Blaurer, Schnepf, Schwenckfeld," in the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*, 1838, II. 4, pp. 29, 35.
§ A 427d.  |  A 428a.
¶ A 428a.
** Hering, *Die Mystik Luthers*, p. 45, correctly expresses Luther's view as follows: "Das Grundthema seiner Schriftauslegung: das Wort ist Geist, ist von dem Zusatz begleitet zu denken, dass Geist im Wort ist."
views of the great body of Christians of all ages, but allowed himself to reveal a bias, logically indeed not without warrant in the position of his chief opponents, yet practically objectionable, against the letter of Scripture, is due not only to the polemical interest that dominated his work but also and primarily to the necessities of his system of thought. Wherever the practical problems of his situation claim his chief attention, however, the decisive authority of the Bible is freely conceded. "Thus do we conclude our admonition concerning the true and spiritual knowledge of Christ, which also is the sole criterion (basis et norma) by which to know and judge all manner of doctrines, opinions, errors and sects. Nor do we know any better or more convenient way for the promotion, reformation or improvement of the Christian religion and doctrine than the true knowledge of Christ, which must be secured, not only out of Scripture but rather out of the gracious gift of the Father's revelation, yet in such wise that it will always agree or harmonize with the testimony of Scripture."† The Spirit therefore works when and where and how he pleases. But the Scriptures are his product, and therefore furnish a faithful criterion for ascertaining and estimating all his revealing activities. When rightly used they simply point to Christ.‡ They recede in importance behind the manifestations of the subjective religious life produced by the immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart. But Schwenckfeld, in spite of his strong dislike of the term Gnadenmittel, still concedes the serviceableness of the Scriptures in pointing the enlightened reader to the real Word of God, the Son himself. The blessings of the Gospel are communicated by the Spirit operating without means upon the heart: the Scriptures are no mediators of salvation. But none the less, when rightly interpreted, the inspired documents fulfill to all intents and purposes the function of means of grace in any but the strictly Lutheran acceptance of the term. "For although God the Almighty himself teaches his disciples inwardly through Christ in the Holy Spirit the pure divine truth, he has nevertheless appointed for them external teachers and learning also, such as servants of the Word of God, preachers, teachers, expositors of the Holy Scriptures, etc., whom God the Lord calls, sends, and through his Spirit urges to promote his divine doings among his people, whose service he also

* "Doch so dass es alle Wege mit der Schrift Zeugnis stimme oder übereintrage" (D 62b).
blesses, in order that it may serve in the grace of God for the edification of Christians in Christ and their soul’s salvation.”†

The same unstable equilibrium is to be seen in Schwenckfeld’s attitude toward the Church as an institution for the furtherance of the religious life. We have seen how little regard or capacity he had for organization, how his strongly anti-eclesiastical spirit voiced itself in declarations which, followed to their logical conclusion, would leave no place whatever for the external Church. Against this very charge of abolishing the ministerial office and the public worship of the sanctuary he had frequently to defend himself.† It is plain, however, that the criticism is only to a certain extent justifiable. He himself sets forth his position as follows: “I object to no one’s hearing sermons as opportunity offers; nor do I (as the Baptists do) bind the conscience in this matter as if it were sin; nor do I advise the endurance of exile. I therefore in these days of dispersion let every one abide in his freedom.”‡

Here, as in the doctrine of the Word, Schwenckfeld distinguished between the internal and the external Church.§ The latter, the true Church of God, is made up of the company of the real believers. Their head is Christ. He rules and builds them up.|| Their salvation is not bound to any external means or institution as an indispensable condition for its bestowal.¶ But on the other hand there are not wanting indications that Schwenckfeld was unwilling to go the whole length of the Anabaptist idealization of the historic Church. Even liturgical ceremonies have a helpful mission, pro-

