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THE THEOLOGY OF JUSTUS MENIUS

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Theology

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by

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May 1973

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The undergraduate student of theology in a Lutheran seminary would probably hear about Justus Menius for the first time in a survey of the Lutheran Formula of Concord. The student would discover that during the so-called "Majoristic Controversy" about good works which led to Article IV of the Formula of Concord, Menius attempted to formulate a theological position between George Major on the one side, and the so-called "Gnesio-Lutherans" or "Strict-Lutherans" on the other. In contrast to Major who asserted that good works are necessary for salvation, Menius asserted that good works are necessary to retain salvation. The student's impression of Menius might be that Menius was an insignificant and somewhat incompetent theologian. The student might suppose that Menius' only claim to fame is the dubious distinction of perverting the evangelical theology of his teacher, Martin Luther. For such a student the only importance for studying Justus Menius would be to discover one of the pitfalls which the Lutheran theologian should avoid. If such an impression were valid, then for that reason alone Justus Menius would merit investigation by a doctoral candidate in theology and a doctoral dissertation on the theology of Justus Menius would serve a useful purpose.

The graduate student in theology in a Lutheran seminary, on the other hand, would soon discover another reason for studying the theology of Justus Menius. In addition to the merely parochial interest which Justus Menius has for Lutheran theology, there is also the broader

interest of Menius' relationship to the Anabaptists. The graduate student would discover, for example, that in the twentieth century the importance of studying Justus Menius has greatly increased as Reformation scholarship has shifted more and more towards research in the whole area of the so-called Radical Reformation. The student would learn that Menius was one of the principal Lutheran theologians who wrote extensively about the radical movement in the area of northwest Thuringia. He would discover that Menius had an intimate personal knowledge of the movement inasmuch as Menius was the official theological inquisitor in the service of the civil government.

The importance of Justus Menius for a knowledge of the Radical Reformation in northwest Thuringia was realized already in the early part of this century. Paul Wappler published the results of his exhaustive research in Thuringian Anabaptism in 1910,<sup>1</sup> and 1913.<sup>2</sup> As research in the Radical Reformation progressed and became more technical and sophisticated, the limitations of Wappler's work became apparent. Nevertheless, his presentation on Thuringian Anabaptism has not become obsolete. This is particularly true insofar as the sources which he printed relate to the activity of Menius. It became obvious, however, in recent years that more attention must be devoted to the theological positions of both the reformers and the

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Wappler, Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung, Heft 13 and 14 in Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte, edited by Joseph Greving (Münster i. W.: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1910).

<sup>2</sup>Paul Wappler, Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584, Vol. II in Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte Thüringens, edited by the Thüringischen Historischen Kommission (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913).

radicals if an adequate assessment of the Reformation Era were to be achieved. John Oyer undertook the task of presenting the theology of Justus Menius insofar as the Anabaptists were concerned in his recent book, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Oyer supplied a critical appraisal of Menius' value as a source of information on the Anabaptists. His book is important because it is written from the viewpoint of one who is sympathetic to the Anabaptist tradition and point of view. Nevertheless, Oyer's book does not preclude further investigation into the theology of Justus Menius. Oyer merely summarized the content of Menius' books against the Anabaptists; and, he did not attempt to give a systematic exposition of Menius' theological position in general. It goes without saying that Menius' attitude towards Anabaptists was not isolated from the totality of his theology. Rather, Menius developed his polemic against the Anabaptists from the perspective of his entire evangelical position. Questions such as the following need to be considered: Are there theological reasons for Menius' intolerance toward Anabaptists? What was at stake for him? How did his polemic against Anabaptists relate to other aspects of his theology? Because of such questions, and because of the great interest in the Radical Reformation, Justus Menius merits investigation by a doctoral candidate in theology.

Furthermore, there are other reasons for studying the theology of Justus Menius. A brief survey of Reformation scholarship suffices

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<sup>3</sup>John S. Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists: Luther, Melanchthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).



to make it clear that Reformation scholars have raked clean the field of the theology of the leading figures of the Reformation Era. The leading figures of that period have been studied and restudied over and over from every angle and perspective. At the same time, however, a survey of Reformation scholarship would show that, in comparison, there is precious little material, particularly in English, on the minor figures of the Reformation Era. Surely the time has come to broaden the field of theological knowledge about the lesser known co-workers of the major reformers. Of such figures, Justus Menius is not without significance.

Justus Menius was among the first students to come to Wittenberg to study with Luther in the year 1518. He lived with Luther and Melanchthon for five years, and was closely associated with both reformers from the very beginning. He studied with Luther and Melanchthon, ate with them, talked with them, conferred with them and corresponded with them. Menius is, therefore, an example of the first generation of Lutheran theologians. In what way did his theology compare with the theology of Luther? Did Menius develop an original theology of his own; or, did he simply reproduce the doctrines of Luther?

However, Menius did not remain in the university environment. He became an ecclesiastical official. As such, he was directly responsible for taking the evangelical reforms down to the grass roots level of the parish. He became a guide and leader for other church men. He charted a course for congregations to follow as they implemented the Lutheran version of the gospel in practical life. He was especially significant as the reformer of Eisenach and its environs

and Mühlhausen and its surroundings. What sort of theological problems and issues did he write about in this capacity? In what way did academic theology become practical and pastoral? These kinds of questions make Justus Menius an interesting and important figure who merits the investigation of a doctoral candidate in theology.

The primary purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to provide a general systematic exposition of the theology of Justus Menius. To accomplish that purpose, it will be necessary to provide an historical overview of his life and activities. Menius never published a systematic theology. His books and writings, like Luther's, were responses to specific theological and ecclesiastical problems. For Menius, these problems were occasioned primarily by the interaction between the theological movement which originated in the university and the life of the local congregations. In order to get at Menius' theology, therefore, it is necessary to have an acquaintance with the historical background out of which he wrote. For that reason, the second chapter of this dissertation will be historical in nature. It will provide a biographical sketch of Menius' life; and, wherever possible, a brief summary of his books. The two-volume biography of Justus Menius by Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt will provide the framework for this historical overview.<sup>4</sup>

Subsequent chapters will attempt to provide a somewhat systematic exposition of Menius' theology. However, such an exposition will not be similar to the kind of presentation which follows the outline of the church's Trinitarian Creeds. Rather, the arrangement of this

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<sup>4</sup>Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Justus Menius, der Reformator Thüringens (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1867).

dissertation will follow the specific topics and subjects which Menius wrote about during the course of his life.

Chapter III will discuss Menius' theology as he presented it against the Anabaptists. The chief area of Christian doctrine which Menius discussed in his polemic against the Anabaptists was the Sacraments. In addition, Menius gave specific attention to the doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of the ministry, and the doctrine of eschatology. Particular attention will be devoted to demonstrating the starting point of Menius' theology. The doctrine of the law, and of the way in which the gospel delivers from the law will be emphasized. In doing that, the evangelical nature of Menius' theology will become apparent. All of the rest of Menius' theology grows out of and flows from that starting point.

Chapter IV will discuss Menius' doctrine of justification with special emphasis on his concept of righteousness. Both doctrines were discussed in great detail in the controversy with Osiander.

Chapter V will discuss Menius' doctrine of the new life. This term is being used instead of the term sanctification because the intention is to focus on Menius' concern to state as strongly as possible the necessity of the new life for the justified sinner. The term, "the new life" attempts to make clear that Menius' principal interest was in addressing the one who has already come to live in the freedom of the gospel. During the Majoristic Controversy, Menius was sympathetic to the theological position of George Major. Although Menius never used Major's phrase, he did say that good works are necessary to retain salvation. Menius' intention was to provide a necessary connection between justification and sanctification. The main question is the way in which such necessity is to be expressed and formulated.

Did Menius speak of the necessity of the new life in a way which vitiated his own evangelical theology?

The controversy about good works and the new life put Menius in an unenviable position as an ecclesiastical official. He who had championed the true doctrine of the gospel as he had learned it in the Scriptures and from Martin Luther was now accused of false doctrine. He who was responsible for preserving the true doctrine in the church was now accused of perverting that doctrine. Thus, Flacius' accusation that Menius had abandoned the gospel raised the whole question of the doctrine of the ministry. Soon they were engaged in a controversy over that doctrine. Chapter VI, therefore, will discuss Menius' doctrine of the ministry.

From all this it should be clear that the theology of Justus Menius is not merely of academic interest. Many of the doctrines which he wrote about are still being discussed in the church today. As in the Reformation Era, so also today the church is once again debating the nature of the very core of Christian theology: the gospel. Perhaps by listening to the voice of one of the co-workers of Martin Luther, the church of today can be helped by understanding the way in which one of the fathers of another time heard the voice of Christ. Perhaps the church, too, as it goes about reforming itself in this age can be assisted by observing the practice of reformation in another age. If this dissertation can contribute in any way to such understanding and observation, it, too, will have more than mere academic interest.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LIFE OF JUSTUS MENIUS

#### Early Years and Education

Justus Menius was born on December 13, 1499,<sup>1</sup> in Fulda, the chief town of the Fulda Abbey in Thuringia. Next to nothing is known about Menius' parents and ancestry. His mother, Elizabeth, nee Ranis, was the daughter of a sister of Henry Faust,<sup>2</sup> a cathedral

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<sup>1</sup>Except where other sources are indicated, the material in this chapter represents a critical summary of the two-volume biography of Menius by Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Justus Menius, der Reformator Thüringens (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1867).

Concerning the date of Menius' birth, consult I, I, fn. 1. The two sources for Menius' birth date given conflicting reports. Paul Eber, in Calendarium Historicum [Wittenberg: George Rhaw, 1556], p. 396, gives the date mentioned above. (For a description of Eber's book, which was unavailable to this writer, consult George Buchwald, D. Paul Eber, der Freund, Mitarbeiter und Nachfolger der Reformatoren [Leipzig: Bernhard Richter's Buchhandlung, 1897], p. 151.) Christian Francis Paullinus, in the Annales Isenacensis, p. 139, gives the date October 13, 1494. Schmidt believes that the earlier date can be explained in the following way. Because Menius received the A.B. degree in 1515, some were evidently shocked that he could have been born in 1499. He would then have been a Bachelor of Arts at the surprisingly young age of 16. Therefore they moved Menius' birth date back to 1494. So, for example, the anonymous author of the section "Annales Meniani," in Sammlung Verschiedener Nachrichten zu einer Beschreibung des Kirchen- und Schulenstaats im Herzogtum Gotha (Gotha: Christian Mevius, 1753), I, 179, hereafter referred to as AM. However, it is more plausible to suppose that the divergent dates are the result of the confusion of the Latin numerals iv and ix in their manuscript form. Schmidt points out correctly that there need be no objection to the later date because others are known to have received the A.B. degree at an early age in this era, as, for example, Melancthon.

<sup>2</sup>Menius wrote on December 7, 1554 to the Dukes of Saxony that an ancestor of his, "a cathedral provost in the bishopric at Gotha by the name of Henry Faust, the full brother of my grandmother, dedicated and endowed a vicarage, or as they were called at that

provost in Gotha. Even though Menius had at least one wealthy ancestor,<sup>3</sup> his parents were apparently quite poor. When Menius matriculated at the University of Erfurt in 1514, he was able to pay only one-half of his fees. He was allowed three semesters to obtain the other half. He also received repeated financial assistance from Conrad Mutian,<sup>4</sup> his uncle.<sup>5</sup>

As a youth, Menius attended the school at the Franciscan monastery in Fulda.<sup>6</sup> There he came under the influence of Hartmann,

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time, a spiritual fief, with the help and assistance of his relatives. He himself dedicated the income from the fief to Henry Ranis, who was both the son of his sister, my grandmother, and the brother of my dear mother." "Im Jahre 1497 'hat ein thumprobst uffm Stifft alhir zu Gota mit namen Er Heinrich Faust, welcher meiner gros Mutter eheliblicher Bruder gewesen, mit hilf und zuthun ander seiner freunde eine Vicaria oder, wie man's damals genant, ein Geistlich lehen der stifter zum ersten selbst belehnet hatt ern Heinrich Ranissen, welcher seiner, des Stifters, Schwester, meiner gros Mutter Son und meiner lieben Mutter seligen bruder gewesen ist." The quotation was printed in the article by Reinhold Jauernig, "Zur Herkunft des Superintendenten Justus Menius," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, XXXI (1934), 131. Hereafter this journal will be referred to as ARG. Schmidt, I, 3, should be corrected when he states that nothing is known about Menius' parents.

<sup>3</sup>The fief which Henry Faust dedicated was endowed for 1000 florins. That was a considerable sum at the turn of the sixteenth century according to Jauernig, XXXI, 132.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Jauernig states that Menius called Mutian his uncle in a letter. The letter to which Jauernig refers was unavailable to this writer. Jauernig's documentation for the letter is K[arl] Gillert, Der Briefwechsel des Conrad Mutian, (herausgegeben von der historischen Commission der Provinz Sachsen (Halle: Otto Hendel, 1890), II, 311. Schmidt, I, 4, mentions only that Mutian was a relative of Menius.

<sup>6</sup>The conjecture by Paullinus and Eilmar that Menius had taken monastic vows and was later released by the Papal nuntio Carl Miltitz is probably inaccurate. Menius could not have attained the canonical age required for taking the vows while he was in Fulda. Cf. the sources in Schmidt, I, 5, fn. 1. It is possible that Menius, like many other youths of his day, was placed in the monastery by his parents with the intention that he become a monk.

Burgrave von Kirchberg,<sup>7</sup> and Johannes Crotus Rubianus. Hartmann was coadjutor of the abbey from 1507-1513. In 1513 the abbot became a proponent of humanism. Crotus Rubianus, as is indicated by the lifelong esteem in which Menius held him, was the more important influence of the two men. He had a significant influence on Menius' intellectual and cultural development.

Crotus Rubianus was born in Dornheim, near Arnstadt, in Thuringia.<sup>8</sup> Beginning in 1498 he studied at the University of Erfurt, took the bachelor's degree in 1500, and was at that time a zealous supporter of scholastic theology. However, through a study of the ancient classics and through his association with the noted humanist Conrad Mutian, as well as with Ulrich von Hutten and Martin Luther, whose roommate he was at Erfurt,<sup>9</sup> he soon became a devoted exponent of humanistic studies. On account of the uprisings at Erfurt in 1510, Rubianus accepted a position as teacher at the abbey school at Fulda where Menius was a student. Here Rubianus also came to know Erasmus and Reuchlin through correspondence. In 1515 he

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<sup>7</sup>The Kirchberg family was a very old noble family which took its name from a castle by Jena, and the title Burgrave from Thuringia. Hartmann was the last of one line of this family. Cf. Johann Heinrich Zedler, Grosses Vollständiges Universal-Lexikon (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1732-1750), XV, 715-716. Hereafter referred to as GVUL.

<sup>8</sup>For biographical material on Crotus Rubianus, cf. the sources mentioned in Heinrich Joseph Wetzer and Benedict Welte, Kirchenlexikon (2nd edition; Freiburg: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1882), III, 1206-1209; and Adelbert Heinrich Horowitz, "Crotus Rubianus," Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (Leipzig: Duncker & Humboldt, 1876), IV, 612-614. This work will be cited hereafter as ADB.

<sup>9</sup>According to E. G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times. The Reformation from a New Perspective (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 133.

sided with Reuchlin in the controversy with the Cologne theologians when the latter desired the complete destruction of Hebrew literature. As a result of this controversy, Crotus Rubianus published the Epistolarum Obscurorum Virorum in which he ridiculed what he considered to be the sterility of scholastic theology, as well as monasticism. In 1517 he journeyed to Italy and became convinced at first hand of the need for ecclesiastical reforms. Thus, he joyously greeted Luther's polemic against indulgences and became his devoted follower, although apparently more from political than theological motives. Menius was in close contact with Crotus Rubianus from the years 1510 to 1517, collected his letters, and absorbed his humanistic interests. Their lives were to cross again in the early 1530's, although then the relationship would not be so pleasant.

Menius attended the University of Erfurt from 1514 to 1518.<sup>10</sup> The University of Erfurt, the fifth of the Empire, was founded in 1392 during the great schism. Subsequently, it was characterized by

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<sup>10</sup>Schmidt's view of the University of Erfurt as extremely anti-ecclesiastical and humanistically oriented during the period when Menius was in attendance is based primarily on F[rantz]W[ilhelm] Kampschulte, Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation (Trier: n.p., 1858). This work, according to Lewis W. Spitz, The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 321, fn. 5, was characterized by "excessive enthusiasm and false emphases." So also Theodore Kolde, Das Religiösen Leben in Erfurt beim Ausgang des Mittelalters (Halle: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1898), pp. 4-5. Kampschulte has been corrected by Gustav Bauch, Die Universität Erfurt im Zeitalter des Frühhumanismus (Breslau: n.p., 1904). Spitz calls attention to the fact, on the basis of a study by Friedrich Benary in 1919, that the anti-ecclesiastical attitude of the University of Erfurt has been overplayed because expressions by individual faculty members were generalized as typical of the faculty as a whole. Spitz states, p. 321, fn. 7, "While individuals may have expressed critical sentiments the faculty of theology was not anti-curial, but conformed even in the crisis of 1520."



an anti-papal sentiment on the part of some of its leading teachers, and its intellectual attitude was characterized by the adherence of its faculties of theology and philosophy to the via moderna. Two of its most influential teachers, Jacob of Jüterbock and Johann of Wesel, were especially critical of late medieval conditions. The former was a conciliarist, and the latter was an outspoken critic of indulgences. In the years between 1509 and 1516 the University of Erfurt suffered a period of decline. During these years, known as the "Seven Year's Revolution," the enrollment dwindled considerably. The renowned law professor, Henning Goede, left for Wittenberg. The influential coterie of humanists gathered around Helius Eoban Hess, such as Justus Jonas, Crotus Rubianus, Henry Eberbach and John Petrejus was dispersed.<sup>11</sup> By 1516, however, many of the humanists had returned and regrouped into a band known as the "Mutian Circle" (Mutianischer Bund). It was not until the rectorship of Justus Jonas, 1519-1521, that a complete reorientation to humanistic studies was carried out in the school of Arts.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter, during the rectorship of Crotus Rubianus in 1521, the University of Erfurt reached its greatest hour before quickly going into decline.

On the basis of this brief overview, it is permissible to conclude that Menius was not at the University of Erfurt during its most influential, most anti-ecclesiastical, and most humanistic period. He took the bachelor's degree in 1515 and the master's degree in 1516. Although he had become acquainted with Conrad

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<sup>11</sup>The incidents referred to are described in Martin Lehmann, Justus Jonas Loyal Reformer (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), pp. 16-18.

<sup>12</sup>According to Lehmann, pp. 2-3.

Mutian and Eoban Hess already in 1514, it was not until 1516 that Menius enjoyed his greatest association with the members of the "Mutian Circle."

In order better to ascertain the nature of Menius' university environment, it is necessary to describe briefly the importance of Conrad Mutian and to summarize a letter, attributed to Menius, which illuminates the viewpoints to which he was exposed as a student. Conrad Mutian was born on October 15, 1470 or 1471 at Homberg, near Fritzlar, in Hesse.<sup>13</sup> After studying with Alexander Hegius at Deventer, he attended the University of Erfurt, receiving the master's degree in 1492. In 1495 he traveled to Italy, studied at Bologna and received a doctorate in law there. After a visit to Rome, he returned to Hesse in 1502, and became a canon at the St. Mary's Collegiate Church in Gotha in 1503. He acquired his own house there and wrote "Beata tranquillitas" over its doorway. He devoted himself to study and carried on extensive correspondence and intercourse with many learned humanists as well as with students from the University of Erfurt. He was especially well acquainted with Urbanus Regius and George Spalatin, both of whom were close by at the Georgenthal Cloister. These three men soon organized an academic association composed of many humanists, including Menius.

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<sup>13</sup>For biographical material on Mutian, consult Karl Schottenloher, Bibliographie zur Deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 1517-1585 (2nd edition; Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1956), II, 16174-16186b. Hereafter referred to as BdG. Consult also Spitz, pp. 130-154; and Wetzer and Welte, XIII, 2066-2069.

Menius was not the least among the group at that time. His accomplishments were surpassed, at least in the view of Eoban Hess, only by Crotus Rubianus.<sup>14</sup> Like many of the other individuals who played a significant role in the Reformation, Menius was educated as a humanist and enjoyed the company of like-minded men.

Menius' stature as a humanist scholar was clearly demonstrated in a letter from the year 1532. Schmidt attributes an anonymous letter which was written to Crotus Rubianus to Menius although there is no irrefutable evidence that Menius was indeed the author. In order to understand the contents of the letter, it is necessary to trace the career of Crotus Rubianus to the year 1532. In 1521 Rubianus became the Rector of the University of Erfurt. As Rector he greeted Luther enthusiastically when the Wittenberg Doctor passed through Erfurt on his way to the Diet of Worms. However, during the course of the decade Rubianus grew increasingly aloof from the reform movement. Schmidt is convinced that Rubianus became discontented with the non-political nature of Luther's reformation, and that Rubianus was also disconcerted by some of the excesses of the more radical reform elements. As a result, Rubianus returned to the Roman party in 1530 and entered the service of Elector Albrecht, Cardinal and Archbishop of Mainz. In the same year, Rubianus received a letter from a friend who wrote anonymously and

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<sup>14</sup>Schmidt, I, II, fn. 3, prints the following words which Eoban Hess wrote to Menius in 1524: "If I thought that you had bad eyes or were habitually bleary eyed, I would have obtained your work by force or by crime, for apart from the work of Crotus, I have not seen anything more splendid." "Nisi te malis oculis esse et ex consuetudine lippire scirem, extorquerem vel convitiis tibi tuum specimen, quo ab eo quod Crotus dederat, non vidi pellucidius."

privately to him concerning his action. Rubianus answered the letter with a defense,<sup>15</sup> and mentioned his distress over the lack of good works and piety among the evangelicals as the primary reason for his change. In 1532 an answer to Rubianus' Apologia appeared anonymously in the form of a letter. It was titled Response of a Friend to the Apology of John Crotus Rubianus (Ad Apologiam Ioannis Croti Rubeani Responsio amici ad quem privatim eam scripsit). It is generally agreed that Menius is its author.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Apologia qua Respondetur Temeritati calumniatorum, non verentium confictis criminibus in populare odium protrahere Reverendissimum in Christo patrem & dominum, do. Albertum . . . a Ioanne Croto Rubeano privatim ad quendam amicum conscripta. 1532.

<sup>16</sup>Johann Christopher Olearius published an annotated edition of this Responsio in 1720. Olearius argued that Justus Jonas was the author. David Friedrich Strauss, Ulrich von Hutten (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1858), I, 256, was the first to question Olearius' scholarship. Strauss drew attention to a passage in paragraph 29 of the letter which reads: "Deinde cum Lutherus jam serio bellum indiceret papistis et ad Wormaciensia iret comitia, ut sisteret se Carolo V invictissimo et clemntissimo imperatori, tu Erffordiae obviam diceris in equo vectus Luthero honorificentissime et officiosissime, more majorum, abeuntem etiam aliquot stadiis comitatus es, hortatus virum ad constantiam." Strauss asked why the author of the letter, if it were Jonas, had to rely on the report of someone else for information about Crotus Rubianus' reception of Luther. Jonas was a participant in the events at Erfurt in 1521 and would have known at first hand exactly what Crotus Rubianus had done. Cf. Lehmann, pp. 28-29. Eduard Böcking republished the letter in Ulrichs von Hutten Schriften (Neudruck der 1859-1861 bei B. G. Teubner erschienenen Ausgabe; Aalen: Otto Zeller Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1963), II, 456-465. Böcking also contested Olearius' view that Jonas was the author. He called attention to a letter which Luther wrote to Menius in 1531. In it Luther states that it will be Menius' task to demonstrate that Crotus Rubianus is an Epicurean who followed the reform movement with poisonous fangs and who proved it by fawning over the Cardinal of Mainz. Böcking printed this letter in the critical apparatus of the Menius' letter, pp. 456-457. His use of this letter in support of Menius' authorship is made even stronger if his textual emendation of the sentence, "Ego musz haben in idolum magnum tuum, sed certe prophetae . . ." to, "Ego musz haben in idolum magnum tuum, sct. Crotu . . ." is accepted as the authentic reading. Schmidt, following Böcking, also supports Menius' authorship. The majority of his

The Responsio begins with an acknowledgment of Crotus Rubianus' complaint in his Apologia. Rubianus had accused the unnamed author of the first letter of attempting to destroy the initial joy which was his after his return from the land of the Samaritans by asking about the way in which the Archbishop was acting with respect to certain matters. These included the reception of the Holy Communion in both kinds as well as the necessity of confessing all sins in auricular confession. The author of the Responsio replied that he would not retain Crotus Rubianus very long for he must yield to a man who can inform him so splendidly on the proper duties of true friendship. He has just learned from Crotus Rubianus what a true friend is: one who is loyal and loving as long as there is good fortune and as long as there is no hate from the rich or powerful.

The author calls attention to Rubianus' and Ulrich von Hutten's brilliant achievement, the Epistulae Obscurorum Virorum. He recalls that Rubianus was proud of the wit of those letters. He reminds Rubianus that he always referred to Cardinals as "Carnals," to

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additional arguments, however, are inferences based on the absence of positive evidence, offer no substantial evidence beyond the arguments presented by Strauss and Böcking and are not decisive or convincing. Typical of Schmidt's arguments is the following: Menius had to be the author because "He had the best and most exact knowledge of his person through the intimate association with him for a period of years." "Er hatte die beste und genaueste Kenntniss seiner Person durch den vertrautesten jahrelangen Umgang mit ihm sich erworben. . . ." Schmidt, I, 34. This, however, could apply equally well to Jonas or other close friends of Rubianus. This writer is not convinced that Menius can be designated the author of this letter with absolute finality. Too much of the supporting evidence is mere assumption, and no absolute evidence is available at this time. Nevertheless, in view of the circumstantial evidence which does point to Menius as the possible author this writer also attributes it to Menius for the time being.

monasticism as "muckism" and to theologians as "theologians." He notes that Rubianus had even memorized an epistle from Erasmus which praised the letters. Yet, according to the Responsio, the anonymity of the Epistulae should be attributed to Rubianus' fear of reprisals if his authorship became known.

Going further, the writer of the Responsio states that he will pass by many other matters about which he could write. Such matters would include Rubianus' views on the true religion, on his use of the Scriptures, of the Epicurean theses which he brought with him from Italy, of his views on canon law, the papacy, of the jokes he used to make in Gotha about the Mass, relics of the saints, and so forth. The author states sarcastically that he realizes now that those daily utterances by Crotus Rubianus were made in defense of the values in the medieval church.

Furthermore, the anonymous author recalls the great festivities which Rubianus is said to have prepared for Luther when he passed through Erfurt on his way to Worms. At that time Rubianus extended every effort to spread Luther's doctrine everywhere possible. In fact, it is reported that when Crotus Rubianus lived among the Samaritans he was such a firm supporter of Luther that he even denied that he was an ordained priest and never wore his tonsure. How different the case is now as Rubianus docilely sings the Salva regina among the clerics of the Archbishop of Mainz. The author implores Crotus Rubianus to think about his old friend Ulrich von Hutten who died for his convictions. The author wonders how Hutten would react if he could see Rubianus at the present time.

The Responsio closes by noting that from the style of Crotus Rubianus' Apologia it is apparent that he suffers from a bad

conscience. The author admonishes Crotus Rubianus to tell the truth to the Cardinal Archbishop and to return to his former self. The place of origin of the letter is given as Samaria and its date as the fifteenth year of the theologians and the first of Rubianus' defection.

This letter is important because it illuminates the authorship of the Epistulae Obscurorum Virorum and because it reveals much about Menius if he is its author. The Latin style of the Responsio is a conscious imitation of Crotus Rubianus' style in his Epistulae. The letter indicates that Menius had mastered well the literary excellence of the humanists. The content of the letter also contains sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it was impossible for Menius to be satisfied merely with a sarcastic and jesting criticism of abuses in the church, even though he shared many of the concerns of the humanists. Menius felt the need for nothing less than evangelical reform. As a consequence, he committed himself to the reform movement which originated in Wittenberg. No matter how much Menius might revere his teacher, Crotus Rubianus, no matter how much he might admire the goals of humanism, there were higher concerns which claimed his loyalty.

Another individual with whom Menius cemented a friendship during his university training was Joachim Camerarius.<sup>17</sup> He came from Leipzig to Erfurt in 1518. Menius was one of his most zealous students of Greek.

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<sup>17</sup>For literature on Camerarius, consult BdG, I, 2545-2566.

The entire group of individuals with whom Menius associated during his university years may be ascertained from the composite coat of arms which Crotus Rubianus prepared at the time of his assumption of the rectorship of the University of Erfurt in 1521.<sup>18</sup> In the center is the shield of Crotus Rubianus. It is surrounded by the shields of sixteen men. Beginning at the top left corner and reading clockwise around the square are the shields of the following: Martin Luther, Ulrich von Hutten, Eoban Hess, Justus Jonas, Erasmus, Philip Melanchthon, John Lange, Henry Eberbach, Conrad Mutian, George Forchheim, Urbanus Rhegius, John Draconites, Reuchlin, Adam Crato, Joachim Camerarius, and Justus Menius.<sup>19</sup>

Early in 1519 Menius went to Wittenberg to continue his studies and especially to attend the lectures of Philip Melanchthon. Here he became personally acquainted with Luther, but appears to have enjoyed a closer relationship with Melanchthon. Here he also renewed his association with Camerarius who came to Wittenberg in 1521. Sometime during the course of that year Menius lived with Crotus Rubianus in Fulda after the latter had left Erfurt because of the unrest there. In the autumn of 1521 Menius returned to Wittenberg. There is an improbable report which maintains that Menius journeyed to Rome in 1522, and worked there for a short time for Carl Miltitz.<sup>20</sup> At any rate, by 1523 Menius was attempting

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<sup>18</sup>The coat is reproduced in Spitz, p. 165.

<sup>19</sup>Lehmann, p. 26, misreads Menius as Mucius.

<sup>20</sup>Schmidt, I, 45, cites Eilmar, Mühlhausen Kirchenhistorie, as the authority for this information. Schmidt comments appropriately that it is doubtful that Menius would have worked with Miltitz in view of Menius' close ties with humanism and Luther and Melanchthon.



to determine what vocation in life he should pursue. Conrad Mutian offered Menius assistance if Menius would open a school in Fulda, but nothing came of this proposal. It seems that Menius experienced considerable difficulty in deciding whether to follow his humanistic interests or to serve in the evangelical reform movement. In 1523 he decided on the latter.

### Menius' Early Reform Activity and the Church Visitations<sup>21</sup>

During the year 1523 Menius went to Mühlberg, a small village near Gotha. There Johann Beck, canon (Domherr) at Gotha, instituted Menius as vicar (Vikar) and curate (Diakon). While in Mühlberg, Menius pursued his scholastic interests, married, honorably according to Melanchthon,<sup>22</sup> and established a lasting and deep friendship with Frederick Myconius. In 1524, Menius completed his first book, a commentary on the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>23</sup>

In 1525 Menius went to Erfurt and began teaching.<sup>24</sup> Menius' departure from Mühlberg may be accounted for in various ways. No

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<sup>21</sup>For a detailed historical account of the reformation of the church life of Thuringia, consult Rudolf Herrmann, Thüringische Kirchengeschichte (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1947), II, 1-139.

<sup>22</sup>Corpus Reformatoren, edited by Carl Bretschneider (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke and Sons, 1842), IX, 926. Hereafter referred to as CR.

<sup>23</sup>Schmidt, II, 300, does not specify the publisher and his identity has not been discovered by this writer. According to AM, I, 180, the work was published in 1524. According to Schmidt it was published in Nuremberg in 1527. This writer was unable to obtain a copy of this work.

<sup>24</sup>Melanchthon, CR, IX, 926, says that Menius taught Latin and Christian doctrine to the children of the town dignitaries.

doubt he missed the activity of the academic life to which he was accustomed. Furthermore, Menius' loneliness in the small village was heightened by the dramatic events which were taking place in the universities. Menius seems also to have encountered difficulties in preaching the evangelical reform movement. In view of the fact that in the next year Menius began teaching in Erfurt and would have preferred not to become pastor at St. Thomas Church there, it is also possible that his decision to become a clergyman had not been absolute.

Arriving in Erfurt in 1525, Menius found that city in a state of extreme unrest. The turmoil of the peasant uprising was reaching its height. The reform movement, which had had a highly turbulent character in this city, was also coming to a climax. The nature of the reform movement in Erfurt was to have a decisive effect on Menius' career.

Erfurt had been strongly influenced by Luther's teachings. However, in spite of his many warnings and personal visits to the city, changes were introduced impetuously, and with little consideration for those who desired to retain the old ways. Led by the Augustinian prior, John Lange,<sup>25</sup> the cloisters in the town were almost emptied. The clergy, both secular and religious, long an object of the townspeople's scorn, were driven from the town with a great tumult. The medieval mass was abolished, and many churches were closed. Evangelical clergy under the supervision of John Lange were installed

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<sup>25</sup>For literature on Lange, consult, BdG, I, 10284-10291a.

in nine of the town's churches. Menius became pastor at St. Thomas' Church, although he would have preferred to have declined the call there.<sup>26</sup>

As pastor in Erfurt, Menius engaged in reform activities of various kinds. Sometime during the year 1525, he translated some lectures of Melanchthon on the Proverbs.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, realizing the people's need for instruction in the proper use of the sacraments, Menius wrote two brief books: The Faith and Meaning of Child Baptism. How to Use the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Christ Profitably (In was Glauben und Maynung die Kyndlein zur heyligen Tauff zu fordderen seyen. Item: Wie des heyligen Leichnambs unnd Blutts unsers Herren Christi fruchtbarlich zu niessen).<sup>28</sup> No doubt Menius was also motivated to write on these topics because of incipient Anabaptist views. He stated in 1530 that already in 1525 he had debated with Melchior Rinck, one of the earliest Anabaptists in north-western Thuringia, concerning infant

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<sup>26</sup>According to a statement by Menius in his book, Widder den Hochberumbten Barfusser zu Erfurt D. Cunrad Klingen/Schutzred und grundliche erklerung etlicher heubt-artickel Christlicher lere (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1527), A3r.

<sup>27</sup>For a detailed investigation into the literary criticism of Menius' translation, consult Otto Clemen, "Eine unbekante Übersetzungsarbeit des Justus Menius," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte, XLVII (1928), 413-419. In this article, Clemen describes his discovery of the work. Schmidt's reference to it in his bibliographical section on Menius is so short that he gives the incorrect impression that the work is a translation of Proverbs by Menius. The work was published in Erfurt in 1526. Neither Schmidt nor Clemen specify the publisher and this writer has been unable to discover the publisher's identity. Melanchthon's lectures are published in CR, XIV, 2-87.

<sup>28</sup>The work was printed as one volume in 1525. Schmidt gives no more bibliographical data than that. He did not have access to the two little treatises, but relied on the summary of them which is contained in Unschuldige Nachrichten von Alten und Neuen Theologischen Sachen, IX (1709), 573-581.

baptism.<sup>29</sup> In the first part, Menius describes the duties of parents and god-parents in the matter of baptism. Parents are to pray earnestly for their children and seek pious godparents for them. Godparents are to consider the importance of their role and to serve as intercessors for the child's welfare. They are to see to it that the children are brought up in the fear of God. The second part contains instructions for those who are going to receive the Lord's Supper. Menius reminds his readers that the Sacrament of the Altar was instituted for the strengthening of the believer in his effort to overcome sin. Menius offers a brief form of examination. It consists of questions and answers which are to be exchanged between pastor and communicant. These questions and answers review the nature and purpose of the sacrament. They emphasize the basic elements of the evangelical understanding of the Gospel and the benefits of the sacrament. After the examination, the pastor is to apply the comfort of the Gospel to the communicant and admonish him with evangelical counsel. The work concludes with a brief admonition to those who are dying not to fear death, but to trust in the promises of Christ for life everlasting.

