

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

## THE WURTEMBERG CONFESSION AND THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES.

BY W. PRESCOTT UPTON.

THE correct title of the Thirty-nine Articles is: "Articles whereupon it was agreed by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces and the whole clergy, in the Convocation holden at London in the year of our Lord God, 1562, according to the computation of the Church of England, for the avoiding of the diversities of opinion, and for the establishment of consent touching true religion." This title is generally misprinted in our present Prayer-books, especially by suppressing the clause "according to the computation of the Church of England," which is of real importance. For, by the "computation of the Church of England" the years of grace began on Lady Day not on January 1, seeing that the Incarnation dates from the Annunciation and not from the Nativity. Consequently, on the "Old Style" reckoning, the days from January 1 to March 24, both inclusive, were dated as a year earlier than they appear in the "New Style" or civil calendar.

The Convocation which authorized the revised Articles met in January, "1562," *Old Style*, which is 1563 in our modern computation. This is of importance, for it shows that the revision of the Articles was decided on by Archbishop Parker *after* the revival of the Council of Trent in 1562, and most probably because of it. It renders us certain that many of the alterations then made were aimed at precisely contradicting the Council's *official* definitions of Romish doctrine, as is the case in Articles XXII., XXIV., XXX. and XXXI.

The method of the revision of 1563 (as it is best to call it) was not to discuss and revise the "Forty-two Articles" of 1552-3 in Convocation. Archbishop Parker revised those Articles himself, and submitted his draft revision to Convocation. Convocation then ordered one or two slight changes, the excision of four Articles and the change of the third paragraph "Of the Lord's Supper." Consequently, the main changes in the Articles were effected by Parker's revision beforehand. A comparison shows that he preserved twenty-one of the original Articles substantially unchanged, materially

altered the expression of seventeen, amalgamated four Articles into two, struck out two whole Articles, and inserted four new Articles (now nos. 5, 12, 29 and 30). In his amendments of the expressions of the Articles, and in framing the new ones, Parker followed principally the guidance of the "Wurtemberg Confession," *except*—as will appear later—on the one point of the "eucharistic presence." It is therefore of great interest to know something of this Confession.

On June 26, 1534, Wurtemberg became Protestant under the restored Duke Ulrich (d. 1550). Its conversion was of importance, not only because it drove a Protestant wedge into Upper Germany; but because theologically as well as geographically. Wurtemberg became a link between the Lutherans of Central and Northern Germany, who held a theory of a "real presence" in the elements, and the "Reformed" of the Rhineland and Switzerland who rejected any such notion. For the two first Reformers of Wurtemberg were Ambrose Blaurer, who held the "Reformed" view of the Lord's Supper, and Erhard Schenpf, a decided Lutheran. Blaurer was more of the school of Bucer, who disbelieved the "real presence," but wished all Protestants to agree to leave it an open question, and to use only such language as—while excluding any presence effected by priestly consecration—would leave men free to believe or not as they wished that there was a "real presence" in the elements at their reception. Blaurer the Oberländer took the district above the Staig, and Schenpf that below it, and the latter "instituted a form of the Lord's Supper with which the Oberländers were satisfied" (Ranke, *Hist. of Ref. in Germany*, iii. 536: London, 1847).

On August 2, 1534, Blaurer and Schenpf signed a "Concord," which, as Blaurer took care to insist before signing, could be agreed to by a Zwinglian. It was to the effect that "The body and blood of Christ are truly—that is *substantially* and essentially, but not quantitatively or qualitatively *or locally*—present and proffered (*exhiberi*) in the Supper." The scholastic terms which shocked some Protestants appear to contradict each other. If "substantially" be interpreted naturally it involves the "real presence"; if "locally" be interpreted naturally it excludes any such idea; the most satisfactory point was that the "true presence" was asserted to be in the "Supper" and not in the *elements*. Hence

when Schenpf tried to claim that Blaurer had become a convert to the Lutheran view, his colleague replied by reminding him of his protest before signing the Concord, and said that he had not in any way changed his opinion. The Wurtembergers therefore—while mainly inclined to Lutheranism—chose to use language which mediated on the “real presence” and afforded a common shelter for both Lutheran and Reformed.