* D 893d.
† Melanchthon, under date of October 18, 1535, wrote as follows to Frecht: “De Schwenkfeldio et Franco. Chronicorum scriptore, placet mihi judicium tuum. Nam et ego utrumque severe coeicendum esse judico, eti Schwenkfeldium stultum magis quam improbum esse arbitror; sed tamen hypocrisis apud vulgus nocet et habet hoc [hic], ut ex Æelampadio audire menini, nullam ecclesiae formam, hoc est, nulla ministeria probat . . . . Ego vero omnes, qui in nostris ecclesiis de ministeriis publicis parum honorificae sentiunt dignos odio esse censo” (Corpus Ref., ed. Bretschneider, II, col. 955).
‡ C 894e.
|| A 870b, 97a.
¶ It is interesting to note that Schwenckfeld taught that there were undoubtedly Christians even among the Turks of that day. A 782 sq.
vided only that no trust be placed in them.* Preaching is therefore of cardinal importance, even if it is not to be identified with the power of Christ, but only to be regarded as pointing toward Him and thereby serving Him.† Even pictures, if not worshiped, may be used with advantage.‡

It must, of course, be admitted that Schwenkfeld had not a sufficiently clear and consistent view as to the need of ecclesiastical organization. He could, in perfect harmony with his rigoristic and puritanic requirements, have insisted upon a fair degree of organization under leaders of his own choosing. Few, however, will fail to approve his views so far as their criticism of the historical situation is concerned.§ He could not, with his rich spiritual experience, rest content with a Cæsaro-papal ecclesiasticism which seemed to endanger the whole Protestant cause, which in large measure destroyed the new-born spirit of religious freedom by permitting the use of the sword even in matters of such subordinate importance as the observance of ceremonial rites.|| He left the existing Churches not from choice but from necessity: they did not in any satisfactory measure embody his ideals. But to organize his followers according to his own principles he had neither the wish nor the ability. And thus his theory of the Church reached no advanced stage of development. His views oscillated between an apparently absolute denial of the need and advantage of an external institution and the generous recognition of the mission of the de

* A 846c: “Also möchte ich auch von Ceremonien sagen welche ausserlicher Gottesdienst oder Kirchenübungen heissen, deren viel nur wohl und nützlich mögen gebraucht werden. Ich achte es auch nicht darauf, dass irgend ein Christ so vermissen sein kann, dass er alle Ceremonien (ob man wohl kein Vertrauen drin setzen noch die Seligkeit drin soll suchen) ohne Unterschied wolle verwerfen. Sonst würde er das Predigtamt, und was in der Kirche ausserlich gehandelt wird, auch müssen verwerfen.” Cf. A 700a, 791b.
† C 997bc.
‡ A 846a.
§ See the impartial judgment of Erbkm, Geschichte der prot. Sekten, p. 435 sq.
|| B 655d: “Deshalb denn die Definition und Beschreibung der Kirchen, wie sie in der Confession [sc. Augustana] gestellt . . . . billig sollte gebessert werden; damit wir Gott den Herrn und seine Werke nicht abermals an uns unnütze Knechte noch an den Papst und Bischof aufs Neue zwingen, heften oder anbinden, sondern den Gang der Gnaden Christi und seines Geistes Lehramt, der die Herzen lehret und geistet wo er will, desgleichen die Erbauung des Leibes Christi überall freim im Geiste und unangebunden stehen lassen. Wie den auch die hl. Christliche Kirche nicht als eine andere Polizei an dies oder jenes Land eingezaunt, weder an Rom, Wittenberg, Zürich, Genf, Mahren, noch anderswo, weder an Zeit, Personen, noch an etwas Ausserliches, ja weder an Prediger, Predigt, oder Sacrament gebunden, sondern mit ihren Gliedern allenthalben durch die ganze Welt, wo glaubige Christen sind, ist ausgebreitet.” On the functions of magistrates concerning the Church, see A 79 sqq., 391 sqq., et passim. Cf. also Schenkel, Das Wesen des Prot., III, 382–386.
jacto organizations, provided only they inculcated a spiritual knowledge of the Head of the Church.*