Besides writing, Menius was also engaged in the reform of the order of worship in Erfurt. In 1525, the Erfurt clergy, led by John Lange, introduced a German order of worship, The German Mass (Die teutsche messe, das ist eine form oder weise des sontages in teutscher

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<sup>29</sup>Justus Menius, Der Widdertaufer lere und geheimnis, aus heilliger schrifft widderlegt (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1530), 316v. The copy of this book which was used by this writer is the version which was printed in the Wittenberg edition of Luther's works, 1548, II, folio pages 299-350.

sprache mit singen und beten zu halten).<sup>30</sup> Lange sent the form to Luther. Luther approved it. He said that he was going to prepare a German mass himself, but told the Erfurt clergy that they were free to use whichever one they desired.<sup>31</sup> It is impossible, however, to determine which rite was used. Luther sent his German Mass (Deutsche Messe) to Erfurt,<sup>32</sup> but it is impossible to determine if it was used.

The major event, however, in Menius' career in Erfurt was his polemical confrontation with a Franciscan monk, Conrad Kling. Inextricably involved in this dispute was the complicated political situation in Erfurt. At this time, Erfurt was under the political jurisdiction of Electoral Saxony, but it was under the religious

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<sup>30</sup>Emil Sehling, editor, Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1902), II, 364, got the title from Erhard, Überlieferungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte alter und neuer Zeiten (Magdeburg: n.p., 1828), I, Heft 1, 1-2. Hereafter Sehling's edition is referred to as KO. Sehling believed that the previous opinion concerning this mass which viewed it as a modification of Müntzer's rite may have to be abandoned in favor of another view which sees it as an original creation of the Erfurt clergy. Sehling also doubts if the original form is extant. Sehling thinks that Carl Martens in his article, "Die Erfurter evangelischen deutschen Messen 1525-1543," Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte und Altertumskunde von Erfurt, XVIII (1896), 91-132, makes a very persuasive case that the rite was identical to the rite of Müntzer which had already appeared in Erfurt. Sehling is undecided, however, whether or not Martens is correct. He mentions that Luther disapproved of Müntzer's rite, but approved of the rite sent to him by the Erfurt clergy. Nevertheless, Sehling reprints the edition of Martens as the Erfurt Kirchenordnung in II, 375-381.

<sup>31</sup>D. Martin Luthers Werke. Briefwechsel. Critische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Herman Böhlau, 1883), III, 591. This edition of Luther's works will be referred to hereafter as WA; the letters as WABR.

<sup>32</sup>WABR, I, 201-202. In this letter dated mid-May, 1527, Luther expressed his surprise that his mass had not yet arrived in Erfurt.

jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Mainz.<sup>33</sup> Since 1483, Erfurt's town council had had the policy of seeking a closer association with the Elector of Saxony in the hope of freeing itself from ties with the Archbishop of Mainz. In 1525, however, after the turbulence of the reform movement and the peasant uprising had subsided somewhat, the town council, having grown fearful of the expanding influence of the Elector, sought a closer relationship with the Archbishop. For that reason, the council reopened four churches in Erfurt for the papal party. One of the clergymen who returned to Erfurt at that time was Conrad Kling.

Conrad Kling was an outspoken critic of both the medieval abuses in the church and the evangelical attempt to reform those abuses. His attacks on the evangelicals led to a bitter feud in Erfurt. Soon both sides were attacking each other from the pulpit. All of this was odious to Menius. He refused to join in the dispute from the pulpit. However, because the town council did not have either the courage or the ability to do anything about the dissension and because it, too, was divided, Menius attempted to do something himself. In private, although with a friend, Menius

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<sup>33</sup>GVUL, VIII, 1609, states that in 1483 the Elector of Saxony obtained the rite of protection, Schutz-Gerechtigkeit, for Erfurt. The city was obligated to pay one thousand five hundred rhenish gold-guldens to the Elector yearly. Max Paul Bertram, "Das Kirchenwesen Erfurts und seines Gebiets gegen Ausgang des Mittelalters," Zeitschrift des Vereins für Kirchengeschichte in der Provinz Sachsen-Anhalt, VII (1910), 2, reports on the basis of the study of Oergel that the Archbishop of Mainz was the legal Stadtherr of Erfurt. As such he possessed the ius metropoleos. In actual fact, however, he had relinquished most of his legal privileges. KO, I, 2, 362, states that in 1531 Erfurt attempted to gain recognition as an imperial free city, but was refused.

visited Kling at his cloister. He hoped to effect a peaceable modus vivendi for the feuding factions.

Menius described his visit with Kling and the subsequent events in the preface to his first polemical writing against Kling, Against the Famous Franciscan at Erfurt, D. Conrad Kling: Defense and Basic Explanation of Several Chief Articles of the Christian Faith (Widder den Hochberumbten Barfusser zu Erffurt D. Cunrad Klingen/Schutzred und grundliche erklerung etlicher heubtartickel Christlicher Iere).<sup>34</sup>

Menius states that when he visited Kling, he told Kling that conflicting reports concerning Kling's preaching had reached him. In one and the same sermon, it was said, Kling would both damn the evangelical position and proclaim its truth. It was also reported that Kling would, on occasion, preach an entire sermon of Luther. In order, therefore, to determine the exact nature of Kling's teaching, so that if possible both parties in Erfurt could reach unity and peace, Menius desired to discuss the matter with Kling in private. Kling responded that in many points he agreed with the evangelical teaching. In some points, however, Kling maintained that the evangelical's position was false. The false points, according to Kling, were the evangelical teaching about free will, justification through faith alone, the adiaphoristic nature of ceremonies, that monasticism is a human institution, and that the papacy is not essential to the church.

Menius and Kling discussed the points extensively. The meeting was then terminated by Kling. Although both men agreed to a future

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<sup>34</sup>The edition which was available to this writer was published in Wittenberg by Hans Lufft, 1527. Schmidt, I, 67, fn. 1, states that he had not obtained a copy of this work. He relied on a summary which is contained in Unschuld. Nach., IX, 635-644.

meeting, Kling, when pressed by Menius to set the time and date, replied only that he would send a messenger to Menius when a convenient time arose. In true polemical style, Menius stated that Kling wanted to terminate the discussion so that he might commence drinking at a tavern.<sup>35</sup>

Subsequent to this meeting, Kling began to attack the reformers and their theology even more. Menius felt compelled to address Kling publicly, in writing. On October 25, 1526, Menius prepared a brief letter to Kling, along with a brief exposition on some of the chief Christian teachings, and sent them to Kling. He appealed to Kling to engage in friendly discussions with the evangelicals, teaching them where they erred, if that be the case, and to seek peace. Kling responded by attacking Menius from the pulpit. In addition, Kling challenged Menius to go to the Universities of Cologne, or Frankfort an der Oder or Paris, three universities which stood solidly committed to scholastic theology, dispute the matter with him there and receive the judgment of the theological faculty of one of these schools. All of his attempts having thus met with failure, Menius decided to publish his writings to Kling together with a brief preface which would explain their origins and background. Menius sent these to Luther and requested that Luther write a preface for the book. Luther granted Menius' request and the work was published by the ninth of April 1527.<sup>36</sup>

The theses which Menius presented in his book against Kling provide a concise summary of his evangelical theology as he understood

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<sup>35</sup>Menius, Widder Kling, A4r.

<sup>36</sup>WABR, IV, 192.



it at this time. For that reason they are reproduced here. Menius supported each of these theses with passages from the Scriptures. He also gave a brief exegesis of the passages and then supplied theological arguments to demonstrate the validity of his theses.

- I. The almighty and gracious God, inasmuch as He alone has created the human race and all things, has the authority and power to give the law to the human race. It cannot be denied that the law gives a complete and whole likeness of the complete righteousness which has been commanded in the Ten Commandments. Nature also acknowledges this itself.
2. Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures deny everywhere that the human being can turn away from the evil which the law of God forbids, free and unhindered, and turn towards the good which it commands on the basis of his own powers.
3. The judgment of God upon us and the conscience which is conquered by such judgment likewise testify that the human being is a prisoner and a completely willing slave of sin. If the human being does that which is in him, he cannot turn from the evil to the good, but is always driven from one evil to another.
4. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures do not teach, nor does any human being have the power to put forward a good work on account of which one human being could justify himself and stand upright before the judgment of God. Likewise, no good work is meritorious on its own account.
5. The Holy Spirit bears witness both in the Scriptures and in our conscience that all human work is sin. Through such work no flesh can ever be justified or stand before the judgment of God. Likewise that the wages of all fleshly righteousness is death.
6. God has had mercy on such a miserable and pitiable condition of the human being and has sent His son into our flesh, sin, curse and death in order to redeem us who were pitifully lost and justified us in the spirit in order to awaken us to life everlasting. To accomplish this, He has remained faithful and promised such to us first through the word and afterwards in deed.
7. Such preaching about the Son of God is the gospel which Christ commanded to be preached about Him in the whole world. Through it He promises righteousness to all those who believe. Furthermore, in order that His promise might be even more certain, He has empowered it with signs which we call sacraments; namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

8. All those who confidently entrust themselves to God's promise together with its accompanying signs will be made truly righteous and holy from their sins and be called children of the living God instead of children of death. These alone will be accounted as the proper Christian community or church against which even the gates of hell will not prevail because it is built on a rock.
9. Such community, just as it has only one builder and father, also has only one ruler and lord, namely, Christ. And just as Christ has built His community through the word alone, so also will He preserve and renew it through nothing else. For what purpose, therefore, do so many institutions of men serve?
10. For that reason no one can call that congregation Christian which has been founded and erected by the doctrines and sacraments of men. Those are not the servants and helpers of Christ, but the servants of Satan who teach, unashamedly, in the name of Christ, doctrines which they themselves have devised. Therefore the anathema should be spoken upon a crowd which teaches and believes that there is another savior than Christ. To that all the world says, "Amen."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Menius, Widder Kling, B2r-B3v. 1. Der almechtige gutige Gott/wie er den menschen und alles allein erschaffen hat/Also hat er auch allem recht und macht dem menschen gesetz zu geben. Das uns nu der selbige ein gantz fertig ebenbild der volkomen gerechtickeit ynn x. gepoten furgeschrieben hab/Vermag ublich niemand zu leugnen. Ja es mus die natur auch selbst bekennen.

2. Das nu der mensch aus seinen krefften sich frey und unuerhindert keren müge/Von dem argen/das ym gesetz Gottes verboten/Zu dem guten/das drynnen geboren wird/Das verneinet die heilige schrifft allenthalben. Auch wissen die gewissen wol/die es durch erfahrung sind ynnen worden/das anders ist.

3. Das aber der mensch ein gefangner/und gantz eigner knecht der sunden sey/Und wenn er thut souiel an yhm ist/das er denn nicht vom bosen zum guten? Sondern aus einer bosheit ymerdar ynn die ander gezogen wird/Das bezeuget Gottes gericht über uns/Und die gewissen/so dauch überwunden werden/müssen auch/das also sey/bekennen.

4. Da her wird auch as der schrifft nicht geleret/vermag auch kein mensch furtzubringen/Nur ein einiges gut werck eins menschen/Da durch er sich selbst rechtfertigen/Und fur Gottes gericht drauff bestehen mug. Des gleichen ist auch keins guten wercks einiger verdienst.

5. Das bezeuget aber der heilige geist wol/beide ynn der schrifft/und ynn unsern gewissen/Das aller menschen werck sund sein/Da durch kein fleisch nymer mehr kan rechtfertig werden/Noch fur dem gericht Gotten bestehen. Und das der verdienst aller fleischlichen fromickeit der tod sey.

6. Solch elend und erbermlich wesen der menschen/hat sich Gott iamern lassen/Und seinen son ynn unser fleisch/sund/vermaledeyung

The next phase of the dispute between Menius and Kling began on March 20, 1527, the Wednesday before Reminiscere. Kling preached a sermon on the mass, using Matt. 12:38-42. On Reminiscere Sunday, Menius responded to Kling's sermon from his own pulpit in a lengthy sermon. The sermon was published later as Several Godless and Unchristian Doctrines of Conrad Kling about the Papistic Mass (Etlicher Gottlosen und widder christlichen lere von der Papistischen Messen/so der Barfusser zu Erfurt D. Conrad Kling gethan Verlegung durch Justum Menium am Sonntag Reminiscere gepredigt).<sup>38</sup>

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und tod zu senden/Uns/die wir dazu so erbermlich verdorben waren dar- aus zuerlösen/Und ym geist gerechtfertiget zum ewigen leben zue- wecken/Hat er uns durchs wort erstlich verheissen/und folgends mit der that auch trewlich gehalten.

7. Solche predigt vom son Gottes/ist eben das Euangelion/Wilchs Christus von sich ynn alle welt zu predigen beuolhen hat/Und da durch selickeit verheissen/allen/die daran gleuben. Und solche seine ver- heissung/auff das sie deste gewisser sein solt/hat er sie auch mit sygeln bekrefftigt/Die wir nu Sacrament nennen/als nemlich die Tauff und des Herrn abentmal.

8. Alle die yhene/so sich auff solche Gottes verheissung/sampt yhren anhangenden sygeln trostlich verlassen/Werden allezumal aus sundern from und heilig/Aus des todes kindern/kindern des lebendigen Gottes/warhafftig gemacht und genennet. Und die selbigen allein werden fur die rechtschaffen Christliche gemein odder kirchen gerechnet/ Da widder/als die auff ein felsen erbawet ist/auch die hellische pfortten nichts vermugen.

9. Und solche gemein/gleich wie sie nur einen bawmeister und vatter hat/Also hat sie auch nur einen regenten und heubtherrn/ nemlich Christum. Und gleich wie der selbige solch seine gemein durchs wort allein erbawet hat/Also kan und sol sie auch durch nichts anders/widder erhalten noch erneret werden. Warzu dienen denn soviel menschen satzung?

10. Darumb sol man die gemein nicht Christi heissen/wilche von menschen/und durch lere und Sacrament/die sie selbst erfunden haben/ auffgerichtet ist. Auch sind das nicht Christi diener und gehulffen/ sondern des Satans dienstboten/Die unterm namen Christi unerschampt leren/das sie selbst erdichtet haben. Derhalb so sollen auff ein hauffen/beide/die da leren/und die da gleuben/das ein ander selig- maker der menschen sey/denn Christus/allezumal sein anathema maharam motha/das ist/zum ewigen tod verbannet. Dazu sag alle welt/Amen.

<sup>38</sup>The work was published in 1527 in Wittenberg by Hans Lufft. Menius sent the sermon to Luther soon after he delivered it. By mid-May Luther wrote to Menius that he had received the commentarium

In the first part of the sermon Menius mentions the exegesis and reasoning which Kling offers in support of his view that the mass is a sacrifice and that the evangelical mass is unchristian. Kling had adduced three references from Scripture to show that the mass is a sacrifice: Exodus 12 concerning the slaughter of the Passover Lamb and the Passover Meal; Genesis 14 concerning the bread and wine which Melchizedek offered to Abraham; and, the institution of the mass by Christ when He offered up bread and wine. Kling argued that just as the children of Israel were commanded to offer up the Passover Lamb and eat it; and, just as Melchizedek offered up bread and wine; so the Lord Christ offered up bread and wine as an offering. The mass is a sacrifice, therefore, in which bread and wine are offered in memory of Christ.<sup>39</sup>

In response to Kling, Menius always gives a detailed examination of the wider context of his Scriptural references and relates them to Christ, the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Concerning Exodus 12 Menius asserts that the parallelism to the New Testament lies not in the offering of the lamb as a prototype of the mass, but in the lamb as a type of Christ. The blood of both was shed as a salvation from death. Melchizedek's significance, likewise, lies not in his offering bread and wine, but in his priesthood which prefigured the perfect priesthood of Christ as is demonstrated by Hebrews 7. Concerning the words of institution, there is no need to comment, according to Menius, inasmuch as the people have been hearing them in the vernacular every Sunday and know well enough what they mean.

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<sup>39</sup>Menius, Widder Kling, A4r-B3r.

In the second part of the sermon,<sup>40</sup> Menius examines what Kling asserted were the bases of the evangelical mass. These, in Kling's view, were as follows: first, that the evangelical mass finds its support in its opposition to the papal mass which the evangelicals consider a human work and institution, although the papal mass is attested in the Fathers and is supported by them; second, that the evangelicals are of the opinion that tonsures and chasubles have no bearing on the mass; and, finally, that the evangelicals contend that that which is neither taught nor forbidden in the Scriptures should be left free.

Menius responds, in general, that the real basis for the evangelical mass is the words of institution as recorded in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and I Corinthians 11. It is incumbent upon Kling, therefore, to demonstrate that these words do not refer to the celebration of the mass, or that the evangelicals use them in an improper way. In response to the specific charges, Menius asserts with reference to the first that the issue is not whether the papal mass is a correct replica of what Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustin or Dionysius said about the mass, but whether the papal mass is a correct replica of the mass which Christ instituted. Here the majestic word of God is of greater significance than the word of the Fathers. Menius is not convinced, however, that the papal mass is a correct replica of the mass of the Fathers. He challenges Kling to cite specific passages in the Fathers which support the papal mass. He promises that he will gladly examine those passages in their context and has no doubt about the probable results. Menius believed

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<sup>40</sup>ibid., B3r-E4r.

that he could prove that Kling misinterprets the Fathers just as he misinterprets the Scriptures.

In connection with this first charge against the evangelical mass, Kling had also called attention to the uniformity of the rites and ceremonies of the papal mass and the unanimity of its interpretation over against the multiform rites which had arisen on account of the reforms. Menius gives a rather long reply to this criticism. He states that papal unity means nothing inasmuch as the pope has become the final authority in interpretation. The Evangelical reformers are agreed, however, in their understanding of the basic meaning of the gospel. Such agreement is not vitiated by a multiplicity of rites. However, the papalists are not as unified as they suppose, according to Menius. Kling, Menius points out, need only look among his own kind to be made aware that the papal party is anything but united.

Concerning Kling's second charge against the Evangelicals, that they oppose the mass because they do not consider its ceremonies essential, Menius responds that if Christ did not have all the elaborations which have come to be connected with the mass, how can the Evangelicals be condemned for not having them? The prefigurements of the Old Testament to which Kling had alluded do not, according to Menius, make them binding on Christians, even if the Fathers instituted them for good reasons.

To Kling's third accusation that the Evangelicals oppose the mass simply because all of its ceremonies are not instituted in the Scriptures, Menius states that in spiritual matters only the Scriptures can be the final authority. Thus, only that which is expressly commanded in the Scriptures can be binding upon Christians. Furthermore,

the Scriptures are clear. Everyone can ascertain from himself precisely what it commands with respect to the mass. What is surprising, according to Menius, is that Kling cannot understand the Scriptures.

The basis issue in this dispute was the authority of church traditions. For Menius, the decisive factor in all spiritual matters was the authority of the Scriptures. Only that which is commanded in the Scriptures is absolutely binding upon consciences. That which Scripture neither commands nor forbids cannot be made essential to the faith. Yet, Menius did not deny the use of traditions in the church. Although he did not discuss the evangelical view of the use of non-Scriptural ceremonies in his books against Kling, Menius' attempt to achieve a modus vivendi among both parties in Erfurt indicates a willingness to permit the use of some papal traditions.

The dispute between Menius and Kling was only one aspect of the much larger dispute which was going on in Erfurt between the reform and the papal parties. The manner in which the issue was settled in Erfurt was to have significant consequences for the career of Menius. During the year 1527 to 1528, the party in the town council which was advocating closer ties with the Archbishop of Mainz gained control of the council. They sought to discredit the potestas jurisdictionis of the Evangelical clergy. Thus, Menius' continued presence in Erfurt became problematical. Eventually the question of Menius' call was raised. When the magistrate denied that Menius had a legitimate call to St. Thomas' Church, and when the members of his congregation would not testify that he had received a call from them, Menius decided to leave

Erfurt. He sought advice from Luther and Melanchthon and he requested financial assistance from the Elector. He received both. In a letter dated May 23, 1528, Luther promised to help Menius obtain a new position.<sup>41</sup> Menius also received a small stipend from the Elector for his subsistence.

Menius moved to Gotha. Myconius had made arrangements for him to live and teach there. Menius devoted himself to instructing children and to writing. He wrote a brief treatise on the duties of marriage, A Reminder about what should be Considered by those who Enter Marriage (Errinnerung, wass Denen, so sich inn Ehestand begeben zu bedenken sei).<sup>42</sup> This little book consists of six parts. The headings of the parts are: I. What marriage is; II. Who belongs in the estate of marriage, and who does not; III. How one should conduct himself in marriage; IV. Duties of the husband; V. Duties of the wife; VI. Duties of both with respect to children, relatives, and the whole household. The book was so popular that Menius decided to reword and expand it. The result was the even more popular treatise, Christian Household Stewardship (Oeconomia christiana).<sup>43</sup>

In this work Menius attempted to provide an evangelical interpretation of the estate of marriage, of family life and of household

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<sup>41</sup>WABR, IV, 371.

<sup>42</sup>Published in Wittenberg by Nickel Schirlentz in 1528. The copy of this booklet which was available to this writer was photographically reproduced from the Gustav Freytag-Bibliothek in the Stadtbibliothek at Frankfort am Main. No publisher's name appears on the title page.

<sup>43</sup>The full title of the book is, An die hochgeborene Fürstin Fraw Sibilla Hertzogin zu Sachsen, Oeconomia Christiana, das ist, von Christliche Haushaltung. Eleven editions of this work are mentioned in WA, XXX, 52-55. The work was translated into low German in 1529 and into Danish in 1538. The edition available to this writer was published in Wittenberg by Hans Lufft, 1529.



management in a more comprehensive way than he had done in his previous booklet. Menius states its theological orientation as follows: "I have written in order that you might be comforted and strengthened in all your works against the devil through the help of God's word, command and order."<sup>44</sup> Menius sets human married life in the matrix of a conflict of wills: God's will and the will of the devil. Menius, following Luther, sees two realms in God's creation: the spiritual, which is the domain of the Gospel; and, the political, in which God rules through human power and reason. In both realms God's will struggles against the will of the devil. Household management is the basis of the political realm. It develops the citizenry which is necessary for a sound political establishment.

According to Menius, marriage is a divine institution and has God's command and promise. God instituted marriage for two reasons: to perpetuate the human race; and, to provide a sanctified outlet for the sexual impulse. Within the framework of marriage, domestic management has its place. Its goal is the proper rearing of children in order that the political order might be sound and strong.

The role of the husband in marriage is fivefold. He is to honor and love God in his calling; he is not to commit adultery; he is to love his wife; he is to be sincerely understanding of the woman's weaker nature; and, he is to provide for the welfare of his family. The role of the wife is fourfold. Like her spouse, she also is to honor and love God in her role as wife and mother; she is to bear children; she is to be obedient and subject to her husband; and, she is to regulate well her own domestic affairs. Both

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<sup>44</sup>Menius, Oeconomia Christiana, B2r.

husband and wife are responsible for the rearing of children. They are to educate their children; they are to discipline children that they might learn industry instead of laziness; they are to see to it that their children learn a trade; and, they are to help their children get started in their married life. In a similar way, Menius outlines the duties of children and domestic servants; and, in conclusion, he treats of the responsibilities of friendship.

Beck has correctly said of this book:

It is as learned on its subject as can be, yet there is nothing dull or abstract. Everything is fresh and fascinating. At the same time there is a penetrating use of the Scriptures and a direct connection to the Christian life.<sup>45</sup>

While in Gotha, Menius also participated in the church visitations of Electoral Saxony. Together with Melanchthon, Myconius, Christoph von der Plaunitz, Georg von Wangenheim, and Johann Cotta, Menius visited western Thuringia from the middle of October 1528, to near the end of January 1529. Melanchthon says of Menius' activity:

Afterwards, in the year 1527, when the illustrious, honorable Prince and Lord, John, Duke of Saxony, Elector, and so forth, obviously out of the great grace of God, proposed that useful, Christian work, the first visitation of the churches, Justus Menius proved himself to be for his Elector the kind of person who was very helpful in the visitation. Now it is obvious that there was much work in that first visitation. Many pastorates were consolidated again. All church incomes were properly registered. Much necessary instruction in doctrine had to be given. Many matters pertaining to marriages had to be examined. Justus Menius did more than all the rest of us in that work, not only in word, but also in writing: making registers and composing contracts, decisions and judgments.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Hermann Beck, Die Erbauungsliteratur der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von Dr. M. Luther bis Martin Moller (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1883), p. 125.

<sup>46</sup>CR IX, 926. "Darnach Anno 1527., als der Durchleuchtigst hochgeborne Fürst und Herr, Herr Johann Hertzog zu Sachsen, Churfurst etc. gewisslich aus grosser Gottes Gnad, das christlich nützlich Werk,

There are few extant documents or records from this visitation.<sup>47</sup> Myconius describes the visitation, in general, as filled with "much trouble, weariness and work."<sup>48</sup> Thus, although Menius was not actively serving a parish during this time, he was gaining invaluable experience which would aid him immensely when he began to serve the churches in Eisenach and elsewhere as a Superintendent.

#### Menius in Eisenach

Sometime during Lent, between March 8 and March 28, 1529, Menius went to Eisenach.<sup>49</sup> The reform movement had triumphed in Eisenach

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die erste Visitation der Kirchen, vorgenommen hat, ist er, lustus Menius, seiner Churfürstlichen Gnaden angezeigt worden für eine Person, die zur Visitation sehr wol zu gebrauchen sein würde. Nu ist öffentlich, dass in derselbigen ersten Visitatio grosse Arbeit gewesen. Viel Pfarren sind von neuem fundirt worden, aller Kirchen Einkommen sind in ordentliche Register bracht, von der Lehr ist viel nöthiger Unterricht geschehn. Es sind auch viel Ehesachen verhört. In dieser Arbeit hat lustus Menius nicht allein mit Reden, sondern auch mit Schreiben, die Register zu machen, die Verträge, Abscheid und Urtheil zustellen etc. mehr gethan, dann wir andern."

<sup>47</sup>KO, I, 47, discovered only two. One describes a contract between a congregation and its pastor; the other describes the Pfarrrecht which the visitors assessed for the Pfarrei Molschleben.

<sup>48</sup>Friedrich Myconius, Historia Reformationis, vom Jahr Christi 1517 bis 1542. Aus des Autoris autographo mitgetheilet, Und in einer Vorrede erläutert von Ernst Salomon Cyrpian (Leipzig: Moritz George Weidman, 1718), p. 53.

<sup>49</sup>Menius states in a report which he wrote to the Ducal Secretary, Postel, on December 22, 1550, for the purpose of describing his financial problems, "Auf die Fasten in Martio (1529) bin ich in Gottes Namen gen Eisenach zum Pfarrherr und Superattendenten verordnet. . . ." The report is printed, in part, in an article by Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, "Zur Katechismus-Literatur des 16. Jahrhunderts," Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie, herausgegeben von Christian Wilhelm Niedner, XXX (1865), 304. Hereafter the periodical will be referred to as ZHTh. However, a letter from Myconius to Lang on March 7, 1529, gives the impression that Menius was already Superintendent in Eisenach at that time. A summary of this letter is contained in Hans-Ulrich Delius, editor, Der Briefwechsel des Friedrich Mykonius, Heft 18 and 19 in Schriften zur

by that time. The difficulties which were soon to plague Menius were not to come from the papal party as in Erfurt, but from the radical reformers. Also, the introduction of reforms in Eisenach, unlike Erfurt, had been accomplished quite peaceably.<sup>46</sup> The first reformer of Eisenach, Jacob Strauss, managed to effect changes with a minimum of hostility and disorder.<sup>47</sup> His support of the peasants during their uprising, as well as his controversy with Luther about interest alienated Strauss from the Wittenberg circle. Eventually, Strauss was compelled to leave Eisenach. Four years later, in 1529, Menius assumed the role of church leader in Eisenach which Strauss had vacated.

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Kirchen- und rechtsgeschichte. Darstellungen und Quellen. Herausgegeben von Ekkehart Fabian (Tübingen: Ph. C. W. Schmidt, 1960), p. 18. However, in view of the fact that Menius signed the dedicatory letter of his work, Oeconomia Christiana, on March 8, at Gotha, it seems questionable whether he was already Superintendent at Eisenach. Perhaps he was in the process of moving in early March and his situation was in a state of flux. At any rate, Schmidt, Menius, I, 130, is incorrect in reporting that Menius was installed as Superintendent in Eisenach after his return from Marburg in October 1529; and, that Menius was only a Diakon at Eisenach until then.

<sup>46</sup>For his information on the reform of Eisenach, KO, I, 33, relied exclusively on the work of Schmidt, Menius, I, 95-131. Schmidt surveyed the older material. For an account of the first visitation of Eisenach by Jacob Strauss, consult Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, "Eine Kirchenvisitation im Jahre 1525," ZHTh, XXXV (1865), 291-299.

<sup>47</sup>Concerning Jacob Strauss, consult the article by G[ustav] Rossert in Realencyklopadie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche, edited by Albert Hauck (3rd verbesserter und vermehrter Auflage; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904), XIX, 92-97. Hereafter referred to as PRE<sup>3</sup>. For the bibliography on Strauss, consult BdG, II, 311, 20824-20828.

In Eisenach, Menius found little improvement in his financial condition. His living quarters were less than pleasant for the first three years. Menius wrote about it:

I did not have a parsonage, but for the first three years I lived in an abandoned cloister. The mayor, Hans Borner, of blessed memory, kept six, eight or ten pigs under my room and sleeping quarters. Day and night I had to smell that aromatic garden.<sup>48</sup>

His salary at first consisted of 80 florins.<sup>49</sup> Duke John Frederick, however, alleviated Menius' plight to some extent. The Duke supplied Menius with enough resources to enable him to build his own house.<sup>50</sup>

In late September and early October 1529, Menius accompanied Luther and other Wittenberg theologians to Marburg for the colloquy with Zwingli. Menius did not sign the articles there, however, because he was only an observer.

During his years as the Superintendent of Eisenach, Menius had extensive contacts with the Anabaptists of that area. As a result of those contacts, Menius developed an intimate knowledge of Anabaptism. His contacts included such activities as examining individuals who were arrested for Anabaptist views, disputing with Anabaptists about the correct interpretation of the Scriptures, instructing Anabaptists in the evangelical faith, and reporting to the Elector of Saxony about his examinations as well as about

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<sup>48</sup>Menius, "Report to Postel," in Schmidt, "Zur Kat. Lit.," ZHTh, XXX, 304-305.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Karl Hermann Fünkhanel, "Die Wohnung des Justus Menius in Eisenach," Zeitschrift des Verein für Thüringische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, VI (1865), 380-389.

Anabaptist activity in his diocese. The literary results of his contacts were three books about Anabaptism: The Anabaptist Doctrine and Secret Refuted from the Holy Scriptures (Der Widerteuffer lere und geheimnis/Aus heiliger Schrifft widerlegt), 1530; On the Spirit of the Anabaptists (Von dem Geist der Widerteuffer), 1544; and, On the Bloodfriends among the Anabaptists (Von den Blutfreunden aus der Widertauff), 1551; and, a book which attempted to justify the civil government's policy of executing Anabaptists, How Each Christian Should Conduct Himself with Respect to All Sorts of Doctrine, both Good and Bad, According to God's Command (Wie ein iglicher Christ gegen allerley lere/gut und bose/nach Gottes befeh/sich geburlich halten sol), 1538. These works are extremely important for the student of Reformation history, not only because they indicate the way in which one Lutheran theologian and churchman responded to Anabaptism, but also because they provide one of the major sources of information about the Anabaptism of western Thuringia.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Records of trials and correspondence between state officials of Saxony and Hesse provide the others. The documents which relate to Menius are printed in Paul Wappler, Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung, Heft 13 and 14 in Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte, edited by Joseph Greving (Münster i.W.: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1910); in Paul Wappler, Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584, Vol. II in Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte Thüringens, edited by the Thüringischen Historischen Kommission (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913); and in Günther Franz, editor, Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte (Marburg: N. G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951), hereafter referred to as TA Hesse. Schmidt's biography of Menius was the pioneer work of research on Anabaptism in northwestern Thuringia. However, his work suffers from two major weaknesses: errors and confusion in reporting certain aspects of Anabaptist history; and, an exaggeration of the importance of Menius in eliminating Anabaptism from this area. Schmidt's research was supplemented

Menius had already become involved with the Anabaptist movement when he was in Erfurt. In 1525 he had received a letter from Thomas M $\ddot{u}$ nzer which answered Menius' request for a summary of M $\ddot{u}$ nzer's theological views.<sup>52</sup> In the same year, Menius met Melchior Rink, the leading Anabaptist in this area, and disputed with him about certain differences between Anabaptist and Lutheran theology.<sup>53</sup> In 1528, Menius, together with Eberhard von der Thann, the prefect of the Wartburg, wrote to Elector John concerning the Anabaptists in Thuringia.<sup>54</sup> Finally, Menius made contact with early radical spiritualist concepts during the church visitations in January 1529.<sup>55</sup>

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and corrected by Wappler. His two studies are invaluable for the sources which he printed, and for the coherent historical framework which he developed from the sources. Wappler, however, was strongly biased against the Lutheran reformers and he failed to realize that the concerns of the sixteenth century were not the same as his own. A recent general study of Anabaptism which investigates some areas related to this present research is George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962). Williams' research provides excellent background material and a broad view of the entire radical movement. The most recent study on Anabaptism in the area under consideration is John S. Oyer, Lutheran Reformers Against Anabaptists: Luther, Melancthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).

<sup>52</sup>M $\ddot{u}$ nzer's letter is printed in Unschuld. Nach., XVI, 1242-1247.

<sup>53</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 138-139, does not document his source for this disputation. The reader will find references to it from Menius' pen in Der Widdertauffer Lere, 316r, 331v. Concerning Rink, consult the article by Paul Schowalter in The Mennonite Encyclopedia (Scottsdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), IV, 336-338. This work will be referred to as ME. Consult also the article by Carl Mirbt, "Rink," in PRE<sup>3</sup>, XVII, 17-19; and, BdG, II, 18153-18168.

<sup>54</sup>The letter is not extant. Melancthon refers to it in a letter to Christian Beyer in December 1528, CR, I, 1012. Melancthon writes, "Et nunc Anabaptistis ista loca Thuringiae sunt obnoxia. Ideo vos oro propter Deum, ut literas Menii et praefecti D. Eberhardi diligenter commendetis Principi."

<sup>55</sup>In a letter to Myconius, dated Jan. 6, 1529, Melancthon describes an examination of an old man of Breitenbach who professed

Menius' major contacts with Anabaptists began after he became the Superintendent of Eisenach. As such he supported the policy of the Electors of Saxony who upheld the Canon of Speyer of 1529.

This canon, which made Anabaptism punishable by death, reads, in part:

We therefore renew the previous imperial law, as well as our above-named imperial mandate . . . that . . . every anabaptist and rebaptized man and woman of the age of reason shall be condemned and brought from natural life into death by fire, sword, and the like, according to the person, without proceeding by the inquisition of the spiritual judges; and let the same pseudo-preachers, instigators, vagabonds, and tumultuous inciters of the said vice of anabaptism, also whoever remains in it, and those who fall a second time, let them all by no means be shown mercy, but instead be dealt with on the power of this constitution and edict earnestly with punishment.<sup>56</sup>

Electoral Saxony had no decrees against Anabaptism as such. Prior to the Canon of Speyer, however, three mandates had been issued which made it illegal for a person not called by the church to

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that he could not, with a clear conscience, refrain from preaching. "Senex Breitenbachensis nobiscum ad Erfordiam usque profectus est. Ibi audivimus eius postulationem. Cupit sibi concedi, ut concionetur, quia aliter tranquillam conscientiam habere non possit. Nec sacramento utatur, quia putet, se contra conscientiam facere ea, quae sibi revelata sunt. Haec est summa negotii." CR, I, 1021. See also col. 1029.