On the death of Ulrich in 1550 he was succeeded by his son Christopher, who by means of his ambassadors presented to the Council of Trent on January 24, 1552, the “Wurtemberg Confession” that had been drawn up by Brentius, who became noted some ten years later as the advocate of “Ubiquitarianism,” or the curious theory that the Lord’s body is present everywhere, and so may well be said to be present in the elements at the Lord’s Table! The Confession preserves just the same cautious ambiguity as characterised the Concord. “Of the substance of the eucharist we hold and teach that the true body of Christ and His true blood are distributed in the eucharist, and we refute those who say that the bread and wine are only signs of the absent body and blood of Christ.” It goes on to say that though God *might* choose to change the substance of the elements, yet “we have no certain Word of God for it,” and urges (by a confusion of the figures in Ezekiel iv. and v.) that where it is said of a tile “*This is Jerusalem*, it was not necessary that the substance of the tile should be changed into the substance of the city of Jerusalem.” Of course the Reformed could agree to such a representation, as they do not believe the elements “only” signs of the absent body and blood, but to be also means and pledges to us that spiritually faith is by them put in beneficial possession of the broken body and shed blood of Christ, which are absent from us not only in *space* as far as the throne of God is from earth, but are absent from us also in *time* as far as the Crucifixion is from the present day.

Accordingly when Peter de Soto published his *Assertio* against the Confession in 1555, he challenges the Wurtembergers to say in plain language what they do mean about the “real presence.” Thus to the first of the above extracts he says:—

“Add, friends (after the word ‘eucharist’), and really contains them after consecration even when it is not distributed.”

And he deals with the “tile” argument as follows:

“ Here, friends, we again expostulate with you, that ye do not openly explain your faith. Certainly, when it is said in Ezekiel, *This is Jerusalem*, it is plain that it is said not of the true city but only of a *figure* of it, which, if it is so understood in the present instance, *This is my body*, it will speak not of the true body of Christ, but of a *certain figure* of it which your words would seem rather obscurely to imply. . . . And when ye say that ‘ the body of Christ is truly present with the bread ’ we should desire that word *truly* to be explained more fully, that is to say, that *substantially* and *really* the body of Christ is *there*. But because it is a ‘ truly ’ only, and ye adduce the example from Ezekiel, we fear lest ye say that the body of Christ is *in such wise* ‘ truly ’ (*ita vere*) there, as Jerusalem was in the tile. . . . If ye hold the true faith that the body and blood of Christ are there really and substantially, why do ye adduce so *alien an illustration* (*tam alienum exemplum*).” (De Soto’s book is without pagination.)

All this is very fair argument and there is only one satisfactory reply to it, a frank acknowledgment that the Wurtemberg Confession was a mediating document which designedly left the doctrine of the “ real presence ” in the elements suspended in the air, neither affirmed nor denied.

How our English Reformers came to use this Confession in 1563 has never yet been determined, so that the following facts may be of interest as indicating the probable channel of communication to have been Grindal, Bishop of London, Parker’s zealous assistant, and eventual successor.

Strype tells us that Christopher of Wurtemberg was a kind friend to the Marian exiles, giving them “ at Strasburg four or five hundred dollars, besides more given to them at Frankfort ”; so that probably at least some of them were interested to read their benefactor’s “ Confession ” which de Soto tells us was even in 1555 “ carried about in the hand of almost everybody.” In 1561 it was falsely quoted by the Cardinal de Lorraine at the Colloquy of Poissy, and the next year Nicholas des Gallars, a leading disputant there, published the *Acts of the Synod of Poissy in London*. Des Gallars was a favourite pupil of Calvin’s, and he was warmly welcomed by Grindal when he came over in 1560 to take charge of the French Church in London; so that Grindal would have learned from him about this misuse of the Confession.