This survey of Schwenckfeld’s doctrine of the Word and the Church will help us to secure a just estimate of his view of the purpose of the sacraments. We are prepared to find his fundamental dualism asserting itself also in this branch of his system. ‘For to a complete sacrament two things are necessary, an inner and spiritual element and an outer, bodily element.’† The sacraments, therefore, are profound mysteries, and not merely external ceremonies.‡ They are more than the mere addition of the outer Word to the given elements.§ The prime requisite here too, therefore, is precisely that which has been so often emphasized, the ‘judgment of the spiritual man,’ the correct interpretation of the Scriptures. It is this lack of spiritual insight that is the cause of all error concerning the sacraments.|| For this very reason the eucharist should continually be discussed, upon the Biblical basis, in order that the true view may be obtained.¶ More must be made, in any event, of the spiritual significance of the ordinances.** The failure of his opponents to do this convicts them of being the real despisers of the sacraments.†† On the other hand, he strongly protests against the justice of this charge so frequently made against him.‡‡ It is not with the sacraments, but with the misuse of them, that he finds fault. It was his conviction that the Church was misinterpreting these sacred rites that led him to advocate the Stillstand in the case of the Supper, and the corresponding custom of substituting for sacramental baptism only a consecratory

* See the (LVI) Fragen von der christlichen Kirche, which are really so many attacks upon the worldly ecclesiasticism of the day, and so many defenses of his own position between the Romanist and Anabaptist extremes.
† B, Part I, p. 140d.
A 342d, 393a-e.
** A 492c.
‡‡ D 15f: ‘Von den heiligen Sacramenten . . . glaube ich alles was die heilige Schrift sagt und wie sie vom Herrn Christo gelehrt und für die christgläubigen eingesetzt, auch von lieben Aposteln und der christlichen Kirche nach dem Befehl des Herrn sind gebraucht worden und noch in der versammelten Gemeinde Gottes also gebraucht und verstanden sollen werden.’ Cf. D 21 sq., 541, 973, C 283b, 687d, 730d, B 104c, A 331, 394, etc.
prayer. He takes his stand once more upon the sole mediatorship of Christ.*

The general principles just mentioned we find exemplified in the statements concerning baptism. The outer rite must be carefully distinguished from the inner reality. “But we must remember that in the complete sacrament of the baptism of Christ two things are present, namely, an external and an internal one; the elemental water and the water of divine grace which purifies the conscience.”†

The external water cannot cleanse. “Let them know in the first place that the washing away of sins does not belong to the external baptism. Then let them be assured that no external thing, washing or water, can reach or remove sin. In the third place, they do not permit Christ in himself and by himself to be a perfect Saviour. It is therefore a grave wrong to the work of Christ and his Spirit if one ascribes or conceives to the water or other created things in the work of salvation something that belongs to Christ alone.”‡

The primary and essential element in baptism, therefore, is the inner grace, the bestowal of which is absolutely independent of the

* C 448d: “Das ihr begehret zu wissen, wie ihr es richten sollt, dass Nichts ausserliches das Herz erreiche, das sollt ihr richten auf den Handel unserer Gerecht- und Seligwerdung, namlich das Herz zu bekehren, zu reinigen und erneuern, denn wer vermag solches denn allein Gott und Christus im heiligen Geiste? Das fleischliche Herz wird wohl oft durch ausserliche Dinge bewegt zu Freuden und Traurigkeit; es wird aber drum durch ausserliche Dinge nicht selig noch umgekehrt. Christus ist der Erneuerer des Herzen; er allein vermag die Sünde draus zu nehmen und seine Gnade darein zu geben.” Cf. A 597 sqq., 780, C 480c, 619, D 440, 46Sab, 738. For extended discussions of what he regarded as an unwarranted emphasis upon the “external” sacraments, see C 1015–1021, and especially the first two letters in Part I of B (pp. 10–146), Vom Grund und Ursach des Irrtums und Spans im Artikel vom Sacrament des Herrn Nachtmdls and Vom Verstande, Gebruch, und Würdigkeit der Sacramente Christi. The Bekennnis und Rechenschaft von den Hauptpunkten des christlichen Glaubens (D pp. 1–62) is a précis of his whole system.

† A 195bc.