<sup>56</sup>The translation is from Williams, pp. 238-239. The text of the imperial decree is contained in Gustav Bossert, editor, Herzogtum Württemberg, Vol. I in Quellen zur Geschichte der Wiedertäufer (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1930), 3-4. The "imperial mandate" refers to the decree of Emperor Charles V against the Anabaptists of January 4, 1528, the text of which is printed in Wappler, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, II, 268-269. Williams traces the history of opposition to rebaptism back to the ancient church, and he records the increasing severity of the punishment from the Theodosian Code to the Inquisition of Charles V. The Theodosian Code threatened those guilty of rebaptism with confiscation of property and other severe punishments, but did not authorize capital punishment. The Roman Codes which did demand death, directed primarily against Manichaeans, were later applied to heretics and Anabaptists. The twofold emphasis of the Canon of Speyer should also be noted. The death sentence is directed not only against those who preach and practice rebaptism, but also against those who, after recanting, return to their error.



perform the functions of the clergy.<sup>57</sup> The policy of Philip of Hesse towards the Anabaptists was more moderate and in sharp contrast to the policy of the Electors of Saxony.<sup>58</sup> He refused to permit individuals to be executed for their religious views. Thus,

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<sup>57</sup>The mandates were issued on Feb. 26, 1525, March 31, 1527, and Jan. 17, 1528. Cf. ME, III, 446-447. The mandates in their original form were, unfortunately, not available to this writer.

<sup>58</sup>Philip's policy of tolerance has been subjected to careful scrutiny. Among the more important studies which the interested reader should consult are the following: K[arl] W[ilhelm] H[ermann] Hochhuth, "Mittheilungen aus der protestantischen Secten-Geschichte in der hessischen Kirche. I Theil: Im Zeitalter der Reformation. Schluss der I Abth.: Landgraf Philipp und die Wiedertäufer," ZHTh, XXVIII (1858), 538-644; XXIX (1859), 167-234. The value of this article is reduced somewhat by its many errors. Wappler, Die Stellung, is primarily a study of the clash of Philip's policy with the policy of Electoral Saxony. The recent study by Franklin Hamlin Littell, Landgraf Philipp und die Toleranz (Bad Nauheim: Christian Verlag, 1957), is suggestive rather than exhaustive, but still valuable. He concludes that Philip's policy of tolerance stemmed from three sources: chiefly from humanistic and political factors, but also from his conviction of the normative character of the early church. Littell's conjecture of the third source of Philip's tolerance needs further investigation. The attempt by Littell to link Philip to the "primitivism" which, according to Littell, characterized Anabaptism strikes this writer as questionable. Perhaps a more important source of Philip's tolerance was his own evangelical faith. For Philip, faith in the true doctrine was a gift of God and could not be coerced. He could not feel justified, therefore, in putting to death those who embraced false doctrine because of their delusion. On May 28, 1533, Philip wrote to the Elector of Saxony, "Wir in unserm gewissen nicht sondere beschwerung befunden, Einich Mensche umb sachen willen dess unrechten glaubens, der ein gab gottes ist und zu zeitten nicht uss bossheit, sonder unversehene angenomen wirdet, mit dem schwerdt zu straffen, so wolten wir E. L. gar ungerne dasselb oder lichts anders weigern, Zuforderst das das tzu straff des ubels und zu forcht der bossen dienen solt" (quoted in Wappler, Die Stellung, p. 165). Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that anyone because of his faith; the landgrave did not concede the right of anyone to believe whatever articles of faith he might desire. The landgrave made many efforts to exclude Anabaptism from his territory, and was not adverse to imposing life imprisonment upon Anabaptists, as in the case of Melchior Rink and Fritz Erbe. Finally, TA Hesse, I, contains a general survey of Philip's relationship to Anabaptism.

in Hausbreitenbach, a castle territory which was ruled jointly by Hesse and Electoral Saxony,<sup>59</sup> there was a continual clash between the two policies whenever Anabaptists were arrested.

The first execution of Anabaptists in which Menius was involved occurred in 1530, and it occasioned his first book against the Anabaptists. In view of the strong punishment meted out to these Anabaptists, as well as the strong reaction against it, both then and now, the background to the executions may be described in detail.

What follows is a translation of Wappler's account of the events which culminated in the execution of six Anabaptists in 1530.

The first traces of Anabaptist agitation in western Thuringia stretched back to about the end of 1526.

(About this time Valten Unger, who was examined in the early part of 1530 at Reinhardsbrunn along with other Anabaptists, was baptized by a certain John Gass.)

From that time on, the apostles of Anabaptism approached the workers in the harvest fields in secret, or else they directed their attention to the kilns, and on other occasions isolated people who lived in the forests, and preached their gospel to them. In Zella St. Blaise,<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>GVUL, IV, 1228, the castle Breitenbach was built by the noble Thuringian family by that name. This writer has not been able to discover when and how this region came to be ruled jointly by Hesse and Saxony. The region of Hausbreitenbach included Bercka with its five villages (Dippach, Hausbreitenbach, Dorfbreitenbach, Gospenroda and Herslet), and Herda with its village, Oberwünschen-suhl. Amt Hausbreitenbach and Bercka were under the town of Gerstungen of Hesse, but Bercka was also under the principality of Hersfeld, although the sovereignty and tax rights belonged to Electoral Saxony. Both were under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Eisenach. The officials of Hesse resided in Bercka. GVUL, III, 1208; X, 1196-1197; and, XIII, 236.

<sup>60</sup>For a detailed description of Zella St. Blaise consult the article, "Von den Kirchen und Schulen zu Zella St. Blasii," Gothaischer Kirchen-u. Schulenstaats, II, 3-21. At this time, Zella St. Blaise was a small town (Stadt) about four miles south of Gotha, two miles west of Smalcaid, and about one hour north of Suhl. It was founded in the eleventh century, together with its church, under the jurisdiction of the Reinhardsbrunn cloister. The provost resided in Zella St. Blaise.

which belonged to the cloister Reinhardsbrunn,<sup>61</sup> and in the neighboring mountain places, a certain Volkmar from Hildburghausen was especially active, as well as a Michel von Uettingen from Eisfeld. They appear to have acquired a moderate following here already in the first half of 1528. About the beginning of June, 1528, the first imprisonments occurred at Hallenberg in the territory of Count Hermann von Henneberg. This appears to have spread abroad among the people there such a fear that numerous other rebaptized persons in Zella St. Blaise avoided the same fate by fleeing. Inasmuch as they even left their children behind destitute, there was much trouble for the electoral protector of the secularized Benedictine abbey Reinhardsbrunn, to which Zella St. Blaise also belonged. Some of those who fled were later apprehended, however, whereupon they recanted their error at Gotha and Georgental, and did penance. Nevertheless, they once again relapsed into their previous error. Indeed, they even aroused a public riot among the people when they threatened to stone one of their members who wanted to renounce his faith. The result was, that at the beginning of January, 1530, nine of them were imprisoned again and were examined at Reinhardsbrunn by the Superintendent of Gotha, Frederick Myconius.<sup>62</sup> In spite of the most urgent admonition and repeated instruction, six of them, two men and four women, persisted in their Anabaptism, and asserted that they had forfeited their life all the same, and therefore wanted to remain and die in their faith, just as others, like Thomas Münzer had done. Consequently, they were executed on January 18, 1530, at Reinhardsbrunn. Without the slightest trace of remorse or fear, they received the deathstroke.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>For a detailed description of the Reinhardsbrunn cloister, consult the article "Von dem ehemaligen Cloister und der jetzigen Kirche zu Reinhardsbrunn," Gothaischer Kirchen- u. Schulenstaats, III, 3-24. The cloister was located about one half hour from Friedrichroda about three miles south of Gotha. The territory around Reinhardsbrunn was purchased in the eleventh century by Louis the Leaper, and the cloister was founded by him in 1085. Emperor Henry IV granted various freedoms to the cloister in 1086, and many Thuringian landgraves and Saxon dukes honored the cloister by being buried there.

<sup>62</sup>The report of the examination which Myconius held is printed in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 134-137.

<sup>63</sup>Wappler, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, II, 48-49. The method of execution in this instance cannot be determined with certainty. Wappler's use of the term Todesstreich would seem to indicate that these Anabaptists were executed by decapitation. However, the only extant account of the execution is from Menius. Menius does not describe the manner by which death was inflicted. Menius says only that the Anabaptists were "executed." Menius, Der Widdertaufer

Wappler's historical summary agrees with the brief account of the same events as reported by Menius.<sup>64</sup> Menius emphasizes, however, the fact that these Anabaptists had been given instructions for over a year at Gotha, that they had freely confessed that they

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lere, 314r. Decapitation by the sword, however, seems to have been the usual manner by which Electoral Saxony executed Anabaptists. Consult, for example, the judgment which the Doctors of the Saxon Court sent to the Eisenach Council in 1539 printed in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 204-205, in which it is stated that if the imprisoned Anabaptists should refuse to recant they should be put to death by the sword. The text of the quotation translated above follows: "Die ersten Spuren der täuferischen Agitation reichen in Westthüringen bis etwa Ende 1526 zurück. Ueberall machten sich seitdem heimlich Taufapostel in der Erntezeit an die Arbeiter draussen auf dem Felde heran, oder sie wandten sich an die Köhler und sonstige vereinzelt in den Wäldern wohnende Leute und predigten ihnen von ihrem Evangelium. In dem zum Kloster Reinhardsbrunn gehörigen Zella St. Blasii und in den benachbarten Gebirgsorten waren vor allem ein gewisser Volkmar aus Hildburghausen und daneben ein Michel von Uettingen aus Eisfeld für die Wiedertaufe tätig. Sie scheint hier bereits in der ersten Hälfte des Jahres 1528 einen ziemlichen Umfang angenommen zu haben. Etwa Anfang Juni 1528 wurden zu Hallenberg im Gebiet des Grafen Hermann von Henneberg die ersten Verhaftungen vorgenommen. Dies scheint unter der dortigen Bevölkerung einen solchen Schrecken verbreitet zu haben, dass sich jetzt in Zella St. Blasii zahlreiche andere Wiedergetauffte demselben Schicksal durch die Flucht entzogen. Da sie dabei sogar ihre Kinder unversorgt zurückliessen, so erwuchs daraus dem kurfürstlichen Verwalter der säkularisierten Benediktinerabtei Reinhardsbrunn, zu deren Besitz Zella St. Blasii mit gehörte, nicht wenig Mühe. Die Flüchtigen wurden jedoch später zum Teil wieder festgenommen, worauf sie zu Gotha und Georgenthal ihren Irrtum widerriefen und Busse taten. Dennoch verfielen sie auch jetzt wieder in ihr früheres Wesen, ja sie erregten sogar im Volke einen öffentlichen Auflauf, indem sie einen, der in der Kirche ihre Artikel abschwören wollte, zu steinigen drohten. Die Folge war, dass Anfang Januar 1530 wieder neun von ihnen verhaftet und zu Reinhardsbrunn durch den Gothaer Superintendenten Friedrich Myconius verhört wurden. Trotz eindringlichster Ermahnung und wiederholter Unterweisung verharrten sechs von ihnen, zwei Männer und vier Frauen, auch jetzt noch auf der Wiedertaufe, indem sie erklärten: Sie hätten ohnedies ihr Leben verwirkt, und so wollten sie auch bei ihrem Glauben bleiben, auf den ja auch andere wie Thomas Münzer gestorben seien. Sie wurden infolgedessen am 18. Januar 1530 zu Reinhardsbrunn öffentlich hingerichtet. Ohne die geringste Spur von Reue oder Furcht empfangen sie den Todesstreich."

<sup>64</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer Lere, 314r-314v.

had erred and had been led astray by false prophets, and had promised not to repeat their error in the future. When they did not keep their word, but soon returned to their Anabaptist faith, they were taken captive a second time at Reinhardsbrunn. Once again they were instructed and once again they rejected their Anabaptist convictions only to embrace them again after they were released. When one of their number was on the verge of recanting his Anabaptist position, they precipitated a public riot on account of their threats to stone him. Arrested for the third time, they asserted that although they could not support their faith from the Scriptures themselves, there were others who could. On this occasion they refused to recant.<sup>65</sup> In accordance with the policy of Electoral Saxony, they were executed.

From the above it is apparent that these Anabaptists were executed not entirely, or perhaps not even primarily, on account of their religious views, even though it was their convictions which provided part of the legal justification for death. Factors which were just as significant in bringing about their execution was their repeated defiance of authority and the civil unrest which they had caused. This is indicated in Menius' description of the events which led up to their execution. He wrote:

To be sure, the whole world saw the stupid fivolyty in which those poor people died who were executed on the Tuesday after Anthony at Reinhardsbrun. Their execution was the result not only of their repeated and abominable blasphemy and seditious articles, but also

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<sup>65</sup>Here Menius' account differs from Wappler's record. Wappler mentions only two examinations, Menius three. The riot appears to have occurred between the second and third arrest.

because of a riot which they stirred up in public in the ordinary church among the people when they tried to stone one of their members who was going to recant their articles, and also because of other similar events which brought them under the punishment of the authorities.<sup>66</sup>

Wappler reports that the executions aroused considerable animosity against the Lutherans who were responsible not only among Anabaptists, but also among others, including the Lutheran Reformer of Swabia, John Brenz.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Menius, Der Widdertauffer, Lere, 314r. "Es haben freilich ein grosse welt gesehen/mit was thumsinniger leichtfertigkeit die armen Leute gestorben sind/so am nehesten dinstag nach Antonii zum Reinhardbrun/nicht allein umb der vielfaltigen und gewlichen Gotteslesterung und auffrürischen artikel willen dieser Rotten/sondern/das sie auch durch einen aufflauff/den sie in gemeiner kirchen unterm Volck öffentlich erreget/einen/der ire Artikel widerrufen solt/zu steinigen; Dazu auch umb anderer etlicher mehr uberfarung willen/damit sie in der Oberkeit straff gefallen/sind gerichtet worden." Oyer, p. 51, fn. 2, refers to this passage and says: "Menius gives a vituperative account of the event, charging the Anabaptists with being followers of Müntzer and of publicly threatening to stone one of their number who did not agree to recant the second time." It should be pointed out, first of all, that Oyer has mistranslated Menius' words at this point. The sense of Menius' statement is that the Anabaptists stirred up a riot by their attempt to stone one of their own members who was about to recant their articles, and not, as Oyer has it, that they publicly threatened to stone one who refused to recant the second time. In the second place, it is difficult to determine the grounds of Oyer's judgment that Menius' account is "vituperative," unless, of course, Menius' statement that these people died with "thumsinniger leichtfertigkeit" is deemed vituperative. It ought to be pointed out in that connection, therefore, that in view of the vulgar polemical language which was customarily used in the sixteenth century, Menius' language is really quite mild. Williams, p. 440, also needs to be corrected. In reporting the research of Oyer just mentioned, Williams apparently misreads Oyer, and states that Menius "threatened personally to stone one of the recalcitrants publicly." For a biographical description of two of the Anabaptists who were executed, consult the article by Christian Hege, "Kolb, Andreas and Katharina," ME, III, 214.

<sup>67</sup>Wappler, Die Stellung, p. 24. Consult also the literature which he cites in fns. 1 and 2.

As a result of the execution, Myconius and Menius undertook to publish jointly a refutation of Anabaptist teaching. Wappler suggests that Myconius may have had conscience pangs about the execution, but offers no evidence for his suggestion.<sup>68</sup> At all events, Melanchthon, in a letter to Myconius written during February, 1530, counselled him against mild treatment of Anabaptists, primarily because of the civil unrest which they caused.<sup>69</sup> In the same letter Melanchthon expressed his approval of the Superintendents' plan to write a treatise against the Anabaptists, and assured Myconius that Luther would give approval also. Luther did this in a letter to the two men at the end of February 1530.<sup>70</sup> Menius was working on the treatise already in February.<sup>71</sup> The authors then submitted the manuscript to the printer, Nickel Schirlentz. By August 20, the first part was printed and in the hands of Luther, who was staying at the Coburg while the Diet was in progress at Augsburg. The printing of the work was finished by the end of September.<sup>72</sup> Only Menius' name appears as that of the author.

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<sup>68</sup>ibid., p. 13.

<sup>69</sup>CR, II, 17.

<sup>70</sup>WABR, V, 244.

<sup>71</sup>Delius, p. 23. In a letter dated February 19, 1530, Myconius stated his hope that Menius could devote the greater part of his day to the treatise.

<sup>72</sup>At that time George Rörer sent a completed copy to Stephan Roth. WA, XXX, ii, 209. Wappler, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, II, 58, reports that a condensed form of the treatise was issued in a second edition in 1533 together with Luther's "Von der Widdertauffe an Zween Pfarher" and Melanchthon's "Unterricht widder die Iere der Widderteuffer."

Menius dedicated the treatise to Philip of Hesse in the hope that he would adopt more stringent measures against the Anabaptists. The book is divided into two portions. In the first part, Menius describes Anabaptism, as he knows it, in a general way. He labels the Anabaptists tools of satan, who, along with the Turks, are a sign that the return of Christ is imminent. After a brief description of the activities of Hans Denk and Melchior Rink, Menius discusses the nature and danger of the Anabaptist articles of faith. Menius sees that faith as blind, stiff-necked and deluded adherence to error. In the second part, Menius enumerates certain specific teachings of the Anabaptists, and discusses each of them from the viewpoint of his understanding of the Sacred Scriptures. The articles of the Anabaptists which Menius contests are: that the word of God is to be preached to no one except those who have been rebaptized; that by belief in Jesus Christ alone without the merit of one's own works and sufferings no one is saved or blessed before God; that infant baptism is impious, sinful and useless for the child; that bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are not the true body and blood of Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ is not the true and natural Son of God; and, that all the damned and godless, including the devil himself, will at last be saved. Menius concludes the treatise by examining a number of minor matters which pertain to the realm of civil life and human ordinances. It is impossible to determine to what extent, if any, this treatise hindered the growth of Anabaptism in western Thuringia.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 161, credits Menius with being largely responsible for the almost complete disappearance of Anabaptism in the lands of Electoral Saxony. The work of Wappler has demonstrated, however, that Schmidt's view is grossly exaggerated. Schmidt also



Menius watched Anabaptist activities within his territory closely. One area which always demanded his attention was the Amt

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praises Menius' treatise for the knowledge of Scriptures of which it gives evidence. Referring to the treatise, he writes, I, 150, "Sie ist, wie seine meisten Schriften, etwas weitschichtig angelegt . . . widerlegt aber die täuferischen Irrthümer in einer Weise und mit einer Schriftkenntniss, wie man sie für jene Zeit kaum erwarten konnte." Wappler, Die Stellung, p. 22, also acknowledges Menius' broad knowledge of the Scriptures, but, beyond that, is quite critical of the work. He writes, "War dasselbe auch wegen seiner polternden Tonart, seinen oft recht wenig beweiskräftigen, bisweilen frivolen und sogar vor niedrigen Verleumdungen nicht zurückschreckenden eines Bessern zu belehren, so ist es doch mit umfassender Schriftkenntnis geschrieben und zeugt von einer Vertrautheit mit dem täuferischen Wesen, die uns noch heute jene Schrift als eine wertvolle Ergänzung der vorhandenen Akten über das Täufern in Westthüringen erscheinen lässt." Wappler expresses a similar opinion in Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, II, 58. He summarizes the treatise on pp. 57-71. Oyer, p. 194, writes, "Through the entire book Menius displayed a harshness of tone and language that indicated a blinding hatred of the Anabaptists." These evaluations of Menius' treatise thus tend to diverge along party lines. Schmidt was a teacher at the Realgymnasium in Eisenach where Menius had been active. Paul Wappler was Oberlehrer at the Realgymnasium in Zwickau. John Oyer of Goshen College is currently editor of the Mennonite Quarterly Review. In turn, the five book reviews by German scholars of Wappler's investigations which this writer was able to examine were all critical of Wappler. The only favorable judgment on Wappler's work, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, comes from the Mennonite scholar, Harold S. Bender. He writes, "Wappler's work is fair, accurate, and thorough and has not been superseded, requiring only some minor revisions," ME, IV, 717. In order to evaluate Menius' treatise fairly, the following factors must be kept in mind. First of all, Menius was intentionally polemical. His purpose was to refute what he considered unscriptural, unchristian and politically dangerous views. The last consideration cannot be overemphasized. For Menius each religion or faith had a particular social order as its consequence. Adherence to Anabaptism meant, as far as Menius was concerned, an attempt to instigate a new social order. Secondly, as polemic, it is neither worse nor better than other polemical literature of the sixteenth century. This writer sees no difference in the manner and tone of this treatise and Menius' previous treatise against Conrad Kling or his later writings against Flacius. Menius' polemic here is certainly no stronger than some of Luther's polemical tracts. Finally, as is evident from the dedication of the book to Philip of Hesse, Menius was intent on persuading the Landgrave that the Anabaptists are such a danger that they must be dealt with by a strong and forceful policy. Perhaps the fairest evaluation which can be made of this

Hausbreitenbach. Because this region was ruled jointly by Hesse and Electoral Saxony, Anabaptism was able to flourish there not only on account of the divergent policies of the two princes, but also on account of the limited number of competent and faithful Lutheran clergymen in that area. The entire region was divided into two parishes, each with a pastor and a curate (Vicarius). Berka included five dependent villages (Ortschaften), some of them large. Herda also had a dependent village. As a result, some villages barely had a service every three weeks. Menius described this lamentable situation in a letter to Elector John Frederick and requested more clergy assistants.<sup>74</sup>

Menius' next dealings with Anabaptism began in this region in October 1531. At that time the Electoral prefect of Hausbreitenbach, Philip Metsch, arrested at least six inhabitants on the suspicion that they were Anabaptists. Wappler supposed that the arrests took

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treatise, therefore, is to view it as an expression of a particular viewpoint, designed for a specific purpose, composed by an author who is hostile to a movement which he feels threatens the tranquility of the established order, and written in the literary style which was customary for the time. It is hardly fair to judge Menius' treatise by the standards and viewpoints of the twentieth century.

<sup>74</sup>The letter is printed in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 221-224. The important passage is the following: "Ferner weis E. Ch. G. ich auch dieses nicht zubergeren, das im ganczen ampt Hausbreitenbach nicht mehr dan zwo Pfarren sind, nemlich Bercka und Herda, welche beide von meinem gnedigen Herrn, dem Landgrauen, von wegen des Stiffts Hersfeld zu lehn ruren, und hat die Pfar zu Bercka funf dorffer, als nemlich Dippach, Haus Breittenbach, Dorfbreittenbach, Gosperoda und Herslet, Herda, Ober wundsche Sula, zu versorgen, und wiewol jede Pfar einen vicarium hat, unter welchen der eine, nemlich zu Bercka, seiner gebrechlichkeit halb gar nicht dienen kan, so ist doch nicht muglich, das solche dorffer alle sampt, deren etliche gros sind in die lx wirtte haben, nottorfftighen versorget werden mogen; dan etliche dorf kaum in der dritten wochen eine predig haben, und sind daczu etliche der Pfarrer und Vicarrer nicht gelert, auch ergerliches lebens, das zubesorgen, solchs sei auch nicht ein geringe ursachen dieses eingerissenen irthums."

place through the instigation of Menius,<sup>75</sup> but he provided no documentation for his supposition. With the consent of the Hessian bailiff of Hausbreitenbach, they were taken to Eisenach.<sup>76</sup> Here they were examined by Menius on October 8, 10, and 11, 1531, at first kindly, but then under torture.<sup>77</sup> Because no seditious articles could be proved against them, Elector John could not decide exactly what to do. Therefore, he asked for the opinion of the Wittenberg theological faculty. Melanchthon composed the reply, and Luther signed the document in agreement.<sup>78</sup> Melanchthon classified the Anabaptists into three categories: originators, among whom are those, who after recanting, embrace Anabaptism again; followers who have been led publicly to espouse seditious and revolutionary teachings; and, those who follow out of ignorance. The first category should receive death by the sword. Those in the last two categories were to be instructed. If they refused to recant, they should be banished. The similarity of the classification of Anabaptists who should be put to death in this letter of opinion and the classification in the Imperial mandate of 1529 is obvious. It should be noted in addition that Melanchthon's letter of opinion

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<sup>75</sup> ibid., pp. 23-24.

<sup>76</sup> The background to the examination is narrated in an accompanying document (Begleitschreiben) which was sent to Elector John on October 12, 1531, from Philip Metsch and Henry Bahner, the Mayor of Eisenach. It is printed in ibid., p. 141.

<sup>77</sup> The record of the examination is printed in ibid., pp. 137-141. The type of torture is not specified. In the Begleitschrift on p. 141, the relevant passage reads, "Als sie auch unsers bedunckens frech gewest und nicht bekennen wollen, seyn sie durch eyn meister peinlich befragt worden."

<sup>78</sup> A copy of the opinion is printed in CR, IV, 737-740. Luther signed it with the words, "Placet mihi Martino Luthero," IV, 740.

is more lenient than the Imperial mandate. Whereas the Imperial law prescribed death for all Anabaptists, without distinction, Melanchthon urged death only for those who persistently espoused Anabaptism.

Melanchthon's classification was to be applied to the prisoners in Hausbreitenbach. When they persisted in their views, the Elector felt constrained to move against them with the death sentence. However, after Philip of Hesse refused to agree to such a measure, it was decided to divide the prisoners between the two princes, each being free to proceed with such punishment as he felt necessary. At least three of the prisoners were turned over to Electoral Saxony and were subsequently executed. Those turned over to Hesse were released. Among them was Fritz Erbe of Herda.

Erbe now became the focus of Anabaptist activity in and around Eisenach.<sup>79</sup> After his release in January 1532, he was again arrested in 1533 for refusing to have his child baptized. As a result of his imprisonment, almost all of the residents in Herda reacted against the Lutherans. Menius describes the situation in a visitation report written by him on June 27, 1533.<sup>80</sup> He reports that about half of the inhabitants of Herda confessed openly that they were adherents of Anabaptism, and he advised strong measures against them. On July 19, the officials from both Saxony and Hesse commanded all the Anabaptists to gather together. Eighteen

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<sup>79</sup>Concerning Erbe, consult the article by Christian Weierhof Neff, *ME*, II, 241. Oyer, p. 71, states that Erbe's home community was Berka. Actually, Erbe's home was Herda.

<sup>80</sup>Menius, et al., "Bericht der Visitatoren in Thüringen an den Kurfürsten Johann Friedrich." The report is printed in Wappler, *Die Stellung*, pp. 167-168. Wappler erroneously dates the report June 25.

Anabaptists were taken into custody. Among them were the three Anabaptists who had been arrested previously in October 1531, and released by Philip of Hesse in January 1532. The group was examined in Berka on July 19, 20 and 21, 1533. A report of the proceedings was sent to the princes.<sup>81</sup> As before, the Elector desired to execute them, Philip of Hesse did not. Wapler concludes that because the two princes could not reach agreement, the Elector withdrew his demand for execution rather than provoke an open dispute with the Landgrave.<sup>82</sup> As a result the group merely remained in custody.

Erbe was held prisoner in a remote dungeon in the wall of Eisenach. His perseverance in his faith in spite of prolonged imprisonment increased the admiration which his fellow Anabaptists had for him. Thus he became a source of strength and inspiration for other Anabaptists even during his imprisonment. In early November 1537, two men, Henry Köhler von Eyeroda auf dem Eichsfelds, and Henry Scheffer von Hastrungsfelde bei Eisenach, were arrested for secretly talking to Erbe at night. Suspected of being Anabaptists, they were brought before the town officials. The suspicion was confirmed, and they were brought before Menius who examined them. Two examinations were held, but the two men refused to recant. Thereupon Menius felt that further attempts to convert them were ill-advised, but admonished his parishioners from the pulpit to pray for their souls. On November 12, 1537, the Eisenach council reported to Elector John Frederick that they had

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<sup>81</sup>A copy of the report is printed in ibid., pp. 168-176.

<sup>82</sup>ibid., pp. 37-44, narrates this incident.

arrested two Anabaptists, and asked what action they should take.<sup>83</sup> Menius also reported to the Elector of his efforts to convert the Anabaptists.<sup>84</sup> The Elector instructed the council to interrogate the two men once more.<sup>85</sup> When this failed to produce the desired results, the Eisenach council once again asked the Elector what steps they should take.<sup>86</sup> In accordance with his policy, the Elector returned the death sentence on January 14, 1538,<sup>87</sup> and they were executed.<sup>88</sup>

The execution of these two men aroused the hostility of the surrounding area. The Anabaptists argued that civil authority held jurisdiction only over the second table of the law; that to punish individuals for their faith placed the Lutherans in the same category as the papists; and, that Philip also was an evangelical prince yet he did not execute those who believed differently from the Lutherans.

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<sup>83</sup>The report is printed in ibid., p. 198.

<sup>84</sup>ibid., pp. 196-198. The report includes a detailed summary of the Anabaptists' theological views.

<sup>85</sup>ibid., pp. 198-199.

<sup>86</sup>ibid., pp. 199-200, prints the report.

<sup>87</sup>ibid., p. 220.

<sup>88</sup>The method of execution is not mentioned. Wappler concludes from the passages, "Nach scherffe der kayserlichen Constitution und recht geburliche Execution und volziung thun lassen," in the Elector's judgment that they were beheaded. Schmidt, Menius, I, 178-181, confuses these two men with the two unknown Anabaptists who were arrested in 1539, and who recanted. Infra, pp. 45-47. He reports incorrectly, therefore, that the two Anabaptists under discussion at this point recanted and were spared the death penalty.

To counter these views and justify the Elector's sentence of death, Menius wrote the treatise, How Each Christian (Wie ein iglicher Christ).<sup>89</sup>

The book is divided into three major sections. In the first part, Menius describes the duty of each individual towards true doctrine; in the second, he describes the duty of the clergy; and, in the third, he defines the responsibility of the civil officials. Menius begins by stating that satan has attempted to mix the pure, saving doctrine of the gospel with error and blasphemy for a long time. With this intention, he sent the hordes of Anabaptists into Thuringia. Menius compares the Anabaptists to beautifully colored snakes. Their duplicity deceives the simple folk. However, God in His great goodness has disclosed their poison. Thus, it is proper for each Christian to respond to God's grace by remaining unharmed by the devilish serpents. Each Christian should also help any simple person who has been poisoned by the Anabaptists out of his trouble. This means that all Christians have the responsibility to preserve the pure doctrine of the holy gospel and its style of life among themselves; and, they are responsible for preventing false doctrine and godless lives. The purpose of the treatise, therefore, is to help the simple understand their duties and responsibilities with respect to the gospel.

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<sup>89</sup>Justus Menius, Wie ein iglicher Christ gegen allerley lere, gut und böse, nach Gottes befelch, sich gebürlich halten sol (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1538). Luther wrote a preface for the treatise. Consult the background material in WA, L, 344-345. The treatise is summarized in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 86-88; in Schmidt, Menius, I, 181-184; in Oyer, pp. 197-201; and in Unschuld. Nach., XII, 637-644.

In the first part, Menius asserts that each Christian is obliged to believe the whole of God's word; to confess his faith in God's word; and, to do, follow and live according to all that God's word commands him. On the other hand, each Christian is also obliged not to believe and to oppose all that is not God's word, but which sets itself up as God's word; to contradict publicly everything which falsely presents itself as God's word; and, to avoid everything which God does not command in His word. He is to do all this in accordance with the vocation into which God has called him.

Furthermore, God has divided the world into two realms: in the one the Holy Spirit reigns in men's consciences through God's word; in the other, which is civil, human authority reigns. Everybody has his respective office in one of these two realms. There he is to honor God, advance the cause of the gospel, and hinder the advance of false doctrine and godless lives. Yet, this is to be done only according to one's office and its legitimate function. No one has any power and authority beyond his respective office.<sup>90</sup>

In the second part, Menius states that God has instituted the spiritual offices in the spiritual realm so that through them the Holy Spirit may teach the will of God. Those who occupy the spiritual offices are to proclaim God's will and purpose to the people from God's word. They are to live according to God's word themselves and be an example for the faithful. They are to

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<sup>90</sup>Menius, Wie ein iglicher Christ, B4v-C3r.



nourish the believers, but they should turn the unbelievers over to the devil. Beyond this the spiritual office has no authority. Those who occupy the spiritual office sin grievously if it usurps power over the civil realm.<sup>91</sup>

God has also instituted the civil offices. These offices are concerned only with external, civil affairs. Thus, because faith and unbelief are hidden in one's heart, the civil office cannot judge such matters. Yet, confessions of faith and ways of life are external things which are done in public and which can be judged by God's word, come under the sphere of the civil office. Therefore, where the civil government is Christian, it is responsible to see that the public preaching of error is eliminated. Blasphemy and false teaching are the kind of sins which eventually pass over into public works. Such works will disrupt society. Therefore, the civil government has a God-given function to suppress blasphemy and false teaching. Menius concludes the third part of the treatise by advising a course of action for Lutherans in territories which are governed by a civil government which suppresses the true doctrine of the gospel. If they are clergymen, they should reprove the civil government; if they are laymen, they should bear witness to their faith by their life. If the government refuses to repent and persecutes the true faith, the true believers of the gospel should emigrate to a different territory.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., C3v-D1v.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., D1v-F4r.

During May 1539, three more Anabaptists were arrested and brought before Menius for examination.<sup>93</sup> One was a certain Henry Müller, but the names of the other two are unknown. On May 27, the Eisenach council wrote to the Elector asking that he instruct them on a course of action against the Anabaptists. At the same time, they requested permission to move Erbe, who had been imprisoned by now for over six years, to a different location.<sup>94</sup> The Elector advised the council to submit the articles of the Anabaptists to the doctors of the high court of justice at Wittenberg for examination. The doctors would instruct them on a course of action, but in the meantime they were to make impossible any future meetings with Erbe.<sup>95</sup> Near the end of June the Eisenach council sent a list of Anabaptists' articles to Wittenberg.<sup>96</sup> The Wittenberg doctors responded that the articles were illegal and instructed the council to execute the Anabaptists with the sword if they refused to recant after being tortured on the rack.<sup>97</sup> As a result of the torture, Henry Müller recanted, agreed to embrace the evangelical faith and promised to do penance. Thereupon the Elector ordered the council to soften his imprisonment. The Elector instructed the Wittenberg theologians to provide a proper penance for Müller; and, he ordered Menius to continue instructing

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<sup>93</sup>This incident is narrated in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 89-91.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 202, prints the council's report.

<sup>95</sup>The Elector's instruction is printed ibid., pp. 202-203.

<sup>96</sup>The council's document is printed ibid., pp. 203-204.

<sup>97</sup>The judgment of the Wittenberg doctors is printed ibid., pp. 204-205.

the other two Anabaptists, keeping them in prison until they recanted.<sup>98</sup> Within a few days they recanted. The penance which the Wittenberg theologians prescribed stipulated that each Anabaptist should recant each of his articles on two or three successive Sundays, at least once at Eisenach and once at his home village.<sup>99</sup>

The fate of Erbe remained the same: imprisonment. Although there are no records to indicate that he was sentenced to life imprisonment, that was what he received. He was moved from his dungeon in the wall of Eisenach to a cell in the Wartburg in 1540. He remained there until his death in 1548.