In 1562 the Duke of Wurtemberg co-operated with Elizabeth in assisting the persecuted Huguenots, and sent a messenger to offer her his services if she was contemplating marriage with any foreign prince. (This was not an indirect proposal, for the Duchess was still alive!) The Queen sent back the messenger with a civil

letter dated January 27, 1563; but before he departed he was invited by Grindal to stay with him, which he did, and the two even "talked of Brentius's Ubiquity" with friendly difference of opinion (Strype, *Grindal*, p. 132; *Annals*, I. ii. 99). All this connects Grindal very closely with the Wurtembergers at the very time when the Wurtemberg Confession was being employed on the Articles. But another consideration appears to put it beyond reasonable doubt that Grindal was the link with Wurtemberg. From 1559 to 1563 he had as his private secretary, to whom he lovingly refers as "my Dithelm," a son of Thomas Blaurer, and nephew of Ambrose Blaurer, the "Reformed Reformer" of Wurtemberg (*Zurich Letters*, i. 130.; ii. 28, 74, 107). Grindal was thus in the closest touch with the very heart of the "Reformed" section of Wurtemberg Protestantism. It would therefore appear that the revision of 1563 was mainly effected by Parker and Grindal correcting the Articles of 1552-3 with the aid of the Wurtemberg Confession.

Archbishop Laurence in his Bampton Lectures for 1804, first noticed that the Articles received their "principal additions and elucidations upon doctrinal points (that of the *Eucharist alone excepted*)" at the revision of 1562-3, from the Wurtemberg Confession (*Attempt to Illustrate*, p. 234; Oxford, 1838). He shows how this Confession furnished the materials to complete the statements of the Articles on the cardinal doctrines of the Trinity, the Rule of Faith, and Justification, by supplying (1) in Article II. the clause "begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father"; and the whole of Article V., "Of the Holy Ghost." (2) The Canon of Scripture and rejection of the Apocrypha in Article VI., and the first clause in Article XX. (if its authenticity be allowed). (3) The first clause in both Article X. and Article XI., and the whole of Article XII.

There was, however, another point on which our Articles were "made fully perfect" in 1563, namely, the doctrine of the Sacraments, and though Archbishop Laurence does not claim this to have been affected by the Wurtemberg Confession, it is hardly possible to doubt that its influence extended also to some of these amendments, which were (1) the fixing of the number of Gospel Sacraments at two, and the denial of this title to "those five" which complete the Roman "Seven Sacraments." (2) Defence of Infant Baptism as "most agreeable with the institution of Christ." (3) The

introduction of the charge that Transubstantiation "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament." (4) The third paragraph in Article XXVIII. (5) The introduction of a new Article (XXIX.) against "reception by the wicked." (6) The introduction of a new Article (XXX.) against the Half-Communion.

The Wurtemberg Confession certainly inspired the attack on the "Seven Sacraments," which it deals with at length. On Baptism it says:—"Baptism is to be ministered, as well to infants as to those that are grown to full age . . . *according to Christ's Institution.*" Of the Lord's Supper it says: "If the substance of the bread were changed, we should have no proof of the truth of the Sacrament." Against the Half-Communion it urges that "the use of either *part* ought to be common to the whole Church," and that the "ancient Church did use both *parts*," and harps upon the idea that the elements are the two Divinely-united "parts" of "one and the self-same mystery." A careful comparison of the Wurtemberg Confession with the decrees of the Council of Trent, and of these decrees again with our Article XXX. of seven months later, will show how the Council sought to evade the argument of the Confession, and how the English Article pounced upon the Council's disingenuous decrees, and pressed the Wurtemberg argument home in a way that could not be evaded; but we have only space for one illustration of this interesting controversy.

The Articles when they refer to the elements call them "sacramenta," and with this we may compare the Communion Service of 1552-9, where the exhortation speaks of "the holy Sacraments of His body and blood," and the final rubric has the phrase "receive the Sacraments." In Article XXX. alone is there a departure from this language. In the Latin title the Roman word "species" is used to show that it was aimed against the Trent decree on Communion "*sub utraque specie.*" In the body of the Article neither the English term "sacramenta" nor yet the Roman "species" is employed, but the Wurtemberg name "part." The Wurtembergers had urged that those who "receive bread alone do not receive the whole Sacrament *sacramentally*"; Rome endeavoured gracefully to elude that blow by saying that the laity are not "*obliged . . . to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist under each kind,*" and that "under each *kind* whole and entire Christ, and a true Sacrament is received"; the Church of England promptly countered

this by the statement that "both the *parts* of the Lord's Sacrament ought to be ministered." This placed the matter on the right basis. The question is not whether the lay people are bound to *receive* both kinds (when they may not be allowed by the clergy to do so); but whether the clergy are bound to *administer* in both kinds, according to Christ's ordinance and commandment. And the use of the word "part" insisted once again that the two elements together form one Sacrament, and that neither kind alone is therefore "a true Sacrament" in the strict sense of the word.