‡ A 32cd. Cf. A 37Sed, 497cd, C 397, 438b, 520a, and many other passages in all of the folios. To be sure Luther had taken pains to bring the word of commandment (Matt. xxviii. 19) into connection with the water of baptism: “Wasser that’s free of any inner water, but the water of God so mixed and poured on the water that is the water of God’s grace and no Baptism” (Der kleine Catechismus, Part IV, in Schaff’s Creeds, III, p. 86). None the less, especially in the matter of infant baptism, Luther reopened the way for the magical efficiency of the ex opere operato theory of the sacrament. The consecrated water itself, in fact, possessed a divine potency. It was heavenly, holy, durchgöttet. Cf. Schenkel, l.c., I, 448 sq.; Thimme, l.c., 898; Hering, l.c., p. 287 sq., and Harnack, Dogmeng III 3, 792.
external rite.* The blood of Christ is the only sprinkling that removes the defilements of sin,† or rather—the reason for this characteristic emphasis upon the unity and totality of Christ’s person will appear later—Christ himself is the bath of regeneration.‡

Precisely so does the right understanding of the eucharist necessitate a sharp distinction between the outer signs and the inner realities, between the external and the internal sacrament. The parallelism in this respect between the Supper and Baptism is complete. "As I have hitherto spoken of two kinds of water in the Christian sacrament of baptism, so I find in the complete sacramental transaction of the Lord’s Supper two different kinds of bread, or food, and drink: namely, a spiritual, divine, heavenly bread, food, and drink, which is the body of Christ given for us and his sacred blood shed for the forgiveness of sins; and a bodily and sacramental bread and drink, which the Lord Jesus before his departure commanded his disciples to break, to eat, and to drink, in remembrance of Him."§ The former is then identified, as will have been anticipated, with Christ the Son; it is the bread which is the Lord. The latter is only the "bread of the Lord." Once more, therefore, the whole question turns upon the correct, that is the "spiritual," understanding of the Scriptures. Once more Schwenckfeld can refute the charge that he makes light of the New Testament sacraments. "In the same way I request, wish, and desire that the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ be observed by the believing Christians according to the institution, intention, and will of the Lord, with a right understanding, knowledge, and faith, also with a due examination and with the due accompaniments, in a Christian, devout, and reverent manner, and that it be not misused to condemnation through ignorance and superstition. Whether this means rejecting the service of the Word of God and despising the holy sacrament . . . . because I distinguish between these things and the Word which is spirit and

* Cf. Schwenckfeld’s remarks about the possibility and the need of an oft-repeated "spiritual feet washing." "Die Füsse der Christgläubigen werden immer gewaschen mit dem reinen Wasser, das ohne Unterlass von dem Leibe Christi fließt" (A 209d). Again (C 207a), "Warum treiben sie"—he is speaking of the Lutherans—"nicht auch so fest aufs Füsswaschen? welches der Herr eben so wohl als das Werk ihm nachzuhm hat befohlen: 'So ich euer Meister und Herr euch die Füsse gewaschen,'" etc. That is, if the Lutherans take this ceremony spiritually, why should not the sacraments also be so understood?

† A 13d, D 147, 285b.
‡ A 31ed; cf. B, Part I, 121d.
§ D 18ab.
life, I will now submit to the Christian Church, your grace, and all pious Christians."*

But of course the really decisive question as to Schwenckfeld's conception of the purpose of the sacraments is still to be raised. His theoretical distinction, amounting in practice, as we have seen, to a virtual separation between the outer transaction and the inner reality in the Supper, satisfied neither the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand nor the Zwinglians and Anabaptists on the other. Indeed, much of the persecuted man's literary activity was due to his desire to remove the misapprehensions concerning his views under which he was sure his opponents were laboring. But in spite of his efforts in this direction, it is still to be regretted that the inner nexus of his sacramentarianism has not been more clearly set forth. For this obviously is the crux of the whole problem: are these outer and inner circles of reality truly concentric, or do they lie in such remote planes that all possibility of a causal connection between them is cut off? Does this fundamental dualism result in an absolutely unmediated juxtaposition of altogether disparate elements? Is there at the most only a possible simultaneity between the external and the internal transactions? What sort of balance must be struck between Schwenckfeld's assertion that the sacraments are serviceable, yet are not means of grace? Is he thoroughly consistent with himself in denying the propriety of the term Gnadenmittel in any and every sense?