Although Menius was continually attentive to Anabaptist activity, he was also very much involved in other phases of the reform of the church while he was at Eisenach. Among his more important contributions to the evangelical movement was his catechism of 1532.<sup>100</sup>

The precise date when Menius revised Luther's Small Catechism cannot be determined with certainty. It was sometime between 1529 and 1532. According to Schmidt, Menius at first refused to publish his revision in spite of requests from his parishioners. Menius

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<sup>98</sup>The Elector's instruction is printed ibid., p. 207.

<sup>99</sup>Instruction for the penance came to the Eisenach council from the Elector and is printed ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>100</sup>Justus Menius, Catechismus Justi Menii (Erfurt: Andreas Rauscher, 1532). Schmidt was unable to examine a copy of Menius' catechism. Since his biography of Menius appeared, a copy of the catechism was discovered in Berlin. The present discussion will be based on the research of Otto Albrecht who published the results of his intensive investigations in the article, "Der Kat. des Justus Menius v. J. 1532," Theologische Studien und Kritiken, LXXXIII (1909), 78-102. Albrecht summarized this investigation in his introduction to Luther's Small Catechism in WA, XXX, i, 614-618.

was content to use it in his weekday instructions and was convinced that anyone who desired could listen to him explain it at church. Besides, he considered it presumptuous to issue his own edition when Luther's Small Catechism was in general use. However, in 1532 an epidemic swept through Eisenach. Since many of the children were unable to attend his instructions, he submitted his catechism to the printer for publication.

The catechism begins with a preface which is dedicated to the young people of Eisenach. In this dedication Menius states his desire to found a school for girls.<sup>101</sup> After the preface, the book begins on with the questions, "How many chief articles of Christian doctrine are there? Five. What is the first?"<sup>102</sup> A short presentation of each of the five articles follows. Before each article, Menius adds a brief explanatory summary of the entire article. For example, the summary for the Ten Commandments reads, "What purpose do the Ten Commandments serve? Answer: They serve to teach us what God requires us to do or not to do, and to show us our sin."<sup>103</sup> After the summary, each of the commandments follow in order. There are only minor changes from the text of Luther. In the explanation to the first commandment, for example, Menius adds the word "only." In each of the following explanations, Menius adds the word "also"

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<sup>101</sup>Consult Otto Albrecht, "Zur Bibliographie und Textkritik des Kleinen Lutherschen Katechismus," ARG, I (1903), 259.

<sup>102</sup>Albrecht, WA, XXX, i, 314. "Wie viel sind heubtstück der ganczen christlichen lere? Fünffe. Welchs ist das erste?" Menius, Catechismus, A3r.

<sup>103</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 193. Albrecht does not include the text of these summaries in his research. Because of their importance, they will be included in this dissertation.

after "God" to Luther's formula, "We should fear and love God

. . . ." A summary preceeds the second article, "Concerning Faith."

What purpose do the three chief articles of our christian faith serve? Answer: They serve to show us what we should expect and receive from God, in order that we might learn to know Him correctly and do those things which He commands us in the Ten Commandments.<sup>104</sup>

The explanation to each of the three articles follows. Menius shortens Luther's explanation to the first article considerably.

Menius' explanation reads:

I believe that God has created me and all creatures with body and soul, sense and reason and all members. He cares for me always in every need want, protects me from all evil, and all this out of pure, fatherly goodness and mercy. This is most certainly true.<sup>105</sup>

The summary of the third article, the Lord's Prayer, is stated thus:

What is the purpose of this prayer? Answer: It serves to teach us to petition God at all times that He would give, preserve and increase in us faith and obedience to the Ten Commandments and remove everything which would hinder us in all these things. What ought to encourage us to pray? Answer: Three things: First, that God has commanded us to pray and to call upon His name in every need, Ps. 50. Second, that He has promised that He will certainly hear our prayer, Jer. 20, Mt. 7.

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.* "Wozu dienen die drei Haupt-Artikel unseres christlichen Glaubens? Antwort: Sie dienen dazu, dass sie uns anzeigen, was wir von Gott gewarten und empfahen müssen, daraus wir ihn recht lernen erkennen, und Dasjenige thun mögen, das er in den zehn Geboten von uns erfordert," Menius, Catechismus, A6r.

<sup>105</sup> Albrecht, WA, XXX, I, 315. "Ich glaube, das Gott mich, und alle creatur, mit Leib und seele, synn und vernunft, und allen gliedern, geschaffen hat, Und noch ymerdar, mit aller nottorfft und narung versorget, Fur allem ubel bewaret, Und das alles aus lautter, veterlicher güte und barmhertzikeit, das ist gewislich wahr."

Third, that he Himself, in the Lord's Prayer has shown us and made known to us our need for which we should pray.<sup>106</sup>

Luther's explanation to the fourth petition is changed to read:

Dear father, let us expect from you and receive with thanksgiving, also use properly and wisely our daily bread, that is, all sorts of bodily wants and needs which belong to this life.<sup>107</sup>

The summary of the article on the Sacraments is as follows:

What is the purpose of the holy Sacraments? Answer: They serve to awaken faith in us and strengthen it and assure us of God's gracious promise in Christ and to be sure seals and signs which God the Lord Himself has instituted and given.<sup>108</sup>

The other differences from Luther's catechism in these two articles are so minor that they need not be enumerated. In addition to a few stylistic changes and the addition of the term "natural" after the word "simple" in the explanatory phrase, "Baptism is not simple

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<sup>106</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 193. "Wozu dienet das Gebet? Antwort: Es dienet dazu, dass wir Gott immerdar bitten sollen, das er uns den Glauben und die Erfüllung der zehn Gebote geben, erhalten und mehren wolle, und Alles was uns daran hindert hinwegnehmen.--Was soll uns vermahren zum Gebet? Antwort: Dreierlei: Zum Ersten, dass uns Gott geboten hat, seinen Namen in allen Nöthen anzurufen und zu beten Ps. 50. Zum andern, dass er uns hat zugesagt, er wolle unser Gebet gewisslich erhören, Jerem. am 20., Matthai am 7. Zum dritten, dass er uns die Nothdurft, darum wir bitten sollen, im Vaterunser selbst anzeigt und zu erkennen giebt," Menius, Catechismus, B2v.

<sup>107</sup>Albrecht, WA, XXX, i, 315. "Las uns, Lieber vater, von dir gewarten, und mit dancksagung entpfahen auch recht und wol gebrauchen unser teglich brodt, das ist, allerley leybes narung und nottorfft dieses lebens."

<sup>108</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 193. "Wozu dienen die heiligen Sakramente? Antwort: Sie dienen dazu, dass sie den Glauben in uns erwecken und stärken sollen und uns der gnadenreichen Zusage Gottes in Christo versichern also gewisse Siegel und Zeichen, die Gott der Herr selbst eingesetzt und gegeben hat," Menius, Catechismus, B6v.

water only," Menius changes Luther's answer to the question concerning proper preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of the Altar to read:

He is truly worthy and well prepared who believes these words in repentance and contrition: "given for you" and "shed for the forgiveness of sins." But whoever does not believe these words or doubts, he is unworthy and unprepared; for words (for you) require a believing heart.<sup>109</sup>

The chief parts are followed by a section on confession.

Menius' treatment of the nature of Confession differs from Luther's presentation of the same topic in the Small Catechism both verbally and conceptually. Whereas the Small Catechism describes Confession and Absolution solely in terms of penitent and father confessor, Menius views Confession and Absolution as taking place in three ways. Menius writes:

First, when we confess our whole life as sinful before God and ask for grace, as indeed all the faithful must do, Psalm 32. Second, when we have offended our neighbor and ask him for forgiveness as Christ has commanded in Matthew 5. Third, when we seek out a wise human being to be comforted by him from the word of God on account of our painful conscience.<sup>110</sup>

Menius then uses the locus classicus for the doctrine of the Office of the Keys, Matthew 18, as indicating that men are commanded by God to console each other's aroused conscience. Instead of Luther's

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<sup>109</sup>Albrecht, WA, III, i, 316. "Der ist recht wirdig und wohlgeschickt, der in rewe und leid an diese wört gleubt: 'Für Euch gegeben' und 'vergossen zur Vergebung der Sunden.' Wer aber diesen Worten nicht gleubt oder zweifelt, der ist unwirdig und ungeschickt; denn das Word (für Euch) will ein gleuwich hertz haben."

<sup>110</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 198. "Zum ersten, wenn wir unser ganzes Leben vor Gott sündlich bekennen und um Gnade bitten, wie denn alle Heiligen thun müssen, Psalm 32. Zum andern, wenn wir unsern Nächsten beleidigt haben und um Vergebung bitten, wie Christus Matthäi am 5. befohlen. Zum dritten, wenn wir nach Erforderung unserer Nothdurft die heimliche Noth unseres Gewissens einem bedächtig Menschen entdecken, auf dass wir durch ihn mit Gottes Wort getröstet werden," Menius, Catechismus, C3r.

emphasis upon absolution as the pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins in the name and power of God, for Menius the stress is on the consolation of a troubled conscience through a "sensible" fellow-man. It is obvious, nevertheless, that there is no irreconcilable tension between the position of Menius and the position of Luther.

Immediately following the section on Confession, Menius offers a brief conclusion to the entire catechism. Here Menius summarizes in a very brief way the Lutheran concept of the justification of the sinner before God through faith in Jesus Christ. He then stresses the importance of the new life as evidence of faith, and points to God's commandments as a guideline of truly good works. This emphasis on good works was probably the result of Menius' contacts with the Anabaptists. They were especially critical of the lack of a pious life among some of the Lutherans. In view of the later controversy between Menius, Flacius and Ambsdorf over the relationship between good works and salvation, it would be profitable to quote Menius' statement and presentation at this point. Menius writes:

That man is saved by grace alone without any merit of our own for Christ's sake through faith in the Gospel is certainly true, as it is taught; but, that for that reason good works ought not to be done, or that they have no value, that is not the meaning of the Christian doctrine. For it is impossible for faith to be and remain without good works, just as it is impossible for a living human being to exist without his natural works. Whoever believes in his heart that God the Father has shown to him such inexpressible grace and favor through His Son, Christ, cannot help but loving and praising, thanking and serving their friendly, true Father from his heart. Yes, such a believing heart has no greater industry, wish and desire than to serve God with thanks and to please Him. On the other hand, such a heart has no greater anxiety than to do something which would offend such a dear Father. It trusts Him alone, calls on Him alone, cries to Him in need, and so forth.

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||| Schmidt, Menius, I, 199. "Dass man aus lauterem Gnaden ohne



At this point Menius introduces Luther's Haustafel, and the catechism concludes with Luther's Traubüchlein.

Menius has been criticized for offering his own revision of Luther's Small Catechism.<sup>112</sup> Concerning this revision by Menius, on the other hand, Albrecht says, "Many of his formalistic changes are not malicious, the majority are unnoticeable and the whole book serves to illuminate the surpassing worth of the esteemed Lutheran Catechism."<sup>113</sup>

Albrecht also calls attention to the fact that Menius' revision is important for the textual criticism and interpretation of the Luther's Small Catechism, as well as for the influence which it exerted on the catechism which Spangenberg edited in 1541.<sup>114</sup>

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alles unser Verdienst allein um Christus willen durch den Glauben an das Evangelium selig werde, das ist gewisslich also, wie gelehrt ist; dass man aber darum keine guten Werke thun soll, oder dass sie auch nichts nutz sein sollen, das ist die Meinung der christlichen Lehre gar nicht. Denn es ist unmöglich, dass der Glaube ohne gute Werke sein und bleiben mag, gleichwie es unmöglich ist, dass ein lebendiger Mensch ohne seine natürlichen Werke sein sollte; denn welcher Mensch von Herzen glaubt, dass ihm Gott der Vater durch seinen Sohn Christum solche unaussprechliche Gnaden und Wohlthaten erzeugt habe, wie könnte sich Der enthalten, dass er er denselben seinen Gott und freundlichen treuen Vater nicht wiederum von Grund seines Herzens lieben und loben, ihm danken und dienen sollte? Ja, es hat ein solch gläubig Herz keinen grössern Fleiss, Begierde und Lust, denn wo es seinem Gott zu Dank und Gefallen nur dienen soll, und wiederum so hat es auch keine grössere Sorge, denn dass es ja den herzlieben Vater nicht etwa erzürne, vertrauet ihm allein, ruft ihn allein an, klagt ihm seine Noth, etc."

<sup>112</sup>So Paullinus, p. 143, who says, "Im J. 1532 habe Menius die Schwachheit gehabt, den kleinen Katechismus Luther's mit einigen Abänderungen . . . herausgegeben," cited in Schmidt, "Zur Kat. Lit.," ZHTh, XXX, 319. Gustav Kawerau in his article "Menius," PRE<sup>3</sup>, XII, 579, calls attention to criticisms, but mentions none in particular.

<sup>113</sup>WA, XXX, i, 617.

<sup>114</sup>ibid.

Schmidt praises the catechism for its pedagogical superiority to Luther's Small Catechism and thinks that this is the primary reason for the revision. He thinks that Luther's edition contains too many difficult words and involved sentences; and, as a result, the memorization of Luther's Small Catechism is made extremely difficult.

Above all Schmidt praises Menius' catechism for what he terms its "dogmatic freedom." He thinks that it betrays an obviously broad dogmatical stance, a stance which is quite amenable to Zwinglian and Calvinistic sacramental theology. Schmidt finds evidence for this dogmatic freedom in Menius' summary of the purpose of the sacraments. He states:

For the words: "The sacrament serve this purpose, that they . . . assure us of God's gracious promise in Christ and are sure seals and signs which God the Lord Himself has instituted and given," obviously remind us of the Reformed conception as the Heidelberg Catechism, Question 66, gives them: "Sacraments are visible, sacred signs and seals instituted by God for the purpose of giving us a better understanding and assurance of the promise of the Gospel as we use them."<sup>115</sup>

When the words of Menius which Schmidt has deleted are included in this statement, namely that the Sacraments serve "to awaken faith in us and strengthen it," the similarity of the passage to the Heidelberg Catechism breaks down. The rest of Schmidt's arguments for Menius' free dogmatic orientation, especially over against the positions of the Swiss reformers, are of the same limited degree

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<sup>115</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 201. "Denn die Worte: 'Die Sakramente dienen dazu, dass sie . . . uns der gnadenreichen Zusage Gottes in Christo versichern, als gewisse Siegel und Zeichen die Gott der Herr selbst eingesetzt und gegeben hat,' erinnern deutlich an die reformirte Auffassung, wie sie der Heidelberger Katechismus Frage 66 giebt: 'Sakramente sind sichtbare heilige Wahrzeichen und Siegel, von Gott dazu eingesetzt, dass er uns durch den Brauch derselben die Verheissung des Evangeliums desto besser zu verstehen gebe und versiegele.'"

of cogency as the one cited above. Consequently they need not be considered further. The fact is that Menius agreed with Luther's teaching on the Sacraments. Menius had only recently returned from the Marburg Colloquy where he had accompanied Luther. In his interrogations of the Anabaptists, Menius gives more than sufficient evidence of his concern to preserve the Lutheran teaching that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are present in the bread and wine.<sup>116</sup> In his revision of the Small Catechism, there are fewer changes from Luther's word order in the article on the Sacraments than in any of the other articles. This is another indication of Menius' agreement with Luther's understanding of the Lord's Supper. Finally, as late as 1544 Menius defended the presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and the wine by means of Luther's teaching of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature. Schmidt's attempt to discover a significant difference between Menius and Luther on this point must be considered invalid.

It is probable that Menius' catechism was in use in Eisenach as long as he was superintendent there. He also introduced it into Mühlhausen when he reformed that city in 1542. The disappearance of Menius' catechism from Eisenach may be attributed, perhaps, to Amsdorf who became superintendent there in 1551. Amsdorf would have had sufficient motivation to discontinue the use of Menius' catechism because of Menius' role in the controversy about the necessity of good works. It is likely that in Mühlhausen Menius' catechism survived until 1725. In that year the senate of Mühlhausen

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<sup>116</sup>Consult the interrogation of the Reinhardtsbrunn Anabaptists, for example, in Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 137-141.

authorized the publication of an edition of Luther's catechism which would include, among other items, Menius' summary of the chief parts of Christian doctrine which, in his catechism, had preceded each article. These summaries were later included in the Eisenach catechism, and were in use there until the nineteenth century.<sup>117</sup>

Menius' interest in education led to efforts to establish a school in Eisenach.<sup>118</sup> He managed to obtain a subsidy from the Elector and the school was provided with a rector (Rektor) and choir-master (Kantor). In 1544, the Eisenach town council undertook improvements of the facilities of the school and also provided for an enlarged staff. By order of Elector John Frederick, the superintendent of Eisenach was made responsible for appointing and dismissing the rector. Menius was requested to return from Mülhausen, where he was engaged in reforming activities at that time, in order to supervise the changes.

Menius was also active in a number of church visitations while he was superintendent in Eisenach. By 1532, two pressing considerations had convinced Elector John of the necessity for another visitation of his territories. On the one hand, there were reports of violations of the 1528-1529 visitation orders; and, on the other hand, there was the urgent need to improve the distressing living conditions of the evangelical clergy. While preparations for the visitation were under way, Elector John died,

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<sup>117</sup>Albrecht, WA, XXX, i, 617.

<sup>118</sup>For the general background of the Eisenach school system in the early part of the sixteenth century, consult Otto Scheel, Martin Luther. Vom Katholizismus zur Reformation (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1921), I, 99-120, and the literature which he cites.

August 16, 1532. The matter was taken up anew by his successor, Elector John Frederick. The provisions of the previous visitation remained the basis of the new instructions, but one significant element was added. This was the appointment in each territory of two executors (Executores) who were to assist the Superintendent to carry out the resolutions of the visitations.<sup>119</sup> The visitors for Thuringia were Menius, Myconius, George von Wangenheim, and John Cotta. The executors for Thuringia were Eberhard von der Thann, Ewald Brandenstein, and George von Denstedt.<sup>120</sup>

Menius reports with reference to this second visitation:

In the year 1533 I was ordered on the second visitation which lasted much longer than the previous one so that my students were lost. In the same visitation not only did I have the same load as the other visitors, but I had the special responsibility of composing all the registers and, in general, everything that had to be written down by myself. . . .<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 236, claims that this is the actual origin of the consistory. He substantiates this claim from the fact that long after the visitations had been completed, the Superintendent and the Executores continued to act as a council with a considerable degree of authority. For more information on the consistory, consult the article by R[udolf] Smend, "Kirchenverfassung," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart (3rd edition; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1959), III, col. 1576-1577; and E. Ruppel, "Konsistorium" Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, III, col. 1784.

<sup>120</sup>KO, I, 53, draws attention to many reports concerning individual congregations from this visitation in the Weimar Archiv, but does not print any.

<sup>121</sup>Schmidt, Menius, "Report to Postel," I, 304, "Anno 1533 bin ich zur andern Visitation verordnet, die nun viel länger denn die vorige gewährt, da mir meine discipuli abermals gar entzogen. Und ist mir in derselbigen Visitation nicht allein gleiche Arbeit mit den andern Mitverordneten, sondern in Sonderheit dieses auf dem Halse gelegen, dass alle Registration und in Summa Alles, was da hat verschrieben werden sollen, durch mich allein gestellt. . . ."

At this time Menius' income was increased. He now received a hundred Guldens, four Erfurt measures of grain and two Eisenach measures of wood.<sup>122</sup>

It is possible that Menius also participated in a visitation in 1536. There is extant at the Coburg an order from the year 1536 which pertains primarily to the administration of hospitals and church funds. Its origin is unknown. Sehling suggests that this order might stem from an unknown visitation of 1536; or, that the date 1536 is a mistake, and the order actually stems from the visitation of 1533.<sup>123</sup>

The next visitation in which Menius was active while he was in Eisenach was in Albertine Saxony. In 1539, Duke George the Bearded of Saxony, the bitter opponent of the evangelical movement, died. He was succeeded by his brother, Henry, whose sympathies lay with the reformers. Duke Henry immediately ordered the reform of his territories. The Elector of Saxony provided both the theologians to prepare visitation instructions for Albertine Saxony, and visitors to carry them out. Menius, along with John Weber, Hartmann Goldacker, Frederick von Hopfgarten, and an unknown visitor from Watsdorf visited Albertine Thuringia. This visitation of the Albertine lands, made in great haste, lasted only six weeks. As a result, the reforms were not established on a solid basis, so that another

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<sup>122</sup> ibid. "Jedoch ist mir zu der Zeit meine Besoldung also gebessert worden, dass man mir hat ein hundert Gulden, vier Erfurter Malter Korn und zwei Eisenacher Malter Gerste gemacht."

<sup>123</sup> KO, I, 54. Schmidt does not mention this order nor does he make any reference to a visitation in 1536. The full title of this order is, "Verordnung der visitatoren zu Thüringen, wie es mit bestellung der kirchenämter, des gemeinen kastens, item des hospitals und siechenhauses zu Eisenach gehalten werden soll."

visitation was soon needed. The second visitation in Albertine Saxony began in December 1539, but Menius did not participate in it.

The chief result of the first visitation was the Kirchen-  
Ordnung zum Anfang für die Pfarrherrn in Herzog Heinrichs zu Sach-  
sen Fürstenthum gestellt.<sup>124</sup> The author of this order is not known. The preface to the first printing of the order, September 19, 1539, is signed by Jonas, Spalatin, Cruciger, Myconius, Menius and Weber.

#### Menius and the Reformation of Mühlhausen

Menius also had an important role in reforming the imperial free city of Mühlhausen. In one respect, the early reform movement in this city was characteristic of the reformation movement in general: both religious reforms and political interests were intimately intertwined. Two factors, however, made the situation in Mühlhausen unique. First, the patrician town council was closely allied with the Archbishop of Mainz, and thus opposed the Lutheran reformation on principle. The town council suspected that the leaders of the Mühlhausen clergy was plotting to usurp ecclesiastical authority in Mühlhausen from the archbishop, and, in this way, to gain control of the town.

The mutual opposition of council and clergy grew stronger after the Peasant's War. Thomas Müntzer completely reformed the city against the wishes of the council. Because of Müntzer's activities, Mühlhausen became an important center during the war. As a result,

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<sup>124</sup>The order is printed in KO, I, 264-281.

the civil officials laid severe penalties on the town. The Lutheran Elector of Saxony, the Roman Catholic Duke of Saxony, and the Lutheran Landgrave of Hesse assumed protective jurisdiction of the city. These three princes exercised political jurisdiction over Mühlhausen in rotation, one year at a time. The Duke of Saxony ruled first. This alternation in rule between a prince who opposed the reform movement and two princes who supported it, was the second unique factor in the reforming of Mühlhausen.

Inevitably, the policies of the princes clashed. During the first year of jurisdiction, Duke George did everything possible to reintroduce the former religious system and to stamp out the reforms which had taken place. He found a ready ally in the town council. The council, opposed to the reform movement from the beginning, gladly supported the Duke and his anti-reform measures. By following this policy, the council hoped that eventually the city could again become independent. The council secured an Imperial mandate which stipulated that the town was not to be reformed again. But during the two years in which the Lutheran princes held jurisdiction over the city, 1527-1528, they made attempts to introduce Evangelical preachers. The council appealed to the Imperial mandate in opposition to the princes' efforts. The princes responded by appealing to the religious stipulation of the Diet of Speyer, 1526. They asserted that they were free to introduce evangelical reforms into their territories. The struggle between the two parties continued for over a decade, but the evangelical princes were unsuccessful in their attempts to reform Mühlhausen. The policy of the two Lutheran princes, however, did keep sentiment for reform alive among the people.



In 1539, after the death of Duke George, Duke Henry became the ruler of Mühlhausen and the situation changed completely. Now all three princes supported a policy of reform in Mühlhausen. They were able to force the city to accede to their demands. The first visitation of the Mühlhausen territories took place in 1541. The princes appointed Menius and Eberhard von der Thann, visitors. The church order which they issued at that time is of interest because of its regulations against the Anabaptists.<sup>125</sup> The visitation of the city, Mühlhausen, took place in 1542 in spite of protests from the town council. In addition to Menius, Frederick von Wangenheim and John Lenning were the visitors. After completing the visitation Menius remained in Mühlhausen as superintendent and pastor at St. Blaise's Church, in order to make certain that the evangelical order became firmly grounded. When Menius completed his term as superintendent, the town council requested that he be reappointed. The request was granted and Menius stayed in Mühlhausen until 1544.<sup>126</sup> At that time the Eisenach council called Menius back to supervise the reorganization of the school.

As early as the beginning of the reform of Mühlhausen in 1539, the Anabaptist movement, long suppressed in the city, but never

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<sup>125</sup>The order, together with its supplement of 1542, is printed in KO, II, 388-389.

<sup>126</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 290, does not make the relationship between Menius and the council clear. The council had opposed the visitation in 1541. In 1547, after the defeat of the Smalcald League, the council once again supported the Emperor. The council's petition for an extension of Menius' superintendency, however, would seem to indicate that the council and Menius had achieved some kind of modus vivendi.

exterminated, again asserted itself strongly. Sebastian Thiel, the pastor of Niederrode, a village near Mühlhausen, was not unfriendly to the movement and permitted it to exist.<sup>127</sup> Menius soon discovered the movement. He reported to the Elector in a letter in 1543, "that there are adherents to the error of Anabaptism in the territory of Mühlhausen."<sup>128</sup> The Elector advised Menius to watch the movement closely. In an effort to stamp out Anabaptism, Menius' Church Order of 1541 contained many regulations against Anabaptist activity. Typical of these provisions is the following:

Inasmuch as the pastorate of the diocese has the duty to perform functions by the grace of God through competent pastors, therefore no uncalled prowler or fanatic is permitted to preach or celebrate the sacraments either in the public congregation or otherwise, but if any such should sneak around and sieze such official functions, in any place, they are to be punished by the authorities.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, Menius stipulated that the pastors should instruct their parishioners about the errors of Anabaptism from the pulpit. The congregations should pray for the conversion of the members of the sect. Finally, at Menius' instigation, Sebastian Thiel was removed from office.

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<sup>127</sup>For an historical account of the origins and development of Anabaptist activity in Mühlhausen, see Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 157-170.

<sup>128</sup>Menius' letter is not extant. His words were quoted by Elector John Frederick in a letter to Menius printed in Wappler, Die Stellung, p. 107.

<sup>129</sup>KO, II, 388. The title of the order is "Kirchen Ordnung fur die Dörfer der Stadt Muhlhausen und die Vogtei. 1541." "Nach

As a result of his contacts with Anabaptism in Mühlhausen, Menius decided to write another treatise against the Anabaptists. He dedicated the book to the town council of Mühlhausen in order to assist it in combatting the sect. Martin Luther wrote a preface for the book, On the Spirit of the Anabaptists (Von Dem Geist Der Widerteuffer).<sup>130</sup>

Menius had a twofold purpose in writing the book. On the one hand, he wanted to defend the Evangelical teaching against the attacks of the Anabaptists as well as to refute the Anabaptists' teachings. On the other hand, he wanted to defend the Lutheran reformation against the criticism of some of the citizens of Mühlhausen. There were those who, having been opposed to the Lutheran princes' policy throughout the previous decade and a half, now blamed the rise in Anabaptist activity in Mühlhausen on the introduction of the Lutheran reforms. There were also those who maintained that if Müntzer's reform efforts had been continued and completed, instead of being rooted out, Anabaptism would not have arisen.

The book is divided into two parts. The first section contains a lengthy defense of the Lutheran reformation, its doctrine and

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deme die pfaren der pfege durch gottes gnaden mit zimlichen pfarhern versehen, so soll keinem unberuffenen schleicher oder schwermer weden in offendlicher gemeine noch sonst in sonderheit zu predigen oder sacramenta zu handeln gestattet, sondern do dieselbigen sich einiges orts ahn bevel unterschleifen und ergriffen wurden, von der obrickheit angenommen und gestrafft werden."

<sup>130</sup>The edition of the treatise which was available to this writer was Von dem Geist/der Widerteuffer./Justus Menius/Mit einer Vorrede./D. Mart. Luther (Wittemberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1544). The treatise was included in the Wittenberg Edition of Luther's Works (1548), II, 377r-411v. For brief summaries of the treatise, consult Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 107-110; Oyer, pp. 201-205; and, Schmidt, Menius, I, 302-303. For information about Luther's preface and other introductory material relation to the treatise, consult WA, LIV, 116-118.

practice. Menius claimed that the Lutherans were not at fault because of the rise of Anabaptist activity in Mühlhausen. On the contrary, the blame should be placed on those who prevented the gospel from being truly preached and on those who refused to accept the gospel and live faithfully according to it.<sup>131</sup>

Next Menius replied to the criticisms which the Anabaptists had put forth against the Lutherans. First, there was the charge that the Lutheran churches were temples of idols because God does not dwell in buildings made with hands. Secondly, the Anabaptists maintained that there were neither true doctrine nor proper worship in the Lutheran churches. Against those two accusations, Menius provided a lengthy defense from the Sacred Scriptures. He argued that the use of external aids to worship does not constitute idolatry. Lutherans worship God, not the external object. Menius defended his position by tracing such use and practice back through Paul to Moses. Thirdly, the Anabaptists criticized the Lutheran clergy on two specific points: the preachers were sinners, and they were hypocrites. In defense, Menius acknowledged that Lutheran clergymen, like all men, are sinners. Preachers who live in open sin, however, are not tolerated by Lutherans. They are removed from office. Furthermore, Menius contended that it is necessary to distinguish between the Office of the Ministry, which is holy and ordained by God, and the person who fills the office. Finally, the Anabaptists criticized the common folk who listened to Lutheran preachers for not improving their Christian life. Menius responded to that criticism by asserting that the validity of the gospel cannot be judged by the failure

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<sup>131</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist der Widerteuffer.

of Christians to bring forth its desired effects. Doctrine cannot be judged by ethics. Furthermore, Menius pointed out the fruits of the gospel which had become obvious among the Lutherans. There were the many consciences which had been consoled by the knowledge of Luther's doctrine of justification by God's grace through faith. There was true faith in God which resided in the hearts of many Lutherans. There were the schools which the Lutherans had founded for children in which the people were instructed in the Christian faith. There was the increase in the use of the Bible and a greater knowledge of it on the part of the Lutherans. All these fruits were evidence, according to Menius, of the work of the Holy Spirit among the Lutherans. Finally, Menius concluded the first part of the book by repeating his previous arguments in favor of recriminations against heresy by the civil government.<sup>132</sup>

The second part of the book was directed against the Anabaptists' doctrine and practice. Menius argues that the deceivers' doctrines are either true or false, there is no other alternative. If the Anabaptists teach the truth, they should not be secretive. Christ requires a public confession of faith and commands Christians to let their light shine before the world. Furthermore, Anabaptists ought to be concerned about the salvation of all men, if indeed they teach the gospel truly, and come out of hiding to proclaim their gospel to all men. Since they remain secretive, one can only conclude that they are false teachers.

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<sup>132</sup>ibid., Cr-G4v.

Menius discusses specifically the doctrine of the Person and Nature of Christ, the Sacraments of the Altar and Holy Baptism and the entire design of God's will for the so-called civil realm. He devotes a major portion of the second part of the book to a discussion of the Person and Nature of Christ. He accuses the Anabaptists of teaching that Jesus Christ is not the natural, true, eternal and almighty God. Especially significant is Menius' examination of this doctrine in connection with the nature of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>133</sup>

Menius responded to two Anabaptist arguments which were supposed to prove that the body and blood of Christ could not be truly present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. The two arguments were that Christ has left the world and ascended to heaven, and that Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Menius argued, first of all, that the words of the Sacred Scriptures are to be interpreted in their natural sense. On that basis alone there is sufficient evidence that Christ's body and blood are present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament. In the second place, Menius admitted that reason and the Scriptures are in conflict with respect to the words that Christ has ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God. However, Menius argued that whenever human reason and the Sacred Scriptures are in conflict, human reason should submit to the clear meaning of the Scriptures. If the Scriptures are followed only to the extent that they agree with human reason, then reason alone could be the teacher. The Scriptures would be

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid., G4v-T4r.

unnecessary. As far as the statement that Christ is seated at the right hand of God is concerned, Menius denied that such a statement destroys faith in the true presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine of the Sacrament of the Altar. The right hand of God, according to Menius, means God's eternal, omnipresent, almighty and eternal might and power for creation, preservation and governance. That Christ sits at the right hand of God means that He participates fully in such omnipresent governance of God.<sup>134</sup>

Next, Menius addressed himself to the meaning of the statement that Christ ascended into heaven. According to Menius, that statement has the same meaning as the statement that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. It means, specifically, that Christ has the same power and might for creating, preserving and governing all things on earth that God the Father has. The result is that Christ, according to both His divine and His human nature, is present everywhere.<sup>135</sup>

Because of its discussion of the person and nature of Christ, this book is Menius' most important contribution to the history of Lutheran confessional theology. When the authors of the Formula of Concord were accused of innovating a doctrine of the omnipresence of the human nature of Christ which was foreign to the theology of Martin Luther, the Württemberg theologians responded, in part, by appealing to the fact that Luther had written a preface for Menius' book, On the Spirit of the Anabaptists. They wrote:

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<sup>134</sup> ibid., 02r-P4r.

<sup>135</sup> ibid., Q4-Q4v.

Justus Menius, a distinguished theologian, explained this matter authoritatively in a number of pages in a long book which he wrote during the lifetime of Luther and Melanchthon. . . . Only two years before his death, Luther wrote a preface for this book. In it he commended and praised this book of Justus Menius. Therefore, this book of Menius was printed not only in Wittenberg, but was also included in the second part of the works of Luther.<sup>136</sup>

Thus, Menius' book is an important contribution to a correct interpretation of the meaning and intention of the Lutheran doctrine of the person and nature of Christ, as well as the nature of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Sacrament of the Altar.

The book evidently influenced the policies of the Mühlhausen town council with respect to Anabaptism. The council appointed a committee which was first to examine those suspected of being Anabaptists, and then to attempt to effect their conversion. Those Anabaptists who promised to repudiate their error were to be set free. Those who refused were to be imprisoned.<sup>137</sup>

#### Menius' Role in the Colloquies

Menius, to be sure in a minor role, also had a part in the drama of the interaction between the various groups which were involved in

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<sup>136</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 304-305. "Justus Menius, ein fürnehmer Theologus, bei D. Luthers und Philippi Lebzeiten, hat diese Sache in einer gedruckten langen Schrift vom Geist der Wiedertäufer gewaltig und durch etliche Blätter ausgeführt. . . . Ueber dieses Buch had D. Luther (nur zwei Jahr vor seinem Tod) eine Vorrede gemacht, in der er gedachte Schrift Justi Menii kommandirt und lobet. Wie dann diese Schrift Justi Menii nicht allein zu Wittenberg gedruckt, sondern auch dem andern Theil der Bücher Lutheri einverleibt worden."

<sup>137</sup>Wappler, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, p. 168; and Wappler, Die Stellung, pp. 106-111.



the reformation of the church. He was a participant in a number of conferences which had significance for the evangelical movement.

The first of these was the Marburg Colloquy which has already been mentioned. Menius' role in other colloquies will now be considered.