We see, then, that the Articles in 1563 were indebted to the Wurtemberg Confession for more than the points noted by Archbishop Laurence. They took from it valuable portions of sacramental doctrine, viz., the rejection of the Seven Sacraments, the defence of Infant Baptism by Christ's institution of that Sacrament for "nations" (not exclusively for adults), the anti-sacramental character of transubstantiation, and the insistence upon both "parts" of the other Sacrament (also in virtue of Christ's institution). So that even on the Eucharist itself our revisers of 1563 did not *entirely* refuse the help of the Wurtemberg Confession. As far as it was *anti-Romish* they used it. But in two places, and in two places only, did they depart wholly from the Wurtemberg Confession when amending the Articles. These two places are the third paragraph of Article XXVIII. and the whole of Article XXIX. ; the subject of both is the same—first considered *positively*, and then *negatively*, *the manner of eating the body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper*. On that question alone do our Articles refuse to be "elucidated" from Wurtemberg. And the divergence is too striking to be accidental.

WURTEMBERG CONFESSION,      ENGLISH ARTICLE, 1563.  
1552.

De substantia eucharistiae  
sentimus et docemus quod  
*verum corpus Christi*  
*et verus sanguis ejus*  
*in eucharistia*  
*distribuitur . . .*  
Quod Corpus Christi vere sit  
*cum pane praesens.*

Corpus Christi

[*in coena*]  
*datur, accipitur, et manducatur,*  
*in coena TANTUM*  
*coelesti et spirituali ratione.*

Even the apologetic Wurtemberg use of the term "eucharist, for so it pleased our fathers to call the Supper of the Lord," makes way for the use of the term which it pleased the Holy Ghost to employ. The name "eucharistia" does indeed occur twice in the Latin



of the Article, first in connection with Transubstantiation and next with Reservation ; but in both cases it is translated in the English version by " Supper of the Lord," not *transliterated* " eucharist." The reason for this was because the Romanists based on the name a false argument for the " real presence," which the Catechism of the Council of Trent had the hardihood to set forth thus : " The Eucharist, a word which *we may render either ' the good grace,' or ' the thanksgiving ' . . . because it contains in itself Christ the Lord Who is true grace* " (Pt. ii., ch. iv., qu. 3 ; Donovan's trs.). On the other hand, the word " Supper " suggests not what the viands may " contain," but the idea of *reception*.

So too the harmless word " distributed " is rejected as likely to be referred to the act of the minister. The cautious Wurttemberg ambiguity " present *with* the bread," which does not quite amount to " present *in* the bread " (Philpot, *Examination & Writings*, pp. 99, 100), was met with a declaration, not of a " presence," but of *actions* (giving, taking, eating), and all " *only after a heavenly and spiritual manner.*"

That the revision of the Articles in 1563 thus shunned the language of the Wurttemberg Confession on the " real presence " *alone* out of all the important doctrinal corrections then made is a fact that must be faced by those who would persuade us that the Articles intend at least to mediate on this doctrine ; to tolerate it, if not positively to affirm it. If that was the purpose, what possible reason can there have been for abstaining from adopting the language of the Wurttemberg formula ?

In Wurttemberg for nearly thirty years Lutheran and Reformed had dwelt in *harmony*, first under the *Concord* and for the last dozen years under this very Confession. To Christopher of Wurttemberg the Reformed looked with merited affection and esteem. He alone of the Lutheran princes of Germany was striking a blow on behalf of the persecuted " Reformed " of France, and was boldly rejecting Catherine de Medici's overtures for peace, refusing to " mix himself up with anything that would prejudice those who were of the *same faith as himself*, even though there *might* be some *little difference* " (reply to the envoy Rascallon, March 17, 1563). He—while other Lutherans, like Joachim Westphal, were rejoicing at Mary's atrocities against the English " Sacramentaries"—had generously relieved the distress of our exiled Reformers, and Grindal's conduct

is proof that Englishmen were not unmindful of his past kindness.