How much injustice in this regard has sometimes been done to the reformer will appear from our answer to these questions. It is difficult to present his views with perfect accuracy and fairness in any other than his own words. What he was bound by rigid self-consistency to say is one thing; what he actually said in conformity with his philosophic and theological presuppositions, on the one hand, and under the influence of the conditions of his situation, on the other, is quite another thing.

The external rites—on at least this point there can be no doubt—are signs and symbols of the inner reality, of the truth, the essence, the res or materia of the sacraments. This fact, it may be assumed, has become plain in the course of the discussion. There are those indeed who regard this statement as the only proper because the perfectly exhaustive one.† There can be no doubt that it is the

* D 545a.
† For example, Hahn, Schwenckfeldii Sententia, etc., p. 60, n. 1: "Itaque sacramentis externis Schwenckfeldius putavit non nisi adumbrari res divinas, quas Christus omnibus fidem habentibus quovis tempore distribuit."
mould into which Schwenckfeld most frequently cast his reflections on the teleology of the sacraments. With what sharpness of vision he grasped this aspect of the problem will appear from a citation of several of the most important deliverances. "All external things are only representations which portray or point and lead to the eternal divine truth which is dispensed through the custodian of the holy blessings, through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. God is therefore not concerned about external things, but about that which is represented to the believer by means of the external thing and which is distributed through Christ in the Holy Spirit."* Again, "the sacraments are indeed spiritual or, if the term be rightly understood, holy, sacramental signs, because they point to holy, spiritual things and signify them. But they cannot impart them, since they have no spiritual, divine power in themselves."† One of the clearest statements on this phase of the subject is the following: "All external things, the sacrament and other things, were instituted by Christ for our sakes, in order that his great benefits and his work in the believing heart may be known and remembered, and that the great riches of the grace of God which he has caused to be manifested to all men in Christ may be known, praised, and magnified in all the world."‡

The external rite, therefore, has at least the function of directing the thought of the participants to Christ, the sole source of saving grace. But is there beyond this any necessary sequence between the outward ceremonial and the bestowal of an inner sacramental blessing?

It is plain that some of the quotations just made leave absolutely no room for an affirmative answer to this question. The unequivocal declarations about the sole mediatorship of Christ must be allowed to retain their force undiminished. That anything in the way of a magical efficiency of the Gnadenmittel was to him an unspeakable absurdity; that salvation can, as a matter of fact, be conferred without any means whatsoever by an immediate operation of the Spirit upon the heart; that the blessings conveyed, according to the theories of his opponents, by the sacraments may be daily granted even to those who do not attend to the outward rites; and that the main current of Schwenckfeld's thought tends to sweep away from the sphere of grace every sensuous, external or "creaturely" object.—these propositions may be regarded as established theses. But we must not prejudge the case by sup

* A 201d. † A 749d; cf. A 789e. ‡ C 580d.
posing that he has reduced his views to a perfectly consistent, unitary system. Granted, for instance, that the Spirit never works through external things: it might still be asked, whether or not he ever works in them or with them? There can be no doubt that Schwenckfeld, in his strong desire to defend himself against his adversaries by trying to conserve the objective or theological content of the sacraments, did at times approach the Reformed doctrine of the means of grace in the narrowest and strictest sense of the term. The evidence, to be sure, is not abundant. The language used expresses rather the feeling of a conservative disposition than the settled conviction of a severely logical mind. The principle is fairly established, however, that the blessings of salvation are actually bestowed in the right use of the sacraments.