The second colloquy which Menius attended was the conference in Wittenberg in 1536 between Lutheran theologians and those theologians who were sympathetic to, or espoused the theology of Zwingli. This conference resulted in the so-called "Wittenberg Concord."<sup>138</sup> The failure at Marburg to achieve a satisfactory consensus between the Lutheran and the Zwinglian sacramental theology had frustrated the political attempts, led especially by Philip of Hesse, to effect a union between the two groups. This failure did not, however, cause a cessation of efforts to achieve such a union. After the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, the search for new avenues on which a satisfactory agreement could be reached was led primarily by Martin Bucer.<sup>139</sup> His perseverance in seeking a meeting between the Lutherans and the theologians of south Germany eventually succeeded. Both parties agreed to meet in Eisenach on May 14, 1536. On May 13, the south German theologians, led by Bucer and Wolfgang Capito,<sup>140</sup> arrived

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<sup>138</sup>The official documents of the Wittenberg Concord are printed in Johann Georg Walch, editor, D. Martin Luthers Sämtliche Schriften (Magdeburg: Joh. Justinus Gebauer, 1745), XVII, 2526-2571. Especially important in this collection is the historical summary Menius' co-worker, Fredrich Myconius. Schmidt, Menius, I, 212-223, summarizes the older material. Cf. also, Theodore Kolde, "Wittenberger Konkordie," PRE<sup>3</sup>, XXI, 383-399, and the excellent bibliography which he provides on pp. 383-384. Cf. Schottenloher, BdG, IV, 39213a-39216.

<sup>139</sup>For biographical material on Martin Bucer, consult the Neue Deutsche Biographie, herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Duncker & Humboldt, 1953), II, 695-697, and the bibliography provided there. Hereafter this work will be referred to as NDB.

<sup>140</sup>For biographical material on Wolfgang Capito, consult NDB, III, 132-133.

in Eisenach. However, because Luther had become ill and was unable to travel, the conference site was shifted first to Grimma, then to Wittenberg. Menius travelled with Bucer and his party through Gotha where they were joined by Frederick Myconius, and from there to Wittenberg. On this journey Menius no doubt became intimately acquainted with the south German theologians and had sufficient opportunity to discuss their theological differences.

Upon arriving in Wittenberg, Menius and Myconius communicated to Luther and Melanchthon their discussions with Bucer and those who accompanied him. The two superintendents were largely responsible for convincing the two Wittenberg theologians of the sincerity of the south German theologians, particularly Bucer. After two days of discussion, the two parties reached sufficient understanding of each other's respective position that they instructed Melanchthon to draft a set of articles which would express the theological understanding which had been reached. Melanchthon prepared six articles. The first three of these dealt with the crucial subject of the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 220-223 prints the articles. The first three are as follows: "I. Die Theologen beider Theile bekennen, laut der Worte Irenäi, dass in dem heiligen Sakrament zwei Dinge sind: ein himmlisches und ein irdisches; demnach halten und lehren sie, dass mit dem Brod und mit dem Weine wahrhaftig und wesentlich zugegen sei und dargereicht und empfangen werde der Leib und das Blut Christi. II. Und wiewohl sie keine Transsubstantiation halten, auch nicht halten, dass der Leib Christi localiter, d. i. räumlich ins Brod eingeschlossen oder sonst beharrlich ausserhalb der Niessung des heiligen Sakraments damit vereinigt werde, so bekennen sie doch und halten, dass um sakramentlicher Einigung willen das Brod sei der Leib Christi; d. i., sie halten und glauben, das mitsamt dem Brod wahrhaftig zugegen sei und wahrhaftig dargereicht werde der Leib Christi u. s. w. Denn ausserhalb dem Gebrauch und der Niessung, so man nemlich das Brod bei Seite legt und in die Monstranzen oder Sakramentshäuslein einschliesst, oder in Procession und Kreuzgängen umträgt und zeigt, wie es im Papstthum geschieht, halten und glauben sie, dass der Leib Christi nicht zugegen sei. III. Demnach halten

Menius and the other theologians who were present signed the articles. Menius also preached to the group when they were assembled for worship on the Feast of the Ascension. On the following Sunday, the entire group worshipped and partook of the Sacrament together.

It is apparent that the articles which Melanchthon drafted did not compromise the Lutherans' conviction that in the Sacrament of the Altar the bread and wine are truly Christ's body and blood by means of a sacramental union. It is also apparent, nevertheless, that a genuine agreement on the nature of Christ's presence in the bread and wine had not been reached between the two parties. This is indicated in several ways. First, the Concord excluded the specifically Lutheran conviction that Christ's body and blood is received orally with the bread and wine. Second, the concept of the nature of the sacramental usum was left vague. Bucer and his party interpreted the usum to be the reception of the sacrament for faith. Beyond such use, they maintained that there was no sacramental presence. For the Lutherans, on the other hand, the use comprised the entire action of the sacrament and the sacramental presence continued even after the conclusion of the celebration of the sacrament. Furthermore, from

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sie, dass die Einsetzung des Sakraments, durch Christum geschehen, kräftig sei in der Christenheit, und dass sie nicht steht oder liegt an der Würdigkeit Dessen der es reicht oder selbst empfängt. Darum wie St. Paulus sagt, dass auch die Unwürdigen auch wahrhaftig dargereicht werde der Leib und das Blut Christi und dass die Unwürdigen solches wahrhaftig empfangen, wo man des Herrn Christi Wort und Einsetzung halte. Aber Solche empfangen es zum Gericht, wie St. Paulus sagt, denn sie missbrauchen das heilige Sakrament, dieweil sie es ohne wahre Busse und Glauben empfangen. Denn das heilige Sakrament ist darum eingesetzt, dass es bezeuge, dass allen Denen, so wahre Busse thun und sich wiederum durch den Glauben an den Herrn Christum trösten, die Gnade und Wohlthat Christi zugeeignet, sie dem Herrn Christo eingeleibet und durch's Blut Christi gewaschen werden."

the disagreement on the interpretation of the meaning of the term "unworthy," it is obvious already then that the two parties were not completely in agreement. The south Germans<sup>142</sup> maintained that the "unworthy" communicant who receive a judgment from an improper reception of the sacrament are merely hypocritical Christians. For the Lutherans, the "unworthy" communicant meant any unbelieving communicant. Thus, although both parties signed the Wittenberg Concord, it was only because each party interpreted the terminology of the articles in different ways and because the Lutherans did not insist on including in the articles those particulars which characterized their unique point of view. Finally, as is indicated by the introductory statement of the Lutherans which accompanied the articles, the Lutherans looked upon the Concord as a statement of their understanding of the position of the south German theologians. The Swiss theologians recognized that the Lutherans had made no concessions to Bucer and his party. As a consequence, they refused to accept the Concord. The conference was not wholly without results, however, for after this the hostilities between the Lutherans and the south Germans subsided. Luther became cordial in his subsequent dealings with Zwingli's successor at Zurich, Henry Bullinger.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>For a thorough discussion of John Brenz's role in the sacramentarian controversies consult John Wesley Constable, "Johann Brenz's Role in the Sacramentarian Controversy of the Sixteenth Century," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1967).

<sup>143</sup>For biographical material on Bullinger, consult NDB, III, 12-13.

In February of the following year, 1537, Menius attended the conference of the League of Schmalkald.<sup>144</sup> This conference had been called in response to the situation which confronted the members of the League as a result of Pope Paul's summons for a Council to meet in Mantua in order to exterminate the evangelical heresy. The Lutherans were compelled, therefore, to decide whether or not they would attend the Council, and, if so, under what conditions. Elector John Frederick instructed Luther to draft a set of articles which would express the evangelical faith. At the same time, Luther was to indicate those matters which the Lutherans could yield for the sake of peace and unity in the church. Luther's articles were to be presented to the other theologians at Wittenberg, and to other Lutheran theologians. Luther selected Menius to be a member of this last-named group. However, on account of Luther's severe illness at this time, and because of the extreme haste in which the concluding articles were completed, Menius was unable to go to Wittenberg in time to take part in the discussions.

Philip Melancthon, George Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, George Spalatin, John Agricola, Nicolas Amsdorf, and Caspar Cruciger signed the articles which Luther prepared. On January 3, 1537, the articles were submitted to the Elector. He approved them and sought to make them the official position of the League of Schmalkald.

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<sup>144</sup>Material on the Schmalkald Articles and the conference at Schmalkald is voluminous. The reader is directed to Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (4th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 1226-1228, and the introduction by H. Volz, pp. xxiv-xxvii. Schmidt, Menius, I, 224-229, summarizes some of the older material. For a bibliography of the pertinent literature, consult also Schottenloher, BdG, I, 13675-13687, and V, 47957-47963.

On February 10, 1537, the League assembled at Schmalkald. Menius was present for the first part of the conference, but left early because of responsibilities at Eisenach. While he was at Schmalkald, however, he was a bedside visitor of Luther, who was still very sick. The Elector's hope that the articles which Luther had composed would be adopted officially by the League was in vain. Luther was unable to exert his influence at the conference because of his illness. Melanchthon managed successfully to keep the Augsburg Confession and the Wittenberg Concord the basis for the League's union. Melanchthon feared that the demand to accept the articles which Luther had drafted would result in a split in the League. At Bugenhagen's demand, nevertheless, the articles were accepted as an expression of personal theological conviction by those present. Myconius signed the articles for Menius.

Menius played an even lesser role in the colloquies of Hagenau and Worms which were held in 1540.<sup>145</sup> He attended the two conferences merely as an observer. Merely to have been an observer, however, at conferences which brought together so many important personages from all sides of the reformation must have been an exciting experience for Menius. As an official observer of Electoral Saxony, Menius accompanied Melanchthon and Cruciger.

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<sup>145</sup>For material on the two colloquies, consult Gustav Kawerau, "Hagenauer Religionsgespräch 1540," *PRE*<sup>3</sup>, VII, 333-335; and, his article, "Wormser Religionsgespräche," *PRE*<sup>3</sup>, XXI, 489-492. Schmidt *Menius*, I, 230-235, summarizes the older material. For a bibliography of the relevant literature, consult also Schottenloher, *BdG*, IV, 41323a-41328.

## The Bigamy of Landgrave Philip

Menius was moved to literary activity again in 1540 in response to the bigamy of Landgrave Philip of Hesse.<sup>146</sup> From his youth, Philip of Hesse had been unable to remain chaste. The same inability persisted even after his marriage and even after his acceptance of the evangelical doctrine. As a consequence, Philip was plagued by a guilty conscience. His spiritual torment intensified whenever he was required to punish adulterers, or whenever he attended the Sacrament of the Altar. As a result, Philip sought a means whereby he could obtain an outlet for his passions, but cloak it with the tolerable guise of legality.

In 1526, Philip considered the possibility of a second marriage. He asked for Luther's advice. Luther advised the Landgrave against contracting a bigamous marriage. However, when Philip became acquainted with Margaret von der Saal, he decided to marry her. Margaret's mother agreed to the proposal of such a marriage, but insisted that the marriage would have to be recognized. In order to carry through the proposed marriage, Philip sought and obtained both the approval of Margaret and of the theologians of Hesse. Still unsatisfied, Philip wanted, in addition, the approval of other important and respected theologians. With Bucer serving as his emissary, Philip sought a dispensation from Luther and Melanchthon.

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<sup>146</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 243-262, devotes an entire chapter to this matter. In this writer's opinion, Menius' role in the whole matter is so negligible that it does not merit such a lengthy discussion. The attempt has been here to reduce Schmidt's chapter to a few paragraphs. The standard work on the bigamy of Philip of Hesse which the reader should consult for more information is William Walker Rockwell, Die Doppelehe des Landgrafen Philip von Hessen (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1904).

Neither Luther nor Melanchthon approved of bigamy. In their opinion monogamous marriage was the divinely intended order. However, confronted with what was, for them, a request for a pastoral solution to a severe spiritual problem, Luther, as Philip's confessor, granted a pastoral dispensation to Philip. He was willing to permit the marriage, but he insisted that the marriage be kept a secret. Once the marriage became known, the dispensation would not be valid.

It was impossible to keep the marriage a secret. When it became public knowledge, Philip desired to defend himself and his marriage. He called on John Lening, pastor at Melsungen, to compose a defense. Lening did so in his book, Dialogue, that is, a Friendly Discussion Between Two Persons About Whether or Not It Is Permissible or Contrary to the Divine, Natural, Imperial and Spiritual Right to Have More Than One Wife. And If Someone Should Do So at This Time, Whether or Not He Is To Be Disposed Of and Condemned as Unchristian.<sup>147</sup>

Whether or not Menius knew of the bigamy is unknown. At all events, he wrote a booklet in opposition to bigamy.<sup>148</sup> Menius'

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<sup>147</sup>Rockwell, pp. 121-128 provides a detailed discussion of the historical and literary background of this book. It was published in 1541 by Huldreich Neobulus. Dialogus, das ist, ein freundlich Gespräch Zweyer personen, davon, ob es Goettlichem, Natuerlichem, Keyserlichem und Geistlichem Rechte gemesse oder entgegen sei, mehr denn eyn Eheweib zu haben. Unnd wo yemant zu dieser Zeit solchs fuernehme, ob er als ein unchrist zu verwerffen und zu verdammen sei oder nit.

<sup>148</sup>According to Rockwell, p. 126, Schmidt, Menius, I, 260, fn. 1, is mistaken when he claims that Menius wrote against Lening's defense of Landgrave Philip's bigamy.



book, That a Christian is not Permitted to Have More Than One Wife at a Time, is primarily an investigation of those passages in the Sacred Scriptures which relate to marriage.<sup>149</sup> Menius begins with the statement of St. Paul that everything which happens apart from faith is sin. He argues that everything which the Christian does without God's command is of questionable propriety. The Christian should not do anything unless he is certain and sure in advance that it is proper and well-pleasing to God.

Menius continues by referring to the fact that God has never specifically instituted anything other than monogamous marriages. To be sure, there are examples in the Old Testament of Patriarchs who had more than one wife at a time. The Law of Moses, too, contains regulations for bigamous marriages. However, according to Menius, it is necessary to make a distinction between the eternally valid order of God and the particular positive laws of a civil government which attempt to express that order. The positive law of any civil government varies according to time and place. Thus it would be inappropriate for Menius' contemporaries to imitate the example of the Patriarchs, or to follow those laws which Moses meant exclusively for the Children of Israel. God commanded and permitted many things for the Patriarchs which He has not commanded and permitted for others.

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<sup>149</sup>The book was never published. According to Schmidt, Menius, II, 304, the manuscript is in the possession of the library of the University of Heidelberg. This writer was unable to examine a copy of the book. The summary provided in the text has been taken from Schmidt, Menius, I, 257-262. The German title of the book is, Dass einem christen nicht geziemet auf einmahl mehr dann ein einiges eheweib zu haben. Cf. also Rockwell, pp. 126-127.

According to Menius, Christians should follow the example of the Patriarchs in spiritual matters only. In those civil affairs and social customs which were unique for the Patriarchs, the Christian ought not imitate them. God did not punish polygamy when it was practiced by the Patriarchs, but He never praised it, and much less did He command it. In brief, what one Patriarch did by divine permission and dispensation is not permitted or allowed others without a direct command of God.

As far as the law is concerned, Menius did not think that Moses tried to legislate what is the true essence of human nature or what is truly appropriate to particular offices and stations in life. Moses permitted some things which the divine order does not permit simply because of the hardness of people's hearts. Menius refers at this point to the statement of Jesus that Moses granted divorce because of the hardness of the people's heart.

As far as the gospel is concerned, Menius stated that sometimes it might be necessary to tolerate polygamy. He used as an example a situation which might arise for Christian missionaries. If the gospel were proclaimed among the Turks, for example, it might be necessary to permit polygamy because the Turks permit and allow polygamy. The immediate prohibition of polygamy among the Turks by Christian missionaries could cause too much social disturbance for the well-being of the people. Nevertheless, even in such a situation polygamy could not be justified by the gospel.

Menius returns now to the question of the permissibility of polygamy for his contemporaries under their respective governments. He repeats his conviction that a different situation obtains for his contemporaries than that which obtained for people who were under

the Law of Moses. No longer can the Law of Moses be introduced in order to defend practices which are against the divine order. In the Holy Roman Empire and in all Christendom, God's true order must prevail. God's law is that each man is permitted to have only one wife at a time. God made one wife for Adam. They were to become one flesh. Thus it is against the divine order to have two wives.

Menius completes his book by arguing against polygamy on the basis of the positive law of the temporal order. It is not only contrary to the divine order for a man to have more than one wife at a time, but it is also contrary to the temporal law of the contemporary governments in Christendom. The Holy Roman Empire prohibits bigamy. Christians should obey the laws of their government as long as it does not contradict God's word and natural justice. If one were to dispense with civil law in the matter of marriage and follow the law which obtained for the Children of Israel, all civil law would be thrown into disorder.

Menius submitted his book to Wittenberg for publication. The Elector asked for Luther's opinion about whether or not the book ought to be published. Luther praised the book and said, "Justus Menius' booklet pleases me very much, especially on account of the pastor of Melsungen who has dished up this matter in a mess."<sup>150</sup> Nevertheless, Luther advised against publishing the booklet. He feared that publication would increase the suspicion that there was something to the rumors about the Landgrave's bigamy. He thought, too, that Lening might reply again and thus draw him into the controversy. Finally, Luther thought that inasmuch as people

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<sup>150</sup>Schmidt, Menius, I, 261.

are always overly curious about such affairs, silence would be the wisest policy. In any case, Luther believed, correctly, that Menius' book did not apply to Luther's position or action in the whole matter. He had given a dispensation as a confessor for the sake of an individual's conscience. Such a dispensation did not fall under the strictures of Menius.

#### Menius at Gotha

Menius did not remain in Eisenach very long after his return from Mühlhausen. In 1546, Frederick Myconius,<sup>151</sup> the superintendent of Gotha, became chronically ill. During his illness, Menius assumed the superintendent's responsibilities for Gotha. Shortly before his death, Myconius wrote Elector John Frederick and petitioned for a competent successor. He suggested that the Duke install his friend, Justus Menius, as superintendent in Gotha and someone else as pastor in Eisenach under Menius' supervision. On Laetare Sunday, April 7, 1546, Myconius died. Menius delivered the funeral sermon. In it he praised Myconius' faithfulness to the Evangelical reformation.<sup>152</sup> Within two weeks of Myconius' death, the constituted

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<sup>151</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 1-11, provides a lengthy summary of the reforming activity of Myconius. Myconius was born in 1490, in Lichtenfels. Tetzl influenced him to become a Franciscan monk. Converted to the evangelical faith, he became pastor at Gotha in 1526 and carried through the reformation of the Gotha diocese. He participated in the visitation of Thuringia in 1528, and attended the conferences at Marburg, Wittenberg, Schmalkald, and Hagenau. He was one of the Saxon theologians who went to England to engage in deliberations with Henry VIII. For further information, consult Schottenloher, BdG, II, 16188-16211.

<sup>152</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 11-17, prints a large portion of the sermon. Two of the recurrent themes of Menius' theology come through in the sermon: the light which the evangelical reformation brought into the darkness of the devil's rule; and, the centrality of the good news about Christ for the salvation of mankind.

authorities of Gotha called Menius to be their pastor and superintendent.<sup>153</sup> Menius accepted the call, but remained the superintendent of Eisenach, too.

Soon after Menius assumed office at Gotha, he had to face the question whether or not the evangelical princes could engage in war against the Emperor. Menius wrote his opinion concerning the matter in his book, Instruction on Self-defense. Useful reading (Von der Notwehr unterrichtet: Nützlich zu lesen).<sup>154</sup> The book is divided into three parts. In the first part, Menius discusses authority in general, and explains to what extent a person is subject to spiritual and civil authority.<sup>155</sup> In the second part, Menius defends the thesis that self-defense against unjust power is permitted and expected by God.<sup>156</sup> In the third part, Menius lists the chief articles of Christian faith which the papists oppose in order that the soldier might know the importance of the doctrines for which he fights and suffers.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> ibid. According to the Electoral constitution for filling the ministerial office at Gotha, the permanent pastors and curates together with the responsible local government official, the tax collector, the councillors and the delegates of the congregation were authorized to select a candidate for the vacant office. The candidate's name was to be submitted to the Elector for approval. By Tuesday after Palm Sunday, 1546, the Elector replied from Torgau, "Ihr wollet einträchtiglich vermöge unserer Konstitution Herrn Justum Menius zu einem Pfarrer und Superintendenten gegen Gotha vociren und berufen."

<sup>154</sup> The book was published in Wittenberg by Veit Creutzer in 1547. Schmidt summarizes and quotes from the book, ibid., II, 20-26.

<sup>155</sup> B3v-D4v.

<sup>156</sup> a1r-e2r.

<sup>157</sup> e2v-f3v.

The war broke out and the Emperor was victorious.<sup>158</sup> After the defeat of the Evangelical forces at Mühlberg, Gotha became subject to the Emperor. The imperial commander, Lazarus von Schwendi, came to Gotha with orders to raze the castle Grimmenstein and all of its fortifications. As the army neared Gotha, many of the citizens fled. Menius requested asylum for his wife and children in Mühlhausen, and fled the city. He returned, however, when he received a letter from John Frederick the Middle who encouraged him to fulfill his ministry.

As a result of the moral collapse which followed the army's march through Gotha, Menius threatened to leave the town unless the people repented of their notorious sinfulness. He wrote a letter to the court in which he criticized the behavior of the Dukes and their associates. In addition, he was disheartened because the Dukes did not grant his request to install a replacement for the incompetent rector, Pancras Sussenbach. As a result, Menius requested a transfer to Eisenach. When he subsequently withdrew the request for reasons which are unknown, John Frederick wrote his son, John Frederick the Middle:

We would not have expected him to jump back and forth in this manner and this causes us some doubt. But, because he is otherwise solid in doctrine, and because he has no defects, we have to let it go and have patience with him. It should be noted from this, however, that they are just like other people: human beings and not angels.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>For literature on the Schmalkald War, consult Schottenloher, *BdG*, IV, 41672-41797. Schmidt, *Menius*, II, 18-31, discusses the war to the extent that it affected Menius in Thuringia.

<sup>159</sup>*ibid.*, II, 30-31. "Wir hätten uns aber zu ihm, dass er also von Einem aufs Andere fallen sollte, nicht versehen, machen uns aber damit etwas Bedenken. Aber weil er sonst in der Lehre rechtshaffen und kein Mangel an ihm zu spüren, muss man es geschehen lassen und

## The Interim

As a result of the defeat of the evangelical forces, the Emperor believed that he could assert his will effectively in the religious affairs of Saxony and reunite the whole church under the papacy. Until a permanent arrangement could be concluded by a general council, the Emperor initiated a temporary policy which was called the Interim.<sup>160</sup> The Interim was drawn up at Augsburg by the papalist bishops Michael Helding and Julius Pflug and the Evangelical court preacher John Agricola. The Augsburg Interim was promulgated as imperial law on May 15, 1548.

The Augsburg Interim, however, was not acceptable to either the Roman Catholics or the Lutherans. John Frederick refused to accept it in his territories, now Ducal Saxony. On June 30, 1548, therefore, the Emperor wrote to the Dukes and demanded the enforcement of the Augsburg Interim. He demanded, too, that the Dukes answer his letter within three weeks. In response, the Dukes summoned all the superintendents, the court and city preachers, and other learned individuals to Weimar. They assembled on July 26, 1548, in order to examine the Augsburg Interim article by article. The theologians' task was to determine whether or not the Augsburg Interim was Scriptural. The examination took two days. Menius, on behalf of the assembled theologians drafted a statement which set forth their evaluation of the Augsburg Interim. Those articles with which the

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mit ihm Geduld haben. Es its aber daran zu merken, dass sie [sic] gleich so wohl als andere Leute Menschen und keine Engel sind."

<sup>160</sup>For literature on the Interim, consult Schottenloher, BdG, IV, 38259a-38330a.

Evangelicals could agree were merely restated. Articles which the Evangelicals found objectionable were either flatly rejected or restated to express the Evangelical position. Typical of the articles in Menius' report is Article VII.

Concerning love and good works, it says truly and correctly that both ought to follow as fruits of true faith. However, the Interim's assertion that love makes faith true, and gives faith the power to justify and obtain life-everlasting is false and a slander against the Lord Christ. The self-chosen works which God has not commanded, which they are accustomed to call works of supererogation, cannot be praised any more highly than Christ praised them in Mt. 15, when He said, "They serve me in vain with the doctrines of men." Furthermore, since the works which God has commanded cannot justify us, it is certain that self-chosen works which God has not commanded can justify us even less.<sup>161</sup>

Menius' statement was signed by all who were present for the conference. The theologians submitted the evaluation to the Dukes. The Dukes instructed the theologians to submit a copy of the Augsburg Interim and a copy of the theologian's report to each clergyman in their respective diocese (Sprengel). After studying both documents, the clergymen were to inform their superintendent which of the two documents they would accept.

On October 12, 1548, the Emperor instructed the Archbishop of Mayence to inform him to what extent the Interim had been put into

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<sup>161</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 46. "Von der Liebe und guten Werken ist wahr und recht gesagt, dass sie als Früchte dem rechtschaffenen Glauben folgen sollen. Dass aber im Interim vorgegeben wird, die Liebe mache den Glauben, dass er rechtschaffen werde, und gebe ihm Kraft, den Menschen zu rechtfertigen und das ewige Leben zu erlangen, dieses ist unrecht und eine Lästerung des Herrn Christi. Die ungebötenen selbsterwählten Werke, die sie opera supererogationis zu nennen pflegen, wissen wir anders oder höher nicht zu loben, denn sie vom Herrn Christo gelobt werden, Matth. 15, da er sagt: Sie dienen mir vergeblich mit Menschen Lehre. Und weil die Werke, so Gott geboten hat, uns nicht gerecht machen können, ist gewiss, dass es selbsterwählte ungebötene Werke viel weniger tun können." Schmidt prints the document in its entirety, II, 44-57.



practice in the Archdiocese of Mayence. Accordingly, the Archbishop summoned the clergymen of the Archdiocese, including Menius, to a Synod. The main objective of the Synod was to provide for the reformation of the clergy in accordance with the stipulations of the Augsburg Interim. Menius intended to send an anonymous refusal to the Archbishop in behalf of the parishes of Eisenach and Gotha. He sent his proposal to the Dukes. The Dukes rejected Menius' idea. They preferred to await the outcome of a conference of the Electoral Saxon theologians whom Elector Maurice had assembled in order to find some solution to the Interim. The Dukes felt it would be to the advantage of the Ducal Saxon clergy to wait and see what action the Archbishop would take against the clergy of Electoral Saxony.

After the Synod of Mayence, the Archbishop notified the Ducal Saxon clergy, including Menius, that he was aware of their absence from the Synod. The Archbishop threatened to discipline Menius for his disobedience. The Archbishop ordered Menius to appear at his residence in Erfurt on April 5, 1549, where the resolutions of the Synod of Mayence would be read. Menius reported the Archbishop's directives to the Dukes. They commanded him to reply to the Archbishop's emissary that whether or not he would appear at Erfurt would depend on the order of the Dukes of Saxony, his constituted authorities. The Dukes promised to send representatives to Erfurt to listen to the resolutions of the Synod. At the same time, they promised to send protests on behalf of their clergy and to inform the Archbishop that the presence of the representatives from Ducal Saxony did not imply recognition of the Archbishop's authority or jurisdiction over the Ducal Saxon clergy.

The three representatives from Eisenach and Gotha, John Weiss, Peter Fuldner and John Brembach<sup>162</sup> appeared in Erfurt on April 5, 1549. They listened to the reading of the resolutions of the synod. When they were asked if they would accept and obey the resolutions, they requested and received one month to make their reply. Menius communicated the report of the representatives to the Dukes. They commanded Menius to assemble his clergy and to compose an answer to the Archbishop's representative. In addition, the Dukes instructed Menius to submit his response to them before delivering it to the Archbishop. Finally, they commanded Menius to keep their instructions secret.

Menius summoned the clergy who were under him to Eisenach. After discussing the matter with them, he composed a reply and sent it to the Dukes for approval. The reply stated that it was impossible for the clergy of the dioceses of Eisenach and Gotha to take any action with respect to the resolutions of the Synod. In defense of his reply, Menius stated that his clergy had not had a copy of the resolutions and could not remember all of the stipulations which the resolutions contained. Menius promised that if he were supplied with a copy of the resolutions, he would consider the matter with his clergy once again. Although the Archbishop's emissary threatened Menius with unpleasant reprisals, nothing came of his threats.

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<sup>162</sup>John Weiss, pastor in Eisenach, was Menius' replacement. Concerning him, consult the article by K. Steiff, ADB, XV, 571; and Schottenloher, BdG, II, 22254-22256. The other two men do not appear in any of the standard bibliographical and biographical works. John Brembach was Menius' assistant (Diakon) at Gotha.

Elector Maurice of Saxony, like the Dukes of Saxony, had not accepted the Augsburg Interim. However, in order to accommodate the Emperor, the Elector instructed his theologians to draw up a compromise formula. The formula, known as the Leipzig Interim, reintroduced certain practices which the theologians of Electoral Saxony considered to be matters of indifference, or "adiaphora."

When John Frederick heard about the Leipzig Interim, he feared that it would be forced on his territory. In anticipation of such an action, he instructed his sons to have the theologians of Ducal Saxony evaluate the Leipzig Interim. The Dukes appointed Menius, Martin Corolitius the superintendent of Jena, and Christopher Hofmann the court-preacher at Jena to analyze the articles of the Leipzig Interim. The three theologians met on February 10, 1549, in Jena, to carry out the order. The important statements of Menius about the issue of adiaphora are:

It is true that there are some, indeed many, innocuous adiaphoristic practices which could be permitted without burdening or harming consciences. We have permitted for a long time, and still do permit some of those practices in some places for the sake of peace and on account of human weakness. Thus it might seem as though we could and should approve such things where they have persisted or where they have fallen into disuse. For although adiaphora, as they are called, may in themselves be freely observed or ignored; still, such freedom is only for believers who are able to use it for their improvement and edification instead of their offense and destruction.

Now, if the intention were that our opponents desired to accept and confess the doctrine of the gospel and faith in Christ with us, then we could and should patiently bear with their weakness in adiaphora for a while. We could and should eat with them, fast with them, dress like them and use or omit to use certain things as the need and situation demanded.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 70-71. "Und wiewohl es wahr ist, dass deren Dinge etliche und viel ungefährliche Mitteldinge sind, die

Menius says concerning Melanchthon:

Dr. Philip Melanchthon has also stated his opinion about this matter. He concludes that if it is possible to preserve the doctrine of the gospel purely and freely in the church in peace and quiet, then we ought to yield in such adiaphora as dress, songs, eating of meat and other such matters. We respect his opinion and concur that this may be done provided that one has preserved the first and most necessary article of doctrine.

But if this is not preserved, and yet concessions and changes are made in external adiaphora, then grave problems will result as was previously indicated. To that extent we respect the opinion and interpretation of Philip.<sup>164</sup>

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ihrethalben ohne Beschwerung und Verletzung der Gewissen könnten gehalten werden, wie wir deren viel eine lange Zeit Jahre um der Schwachen und Friedens willen gehalten haben und an etlichen Orten noch gehalten werden, derwegen sich's ansehen liesse, als könnte und sollte man solche Dinge nachmals billig halten, wo sie geblieben, oder wo sie gefallen, wiederum auch aufrichten, so hat es aber gleichwohl gar viel eine andere Gestalt und Meinung damit.

"Denn obwohl die Mitteldinge, wie man sie nennt, an ihnen selbst frei gehalten oder nachgelassen werden mögen, so gehört doch solche Freiheit allein für die Gläubigen, die ihrer gebrauchen sollen zur Besserung und Erbauung und nicht zu Aergerniss und Zerstörung.

"Wenn es nun die Meinung hätte, dass unsere Widersacher die Lehre des Evangelii und Glaubens an Christum mit uns annehmen und bekennen wollten, so könnten und sollten wir billig mit ihrer Schwachheit in solchen Mitteldingen eine Zeit lang Geduld tragen, mit ihnen essen, fasten, Kleider und anderes gebrauchen oder nicht gebrauchen, wie es die Nothdurft und Gelegenheit erfordern möchte." Schmidt prints the entire document which Menius wrote, II, 69-75.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*, II, 74. "Es hat D. Philippus Melanchthon von dieser Sache auch sein Bedenken gestellt, darin er auf diese Meinung auch schliesst, wie man den Kirchen die Lehre des Evangelii rein und frei in Friede und Ruhe erhalten könnte, dass man in äusserlichen und freien Mitteldingen, als mit den Kleidern, Gesängen, Fleischessen und was dergleichen mehr sein mag, etwas nachgeben sollte. Dieses achten wir auch, dass es zu thun sei, aber doch nicht anders noch eher, man habe denn das erste und nöthigste Hauptstück von der Lehre zuvor erhalten. Denn wo dasselbe nicht erhalten und gleichwohl in den äusserlichen Mitteldingen etwas nachgeben und Aenderung gemacht würde, da kann noch mag es ohne gross und schwer Aergerniss nicht wohl abgehen, wie zuvor angezeigt. Darum achten wir, des Herrn Philippi Bedenken und Meinung sei auch dahin gerichtet und diesem unsern gar nicht entgegen."

There is, in Menius' position, a quiet but real disagreement with the position both of the Leipzig Interim and of Philip Melanchthon. Menius was not, in principle, opposed to accepting adiaphora. He was opposed, however, to accepting adiaphora if the doctrine of the gospel were not preserved.

Shortly thereafter, in February and April 1549, the Emperor commanded John Frederick and his two sons to return to the papacy or to introduce the Augsburg Interim. The Emperor threatened to take action against them if they disobeyed. The Dukes decided to lay the matter before the civil and ecclesiastical members of the territorial diet. Before doing that, however, they called several theologians to Weimar and asked for their opinions about what they should answer the Emperor. The Dukes were especially interested in knowing if the theologians thought that Ducal Saxony could yield in the matter of adiaphora. The civil officials had already informed the Dukes of their willingness to reintroduce the adiaphoristic practices. Menius was one of the theologians who submitted an opinion to the Dukes.

The essence of Menius' position is indicated by these statements from his written opinion:

I, for myself, cannot and will not accept it [the Augsburg Interim]. Nor will I serve in the churches in which it is adopted and accepted. My reason is this: it is against the pure and wholesome doctrine of the holy gospel and it sets up again and confirms the whole papacy together with all its antichristian idolatry and abominations.

The doctrinal articles, particularly on justification, are quite impure and we cannot accept them in good conscience. For therein the honor of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, being our only savior and reconciler is removed and in part transferred to our own virtues. This is an abominable disgrace and slander of the

Son of God, and it simultaneously takes away from the poor conscience its highest comfort. That conscience can no longer be certain that God is gracious, but must be filled with doubt.<sup>165</sup>

Menius' evaluation of the Leipzig Interim was more irenic. He asserted that it was difficult to appraise that Interim for two reasons. First, the text had suffered repeated changes; and, second, because the articles were ambiguous. The papalists had interpreted the Leipzig Interim as if it supported the papal doctrine; and, as Lutherans had interpreted it in an evangelical sense. Menius' opinion of the Leipzig Interim is expressed in these words:

Although there can be no doubt that the theologians of the universities and churches at Wittenberg and Leipzig studiously considered and reflected on all the above mentioned considerations, and probably even more, it is certain that they did not formulate their articles with any other intention. For if one could preserve the christian doctrine in peace with the Roman Imperial Majesty as it has been preached previously in their [Electoral Saxony] and our churches, then agreement in such an order as these articles offer in adiaphora could be harmoniously and uniformly attained.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, II, 76-77. "Ich aber für meine Person kann und will es nicht annehmen, auch in den Kirchen nicht dienen, da es angenommen und gehalten werden soll, aus dieser Ursache, dass es der reinen heilsamen Lehre des heiligen Evangelii zuwider ist und das ganze Papstthum mit allen seinen antichristischen Abgöttereien und Greueln wiederum aufrichtet und bestätiget.