If, then, in 1563, the revision of the Article on the Lord's Supper was effected in order to *withdraw* *censure* from the doctrine of the "real presence," and so to leave it at least possible for a believer in that doctrine to sign the Articles with a good conscience, why did our Reformers diverge from the Wurtemberg Confession on this point, and on this point alone, out of all the important re-modellings that they then made? In the Wurtemberg Confession they had a document of proved worth as an "eirenicon" on the "real presence," and the formulary which, above all other (semi-) Lutheran declarations, would most conciliate and disarm criticism from the Reformed Churches. Yet it is just on this question of the "real presence" that the English Articles turn away from the Wurtemberg Confession; they adopt none of its ambiguities, they use, on the contrary, the characteristic language of the "Reformed."

As to who actually compiled the third paragraph of Article XXVIII. we have no information, though Geste claims (in what the Judicial Committee has rightly described as "the questionable comments of a doubtful letter written for personal motives") that the first sentence of it "was of mine own penning"; but this does not amount to claiming to have been its "compiler," as the Supreme Court pointed out in correcting Sir Robert Phillimore's unwarrantable employment of that word for partisan reasons. Sancroft, as secretary, "penned" a large amount of the changes made in the Prayer-book at the last revision in 1661, yet we may not therefore call him the "compiler" of those amended passages, and the Sacerdotalists would be the last people in the world to concede that Sancroft should be regarded as irrefragable authority for the interpretation of those amended rubrics and prayers which are certainly "of his own penning."

Whether Geste did, even in a restricted sense, "pen" the sentence in question, is open to grave doubt. From the Parker MS. it is certain (1) that the full third paragraph of Article XXVIII. was in the draft *before* it was presented by the Primate to Convocation, so that Geste's "penning" can only have been in some draft submitted privately to the Archbishop, if it ever occurred; (2) that in the Parker MS. these words form part of an *explicit denial* of the "real and bodily presence," and therefore must have been understood in that sense from the beginning.

Here it is that we are so strongly tempted to doubt the good faith of Geste. For the sake of a Lutheran friend he alleged that the words were "penned" by himself, and that "*only* after a heavenly and spiritual manner" does not exclude a belief that Christ's body is received "corporally, naturally and carnally." The value of that special pleading may safely be appraised by any one who knows English; but when we know for certain that these words came before the Synod as originally forming part of a denial in so many words of "the real and bodily presence," we cannot fail to feel that Geste is hardly a trustworthy witness.

The writer hopes to show in a following paper that the paragraph introduced into Article XXVIII. (and its correlative, Article XXIX.) in reality have a source which places their "Reformed" character beyond question.

W. PRESCOTT UPTON.

---

#### A BOOK ON CONFIRMATION.

TALKS ON CONFIRMATION. By the Rev. F. Arthur Roughton. London: S.P.C.K. 3s. 6d.

No part of a Clergyman's life is more important than the preparation of Confirmation Candidates. Then he comes face to face with the young life of his congregation when conscience is tender and the boys and girls can be moulded by sympathy and led to personal knowledge of their Saviour. Most candidates wish to be "good" and are ready to receive teaching of a practical and doctrinal character. To seize and make the best use of the opportunity is an imperative duty. Mr. F. Arthur Roughton enables earnest men to do this. He has definite ideals and he is not afraid to express his own convictions which are definitely Evangelical. What is more, he has read widely and brings into his pages illustrations from the best modern theological and devotional books. The whole ground is admirably covered by a man who recognizes the sacredness of the task and the duty of fulfilling it to the best of his ability. A re-reading of the book deepens our view that it will prove invaluable to all who seek to give freshness and point to the classes they are privileged to hold. We recommend "Talks on Confirmation" to the senior as well as to the junior Clergy.