"This requires the right understanding and use of the sacraments of Christ, that is the knowledge of Christ according to the Spirit and the dispensation of the mysteries of God in the believing soul, it being the special office of the Holy Spirit to distribute the blessings acquired by Christ unto all believers in the use of his sacraments (beim Brauche seiner Sacramente), likewise before and without the use of them."* To be sure, even here the place of emphasis in the sentence is reserved for the thought that the sacraments are by no means necessary. Likewise characteristic is the difference in the prepositions in the phrases "durch Christum" and "beim Brauche seiner Sacramente." But the manifest coordination of the two methods of bestowing grace, that "with the use of the sacraments" and that "before or without them," shows that in some real sense external things may mediate grace. In another passage we have not only the preposition bei but also in used. "But if it is said that such grace comes through the external thing, or that the external thing adds something in the form of an instrument, or that the grace cannot be poured in or given without the external thing, or that it must follow the latter, this is all palpable error. For, in short, the grace of God without and in the external thing (ohne und beim Äusserlichen) alone effects salvation, in both the sacraments and other spiritual transactions."† When, therefore, the sacrament is truly used, it "brings grace along with itself."‡

* B, Part I, 85b.
† B, Part I, 97d.
‡ "Dass aber die Sacramente Christi, wo sie recht verstanden und gebraucht werden, Gnade mit sich bringen ist wohl aus dem Exempel abzunehmen, so man bedenkt, wenn ein Christgläubiger in der christlichen Kirche wird getauft und ihm alle Wohltat Christi wird vorgehalten werden, dass er sich ganz und gar Gotte aufopfert," etc. Ibid.; cf. B 15d, where it is said that the consecrated bread "ought to serve the mystery of feeding upon the body and blood of Christ."
These citations, then, must be taken as an authentic commentary on the numerous passages in Schwenckfeld that protest against the *Gnadenzmittel.* The common representation, that he taught "a plan of salvation without the means of grace,"* must be understood in the light of the fact that the sacraments when rightly used may and really do convey grace.† Whether or not they may be called "means of grace" will depend, therefore, upon whose definition of the term we employ. Romanists and Lutherans will alike answer in the negative.‡ But in a sense approximating that of the Reformed Church, Schwenckfeld may fairly be said, in spite of his protests, to have "means of grace." His theory of the Supper, as will appear when we discuss the question of the mode of Christ's presence, is distinctively higher than that of Zwingli.§ There is,

* So, e.g., Weiser, in his article on "Casper Schwenckfeld and the Schwenckfeldians," in the Mercersburg Review, July, 1870, p. 150.

† The common representation is, of course, essentially correct, inasmuch as it summarizes the content and also the spirit of the great bulk of passages dealing with the subject. But by an occasional inconsistency Schwenckfeld permitted himself to speak, as we have seen, in terms that compromised the rigor of his system with affection for the time-honored institutions of the Church. His presuppositions forbade his making the sacraments means of grace: but the contentions of his adversaries on the right as well as his dissatisfaction with the fanatics on the left, above all the overmastering force of the same words that held Luther captive—the *hoc est corpus meum*—made him sacrifice something of his logic, or, to use more customary but less intelligible language, his "mystical feeling," against external ecleciasticism.

The practical question concerning the use of the sacraments has of late become acute in the history of the American Schwenckfelders. The younger and more progressive ministers especially are inclined to put a lax construction upon Schwenckfeld's polemic against the "external" rite; they admit that the exigencies of debate betrayed him into ill-balanced assertions, but they are likewise strong in their insistence that according to him the sacraments when rightly used are "means of grace."

‡ Döllinger, *Die Reformation,* I, 230 sq., declares that external baptism according to Schwenckfeld was only an outer reminder and confession of the inwardly received grace; and that the external Supper is only a picture of the inward eating. Kurz (Kirchengeschichte, 9. Aufl., II. p. 150) says Schwenckfeld's doctrine of the Supper is mere symbolism, a charge which the reformer times without number explicitly denied.