"Die Artikel von der Lehre und bevorens von der Justifikation sind gar unrein, die können wir mit gutem Gewissen gar nicht annehmen. Denn es wird darinnen dem Sohne Gottes, Jesu Christo, seine eigene Ehre, dass er allein unser einiger und ewiger Mittler, und Versühner jetzt genommen und zum Theil unsern eigenen Tugenden zugegeben, welches eine greuliche Schmach und Lästerung des Sohnes Gottes ist, und wird den armen Gewissen ihr höchster Trost damit zugleich genommen, dass sie nicht gewiss halten können, sondern zweifeln müssen ob ihnen Gott gnädig sei oder nicht.

<sup>166</sup> *ibid.*, II, 87. "Weil kein Zweifel ist, die Theologen der Universitäten und Kirchen zu Wittenberg und Leipzig haben alle obangezeigte Ursachen und vielleicht andere noch mehr zum fleissigsten auch betrachtet und bewogen, ist gewiss, dass sie ihre Artikel auch anderer Meinung nicht gestellt haben. Denn da man bei der Röm. Kais. Maj. die christliche Lehre, wie die in ihren und unseren

Menius proceeded to analyze the Leipzig Interim article by article. He expressed his agreement with each or offered his interpretation. He was willing to accept all the articles on adiaphora provided that agreement in the gospel be a necessary precondition for adopting the document.

The other theologians who were with Menius at Weimar endorsed his opinion and signed it. They gave him the task of reworking his statement and of removing the personal references from it. When Menius had accomplished that task, the theologians submitted the document to the Dukes. The Dukes, in turn, submitted the document to the civil and ecclesiastical members of the territorial diet. They accepted it on March 13, 1549.

The Ducal Saxon officials decided that it would be advisable to publish a confession of the doctrine which was taught in the churches of Ducal Saxony together with a uniform church order for the territory. They appointed Menius to write the confession and church order. Menius used the Wittenberg and the Leipzig church orders as guides for the church order of Ducal Saxony. For the confession, he used the Augsburg Confession, and probably Melancthon's Loci Communes. After Menius had completed the task, the territorial diet accepted the document and requested the Dukes to order a general visitation of all the churches in the territory.

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Kirchen bis anher gepredigt wird, mit Frieden erhalten könnte, dass alsdann in freien Mitteldingen sich einer solchen Ordnung, wie die Artikel mitbringen, zu vergleichen und in Kirchen einträchtig und gleichförmig zu halten wäre."

The full title of this product of Menius' labor was: Doctrinal Statement and Confession of the Serene, Noble Prince and Lord, Lord John Frederick the Younger, Duke of Saxony, Landgrave of Thuringia and Margrave of Meissen and so forth.<sup>167</sup>

Menius sets forth the essence of his theological convictions in brief and concise articles. The theology of his Confession is informed by the theology of the Augsburg Confession, but the emphases of Menius differ considerably from the former confession.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., II, 93-105. Konfession und Bekenntnis des Glaubens der durchleuchten Hochgeborenen Fürsten und Herrn Johans Fridrichen des jungeren, Hertzogen zu Sachsen, Landgrauen zu Düringen und Marggrauen zu Meissen etc. Schmidt prints selections from the confession and the entire church order. The photographically reproduced copy of the confession which was available to this writer was published in Königsberg in 1549, but the publisher's name did not appear.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. The title of the articles are: I. Von Autoritet der heiligen goettlichen schrift. II. Von andern Lerern in der Kirchen nach den Propheten und aposteln. III. Von Conciliis. IV. Von Auslegern der Schrift. V. Warauff die Heilige schrift endlich gerichtet und was in summa darinnen zu suchen sey. VI. Vom Gesetz. VII. Vom Euangelio. VIII. Von dem alten und neuen Testament. IX. Bekenntnus unser Christlichen Lare/Glaubens und Religion/aus den heiligen zehen Geboten. X. Bekenntnus unser lare und glaubens/aus dem symbolo Apostolorum. XI. Vom creutz und trübsalen der heiligen. XII. Vom trost der kirchen und heiligen in allerley leiden und trübsalen. XIII. Vom Gebet. XIV. Ordenungen vom Herrn Christo und den Aposteln eingesetzt und gehalten. XV. Ordnungen der Tauffe. XVI. Ordnung des Abentmals. XVII. Ordination der Kirchendiener. XVIII. Ordnungen des gebets/Psalmen/lection/und danksagung in der gemein. XIX. Von menschlichen ordenungen in der Kirchen/deren die Christen mit freiheit gebrauchen mugen oder nicht. XX. Von menschlichen tradition oder satzungen/deren die Christen on verletzung irer gewissen/gar nicht halten können. XXI. Weise und ordnung/wie es in unsern Kirchen/mit allem Gottes dinst gehalten wird. XXII. Von den fest und feiertagen. XXIII. Von dienern der Kirchen. XXIV. Fürgestellte form und weise der kirchen Empter. Von der Tauffe. Vesper auff die Sonnabend und anderer feierabend. Von der beicht und verhörung der communicanten. Auff die Sontage und ander festa/Metten. Mess oder Communio. Vesper. Catechissuchung der krancken. Vom begrebnus der todten. Vom fasten. Von Christlicher freiheit.



Menius introduces a number of theological articles which were not included in the Augsburg Confession such as articles on the Sacred Scriptures, on the distinction between law and gospel, on Christian freedom and adiaphora, on prayer, and on such pastoral concerns as the Christian's cross and comforting those who mourn. It is possible that here Menius followed somewhat the order of Melanchthon's Loci. The issues which Menius deemed important enough to merit an article are issues of authority and practical church life. The intent is not to show unanimity with the confessions of the church of previous ages, but to state the particular aspects of the faith which were important to the churches of Ducal Saxony as Lutheran entities. The confession did not play an important role in the interaction between Ducal Saxony and the Archbishop of Mayence or the Emperor. It was never used as an official document of Ducal Saxony in the dispute about the Interim. After the Archbishop of Mayence made one final attempt to compel the Saxon Dukes to introduce the Interim, he did not pursue the matter any longer. The Interim was never introduced in Ducal Saxony.

#### On Baptismal Exorcism

In the first edition of his Taufbüchlein of 1523, Luther retained both exorcisms and much of the ritual which were used in the baptismal rite of the medieval church. In subsequent revisions of the Taufbüchlein, Luther simplified the rite more and more, but he did not omit either of the exorcisms. Luther's revised rite began with the first exorcism, "Depart unclean spirit and give place to

the Holy Spirit."<sup>169</sup> The second, and longer exorcism, "I adjure you, you unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, to depart and retreat from this servant of Jesus Christ."<sup>170</sup>

During the year 1549, Geroge Merula, assistant pastor at St. Margaret's Church at Gotha, began to omit the second exorcism whenever he administered Baptism. When Menius and the other assistants (Diakonen) John Brembach and Henry Thilen, failed in their efforts to persuade Merula to use the exorcism, Menius ordered Merula not to administer the sacrament. But Merula, contending that Menius did not have the authority as a superintendent to deprive him of his ordained right to administer Baptism, refused to obey Menius. He continued to baptize without using the exorcism. As a result, Menius delivered a petition to the Gotha town council in which he requested it to enforce his order. He included an extensive explanation of his action and the reasons for it.<sup>171</sup> Merula wrote an extensive reply.<sup>172</sup> When the council was also unable to force Merula to use the exorcism, Menius decided to report the matter to the Duke.

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<sup>169</sup>BK, p. 538. "Fahr aus, Du unreiner Geist, und gib Raum dem Heiligen Geist."

<sup>170</sup>ibid., p. 539. "Ich beschwere Dich, Du unreiner Geist, bei dem Namen des Vaters und des Sohns und des Heiligen Geistes, dass Du ausfahrest und weichest von diesem Diener Jesu Christ, N., Amen."

<sup>171</sup>"Antwort uff M. Georgen schrifft. Vom Exorcismo, dass der bey der Tauffe in christlichen kirchen wol gebraucht werden moge, und nicht als ein zeuberischer Grewel zu verdammen sey." Schmidt, Menius, II, 115, states that this mild work was never printed. This writer was unable to obtain a copy of this work or to find any other bibliographical information concerning it. Schmidt does not summarize it or give any indication of the nature of its content.

<sup>172</sup>"Antwort uff die Hessige und Gifftige Schmachschriefft der Ern Justi Mönii pfarhern und Superattendenten, Heynrich Thilen und Johan Brembachs, beide Diakon zu Gotha, vom Exorcismo bei der

As a result, the Duke summoned Merula to appear before a ducal theological commission (Kommission) on June 2, 1550, at Weimar. The commission discussed the matter with Merula. Merula promised to use the exorcism in the future. The commission instructed him to continue in his office and admonished him and his fellow clerics at Gotha not to dispute about the matter any longer.

However, Merula did not keep his promise. Soon he was again omitting the exorcism. Once again Menius discussed the matter with Merula. Merula expressed a desire to debate the matter with the Weimar theological commission. The disputation took place in the presence of the ducal councillors on November 11, 1550. After the disputation, the commission requested the Duke to decide whether or not Merula's arbitrary and personal rejection of the exorcism could be tolerated. The Duke, however, did not immediately make a decision, because he hoped that Merula would change his mind.

On January 12, 1551, Menius wrote to the Duke. He requested an immediate decision about the matter. In the same letter, Menius

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Taufe." This writer was unable to discover any more bibliographical information about this work. Schmidt does supply a summary of some of its contents, II, 116-117. Merula complained that Menius and the other assistants had treated him in an unchristian manner. Next Merula claimed that he had always used the true exorcism, namely the command for the devil to depart. However, Merula asserted that the second exorcism could not be proved from the Scriptures or from any of the leading fathers of the church. Merula's principal objection was his claim that there is no acceptable evidence for anyone ever taking an oath with respect to the devil, including Jesus. Merula thought that the second exorcism did not belong to the substance of baptism, that is it did not affect the validity of the sacrament, and was therefore unnecessary. Merula concluded by accusing Menius of persecuting him as a scapegoat for Menius' failure to conquer Osiander on the field of theological battle.

stated that he felt compelled to explain the dispute from the pulpit. The Duke replied by ordering the town council at Gotha to discuss the matter with Merula again and to dismiss him if he refused their instruction. The council met with Merula, but was unable to persuade him to change his mind.

On Invocavit Sunday, 1551, Menius and Brembach each delivered a sermon on exorcism. In their sermons, they explained why Merula's rejection of exorcism was intolerable. In response to the sermons, Merula published a virulent attack on Menius and Brembach.<sup>173</sup> The tract offended the ducal court so much that friends of Menius requested the Duke to silence Merula. In the meantime, Merula precipitated a riot in Gotha. No indication is given by Schmidt, however, concerning who Merula's supporters were or concerning the extent and nature of the riot. Therefore, when the Gotha town council asked for Merula's immediate dismissal, the Duke ordered him to be deposed and banished.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>An die Achtbaren, Namhaften, Ehrsamten und Weisen, Herr Schösser beide Rätthe und ganze Gemeine zu Gotha, Bericht und Antwort auf die unwahrhaftige Invectiva oder Schandpredigt, so Justus Menius und Johann wider mich auf den Sonntag Invocavit dieses 51. Jahres in beiden Pfarrkirchen zu Gotha gepredigt. M. Georgius Merula. This writer was unable to discover any bibliographical information on this work. Schmidt, Menius, II, 123, says that in the tract Merula called his opponents, "Teufelsdiener, Verfälscher aller reinen christlichen Lehre, Verführer des Volks, Zerrütter aller christlichen Liebe, Ordnung, Zucht, Ehrbarkeit und Einigkeit, die vom Teufel besessen, und in welche der Mord- und Lügengeist des Antichrists ganz gefahren ist." He says that Merula called Menius, in particular, "einen Papstteufel."

<sup>174</sup>According to Schmidt, Menius, II, 113, Merula was born in 1501 in Boleslau. He was a rector in Zwickau, Schneeberg and Altenberg. Through Melanchthon's recommendation he became an assistant pastor (Diakon). After leaving Gotha, he became pastor at Jüterbock and served there until 1565 when he moved to Wittenberg. He died in Wittenberg on November 15, 1565.

The controversy became common knowledge. Menius decided to publish a book in order to explain the issues and hopefully to convince all of the pastors in his dioceses (Diöcesen) that the exorcism was a legitimate element in the ritual of Baptism. In the little booklet On Exorcism (Vom Exorcismus) Menius stressed the necessity of following the prescribed form of Baptism in the territorial agenda. He distinguished four kinds of individuals who are present in the action of Baptism. The first is the candidate for baptism. The candidate is outside of the kingdom of Christ, under the rule of the devil, and for the sake of the candidate's miserable condition the church performs the sacrament. The second individual is the church who receives the candidate. The third individual is the devil. The fourth individual is the baptizer who represents God. According to Menius, the church brings the candidate for baptism to the font and indicates that the candidate is to become a member of the kingdom of Christ. The church indicates this in the first exorcism, and in the bestowal of the sign of the cross. Afterwards, the church prays for the candidate to be received into God's grace through faith. However, inasmuch as the devil opposes this, the church threatens the devil with the punishment of God. That is the basis for the second exorcism. Menius asserts that both of these exorcisms are completely legitimate in the context of Baptism.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>175</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 125-126. The above is a summary of the material which Schmidt supplies about this work. Schmidt gives the following bibliographical data, II, 302. Vom Exorcismo, das dieser ohne verletzung des Gewissens bey der Tauffe wol mag gebraucht und behalten werden (Erfurt: n.p., 1552). A second edition was printed in 1591.

Menius and the Bloodfriends (Blutfreunden)

In 1551, Menius came into contact with the heretical group known as the Bloodfriends.<sup>176</sup> Fifty-four adherents of the group were discovered in the area around Gotha. Three were executed in 1551, the rest were released after they recanted.<sup>177</sup> The group believed that the Old Testament had been abolished for Christians, particularly the laws and regulations relating to sex. They considered themselves to be completely free people, holy and sinless in the sight of God. The goal of their religion appears to have been ecstatic union with God.<sup>178</sup>

Menius reports that he interrogated three members of the sect. One of these was Nicholas Ludwig of Tüngeda, the leader of the sect. He had been previously associated with the Anabaptist, Ludwig Spon, but later repudiated Anabaptism. He even made efforts to lead others away from Anabaptism. Menius reported that the only doctrinal error which he could find in Ludwig was his belief that because

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<sup>176</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 127-138, devotes a whole chapter to Menius and the Bloodfriends. Schmidt, following Menius, thinks that the sect originated around Mühlhausen. Claus-Peter Clasen, "Medieval Heresies in the Reformation," Church History, XXXIII (1963), 391-414, offers a different theory. He thinks that the "Bloodfriends" were a continuation of the medieval heresy of the Free Spirit. Oyer, pp. 205-208, discusses Menius' relation to the sect. His statement, p. 74, that the "Bloodfriends" had no connections with Anabaptism is not correct. Nicholas Ludwig of Tüngeda, the leader of the sect, had been associated with the Anabaptist, Ludwig Spon. Clasen, XXXII, 409, notes the following connection between the "Bloodfriends" and Anabaptists, "Ludwig, the new Christ himself and several of his followers, had either been Anabaptists or at least had been close to Anabaptism. Some of the Bloodfriends later became Anabaptists." Wappler, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, pp. 189-206, has the most complete and best documented discussion of this group which is available.

<sup>177</sup>Clasen, XXXII, 403.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., XXXII, 404.

Christ had redeemed him from death and damnation and made him a true child of God he was now holy and could no longer sin.

Another member of the sect whom Menius interrogated was John Kindervater of Langula. Menius learned from Kindervater the meaning of the sect's doctrine of sinlessness. Kindervater acknowledged that he had had sexual intercourse with all the wives of the members of his fellowship. He maintained that he represented God's Son and asserted that he and his associates could not sin. He disclosed that he had received a revelation that he was supposed to exterminate all the godless people from the earth and set free those who accepted his belief. Upon acceptance, sexual intercourse became holy. It was, in fact, their sacrament. Man was bread, woman was wine. Children who were born of their sacrament did not need baptism because they were untainted by original sin. In their assembly, Kindervater read to the believers from the New Testament and preached. When Menius asked Kindervater who had taught him such an interpretation of the New Testament, Kindervater replied that he had studied the New Testament for himself. In spite of Menius' attempts to get Kindervater to recant his beliefs, Kindervater refused.

Menius also interrogated George Schuckard. Schuckard had been imprisoned as an Anabaptist as early as 1540. After being interrogated by Menius, he had promised to amend his ways and was set free. In 1551, Schuckard was taken captive again and imprisoned in Kreuzburg. It was discovered that he knew a certain Strohans of Etterwinden. Strohans was arrested. Under questioning, Strohans disclosed that Schuckard had approached him, explained his theological views and desired to have sexual intercourse with Strohans' wife. Strohans refused.

On August 20, 1551, Duke John the Middle informed his father of the whole matter and indicated his intention to execute Schuckard. Schuckard was the founder and leader of a sect and he had committed adultery. Both crimes were punishable by death. Duke John also informed his father that Menius had requested permission to summon together all the clergy of his two dioceses in order to instruct them about the sect so that they could ward off the group and keep it from spreading. John Frederick agreed to Menius' proposal, and decided that the other Superintendents of his territory should do the same. After Duke John the Middle had received an opinion from the jurors at Leipzig that Schuckard should be burned to death if he refused to recant, or beheaded if he did recant, Duke John ordered the death sentence. Schuckard refused to recant and was burned to death. In going to his death, Schuckard refused the prayers of the clergy, claiming that he did not need them since he was a child of God.

In 1551, Menius published a pamphlet against the sect, On the Bloodfriends among the Anabaptists (Von den Blutfreunden aus der Widertauff).<sup>179</sup> The book is divided into two parts. In the first part, Menius follows his customary procedure in his polemical writings: he describes the doctrine and practice of the Bloodfriends. He enumerates three devilish dangers of the sect: they destroy the true religion of the Sacred Scriptures; they ruin the civil order; and, they uproot the divine order of the family and household stewardship. In the second section, Menius offers five counter arguments

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<sup>179</sup>Published in Erfurt by Gervasius Sthürmer. An abridgement of the pamphlet was printed in Unschuld. Nach., XII (1712), 189-194.



against the Bloodfriends.. They are: that Christians are sinful even after their rebirth by the Holy Spirit; that Christ did not abolish the validity of the Old Testament Law; that Christians are obliged to obey the Law of God; that Christ has not abolished the validity of the Old Testament, but built upon it; and, that the Bloodfriends' righteousness is really sinfulness. Menius concludes the book by explaining the reasons why God permits the sects. He does so to make manifest those who are truly upright, to punish those who despise the divine word and to remind the faithful that the end of the world is near and their redemption has drawn near.

### Controversies

#### The Aepinian Controversy

During the so-called Aepinian Controversy about the nature of Christ's descent into Hell,<sup>180</sup> Menius submitted his opinion on the

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<sup>180</sup>John Aepinus was the first evangelical superintendent of Hamburg. He was born in 1499 and studied at Wittenberg where he took the bachelor's degree in 1520, having studied under Luther and Melanchthon. In 1529 he became pastor of St. Peter's church in Hamburg, and in 1532, the Superintendent of Hamburg. He carried through the evangelical reformation in Hamburg. He is best known by the controversy which arose over his teaching about the descent into Hell. According to Aepinus, Christ had really gone down into Hell, to deliver men from its power, instead of merely going to the grave as his opponents taught. The opposition party was led by Aepinus' successor at St. Peter's, John Gartz. Both parties sought the support of the Wittenberg theological faculty for their respective points of view. Melanchthon discovered that there was no agreement on the matter among the theologians whom he consulted on the matter, and advised that the Hamburg theologians not engage in controversy about it. For the literature on Aepinus, consult Schottenloher, *BdG*, I. Schmidt does not mention the controversy, perhaps because Menius' role in it was next to nothing. Erich Vogelsang, "Weltbild und Kreuzestheologie in den Hoellenfahrtsstreitigkeiten der Reformationszeit," *ARG*, XXXVIII (1941), 90-132, surveys the older literature and provides an in depth study of the controversy. His

subject to Melanchthon. In it Menius expressed surprise that the Hamburg theologians would engage in controversy about such an unnecessary question. According to Menius, Christ's descent into Hell was a part of His suffering. It should be interpreted as spiritual torment under the wrath of God. Menius views Christ's descent into Hell with regard to its content, suffering, rather than with regard to its time of occurrence. After Christ said, "It is finished," he did not suffer anymore. Here Menius followed Luther who had expressed such a view in his lectures on the Psalms in 1519, when Menius was his student.<sup>181</sup> At the end of his "Opinion," Menius stated, "This is not my opinion, but the opinion of Luther."<sup>182</sup>

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paragraph on Menius is based on Menius' Gutachten to Melanchthon of August 14, 1551, now in the Wolfenbüttel Library. The bibliographical entry of that library which this writer discovered is, "Judicia variorum theologorum videlicet Aepini, Flacii Illyrici, Lutheri, Melanchthonis, Menii, Osiandri, Westphali Wittenbergensium, Crogeri et aliorum de descensu Christi ad inferos (circum annum 1550)." This writer was unable to examine the Wolfenbüttel manuscript to determine whether or not it contains the Gutachten to which Vogelsang refers. The writer obtained a photo-reproduction of Menius' "Sententia," as contained in the "Controversia Hamburgensium Theologorum. 1550," handwritten copy in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg as a gift from Dr. Robert Kolb of the Foundation for Reformation Research. On the basis of the material which was available to this writer, it was impossible to determine whether or not Menius' "Sententia" is the same as his Gutachten to Melanchthon.

<sup>181</sup>Vogelsang, XXXVIII, 114.

<sup>182</sup>Menius, "Sententia," p. 58a. "Haec mea, quae non est mea, sed Lutheri sententia est."

## The Osiandrian Controversy

By the time Menius finished his book against the Bloodfriends, he was, it may be presumed, already aware of the controversy that was raging in Königsberg about Andrew Osiander's doctrine of justification. Menius says on February 16, 1552, "I have kept the thoughts which I have written in this book to myself until now, evermore hoping and expecting another, better confutation and rebuttal."<sup>183</sup> The controversy had begun in 1549, on the occasion when Osiander delivered his inaugural disputation at the university in Königsberg. For over a year and a half, Menius was deeply involved in this controversy.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>183</sup>Justus Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt. Wider die neue Alcumistische Theologiam Andreae Osiandri (Erfurt: Gervasius Sthürmer, 1552), A3r-A3v. "Hab auch solche gedanken mich bis daher auffhalten lassen/das ich mit meinem schreiben jnnen gehalten/und jimmerdar andere bessere Confutation und widerlegung gehoffet und gewartet hab."

<sup>184</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 139-183, relies on the older material. For literature on Andrew Osiander and the Osiandrian controversy, consult Schottenloher, BdG, II, 16668-16712a, 25299a; III, 48521-48532. The standard biography for Osiander is W[ilhelm] Möller, Andreas Osiander: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften. Vol. V in Leben und ausgewählte Schriften der Väter und Begründer der lutherischen Kirche (Elberfeld: R. L. Friderichs, 1870). Emmanuel Hirsch has written a comprehensive monograph on Osiander's theology, Die Theologie des A. Osiander und ihre geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1919). The Dutch theologian, Marinus Johan Arntzen, takes issue with Hirsch and offers a different interpretation of Osiander's doctrine of justification in his Mystieke Rechtvaardigingsleer (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1956). Osiander was born on December 19, 1598 at Gunzenhausen in the Electorate of Brandenburg. He was ordained in 1520 in the Imperial City of Nuremberg, and became professor of Hebrew there at the Augustinian monastery. In 1522, he became preacher (Prädikent) at the Church of St. Lawrence. In that position he exercised a decisive leadership in introducing the evangelical reforms. In spite of protests from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, Osiander succeeded in his reforms; and, during the diet of 1523, he administered the Sacrament of the Altar in both species to Queen Isabella of Denmark, the sister of Emperor Charles. During the next decade, Osiander participated

The primary theological issue in the controversy was in the area of the doctrine of justification. Osiander taught that a man is saved by God's grace through faith in Christ alone. For Osiander, a man is justified as the essential righteousness of God dwells within him through faith. This indwelling righteousness of God effects a true righteousness in the believer's human nature which restores him to the image of God in which the human race was originally created. Osiander separated subjective justification historically from the reconciliation which God accomplished in Jesus Christ, and insisted that justification cannot be a mere imputation of the reconciling work of Christ. Only as Christ, with His divine nature, dwells in the believer and makes him truly righteous is it possible to speak of the justification of the sinner. Opponents of Osiander accused him of distorting the biblical message in two main areas. His teaching, they argued, robs despairing sinners of the real consolation of faith; and, his teaching mixes together faith and the new obedience which flows from faith. At odds were two different conceptions of righteousness and two different conceptions of the scope of justification.

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actively in the reform movement. At the same time, he developed an original system of theology. While he was consolidating the reform measures in Nuremberg, he became personally acquainted with the Saxon reformers at Marburg. After 1529 he was present at many of the important colloquies, he attended the Diet of Augsburg, and he was a signatory to the Schmalkald Articles. When the Augsburg Interim was introduced at Nuremberg, Osiander left. He obtained a preaching position in Königsberg from Duke Albert of Prussia, who had a deep admiration for Osiander. In 1549, Duke Albert appointed Osiander the leading professor of the theological faculty at Königsberg even though Osiander had never received an academic degree.

The immediate occasion for the beginning of the controversy was Osiander's inaugural disputation on April 5, 1549, Concerning the Law and the Gospel (De Lege et Evangelio). A Wittenberg master, Matthew Lauterwald, attacked Osiander and he was soon joined by Osiander's colleagues, especially Joachim Mörlin. On October 14, 1550, Osiander held a second disputation, On Justification (De Iustificatione). After that disputation, Osiander began to set forth his theological views in books. In December of the same year, he published a book in which he explicated his concept of the image of God, Would the Son of God Have Had to Become Incarnate if Sin Had Not Entered into the World? And, Concerning the Image of God (An filius dei fuerit incarnandus, si peccatum non introivisset in mundum. Item de imagine dei). In the following year he published the book which was to be most significant for Menius' early role in the controversy, Confession on the Unique Mediator Jesus and Justification Through Faith (Von dem einigen Mittler Jesu Christo und Rechtfertigung des Glaubens, Bekenntnis Andreas Osiander).

In order to settle the dispute, Duke Albert requested the Lutheran theologians in the various territories to assemble in conferences and discuss the articles in controversy. He asked the theologians to send their theological evaluations (Gutachten) in writing to Königsberg, after they had held their conferences. In order to comply with Albert's request, Duke John Frederick, the former elector of Saxony, who at that time was in prison because of his opposition to the Emperor during the Schmalkald War, summoned together some of the theologians of his territory for a conference. Menius was one of the theologians who attended. He wrote one of the three evaluations which the Saxons sent to Königsberg. Under the date of

January 18, 1552, and with the single title, Opinions: that is, An Evaluation on the basis of God's Word of the Confession of Andrew Osiander Concerning the Unique Mediator Jesus Christ and Concerning Justification Through Faith (Censurae: das ist, Erkendtniss aus Gottes Wort und heiliger Schrifft, Uber die Bekendtnis Andrea Osiandri, Von dem einigen mittler Jhesu Christo, und von der Rechtfertigung des Glaubens).<sup>185</sup> The assembled theologians signed the volume of opinions.<sup>186</sup>

During the next month Menius wrote a lengthy book against Osiander's theology, Concerning the Righteousness that Avails before God (Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt).<sup>187</sup> The main body of

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<sup>185</sup>Menius published his opinion in 1552, in Erfurt, through the printer Gervasius Stürmer.

<sup>186</sup>The theologians who signed the volume of Gutachten were: Nicholas von Amsdorf, Justus Jonas, Erhard Snepf, Maximillian Mörlin, Justus Menius, John Graius, Victorineus Strigel, John Stols, John Aurifaber, John Birnstil, and John Fesellius. They submitted the volume to John Ernest, John Frederick the Middle, John William, and John Frederick the Younger, Dukes of Saxony. Menius' Gutachten consists of five main parts in addition to a dedicatory introduction (Alv-B1r) and a conclusion (F2r-F4v). The five major sections are: I. Concerning the Person and Nature of the Mediator, Jesus Christ (B1r-B3r); II. Concerning the office and unique works of the Mediator, Jesus Christ (B3r-C2v); III. Concerning the Righteousness of the Mediator Jesus Christ which is Imputed to the Believer, and what Avails before God (C2v-D3v); IV. How the Righteousness of the Mediator Jesus Christ comes to us and becomes our own (D3v-E1r); and, V. Concerning the Result and Effect of the Doctrine of Osiander, that is, to what End it finally comes, and what its Outcome is (E1r-F2r).

<sup>187</sup>Menius dedicated the book to Duke Albert in the hope that it would persuade him to silence Osiander. The book is divided into these parts: I. Summary of Osiander's doctrine of justification (B1r-C2r); II. General evaluation of Osiander's doctrine (C2v-D2v); III. Concerning Osiander's formulations and translations (D2v-F4v); IV. Concerning the Person and Nature of the Mediator, Jesus Christ (F4v-G2r); V. Concerning the Office and Unique Works of the Mediator, Jesus Christ (G2r-K2v); VI. The true righteousness of God which avails before God and which is imputed to the poor sinner through faith, on account of which he is esteemed righteous before God,

the eighty-page book is divided into ten sections. In the first three, Menius summarizes Osiander's doctrine of justification and discusses some general questions relating to it. Menius compared Osiander's previous doctrine of justification with the view of justification which Osiander was teaching. He rejects Osiander's claim that the two are identical with each other. Menius argues that if Osiander had taught previously what he was teaching now, then his colleagues, and especially Luther, would have publicly refuted him. Because Osiander had not been refuted earlier, Menius concluded that Osiander had deliberately disguised his teaching in the past. Menius disputed Osiander's interpretation of the Scriptural terms: justification, reconciliation, and redemption. He accuses Osiander of misinterpreting these terms. Thus, justification does not mean "to make righteous," as Osiander maintains, but justification means "to declare righteous." The words reconciliation and redemption do not refer to aspects of Christ's work which are separate from justification, as Osiander holds, but all three are united aspects of Christ's work by which the sinner becomes acceptable to God.

In the fourth and fifth section, Menius takes up the matter of Christ's Person and Work. Menius concurs with Luther, the holy Apostles and Evangelists that Jesus Christ is true God and man, and that two natures, the divine and the human, are personally united in Him. Menius accuses Osiander of separating the person of Christ

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obtains grace and salvation (K2v-N2v); VII. How the righteousness of Christ comes to us and becomes our own (N1v-N4v); VIII. What the righteousness of Christ effects in the believers, and the damage that Osiander's doctrine does to the true teaching (N4v-R1r); IX. Concerning Osiander's sophistry (R1r-T1r); X. Excerpt from Raymond Lull (T1v-T3v).

because he separates the work and office of Christ, attributing His work to His human nature and His office to His divine nature. The office of Christ, according to Menius, must be attributed to the entire person of Christ including both natures. Just as there can be no Christ without a unity of two natures, Menius argues, so there can be no office or work of the Christ without a unity of the natures.

The final three theological sections of the book deal with the whole matter of righteousness. The righteousness of God which avails before God and which is imputed to the poor sinner through faith, on account of which the sinner receives grace and is saved, is not the essential righteousness of the divine majesty as Osiander holds, according to Menius. Menius claims that the word, iustitia, is seldom used in the Sacred Scriptures for the essential and eternal righteousness of God. Instead, the term means most often the righteousness which God reckons to the sinner who believes on Christ. Furthermore, according to Menius, the essential righteousness of God cannot be meant in the doctrine of justification because the sinful human nature cannot be transformed into such righteousness. The human nature and God's essential righteousness are incompatible. This can be seen clearly from the doctrine of the Law of God.

The Law of God, according to Menius, shows the essential righteousness of God, which man ought to have in his own nature and essence. It shows what God intends for the human race. Human righteousness is to show itself by conforming to the divine Law. Although the Ten Commandments are a voice of the essential righteousness of God, nevertheless it is clear that human nature cannot conform to it. This is sufficient evidence for Menius that human nature cannot be transformed into the divine righteousness and that



Osiander's doctrine of justification is clearly false. Menius believed that an individual whose conscience was extremely troubled would be driven to despair by Osiander's notion of righteousness and the way he uses it in his doctrine of justification.

Osiander responded to Menius in his book, A Taste of Beer (Schmekebier). Then, on October 17, 1552, Osiander died. The controversy about his teaching continued. The division among the clergy and laity in Duke Albert's territory was so deep that all attempts to produce peace and unity between the opposing parties were unsuccessful. Menius' role in the controversy now entered a new phase.

John Frederick of Saxony had cherished a deep friendship for Duke Albert for a long time. He wished, therefore, that Albert would bring the controversy to a conclusion so that peace could return to the ecclesiastical affairs of the Prussian domain. John Frederick thought that it would be a simple matter to settle the controversy since the principal antagonist, Osiander, had died. Therefore, the Elector sent several theologians to Prussia, and instructed them to resolve the controversy. These theologians were Menius and John Stolz, the Court Preacher at Weimar. They were accompanied by Frederick von Wagenheim, a court official, and Christopher Elephas, a Doctor of Law.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 159-183, based his presentation of the following material on the handwritten archival manuscript, "Preussische Handelunge der kurfürstlichen Sechsischen Gesandten mit den Osiandristen über den Artikel von der justification oder Rechtfertigung des Glaubens ausgehen durch Justus Menius." Schmidt claims, II, 160, that the document was ready for publication and was supposed to have been published at Jena in 1555. However, because of the controversy over good works on account of which Menius incurred the wrath of the Saxon Dukes, the document was never published. This writer has

On April 8, 1553, Menius and the other members of the envoy met with Duke Albert. Albert commanded John Funck,<sup>189</sup> the son-in-law of Osiander and the chaplain of the Duke, and others who agreed with Osiander's ideas, to prepare a written confession for the Saxon theologians. On April 14, Menius and Stolz were summoned to appear before the Duke again. The Duke claimed that he himself had not departed from the pure doctrine of the gospel or the Augsburg Confession. He noted that he himself had attempted to resolve the controversy many times, but without success. In his view, the controversy stemmed from the inordinate ambition of the theologians and from their desire to humiliate the good man Osiander. Funck then expressed his hope that the Saxon envoy would examine the Osiandrian party's confession impartially. Funck was convinced that the Saxons would discover that the Osiandrian's theological views had been repudiated unjustly. He then read the confession which he had prepared for the meeting. Menius and Stolz asserted that they wanted to examine the confession, and to compare it with the works of Osiander. They proposed to set forth their evaluation of the confession in a special refutation. The Osiandrians objected. They asserted that many theologians had frequently misrepresented Osiander's position. Furthermore, they

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supplemented Schmidt's material with Christoph Hartknoch, Preussische Kirchengeschichte, darinnen von Einführung der Christlichen Religion in diesem Lande, wie auch von der Conservation, Fortpflanzung, Reformation und dem heutigen Zustande derselben ausführlich gehandelt wird (Frankfort/Leipzig: Beckenstein, 1686), pp. 360-362; and Franz Koch, "Die sächsische Gesandtschaft zu Königsberg während des Osiandrischen Lehrstreits im Jahre 1553."

<sup>189</sup>For the literature on Funck, consult Schottenloher, BdG, I, 6838-6841a.

maintained that their confession set forth clearly their past and present understanding of Osiander's teaching. Menius responded that Osiander's Confession on the Unique Mediator Jesus and Justification Through Faith was clear enough, and that it needed no further elaboration. To this Duke Albert replied that Osiander's books had also been frequently misinterpreted. He stated the conviction that Osiander's doctrine of justification agreed completely with the doctrine of justification as it was set forth by Luther.

Menius and Stolz prepared a refutation of the confession of the Osiandrians. In their refutation they indicated those elements of the Osiandrian doctrine which they deemed objectionable. On April 19, Menius read the refutation in the presence of the Duke and the Osiandrians. When he had finished reading, Funck requested a copy of the refutation so that the Osiandrians might examine it according to the Scriptures and prepare an answer. On May 2, in response to the refutation of Menius and Stolz, the Osiandrians submitted a reply which Menius considered bitter and insulting. The Duke expressed his desire that the Saxons would consider the reply favorably, and that they would formulate their own response without invectives, but in a manner that would glorify God.

The Saxons decided that the best course of action would be to desist from any further literary exchanges with the Osiandrian party. Instead, they planned to prepare a special composition for Duke Albert in which they intended to set forth clearly the errors of the Osiandrian doctrine. However, only one part of the work could be completed because Menius became ill with a severe fever on May 3. On May 16, the delegation had another audience with the Duke. They

now requested a public discussion with the Osiandrian party, but their request was refused. Although successful attempts were made to set a date for a private discussion between the opposing parties, Funck repeatedly changed the date so that the proposed discussion never took place. On June 5, Duke Albert left Königsberg. He dismissed the Saxon deputation and called for a Synod to settle the matter.

According to Menius, the matter would have ended there if Count Poppo of Henneberg<sup>190</sup> had not come to Prussia at this time. The Count had discussed the controversy with Duke Albert and had received Albert's permission to preside at a discussion in Königsberg between the Saxons and the Osiandrians. The discussion took place on June 25. Menius, although he was still ill, delivered the opening presentation. He developed the article of justification on the basis of the Scriptures, the Augsburg Confession, and the works of Luther. Next he pointed out what he considered to be three errors in the Osiandrian doctrine: that Osiander's view had the effect of making the works which the believer does in faith the basis for his assurance of salvation; that Osiander split asunder the union of the divine and human nature in Christ; and, that Osiander improperly separated reconciliation, redemption, forgiveness and justification. Funck, in reply, denied the validity of Menius' conclusions. He asserted that the Osiandrians taught that believers should place their assurance on Christ alone. Although good works are performed in this life through the power of Christ, yet no one should place his confidence in such works. Menius

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<sup>190</sup>For literature on Poppo, consult Schottenloher, BdG, III, 30249-30250.

asked how Funck could now speak about the comfort of Christ's obedience and suffering since he had previously written that in temptation no one should be comforted by them? Funck referred to the "Opinion" of Brenz, and asserted that the whole controversy was merely a matter of words. From then on, the discussion grew more confusing. Each party presented different interpretation of the biblical concepts of righteousness and justification. When it became obvious that nothing could be settled, Funck called for a Synod to settle the matter. The Count then dismissed the meeting. He prohibited both sides from publishing any more books about the matters in dispute. The Saxons had to return to their territory without accomplishing their purpose. Menius, because of his illness, remained in Königsberg until August 26. During this time he completed another refutation of the Osiandrians which he submitted to Duke Albert. At this point, Menius' role in the Osiandrian controversy came to an end.

#### The Majoristic Controversy

It is not clear at what point Menius relinquished the office of Superintendent at Eisenach.<sup>191</sup> At all events, in 1552, Nicholas von

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<sup>191</sup>Schmidt, Menius, II, 185, says that Menius relinquished the office in 1552 when Amsdorf arrived in Eisenach. Funkhänel, p. 383, says on the basis of Himmel that Menius had given up the Superintendent's office in Eisenach in 1551. Schmidt, Menius, II, 36, 185, gives two reasons for Menius' decision to turn his attention exclusively to Gotha. He states that Menius did so because he feared unpleasant confrontations with Amsdorf, who, by this time had already joined with Flacius in attacking George Major. Menius, whose son was studying theology with Major and Melanchthon at this time, was a close friend of Major. Schmidt states, too, that Menius' poor health prevented him from being Superintendents over both dioceses.

Amsdorf came to Eisenach and moved into Menius' house.<sup>192</sup> While at Eisenach, Amsdorf sought to gain the theologians of Ducal Saxony as his allies against the theologians at the Universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig, but without much success. In 1554, Amsdorf began an attempt to discredit Menius, who, until that time, had remained neutral in the Majoristic controversy. Menius' role in that controversy will now be described.<sup>193</sup>

In June of 1554, Duke John Frederick the Middle proposed a visitation of the churches in his territory.<sup>194</sup> Two of the Ducal

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<sup>192</sup>Funkhänel, p. 383.

<sup>193</sup>The primary sources for Menius' role in the controversy are his books Verantwortung Justi Menij Auff Matth. Flacij Illyrici giftige und unwahrhafftige verleumdung und lesterung (Wittenberg: [Georgen Rhawen Erben], 1557); Bericht der Bittern Warheit lusti Meni Auff die Unerfindlichen aufflagen M. Flacii Illyrici/und des Herrn Niclas von Amsdorffs (Wittenberg: n.p., 1558); the following handwritten archival material from the Ducal archive at Weimar, obtained from the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel, Menius, "De quaestione, an bona opera ad salutem sint necessaria, disputatio seu collatio Justi Menii anno 1554, mense Novembris, Gotae in 110 propositiones redacta et visitatoribus oblata"; Nicholas von Amsdorf, "Summa propositionum Menii syllogismo inclusa et comprehensa ab episcopo Amsdorffio"; Erhard Schnepf, "Ad Menii opinionem de iustitia operum necessaria ad salutem themata Erhardi Schnepffi"; Menius, "J. Menii epistola ad Erhardum Schnepffium, d. d. Gotthae, 1550"; Menius, "Ad statum controversiae. Justus Menius"; Menius, "Ad themata Schnepffi responsio Menii"; Menius, "J. Menii epistola ad Joh. Stolsium, d. d. Gotthae. 1555, Jan. 12"; Schnepf and John Stolz, "Schreiben Erhardi Schnepffi und Joh. Stolsii an dem Rath zu Nordhausen, d. d. Gotha. 1555, Jan. 13"; "Actio J. Menii, Gotanae ecclesiae pastoris et superintendentis, habita Isnaci coram duce Johanne Friderico Saxoniae, praesentibus primariis theologis et consiliariis eiusdem a. 1556, mense Augusto."

<sup>194</sup>KO, I, 222, prints the Duke's instructions to the visitation commission. "Instruction unser von gottes gnaden Johans Friderichen des mittlern, Johans Wilhelm und Johans Friderichern des jungern gebudern, herzogen zu Sachsen, lantgrafen in Doringen und marggrafen zu Meissen, was die ehrwirdigen, wirdigen und hochgelarten unser liebe andechtige, rethe und getreuen ern Niclas von Amsdorf, doctor Erhardt Schurpff, Justus Menius, magister Johannes Stoltz, Dietz von Brandenstein, Christannus Bruck der rechten doctor, in sachen die neue visitation belangend thuen, handeln und ausrichten sollen. Vom 17. Juni 1554."

stipulations in the visitation instruction provided Amsdorf with the means of forcing Menius out of neutrality. One of the stipulations provided for the removal from office and banishment of any clergyman who adhered to Major's error.<sup>195</sup> The other stipulation was that if the visitors discovered any adiaphoristic books, they should give an earnest warning to the clergy about their use.<sup>196</sup> After the visitation of Weimar had been completed, Amsdorf requested Menius to condemn certain books as adiaphoristic, and to condemn the books of Major as erroneous.<sup>197</sup> Menius refused. He claimed that he did

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<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 223. "Wurden aber pfarher, prediger oder diaconi befunden, die einen irthumb im glauben, es were des hochwirdigen sacraments des leibs und bluts Jesu Christi, der hailigen tauf, interims, adiaphorische, Osianders, widerteuferischen, Schwenkfeldischen, Zwinglischen und Majorischen vorfurischer secten oder andern kezerei und falscher Iher halben, oder sonsten an unserer christlichen religion und Augspurgischer confession zweivel oder ekel hetten, den sollen unswere visitatores als balt sagen, sich furderlich aus unsern landen zuwenden, mit der vorwarnung, wo sie doruben betreten wurden, das sie mit ernst sollen gestrafft werden, und do sich gleich einer oder mer dorvon abzustehen erbitten werden, so sollen sie doch im kirchampt nicht gelassen werden, sintemal die erfahrung gibt, das sie von solcher gift nicht lassen."

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 227. "Es sollen auch vil alter und neuer schedlicher, adiaphorischer, Bullingischer, Calvinischer und andere kezerische bucher, wie hioben gemeldet vorhanden sein. Die sollen unsere visitatores, da dieselbigen in den gemainen kirchen und inventarien befunden, hinweg zuthuen vorschaffen, oder aber die predicanten derselbigen in leren und predigen zugebrauchen mit ernst vorwarnen, in betrachtung das menniglichs vorstand und gotliche gaben in solchen vorfurischen buchern underschid und messigung zuhalten sich nit erstrecken thut und dordurch zu schedlichen irthumb oftmals ursach und anleitung gegeben wird."

<sup>197</sup> Schmidt, *Menius*, II, 186, conjectures that Amsdorf was suspicious of Menius because of Menius' friendship with Melancthon, and because Menius had sent his son to study at Wittenberg. Menius' son, Eusebius, was a student of Major at Wittenberg.

not know if the books which Amsdorf had put before him for condemnation were erroneous because he had not read them. Menius refused, too, to condemn Major because he claimed that he had not read Major's books. Menius noted that Amsdorf's request for a condemnation was actually aimed at the theologians of Wittenberg and Leipzig. Menius stated that he could not participate in such a condemnation because the Dukes and the Elector of Saxony had agreed that the theologians of Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Jena should not molest each other. Finally, Menius pointed out that both Amsdorf and Schnepf had agreed that Major had corrected his previous error.

Menius perceived that Amsdorf and Schnepf were displeased. He surmised that the visitation could not be continued without further tension. He requested the Duke to excuse him from his duties on the visitation. He complained that bodily condition, his poor eyesight, his inability to withstand the travel across the country in the uncomfortable coldness of winter, and the strain on his eyes from having to work at night with poor lighting made it impossible for him to continue. The Duke honored Menius' request and granted Menius a leave of absence.

Soon thereafter, Menius' opponents reported to the Duke that Menius had fabricated the reasons for which he requested to be excused from the visitation. They accused Menius of making several all-day journies to taverns at Nordhausen in cold weather; that he had been seen sitting at a table until well into the night; and that the pastors of Gotha complained that they had heard strange words from Menius which could cause all sorts of misunderstanding and dangerous opinions unless the civil authority intervened. The



Duke instructed Schnepf to investigate the charges, and then to submit his opinion about how to deal with Menius.

When the visitors were in Weida, Menius sent a set of propositions to Schnepf.<sup>198</sup> In Schnepf's view, Menius undertook to defend the error of Major. He requested Menius to withdraw the propositions, and not to present them to the visitation commission. However, when the visitors came to Gotha in November, Menius submitted his propositions to them. Amsdorf drafted a set of counter-propositions.<sup>199</sup>

On the Sunday after Christmas, Menius sent an evaluation and a personal confession about Major's teaching to Schnepf. Menius' statement read as follows:

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<sup>198</sup>Justus Menius, "De quaestione, an bona opera ad salutem sint necessaria, disputatio seu collatio Justii Menii anno 1554, mense Novembris, Gotae in 110 propositiones redacta et visitatoribus oblata," unpublished manuscript in the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel. Matthew Flacius published those theses of Menius which he considered erroneous in his book, Die alte und neue Lehr Justii Menij/jederman zur Warnung und jtzzt zu einem vordrab Matth. Fl. Illyrice, A4v-Blr. The propositions which Flacius printed were: "26. Es ist die gantze Warheit/nicht allein durch des Gesetzes zeugnis/sondern auch des Euangelii bewiesen/das die gerechtigkeit und gute werck/so das Gesetz gebeut/zur Seligkeit nötig sein. 38. Es ist nötig war/das auch die guten werck zur Seligkeit nötig sein. 39. Diejenigen so da sagen/das die guten werck zur Seligkeit nicht nötig sein/Heben auff das furnemste Ampt des Gesetzes/ja das gantz Gesetz machen sie zu nichten/und seind ware Antinomer. 41. Nicht aber allein das Gesetz/sondern auch das Euangelion selbs leret/das die guten werck zur Seligkeit nötig seind. 55. Es ist offenbar/das die jenigen/so verneinen/das die guten werck zur Seligkeit nötig sein/nicht allein das Gesetz auffheben/Sondern auch das Euangelium zu nicht machen/und die furnemsten wolthaten Christi auffheben. 107. Es seind nicht viel besser denn die Widerteuffer die jenigen so da vermeinen/das die gute werck den gerechtfortigten nicht nötig zur Seligkeit etc. 109. Summa/dass die guten werck zur Seligkeit nötig sein/bezeuget nicht allein das Gesetz/sondern auch das Euangelion." For a transcription of the handwritten document, consult Appendix A.

<sup>199</sup>Nicholas von Amsdorf, "Summa propositionum Menii syllogismo inclusa et comprehensa ab episcopo Amsdorphyo," unpublished manuscript in the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel.

As far as the honorable and learned George Major's doctrine of good works is concerned, which teaches how and why good works are necessary for the salvation of the soul, I, Justus Menius, confess that it agrees in every respect with the Holy Scriptures, the Augsburg Confession, and the doctrine of blessed Martin Luther. Its meaning is that that everyone receives the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the Holy Spirit, eternal life and salvation through faith in Christ, purely from God's grace and mercy without any work or merit of their own, but only for the sake of the unique Mediator, Jesus Christ. For such, in order that they do not lose again all those heavenly goods and treasures of grace and be damned eternally with the devil, it is necessary continually to fight against the remaining sins in the flesh for as long as they live, and produce the proper fruits of faith, exercise, prove and make sure their faith in the new obedience. To that end they are incited and moved by the Holy Ghost, since the gift of the Holy Spirit, which certainly follows the forgiveness of sins, is not lazy or idle, but rather powerful and active, purifies and cleanses out daily the remaining sins, and works in order to make every human being pure and holy. This can be seen in all the examples and biographies of those who, at any time from the beginning of the world, have been converted and saved. It can be shown that this has always occurred and happened at all times without exception, and that this is the divine order for every sinner who is truly converted.

In that way, and in no other, I interpret D. Major's phrase, when he asserts, Good works are necessary for salvation, not in order to obtain it, but that they must certainly follow as fruits and effects of the Holy Spirit in those who have already become saved and the children of God through their faith in Christ by grace alone without any works and merit.

Furthermore, that at no time can anyone be or become saved in whom, after receiving salvation, good works do not follow, and would have to follow if he would want to continue and remain in the salvation which he has received.

That this is Major's meaning can be seen from his own clarification which he has attached to that phrase in every instance, but without which, his words, if they stood only by themselves (Good works are necessary for salvation. Without good works no one has ever been saved. It is impossible to be saved without good works.) could have a different and provocative sense. Therefore, D. Major adds that the phrase is in accordance with the Scriptures if it is properly interpreted.

Thus and in no other way do I understand D. Major's doctrine that good works are necessary for salvation. I cannot draw any other meaning from his books with my simple reason, unless I wanted to be a false witness

against God's commandment and my own conscience (from which may God preserve me). I cannot pronounce Major's doctrine erroneous as such, to any man on earth, friend or foe, since it completely agrees with God and my conscience.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>200</sup>Justus Menius, "Urtheil und Bekenntniss über Majors Satz," unpublished manuscript printed in Schmidt, Menius, II, 188-189. "So viel des ehrwürdigen und hochgelehrten Herrn Georgii Majoris Lehre von guten Werken, dass und wie dieselben zur Seelen Seligkeit von nöthen seinen, belangen thut, kann ich, Justus Menius, sie anders nicht, denn der heiligen Schrift, Augsburgischen Konfession und Doktoris Lutheri seligen Lehre allenthalben gemäss erkennen, also dass nemlich dieses seine Meinung sei, dass allen Denen, so durch den Glauben an Christum Vergebung ihrer Sünden, Gerechtigkeit, heiligen Geist, ewiges Leben und Seligkeit aus lauter Gottes Gnade und Barmherzigkeit ohne alle ihre eignen Werke und Verdienste, allein um des einigen Mittlers Jesu Christi willen erlangt haben, von nöthen sei, damit sie alle solche himmlische Güter und Gnadenschätze nicht wiederum verlieren und ewig mit den Teufeln verdammt werden, dass sie bis in ihren Tod wider die übrigen Sünden in Fleisch durch ihr ganzes Leben immerdar streiten und rechtschaffene Früchte der Busse wirken, ihren Glauben in solchem neuen Gehorsam üben, beweisen und gewiss machen, dazu sie dann vom heiligen Geist angeregt und getrieben werden, sintemal des heiligen Geistes Gabe, so auf die Vergebung der Sünden gewisslich folgt, nicht faul noch müssig, sondern vielmehr kräftig und thätig ist, reinigt und feget täblich die übrige Sünde aus und arbeitet, dass sie den Menschen recht rein und heilig mache, wie solches in allen Exempeln und Historien derer, so von Anfang der Welt jemals bekehrt und selig worden sind, dass es also allerwege und niemals anders ergangen und geschehen sei, zu befinden und unmöglich ist, dass es in göttlicher Ordnung anders denn also mit einigem Sünder, der wahrhaftig bekehrt wird, ergehen könne.

"Auf solche Meinung und nicht anders muss ich D. Majoris Rede verstehen da er setzt, Gute Werke seien nöthig zur Seligkeit, nicht sie damit zu erlangen, sondern dass sie bei Denen, so durch den Glauben an Christum aus lauter Gnaden ohne alle Werke und Verdienste schon selig und Kinder Gottes worden sind, als Früchte und Wirkung des heiligen Geistes gewisslich folgen müssen.

"Dass auch niemals Jemand selig worden sei noch selig werden möge, in dem nach erlangter Seligkeit gute Werke nicht gefolgt hätten und noch folgen müssten, so er anders in der erlangten Seligkeit bestehen und bleiben wolle.

"Und dass dieses seine Meinung sei, giebt seine selbsteigene Erklärung, so er allerwege dabei gesetzt hat, ohne welche sonst diese seine Worte, wenn sie für sich selbst allein stünden (Gute Werke sind nöthig zum Seligkeit, Ohne gute Werke ist Niemand jemals selig worden und ist unmöglich ohne gute Werke selig werden) auch wohl auf einen andern und ärgerlichen Verstand gezogen werden möchten, derhalben D. Major auch hinzugesetzt, solche Reden seien der heiligen Schrift gemäss, so sie recht verstanden werden.

"Also und nicht anders verstehe ich D. Majors Lehre von guten Werken, dass und wie sie zur Seligkeit nothig sind, und kann nach meiner Enfalt aus seinen Schriften keinen andern Verstand zeigen,

Thereupon Schnepf, too, composed some propositions.<sup>201</sup> He gave them to Menius, and the two men disputed about them the following day. The result of the disputation was that on January 2, 1555, Schnepf reported to the Duke, "Justus Menius' statement and interpretation about justification and good works is correct, proper, in conformity with the Scriptures and irreproachable."<sup>202</sup> In Schnepf's view, Major's expressions should not be used in the church, where, Schnepf thought only clear statements should be used. Schnepf went on to say that there would be no difficulty if Major and Menius would be content to assert that good works are necessary for the Christian. Schnepf supposed that Menius was motivated by noble reasons, but he complained that Menius, by supporting Major, made it possible to include works as a cause of salvation. Schnepf concluded that the conflict between him and Menius was not about theological substance, but only about the use of theological formulations in the church.

However, a discussion between Menius and the rest of the visitors ended less amicably. The visitors could not persuade Menius to condemn Major's statements as questionable or suspicious. Instead, Menius remained neutral, claiming that he could not completely

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ich wollte denn (dafür mich mein lieber Gott gnädiglich behüten wolle) wider Gottes Gebot und mein eigen Gewissen ein falscher Zeuge sein, kann auch solche Lehre gar nicht als irrig verwerfen, das alles mit Gott und meinem Gewissen bezeugend, keinem Menschen auf Erden zu Liebe noch zu Leide."

<sup>201</sup>Erhard Schnepf, "Ad Menii opinionem de iustitia operum necessaria ad salutem themata Erhardi Schnepffi," unpublished handwritten manuscript in the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel.

<sup>202</sup>Quoted in Schmidt, Menius, II, 190, but not documented. "Justi Menii Sentenz und Meinung von der Rechtfertigung und guten Werken recht, aufrichtig, der heiligen Schrift gemäss und untadelig ist."

defend Major's statements, or use them. He refused to condemn Major's expressions because he was persuaded that they could be interpreted properly. In a note which Menius sent to the visitors, he said:

The formulation of the phrase is not simply false as it stands without any interpretation, but only ambiguous. Blessed D. Luther was willing to bear with it, though reluctantly. It may be used in the discussion of the doctrine of the law to speak abstractly about good works. There it is not wrong, but right and true to say that good works are necessary for salvation.<sup>203</sup>

Finally, Menius contended that a condemnation was such a grave judgment that it should be reserved only for the most crucial matters. Menius' note troubled the visitors, but the Duke advised them to let the matter rest for a while.

At about that time, the town council at Nordhausen requested from Schnepf, Stolz, Menius and the theologians at Jena their opinion about the dispute which had arisen among their preachers over the statements of Major. The Nordhausen council also desired a proposal for a way to restore unity. The visitors requested Menius to join with them in their opinion and advice, but Menius refused. He replied that he intended to remain with the opinion which he had given to them both orally and in writing. Menius told the visitors that they could send their opinion, but that he intended to compose his own. When another attempt by Stolz failed to persuade Menius

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<sup>203</sup>Quoted in Schmidt, Menius, II, 191, but not documented. "Dass die forma loquendi, da sie gleich an ihr selbst ohne alle Erklärung blos steht, nicht simpliciter falsa, sondern allein ambigua ist, deswegen sie D. Luther seliger ungern leiden wollen, und da sie in tractatione doctrinae legis geführt wird, von guten Werken abstracte zu reden nicht unrecht, sondern recht und wahr gesagt wird, quod bona opera sunt ad salutem necessaria."

to join with the visitors in their opinion, the visitors ordered Menius not to send an opinion to Nordhausen. Menius agreed to remain silent. However, he told the visitors that he would not remain silent if anyone asked him for his own opinion, or if the messenger from Nordhausen demanded an answer from him, or if the Nordhausen council itself requested an answer from him.

The first phrase of Menius' involvement in the Majoristic controversy came to a conclusion on January 15, 1555, when the Duke directed Menius not to defend Major's statements from the pulpit, or in talking or writing to friends, or others; but, to agree in condemning the proposition with other teachers of the Duke's territory. The reasons which Duke gave for his directive were the same reasons which had been used to justify the suppression of the Anabaptists. The Duke asserted that although no one's conscience could be bound about what that person might believe privately in his own heart, nevertheless, because of the Duke's civil responsibility toward the Gospel, he could not permit the dissemination or defense of false doctrine within his territory.

Knowledge about Menius' conflict with the visitors spread. On the one hand, Menius could not avoid explaining to the clergy under his authority what had happened. On the other hand, his opponents spread the rumor that Menius was defending Major's statements from the pulpit, and that Menius had fallen away from the gospel and became a papist. Therefore, Menius decided to defend himself. He wrote a book in his defense, but he was not permitted to publish it.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Justus Menius, "Entschuldigung lusti Menii. Auff die unwarthafftige verleumbdung/darinnen jm aufferleget wird/als solt er von der reinen Lare des Euangelij abgefallen sein/etc." The visitors

The Duke soon took further measures against Menius. Some individuals whose identity is unknown reported to the Duke that Menius had separated himself from the visitors in order to flee from Saxony. Rumors reached the Duke that Menius had already secretly dispatched his possessions out of the territory. Therefore, the Duke instructed his representative at Grimmenstein Castle, Bernhard von Mila, to intercept Menius and obtain from him a promise not to move from Gotha without the permission of the Duke. The Duke threatened imprisonment for Menius if Menius should refuse to make such a promise. When von Mila arrived at Menius' residence, he met Menius preparing to leave for Schoenau in order to install a new pastor. Menius promised to return to Gotha that evening and to appear at the castle the following morning. However, the next morning Menius fled to Halle. He sent one of his subordinates, the curate Thilen, to the castle with a letter in which Menius explained the reasons why he fled. In Halle, Sebastian Boethius, Menius' son-in-law, told Menius about the rumors which were circulating there and in Wittenberg. Boethius also showed Menius some books in which Major had made some marginal notations. In Menius' view, the comments by Major were too crass. He wrote to Melanchthon and stated

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learned about the book when the manuscript was already at the printer in Erfurt. From Coburg, they requested the Duke to prevent its publication. On February 13, 1555, the Duke instructed his representative at the Grimmenstein Castle, Bernard von Mila, to obtain promises from Menius that he would withdraw his book from the publisher and send it to the Duke, and that Menius would not defend Major's teaching from the pulpit. Menius promised to do both. He sent a messenger to Erfurt to retrieve the manuscript. However, when the messenger arrived at Erfurt, he discovered that the Duke had already confiscated the manuscript. Menius published the book later, in 1558, as a part of his Bericht der Bittern Wahrheit.

that he disagreed with Major's use of the disputed theses very much.<sup>205</sup> Menius then wrote to the Duke and defended himself against the charges of his adversaries, and appealed for a hearing.

In the meantime, Menius' colleagues at Gotha appeared in person at the Duke's court and defended Menius. The Duke wrote to Menius and instructed him to return to Gotha and continue in office. The Duke promised Menius a hearing if that should be necessary. Menius returned to Gotha on March 26, 1555, and requested permission from the Duke to defend himself in writing. Menius threatened to leave Gotha if the Duke denied his request. On April 2, the Duke replied to Menius. The Duke advised Menius that a decision would be forthcoming. Menius waited for over a year without receiving a decision from the Duke

In the course of the year 1556, Menius published two small works: How to Prepare for a Blessed Death, and a Sermon on Salvation.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>205</sup>Menius' letter to Melanchthon of March 4, 1555, printed in AM, p. 91.

<sup>206</sup>This dissertation is handicapped by the fact that these two important publications by Menius could not be located or obtained by this writer. Schmidt does not summarize, nor does he quote from either of these works as he does from other books by Menius. He supplies no bibliographical information about them except that they were published in Erfurt. The first book, Von der Bereitung zum seligen Sterben, was dedicated to Burgomaster Cotta of Eisenach and George von Wangenheim. The second work, the Predigt Von Der Seligkeit, was summarized by Menius in a letter to Thomas Titterich, the pastor at Zelle, on August 29, 1556, printed in Unschuld. Nach., II (1702), 1045-1049. In the letter, Menius writes, "Ist die Summa der Predigt diese: Dass man nicht aus menschl. Vernufft und Weisheit/ sondern allein aus dem Evangelio lernen muss/worinnen die Seligkeit aller Menschen stehet/zum andern/das durchs Gesetz und Werck kein Mensch selig werden könne/und hab unterschiedlich Ursachen angezeiget/warumb man durchs Gesetz und Werck von Gott gegeben/nicht könne selig werden: zum drifften/dass man allein durch den Glauben an Christum selig werden muss/und wie solches zugebe/auch was die Ursach sey: zum vierden/das diejenigen/so ohn alle Gesetz und Werck/ allein durch den Glauben an Christum selig worden sind/sich vorsehen



He sent copies to several men whom he respected, including Melancthon and Bugenhagen. Although Menius avoided the expression that good works are necessary for salvation, he emphasized that a moral improvement is necessary in order to retain the salvation received through faith out of God's pure grace without any merit or works. The passage from the sermon which soon came under attack read:

For those who have been saved without the law or any work, but only through faith in Christ, it is necessary that they guard against and take care that they do not lose again the salvation which they have received without any merit, but only by grace, on account of their manifest sins against God and their conscience, but rather that they preserve their salvation, stand in it, and remain in it by means of their pure heart, good conscience and unfeigned faith.<sup>207</sup>

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und hüten sollen/dass sie die Seligkeit/so ihnen aus Gnaden/ohne allen ihren Verdienst wiederfahren ist/durch öffentl. Sünde wieder Gottes Geboth und ihr wissen nicht wiederum verliehren/sondern sie vielmehr in seinen Hertzen/guten Gewissen und ungefärbten Glauben erhalten/und darinnen bestehen und bleiben mögen. Dieses letztere Stück/neml. wie ein Gläubigen sich halten soll/dass er seine Seligkeit durch öffentl. Sünden nicht wiederum verliehren/sondern sie in einen reinen Hertzen/guten Gewissen/und ungeferbten Glauben erhalten und darinnen bleiben möge/ist mir von etlichen verkehrten bosshafftigen Leuten dahin fälschl. gedeutet worden/als hätte ich geschrieben/man müsse die Seligkeit mit guten Wercken verdienen/welchs ich doch mit den wenigsten Wörtlein nicht gedacht/sondern durch die gantze Predigt aufs gewaltigste darwieder gefochten und gestritten habe/wie die Predigt ausweiset." ibid., II, 1047-1048.

<sup>207</sup>Quoted in Gottlieb Jakob Planck, Geschichte der Entstehung, der Veränderungen und der Bildung unseres protestantischen Lehrbegriffs vom Anfang der Reformation bis zu der Konkordienformel (Leipzig: Siegfried Lebrecht Crusius, 1796), IV, 516. "Dass denjenigen, so ohne alles Gesetz und Werke allein durch den Glauben an Christum selig geworden sind, doch vonnöthen sey, sich vorzusehen und zu hüten, dass sie die Seligkeit, so ihnen ohne alles Verdienst aus Gnaden wiederfahren ist, durch öffentliche Sünde wider Gott und ihr Gewissen nicht widerum verliehren, sondern sie vielmehr in reinen Herzen, guten Gewissen und ungefärbten Glauben erhalten, und darinn bestehen und bleiben mögen."

A similar statement occurred in Menius' booklet on How to Prepare for a Blessed Death. Menius wrote:

The Holy Ghost begins righteousness and life in the believer. That beginning is utterly weak and imperfect in this life, to be sure, and will be consummated in the future life after the resurrection. But as long as we live in this sinful flesh, it is necessary for salvation.<sup>208</sup>

On July 8, Amsdorf wrote in a letter to the Duke that Menius should be refuted. He requested permission to publish a confutation. Other members of the Ducal court took a milder view of Menius' alleged error. Therefore the Duke requested all respected theologians of the land to send opinions (Gutachten) about Menius' booklet and sermon. Schnepf restated his previous position that Menius' language should not be tolerated in the church. Some of the Jena theologians were of the opinion that Menius had not fallen from the gospel, but only that some of his expressions were unclear. They suggested that Menius should explain if he believed that good works were a cause of justification, or if good works were the fruit of justification. Morlin and Stossel, who were to become, along with Amsdorf and Flacius, Menius' most bitter enemies, were of the opinion that Menius' book was very suspicious, and suggested that Menius be examined by a Synod.

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<sup>208</sup> ibid. "Dass der heilige Geist anfahe in den Glaubigen Gerechtigkeit und Leben, so lange wir in dem sündlichen Fleisch wandlen, zwar ganz schwach und unvollkommen, aber doch zur Seligkeit vonnöthen sey, und künfftig nach der Auferstehung vollendet werde."

Menius was again summoned to Grimmenstein Castle by the ducal officials, and, by order of the Duke, they instructed Menius to refrain from preaching at Gotha.<sup>209</sup> They also ordered Menius not to leave the city without the Duke's permission. Menius was instructed to appear in Eisenach for a hearing on the following Monday, but, in the meantime, he was not to discuss the matter with anyone. Menius felt compelled to accept the conditions. Menius threatened, however, never to enter the pulpit in Gotha again if he were not permitted to preach. He requested the Duke to release him from his office in order that he might obtain a position elsewhere. The ducal officials communicated Menius' request to the Duke, but the request was denied.

Menius arrived in Eisenach on August 2, 1556. The Duke, John Frederick the Middle, personally presided over the Synod. Some theses which had been drafted by Victorin Strigel were put before Menius. He was requested to declare whether he would accept them, or reject them. No discussion about the theses was to be allowed. Menius was granted permission, however, to wait until the next day to think about his answer, and to submit his reply in writing.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup>Perhaps this is the reason for the statement by Preger that Menius was suspended from his office. Wilhelm Preger, Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1859), I, 382. Salig, p. 49, agrees that Menius had to relinquish the "Predigtstuhl."

<sup>210</sup>Schmidt's presentation of the Synod at Eisenach is based on a transcription of the proceedings, "Actio J. Menii, Gotanae ecclesiae pastoris et superintendentis, habita Isnaci coram duce Johanne Friderico Saxoniae, praesentibus primariis theologis et consiliariis eiusdem a. 1556, mense Augusto," unpublished manuscript in the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel.