§ Zwingli's statements on the eucharistic controversy present, as is well known, marked contrasts. When governed by polemic zeal against the Romanists and Lutherans he seems to deny that the Supper is in any sense a means of grace. Cf. his *Fidei Raio,* in Niemeyer's *Collectio Confessionum,* p. 24: "Credo, imo scio omnia sacraentam tam abesse ut gratia conferant, ut ne adherant quidem aut dispensent." The positive thought he most emphasizes is that the Supper is "nihil aliud quam commemoratio, qua ii, qui se Christi morte et sanguine firmiter credunt patri reconciliatos esse, hance vitalem mortem annonciat, hoc est, laudant, gratulatur, et praeident." (De vera et falsa Religione, Opera, ed. Schuler and Schulthess, III, p. 263). But it must be remembered that he at times taught that Christ is truly present in the Supper, and that his body is truly eaten by the believing heart. See below.
in fact, so close a resemblance to the Calvinistic doctrine that, with all allowance for essential differences, the term "means of grace" may be applied with almost as much propriety in the one case as in the other. Schwenckfeld and Calvin, in carrying beyond the limits of the Lutheran movement the basal distinction between Romanism and Protestantism, that pertaining to the way in which the soul's relation to God is mediated,* emphasized the possibility and reality of the direct operation of God upon the religious subject. They furthermore agreed in making the whole Christ the res or materia of the sacrament, and in making the work of the Spirit a distinguishing feature of their doctrine of the "means of grace," thus aiming to do justice to the objective content of the sacraments as taught by Romanist and Lutheran and the subjective aspects championed by the Zwinglians. Above all, in their spiritual view of the whole process of salvation, in which the sacraments conveyed no unique grace not otherwise obtainable, faith was emphasized as the indispensable condition for securing a dialectic and causal connection between the outer transaction and the inner effect. To be sure, Calvin succeeded in obtaining a far more satisfactory because intimate nexus between the spiritual and the corporeal, the divine and the human elements of the sacramental act, and it was especially his clear recognition of the sealing character of the ordinance that gave his views so speedy and complete a victory not only over those of his theological kinsman Zwingli, but also over those extremists like Schwenckfeld who belonged to a more remotely related spiritualistic school.†

We are bound, therefore, to ascertain more exactly the nature of Schwenckfeld's conception of faith. For it is obvious that it was by this bridge that he sought to span the chasm that lay be-

* Cf Baur, Die Lehre von der Dreieinigkeit, III, 254.
† Schwenckfeld never attained, and from his premises, as will appear, never could attain, the high vantage-ground from which Calvin could regard the sacraments as seals of the new covenant. Lutheran writers, indeed, are wont to say that Calvin himself was not warranted by his presuppositions in taking so "high" a view of baptism and the eucharist. See, e.g., Kähnis, Die Lehre vom Abendmahl, p. 407 sq., and cf. Schenkel, l.c., I, 429 sq. The latter, however, admits that Calvin has given the best solution of the sacramental problem (ibid., and cf. p. XIX). But Schwenckfeld, as we shall find, was prevented by his conception of faith and his theory of the deification of the flesh of Christ, from securing any adequate view either of the work of the Spirit in the application of grace or of faith as the instrument of salvation.

At times, to be sure, attempts were made to vindicate a sealing character for the sacraments. See the Catechism of the Schwenckfelder Werner in Arnold, Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie (1740), Vol. I, Th. II, B. XVI, cap. XX, p. 853. But all such attempts really exceed the logical warrant of the premises of the system.
tween his desire to preserve the objective content of the sacraments and his determination to hold fast to what he regarded as the deepest essence of Protestantism, the sole mediatorship of Christ operating directly, that is without the use of any creaturely objects, upon the believer’s heart. It is only by securing an adequate grasp of his doctrine of faith that we shall succeed in doing justice to his otherwise altogether anomalous position between the Romanists and Lutherans on the one hand and the Zwinglians and Anabaptists on the other. Only so can we realize how, in his eagerness to preserve the choicest treasures of the new evangelical faith, he took so extreme a position against Rome that he found it impossible, save by an occasional felicitous inconsistency of thought, to regard the sacraments as anything more, in the actual life of the Church, than symbols or means of representing spiritual realities to the physical senses. Only so can we understand the logic of his oft-repeated statement that the external rites must follow, and not precede, the internal transactions.* Only so can we ascertain both the strength and the weakness of his sacramentarianism and estimate aright his contribution to the eucharistic controversy.

But we shall reserve the exposition of this and the related topics for the next number of this Review.

* See e.g., A 513c, B 601b.

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