The following day Menius appeared before the Synod and gave his reply. He stated that he would not reject the position which he had set forth in his booklets, namely that good works are necessary to retain salvation.<sup>211</sup> After Menius had delivered his statement,

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<sup>211</sup>Menius' reply is quoted in Schmidt, Menius, II, 204-210. The statement of Menius contained three points. In the first, Menius reiterated the Duke's asserted desire to retain the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession pure and whole within his territory. In the second, Menius stated that he had never used the formulation that good works are necessary for salvation. In the third, Menius claimed that he had never taught anything against the gospel. An important part of the third point is worth quoting. "I confess and have repeatedly confessed that the statement, Good Works are necessary for Salvation, is a misleading, half-incomplete and dangerous statement, which, by itself, can be interpreted in an unchristian as well as a christian sense. For that reason, D. Martin Luther advised that the statement should not be used without an explanation, in order that everyone could know and be certain what was intended by it and what it meant. Or, if used without such clarification, it should be avoided. For his words were, 'That proposition should either be formulated with the necessary distinctions or repudiated. But I have never heard or read that he condemned the proposition as heretical. Since, in the doctrine of the law, it cannot be condemned as the Saxon Churches of Lübeck, Hamburg and Lüneburg confess. Now although I was not in Wittenberg at the time when that disputation took place, in 1538, and cannot pass judgment on it, even though my judgment would count for nothing, still I have a personal statement from Frederick Myconius who was sent to England with others at about that time, and who was present at that disputation. He testified with his own hand that he was given a statement, in the form of an instruction, by the theologians at Wittenberg about what he should count as agreement with the English theologians. His personal testimony does not agree with the publication which was published in Magdeburg about that disputation. In Myconius' handwritten statement, he claims that he was instructed not to contest the statement that good works are necessary for salvation. In my opinion, the reason for that is this: although justification and salvation depend on each other and belong together, still the word salvation includes much more than the word justification. For without a previous renewal or sanctification, to be sure, the human being becomes righteous before God through faith alone. However, when the human being has become righteous through faith, and has received the hope of salvation, then the renewal and sanctification must truly begin until salvation is consummated, as St. Peter says, 'Salvation is the end of faith.' Therefore, the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are renewed, is not the smallest, but the treat-est of the blessings which faith receives. For that reason, renewal cannot be excluded from salvation, but is necessary for it in every way in order that we might be restored again to the state of

he was sent out of the room to await the decision of the Synod. The theologians then requested Menius to clarify several matters which,

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blessedness which we had in the beginning, but which we lost through Adam's fall. Just read the Exposition of D. Luther of the Gospel for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity; or his book on the councils, section XI and LXI; or the many other testimonies which I could draw out of his and other excellent theologians' books. But, just as will them all, so I can testify in truth before God and my own conscience in front of the whole world, that I have never used that proposition by itself and ambiguously for as long as I have lived, because that proposition, as the theologians themselves confess, is ambiguous. All those who have heard me preach, and my own books bear witness to that, too." "Ich bekenne und habe es je und alle Wege bekannt, dass die Rede, Gute Werke sind nöthig zur Seligkeit, eine missverständliche, halbmündige, unvollkommene und gefährliche Rede sei, die so blos an ihr selbst ebenso wohl auf unchristlichen irrigen Verstand als auf rechten christlichen Verstand gezogen werden möge. Derhalben D. Martinus Luther gerathen, man soll sie entweder gar unterschiedlich führen und alle Worte wohl baden, dass man gewiss wissen und erkennen möge, wohin sie gerichtet und gemeinet sei, oder soll ihr ganz und gar müssig gehen. Denn also lauten seine Worte: Illa propositio aut est distinguenda aut simpliciter repudianda. Dass sie aber als aller Ding ketzerisch von ihm verdammt sein sollte, habe ich von ihm new weder gehört noch gelesen. Sintemal sie in doctrina legis je nicht verdammt werden kann, wie der Sächsischen Kirchen, Lübeck, Hamburg und Lüneburg Prediger auch bekennen. Wiewohl ich nun die Zeit, da diese Disputation gehalten worden, nemlich Anno 1538, zu Wittenberg nicht gewesen und demnach auch davon nichts hab judiciren können, wiewohl auch an meinem judicio nichts gelegen; so hab ich aber doch weiland des ehrwürdigen Herrn Friedrich Myconii Handschrift, der damals in England beineben Andern verschickt worden und solche Disputation gegenwärtig angehört und mit seiner Hand aufgezeichnet hat, welche sich mit dem ausgegangenen Magdeburgischen Druck allenthalben nicht vergleicht; zudem ist deibeineben auch seine Handschrift vorhanden einer Instruktion, so ihm damals von den Herren Theologen zu Wittenberg mitgegeben, worauf er sich mit denen Englischen in allen Artikeln unserer christlichen Confession vergleichen sollt oder nicht. Darinnen mehr denn einmal zu befinden, dass ihm vorgeschrieben, diese Proposition, dass gute Werke zur Seligkeit nöthig, ohne Widerfechtung nachzulassen, meines Erachtens aus dieser Ursach, obwohl Rechtfertigung und Seligkeit aneinanderhangen und zusammengehören, dass doch das Wort Seligkeit weit mehr in sich beschliesst denn das Wort Rechtfertigung; denn ohne vorhergehende Verneuerung oder Heiligung wird man wohl vor Gott gerecht allein durch den Glauben; aber wenn man durch den Glauben gerecht worden ist und die Hoffnung der Seligkeit erlangt hat, muss wahrlich die Verneuerung und Heiligung mit anfahren zur Vollendung der Seligkeit, wie St. Petrus sagt: die Seligkeit sei des Glaubens Ende. So ist ja die Gabe des heiligen Geistes, damit wir verneuert werden, unter andern Wohlthaten, so der Glaube empfähet, nicht die geringste, sondern eine mit der grössten. Derwegen sie von der Seligkeit mit

In their opinion, he had not answered sufficiently. They demanded Menius to give sufficient and correct answers to the questions which they now put to him, in order that the Duke could see if Menius agreed in the pure doctrine with the other teachers of the land. They asked, first, if the statement that good works are necessary to retain salvation is not the same as saying that good works are necessary for salvation? Second, does not the use of the word "retain" in the statement, "Good works are necessary to retain salvation" give to works a power which belongs to faith alone? Third, even if the phrase of Menius could be interpreted properly in the doctrine of the law as an abstract expression, should it still be allowed in the church if it could be misinterpreted by the simple and unlearned folk? Fourth, in what sense does salvation include more than justification? Fifth, what is the sense of the phrase, "in the consummation of salvation" (in Vollendung der Seligkeit?) Finally, because of the importance of the article of salvation, must not the proposition be simply condemned as a divisive element in the church, and because of its ambiguity, not even be allowed in the doctrine of the law?

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nichten ausgeschlossen werden kann, sondern in alle Wege von nöthen ist, damit wir zu dem, so wir im Anfang gehabt und durch den Fall Adams verloren haben, wiederum kommen mögen. Man lese die Auslegung D. Lutheri über das Evangelium des 18. Sonntags nach Trinitatis; item in libro de conciliis, quaternione XI und LXI, sammt den sehr vielen testimoniis, so ich aus seinen und anderer trefflichen Theologen Schriften anziehen kann. Aber wie dem allen, weil diese propositio, wie die Herren Theologi selbst bekennen, ambigua et flexiloqua, d. i. dunkel und missverständlich ist, derhalben sie D. Luther entweder wohl unterscheiden oder gar aller Ding hat meiden heissen, so mag ich vor Gott auf mein Gewissen auch mit Wahrheit vor aller Welt das zeugen, dass ich sie so blos und ambigue mein Leben lang weder in Predigten noch Schreiben niemals geführet habe, dessen ich mich auf alle Die, so meine Predigten angehört, desgleichen auch auf alle Die, so meine Predigten angehört, desgleichen auf alle meine ausgegangen Schriften hiemit referiren thue."

Menius was given until six o'clock the next morning to prepare his answers. He appeared at that time and answered the theologian's questions one by one.<sup>212</sup> First, Menius stated again that he had never used the phrase, "good works are necessary for justification," in any of his books or sermons. He requested that his book and his sermons, which had been attacked, be judged on the basis of its total argument. Menius requested that no one draw from his words more than what they actually say. Second, Menius asserted that to retain salvation and to be retained in salvation are one and the same thing, "since God wants to preserve us in grace and salvation insofar as we do not walk after the sinful desires of our flesh, but obey the Holy Spirit after he has taught us."<sup>213</sup> Third, as far as the use of the phrase in the doctrine of the law is concerned, Menius asserted that he would remain with the statement of the pastors of the churches of Lüneberg, Hamburg, Lübeck, and Magdeburg, who wrote that the phrase cannot be condemned as heretical. Fourth, Menius thought that it was clear enough that the word salvation includes in it more than justification. To justification, he argued, pertain the two elements of the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. To salvation belong both of the above as well as the gift of the Holy Spirit and the renewal which He effects, beginning in time, but fully in eternity. Finally, Menius asserted that he personally would not use the

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<sup>212</sup>The complete text of Menius' reply is printed in Schmidt, Menius, II, 216-220.

<sup>213</sup>ibid., II, 217. "Sintemal uns Gott also in Gnaden und in der Seligkeit erhalten will, sofern wir nicht nach den sündlichen Lüsten unseres Fleisches, sondern nachdem wir vom heiligen Geist gelehrt werden, wandeln und ihm gehorsam sind."

phrase, but he refused to condemn it. He gave as reasons for this refusal the fact that the statement is true in the doctrine of the law, as even the theologians' question had acknowledged; and, furthermore, Luther himself, in his sermon on the Gospel for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity had asserted that the law has to be kept purely by those who want to be saved; and, finally, because the phrase had been used in a proper sense by many trustworthy teachers, and may be so used again in the future. Menius did offer, however, to condemn anyone who used the phrase improperly.

After reading his statement, Menius was asked to depart. He was summoned back an hour later, and was ordered to dispute with Strigel on the following theses:

- I. Although the expressions: Good works are necessary for salvation, when one preaches the law and speaks concerning how we are obliged to keep it and completely fulfill it, abstractive et de idea, may be tolerated, yet there are many important reasons on account of which the term, good works are necessary for salvation, should not be used, just as the phrase, Christ is a creature, should not be used.
- II. When one treats how a condemned sinner may become righteous and saved, the expression good works are necessary for salvation cannot be tolerated in any way.
- III. When one treats concerning why the new obedience or renewal is required to follow in those who have been reconciled with God through faith, one cannot say that good works are necessary for salvation, but for other reasons.
- IV. Faith alone, from beginning to end, makes one righteous and saved.
- V. Good works are not necessary to retain salvation.
- VI. Justification and salvation have one and the same meaning, and one may be used for the other, and in place of the other. Neither can be, nor ought to be separated from the other.
- VII. Therefore, such an expression ought to be thrown out of the church and not used because the papists are



accustomed to misuse it to their advantage wherever they think that it would be helpful for them, and because it occasions many offenses and controversies, and also for other reasons, concerning which the Apostles in Acts 15 give advice.<sup>214</sup>

Menius was now given until one o'clock in the afternoon to reflect on the propositions. From one until four o'clock, in the presence of the entire assembly, Menius debated with Strigel over the propositions. The two men found agreement on all seven points. Chancellor Brück delivered a speech in which he congratulated the two men, and suggested that the propositions be drawn up in the form of a confession and be signed by all the theologians. Strigel composed a confession entitled, "Conclusion and Decree of the Eisenach Synod, 1556, in which the Error of Major and Menius was

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., II, 220-221. "I. Wiewohl diese Rede: Gute Werke sind nöthig zur Seligkeit, wenn man das Gesetz predigen soll und davon redet, wie wir's zu halten und vollkommlich zu erfüllen schuldig sind, wohl mag geduldet werden, so sind doch sonst viel gross-wichtige Ursachen, um derenwillen man ebenso wenig sagen soll: Gute Werke sind nöthig zur Seligkeit, als man sagen soll: Christus ist eine Kreatur. II. Wenn man davon zu handeln hat, wie ein verdammter Sünder soll gerecht werden und selig, ist die Rede keineswegs zu leiden, dass man sagen wollte: Gute Werke sind nöthig zur Seligkeit. III. Wenn man davon lehren soll, wie in denen, so durch den Glauben mit Gott versühnet sind, neuer Gehorsam oder Verneuerung folgen soll, anderer Ursachen willen nöthig sind. IV. Der Glaube allein macht gerecht und selig vom Anfang durchaus bis zum Ende. V. Gute Werke sind nicht nöthig, die Seligkeit damit zu erhalten. VI. Rechtfertigung und Seligmachung sind einerlei Bedeuten und gelten eins so viel als das andere und mag eins wohl statt des andern gesetzt werden, können noch sollen von einander nicht geschieden werden. VII. Dero-halben solche Rede, welcher die Papisten zu ihrem Vortheil und wo sie sich dünken lassen, dass es ihnen eben sein wolle, zu missbrauchen pflegen, um vierlerlei Aergerniss und Zwietracht, auch anderer Ursachen willen, davon die Apostel Akt. 15 Meldung thun, aus der Kirche verworfen und nicht gebraucht werden soll."

Condemned."<sup>215</sup> The confession was composed of the seven articles about which Menius and Strigel had disputed, together with explanations of each article.

Menius signed the confession. He was then given a formula of recantation to sign, but he included the comment that he had always taught and written in agreement with the confession. Some of the theologians, particularly Amsdorf, were offended. They thought that Menius was trying to escape the embarrassment of recanting. Therefore Menius was compelled to add the following words with his own hand.

I, Justus Menius, testify in my own handwriting that this confession is true and orthodox, and that, according to the gift given to me by God, I have heretofore by word and writing publicly defended it, and shall continue to defend it. Since, however, in my little book about salvation which was published recently, I used a manner of speaking about the necessity of the new obedience of those who have been reconciled which could be interpreted in an improper sense by those who are uninformed, I am willing to remove those passages and to explain their sense in order that the confession may remain pure forever and never be made ambiguous or the subject of scandal.<sup>216</sup>

At the conclusion of the Synod, the Chancellor ordered the superintendents not to permit the clergy of their dioceses to use the formulation, "good works are necessary for salvation." The

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<sup>215</sup>The entire text of the "Conclusio et decretum synodi Isenacensis anno MDLVI celebratae, qua Majoris et Menii error damnatus est," is printed in Schmidt, Menius, II, 222-237.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., II, 236. "Ego Justus Menius hoc meo chirographo protestor hanc confessionem veram et orthodoxam esse eamaue me pro dono mihi divinitus collato voce et scriptis hactenus et publice defendisse et porro defensurum esse. Cum autem eam verborum formam, qua de necessitate novae obedientiae reconciliatorum in libello meo de beatitudine recens edito usus sum, in diversam sententiam accipi a nonnullis intelligam, polliceor me totum illum retexturum itaque sententiam explicaturum esse, ut piae confessioni per omnia consentanea futura nihilique habitura ambiguitatis aut scandali sit."

superintendents were instructed to make sure that all the preaching in their dioceses was in accord with the Eisenach confession. In addition, the theologians were ordered not to publish anything unless it first received the approval of the official censors. Furthermore, the Duke would be displeased if they published anything in any other city except Jena. The second phase of the controversy had now come to a conclusion. The most bitter part was still to come.

Amsdorf was dissatisfied with the confession. He maintained that the words "abstractly" (abstractive) and "concerning the idea" (de idea) in the first article represented a new and unprecedented theological direction in the church which should not be tolerated. Furthermore, he thought that Menius could use those words as an escape from the censure which he had received on account of his false doctrine. Amsdorf, Wigand, and Flacius submitted opinions to the Duke against the Eisenach confession and they persuaded the Duke not to publish it.<sup>217</sup> Menius' teaching was discussed again at a convention at Weimar in May 1557. The majority of that assembly demanded that Menius' teaching be condemned, but Schnepf and Hugel, both of whom opposed such an action, managed to prevail on the Duke not to take such action.

In the meantime, various rumors were being spread abroad.<sup>218</sup> In effect the rumors claimed that Menius was guilty of false doctrine,

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<sup>217</sup>The Eisenach confession remained in the Ducal archives until Flacius published it in 1563, ibid., II, 241.

<sup>218</sup>The source for the documentation of the rumors is Menius, Bericht der Bittern Wahrheit, N2v-N3r.

and that he was secretly sympathetic to the so-called adiaphorists. In response to the rumors, Menius remained silent, for the most part. However, he did write a letter to the clergy at Zelle in which he answered the charges against him. In addition, Menius revised the disputed passages in his book on salvation. But the whole matter flared up again when one of Menius' subordinates at Gotha, the curate, Thilen, accused a fellow curate, Melchior Weidemann, of preaching that the law is necessary for salvation. Aurifaber brought the matter before the court and the Duke reprimanded Menius. By October 1556, Menius came to the conclusion that he could no longer continue in office at Gotha. Flacius, too, had attacked him, and lumped him together with the so-called Adiaphorists.<sup>219</sup> On October 27, Menius informed the Duke that he was going into hiding until he discovered whether or not the Duke would deal kindly with him. Menius sent a letter to the ducal officials and ecclesiastical ministers of the Gotha diocese informing them that he was laying aside his office, and he went to Langansalza. On November 22, the Gotha town council tried to persuade Menius to return. They showed Menius a note from the Duke in which the Duke assured the council of his gracious intentions toward Menius. In response, Menius gave the following conditions under which he would return to Gotha. First, he demanded that he be protected

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<sup>219</sup>Preger, Flacius, I, 382, quotes from Flacius' book, Von der Einigkeit derer, so für und wider die Adiaphora in vergangenen Jahren gestritten haben, christlicher, einfältiger Bericht sehr nützlich zu lesen von M. Fl. III. "Major and Menius have started defending again the error that good works are necessary for salvation in their printed books. It is to be feared that their last error will be worse than the former." "Es regen jetzt Major und Menius in ihren gedruckten Büchern wiederum den Irrthum: dass gute Werke zur Seligkeit nöthig seien, dass deswegen zu besorgen ist, das Unglück were ärger, denn das vorige."

from those who accused him of teaching false doctrine. Secondly, he demanded that he be permitted to defend himself, his ministry, his doctrine, and his churches against those who slandered him from outside Saxony. Third, he desired assurance that he would not be compelled to approve or to condemn anything that was against his conscience. Fourth, that if any other controversies arose, he be assured that his position would be examined by other theologians of the Augsburg Confession, and not just those of Saxony. Fifth, Menius demanded that he be not forced to separate from men like Melancthon whose work built up the church. Sixth, Menius wanted assurance that the Duke would not take action against him ungraciously, and remove him from office without a fair hearing. On December 24, Chancellor Brück submitted the Duke's response to Menius' conditions. The Duke declared that if Menius would again return to his office at Gotha, serve it, hold himself in accordance with the church order of the territory, then Menius would not lack protection. However, if Menius refused to comply, then the Duke would not be able to grant him special privileges. Menius was of the opinion that he could not accept the Duke's answer. He refused to return to Gotha, and shortly thereafter moved to Leipzig.

#### Menius in Leipzig

In Leipzig, Menius secured a position as a preacher at the Church of St. Thomas. There he spent the last two years of his life engaged in bitter polemical exchanges with Flacius and Amsdorf. In order to refute the charge which Flacius had made in his book On the Unity (Von der Einigkeit) accusing Menius of teaching that good works are necessary for salvation, Menius published a pamphlet,

The Vindication of Justus Menius from the Poisonous and Untrue  
Calumny and Slander of Matthew Flacius Illyricus (Verantwortung  
Justi Menij Auff Matth. Flacij Illyrici gifftige und unwarhafftige  
verleumbdung und lesterung.<sup>220</sup>

The book is divided into three main parts. In part one, Menius explains why he refused to repudiate and separate himself from the theologians of Wittenberg and Leipzig: they are true teachers of the gospel who have performed the thankworthy task of planting and building the Evangelical church. In part two, Menius explains why he refused to become allied with Flacius and the theologians associated with him. He gives the following reasons: because Flacius sets himself up as the judge of all the other theologians in the church; because Flacius has no true call from God to judge the doctrine of the called teachers of the church; because Flacius' confession of faith is suspect since he has never been examined for a call; because Flacius has caused more havoc in the Evangelical churches than the pope; because Flacius sins against Christian love in his ruthless attacks. In the final part, Menius defends himself against the charge of false doctrine. He claims that he has never written or said that good works are necessary for salvation. Then Menius summarizes his theology of the role and necessity of good works in the life of the christian.

During the course of 1557, three more polemical pamphlets were exchanged between the two men. Flacius wrote a very brief tract, The Old and New Doctrine of Justus Menius: a Vanguard Warning to

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<sup>220</sup>Published in Wittenberg by Georgen Rhawen Erben in 1557.

Everyone (Die alte und neue Lehr Justi Menij/jederman zu einen vordrab Matth. Fl. Illyrici).<sup>221</sup> Menius replied with his Short Answer to the Vanguard (Kurtzer Beschaid).<sup>222</sup> In his Short Answer (Kurtzer Beschaid), Menius attempted to prove that Flacius did not have a call or a command to write against Major and others; to defend himself, Menius, against the accusation by Flacius, that he, Menius, was teaching differently now than before; and, finally, to refute Flacius' charge that he, Menius, was guilty of false doctrine. In this book Menius presented the basic arguments which he had set forth previously in his Answer (Verantwortung), and at the Eisenach Synod.

Flacius, in turn, wrote a long reply to Menius in his Apology of Matthew Flacius Illyricus to Two Unchristian Books of Justus Menius (Apologia M. Fl. Illyrici/auff zwo unchristliche Schrifften Justi Menii/Darinnen von den grewlichen Verfelschungen der

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<sup>221</sup>There is no publisher and no date. The booklet consists of quotations from Menius' published books on the doctrine of salvation. It consists of two parts. In the first part, Flacius prints statements from Menius on the doctrine of justification and salvation which are unquestionably acceptable. In the second part, Flacius published some of Menius' statements during the Majoristic controversy which assert the necessity of the new life to retain salvation.

<sup>222</sup>Justus Menius, Kurtzer Beschaid Justi Menij: Das seine lare, wie er die fur der zeit gefurt und noch furet, nicht mit jr selbs streittig noch widerwertig, sondern allenthalben einerley und der warheit des Evangelij gemes sey. Auff den Vortrab Flacij Illyrici. Simplex veritatis Oratio. Psalm 25. Schlect und Recht behüte mich (Wittenberg: Georgen Rhawen Erben, 1557). The book contains three parts: A3r-A4v; A4v-F3r; F3r-F4.

Adiaphoristerey und Maioristerey allerley nützlichs angezeigt

wird),<sup>223</sup> dedicated to the King of Denmark. Menius concluded his side of the controversy in 1558, with his final pamphlet, Report of the Bitter Truth to the Unfounded Charges of M. Fl. and Nicholas von Amsdorf.<sup>224</sup> The book consists of a new reply to Flacius, and the unpublished work which Menius had written in 1555, his Entschuldigung. The first, new, portion contains two parts. In the first part, Menius gives a brief history of his involvement in the Interim. He attempts to demonstrate that he had remained faithful to the gospel during those difficult days. In the second part he protests against the charges of Flacius and Amsdorff, but he only repeats the same thoughts he had already expressed previously.

Menius died on August 13, 1558. Pfeffinger delivered the funeral sermon using as his text, Is. 57:1-2. In it he praised Menius for being a devoted, pious, Christian and learned man.

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<sup>223</sup>Apologia M. Fl. Illyrici/auff zwo unchristliche Schrifften Justi Menii/Darinnen von den gewlichen Verfelschungen der Adiaphoristerey und Maioristerey allerley nützlichs angezeigt wird (N.p.: 1558). A second "improved" (gebessert) edition came out later the same year. The book is divided into two main parts, plus a dedicatory introduction to the King of Denmark. In the first part, Flacius replies to the charges which Menius made in his first book, Verantwortung, Blr-02r. In the second part, Flacius responds to Menius' charges in his second book, Kurtzer Beschaid, 02r-P3v.

<sup>224</sup>Bericht der Bittern Warheit lusti Menii Auff die Unerfindlichen Auflagen M. Flacij Illyrici/und des Herrn Niclas von Amsdorffs (Wittemberg: Georgen Rhawen Erben, 1558).



## CHAPTER III

### MENIUS' THEOLOGY AGAINST THE ANABAPTISTS

#### Menius as a Source of Knowledge for Anabaptism

The first Anabaptist leader whom Menius met personally, as far as the sources indicate, was Melchior Rinck. Menius met Rinck in 1525 when Rinck was a disciple of M $\ddot{u}$ ntzer. The context of this meeting with Rinck cannot be reconstructed, nor can it be known to what extent Menius had personal relations with him. Menius' books indicate that he had a relatively extensive knowledge of Rinck's views. The meeting mentioned above indicates that Menius obtained some of his knowledge about Rinck from personal acquaintance. It is significant that Menius' first contact with one who was later an avowed Anabaptist leader was a disciple of Thomas M $\ddot{u}$ ntzer.

The next contacts between Menius and Anabaptists occurred during the visitation of Thuringia in 1527-1528. These visitations occurred in the aftermath of the Peasant's War. It might be conjectured that Menius would quite naturally link the Anabaptists which he met at this time with the radical peasants who had previously caused an uprising in this area. In 1528, together with Eberhard von der Thann, Menius wrote to John Frederick and informed him that there were Anabaptists in his territory. Because the letter is not extant, the nature and extent of Menius' contacts with and his views of those Anabaptists cannot be determined.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The letter is known only from a reference to it by Melanchthon. Corpus Reformatorum, edited by Carl Bretschneider (Halle: C. A.

By 1530, however, Menius had had extensive exchanges with Anabaptists. He wrote, "Frederick Myconius and I have been fighting this poisonous devil's seed for some time now, and we are not able to find an end to this poisonous vermin."<sup>2</sup> He stated that he had interrogated over thirty Anabaptists.<sup>3</sup> His knowledge of Anabaptists was already quite extensive.

Throughout the fourth decade of the sixteenth century, Menius had numerous personal confrontations with Anabaptists, but court records do not contain reports of many of these contacts. Menius personally interrogated at least thirty-five Anabaptists in his capacity as superintendent of Eisenach between the years 1530 and 1540. Moreover, he knew that the number of Anabaptists in his diocese was greater than those whom he had questioned.<sup>4</sup> The exact number of Anabaptists with whom Menius had contact cannot be fixed precisely. One thing is certain though, from the above information:

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Schwetschke and Sons, 1842), 1, 1012. Hereafter referred to as CR.

<sup>2</sup>Justus Menius, Der Widdertauffer Iere und geheimnis, aus heiliger schrift widerlegt (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1530), f. 301v. The copy of this book which was used by this writer is the version which was printed in the Wittenberg edition of Luther's Works, 1548, Vol. 11, folio pages 299-350.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., f. 312r. Menius probably included among these thirty, the Anabaptists who were executed at Reinhardsbrunn, January 31, 1530, because he writes about them in this book. He states that he had personally heard them, f. 340r. However, his role in their trial is unclear.

<sup>4</sup>Menius indicates this in his reports to Elector John Frederick of June 25, 1533, and July 28, 1533. The reports are printed in Paul Wappler, Die Stellung Kursachsens und des Landgrafen Philipp von Hessen zur Täuferbewegung, Heft 13 and 14 in Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte, edited by Joseph Greving (Münster i. W.: Aschendorffsche Buchhandlung, 1910), pp. 167, 177.

Menius' knowledge of Anabaptists' views was authentic. It was based on what Anabaptists themselves reported about their beliefs.

From 1541 to 1544, Menius questioned and interrogated more Anabaptists. Both at Mülhausen, where he introduced the evangelical reforms from 1542 until 1544, and at Hausbreitenbach, Menius came into contact with Anabaptists. In the area around Mülhausen, Menius tried to suppress Anabaptism; but, at the present time, there are no available records of any trials or interrogations in which Menius participated. Here again it is impossible to determine the number of Anabaptists with whom Menius talked. However, when Menius wrote his book, On the Spirit of the Anabaptists (Von dem Geist der Wiedertäufer), he stated that he knew over one hundred Anabaptists. It is obvious that Menius devoted considerable energy to the task of determining at first hand what Anabaptists actually believed and taught. The only place where information is available about what Menius learned of these Anabaptists is in his own books on the subject and extant court records.

Even if Menius' contacts with the Bloodfriends (Blutfreunden) are left out of consideration, what has been reported so far seems sufficient to warrant two conclusions. First, what Menius wrote concerning Anabaptist doctrines and practices was based on extensive and intensive firsthand investigations and personal knowledge. Second, assuming that Menius truthfully reported what he heard from Anabaptists, contemporary scholarship can use Menius' books about Anabaptists with the conviction that he describes genuine and authentic Anabaptist doctrines and practices.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>From this point of view, therefore, it is difficult to concur with John Oyer's evaluation of Lutheran writings against Anabaptists,

## The Definition of Anabaptism

The accusation of inaccuracy which has been directed against Menius' books against the Anabaptists is connected with a concern for an accurate definition of Anabaptism. The question is not so much whether or not Menius reported faithfully the views and activities of those whom he encountered as it is a question of whether or not Menius' picture of Anabaptism accurately depicts genuine Anabaptism.<sup>6</sup> What constitutes an accurate definition of

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Insofar as it refers to Menius. Oyer says in Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists: Luther, Melancthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 252, "on the question of accuracy of the Lutheran writings there can be no doubt whatsoever. They were based too frequently on insufficient primary association with radicals." Just the opposite is true of Menius. Oyer draws the following conclusion about Lutheran writings, "They were written for a propagandistic rather than descriptive purpose. They were conceived in fear and anger. They are grossly inaccurate." Ibid. To be sure, Menius did write for a propagandistic purpose, particularly when he was defending the Lutherans against the criticisms of the Anabaptists. But his books are not exclusively propaganda. They were written, in part, for an informative purpose and, in part, for a descriptive purpose. Menius wanted to inform the clergy under him and the simple folks about the nature of the Anabaptists and their distinguishing doctrines and practices. He wanted to help his clergy and parishioners understand what he considered to be the errors of the Anabaptists. Consult Menius, Der Widdertauffer Iere, f. 306v, f. 350r, passim. To repudiate the descriptive value of Menius' books against the Anabaptists because they contain propaganda is to cast an overly severe judgment. Oyer's criticism of Menius' books appears too harsh in the light of what he himself says in other places of his study. Oyer writes, p. 179, "Menius knew whereof he wrote. He had more contacts with the Anabaptists than did any of the Lutheran opponents of the radicals in Central Germany." In his evaluation of Menius' books, Oyer writes, p. 239, "He [Menius] wrote his books on the basis of personal encounters with Anabaptists of Central Germany." Why should books which were written on the basis of personal encounters be grossly inaccurate? Is it because Menius defined Anabaptism differently than Oyer does?

<sup>6</sup>Oyer, p. 252, criticizes the Lutherans, including Menius, because, "They persist in thoroughly mixing the most diverse kinds of Anabaptists so-called. They reveal a want of understanding of the real Anabaptist position on various issues." He faults the Lutherans

genuine Anabaptism? What is to be included in "general" Anabaptist thought? What groups and individuals should be designated Anabaptist? Was there any justification for Menius' point of view? Just how inaccurate, or accurate, was Menius' definition of Anabaptism? To work towards a solution to those questions, it is necessary to describe both Menius' theology with reference to the Anabaptists, and his picture of Anabaptism itself.

It should be pointed out, first of all, that by 1530, Menius had developed his theology against the Anabaptists into a rather coherent and unified position. Menius elaborated some of his early views in later writings, and he used some new arguments as the debate shifted; but, in general, his basic position was established by 1530. So was his picture of Anabaptism. The arguments which he employed in his first book recur in his later books. Therefore, it is possible to discuss Menius' theology over against the Anabaptists somewhat systematically.

Menius' theology as he formulated it with reference to Anabaptism proceeds from an eschatological orientation. Menius was convinced that the return of Christ in glory was imminent. He began his first book against the Anabaptists with the statement, "Everyday

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in general for not making distinctions between Anabaptists, p. 249. He limits the value of Menius' books in particular. "His information in general must be used with caution, preferably against the background of known views derived from Anabaptist sources. Where the latter is impossible his delineation of Anabaptist ideas must be judged by whether or not it conforms to general Anabaptist thought and practice," p. 252. Here the issue is obviously the question of an accurate definition of Anabaptism. Apparently what makes Menius' books inaccurate in Oyer's view is that Menius was unable to distinguish genuine Anabaptism from its counterfeits.

we hear and see that the time when the world will come to an end cannot be very far away. . . ." <sup>7</sup> The signs of the end time which Christ proclaimed in the Scriptures, signs in the stars, distress among nations, have now come to pass. <sup>8</sup> St. Paul's prophecy in 2 Thessalonians, concerning the man of sin who sets himself in the temple of God has been fulfilled in the papacy at Rome with its doctrine of works. <sup>9</sup> Daniel's prophecy has been fulfilled in the power of the Turk. <sup>10</sup> All these signs indicate that satan has begun his final assault on the elect of God's kingdom. <sup>11</sup>

The struggle between satan and God is most intense in the battle over the preservation of the truth of the gospel. The external catastrophes of satan are not nearly so dangerous as the damage which he effects by means of false doctrine. He has raised up all sorts of sects and groups who go about in Christendom under the guise of God's name and the gospel. <sup>12</sup> The worst among these are the Anabaptists. They are satan's force against the gospel, just as the Turk is satan's force against the civil governments of Christendom. <sup>13</sup> In fact, for Menius, the chief distinction between the Turk and the Anabaptists is their names. Both are bent on

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<sup>7</sup> Menius, Der Widdertaufer Lere, f. 302r. "Wir hören und sehen teglich/das die zeit/darinnen der welt ende komen sol/nu freilich nicht lang mehr sein kan/. . . ."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., f. 302v.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., f. 303r-303v.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., f. 304v.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., f. 306r.

destroying the truth of the gospel. Both are similar in their external manner of living. Nevertheless, God is fighting against satan. In these last times, God has caused His gospel to shine out of darkness in order to preserve His elect from the power of satan until the last day. Not since the time of the apostles has the gospel been proclaimed so clearly as it is now among the Lutherans.<sup>14</sup>

In order to assess properly Menius' bitter hostility against the Anabaptists, his severe condemnation of them, his approval of their being executed, his conclusion that they are satan's agents, it is necessary, first of all, to recognize the eschatological basis of his theology. Secondly, it is necessary to recognize the cosmic duel between God and satan which is fought out against this eschatological background. For Menius, the world is the arena of a cosmic struggle between God and satan. Although this war has effects on the civil affairs of men, its focal point is in the spiritual life of men. No human being could survive the destructive forces of satan's power. Menius exclaims, "O Lord God! Who would be able, indeed, who could survive at all now if you did not protect and defend us day and night?"<sup>15</sup> When Menius writes against Anabaptists, therefore, he sees himself as contending not merely against flesh and blood human beings. He is convinced that he is participating in the great end time struggle between

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<sup>14</sup>ibid., f. 305r.

<sup>15</sup>ibid. "O HErr Gott wer wolt/ja wer kund hie jmermehr bleiben/wenn du nicht uber hüttest und wachetest tag und nacht?"

God and satan. It is precisely this eschatological struggle which colored Menius' whole view of Anabaptism as a threat to evangelical Christendom.<sup>16</sup>

The central issue in this cosmic war between God and satan, insofar as it touches the world of men, is the struggle for the gospel. The kingdom of God confronts the kingdom of the devil, order confronts chaos, light confronts darkness and Christ confronts antichrist precisely at the point where the gospel collides with false doctrine, where God's Word opposes the doctrine of works, where ecclesiastical and civil authority repel the conflict and disunity which is caused by sects, and where the Christian confesses his faith publicly to unbelievers.<sup>17</sup> These antitheses are the driving force behind Menius' theology. For Menius, everything is at stake: both faith and the civil order.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>George Huntston William's statement in his book, The Radical Reformation (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 857, that the Radicals had "an eschatological mood far more intense than anything to be found in normative Protestantism or Catholicism," should be qualified insofar as it pertains to Menius.

<sup>17</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer lere, f. 304v-306r, 314r.

<sup>18</sup>The best explanation of the Lutheran reformers' view of the interrelationship between faith and social order which this author knows is that of Knud E. Loegstrup in his book, The Ethical Demand, translated by Theodor I. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), pp. 100-105. Loegstrup says, p. 101, "Why did Luther consider it necessary to punish heresy? Because it is the responsibility of the government to protect God's honor. He says very plainly that the princes are not only to protect the property and lives of their subjects; their primary office is to prevent blasphemy. The secular government is to promote not only man's physical welfare but also and primarily God's honor. Is this duty a religious obligation or a political necessity? Such a differentiation was undoubtedly foreign to Luther for the simple reason that to his way of thinking the social structure was dependent upon the people's religion. If a Christian people were to become a Turkish people it



In his 1544 book, On the Spirit of the Anabaptists (Von Dem Geist der Wiedertaufer), Menius defined the gospel in the following words: "But what is the gospel? It is this that God wants to be gracious, to forgive sins and bring to salvation all pagans and all nations for Christ's sake."<sup>19</sup> This is Menius' most explicit statement of what he means by the gospel; and, although written in 1544, it appears to be identical with his understanding in 1530. Implied in this Lutheran statement of the gospel are his anthropology, soteriology, Christology, ecclesiology, and theology.

For Menius, human beings were created by God in His own image.<sup>20</sup> He takes this to mean that God intended the human race to be disposed and inclined to conform to the divine nature and essence.<sup>21</sup> That in which this image consisted God has depicted in the divine law. God has done this in order that fallen man can perceive the image in which he was created. The Christian perceives in this law also the image to which he will be restored.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the divine

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would not only receive a different faith, a different religion, but also a different social structure. And we are not to forget that this connection between faith and social structure was for both Luther and his contemporaries a matter of common observation. If a papal territory or a Lutheran territory became Anabaptist, the people received not only a different church but also an entirely different society. This is why the Anabaptists in a great many instances were treated as insurrectionists, and why the opposition against them raised no theological problems."

<sup>19</sup>Justus Menius, Von dem Geist/der Wiederteuffer/Mit einer Vorrede./D. Mart. Luther (Wittemberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1944), Lv. "Was ist aber das Euangelium? das ists/Das Gott wolle gnedig sein/die sunde vergeben/und selig machen/alle Heiden und Volcker/umb Christus willen."

<sup>20</sup>Justus Menius, Von den Blutfreunden aus der Widertauff (Erfurt: Gervasius Sthürmer, 1551), J2r.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., J1r.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

is a description of the original, and final, pattern for man's life. But, it is more. The divine law is also demand. That is, the divine law is God's demand that fallen man conform in this present life to the image in which he was created.<sup>23</sup>

The divine law has been imposed on human beings as demand because of the fall of the first man, Adam.<sup>24</sup> God has obligated all men to obey completely the divine law, depicted in the Ten Commandments, or suffer the loss of divine favor, grace, and life everlasting.<sup>25</sup> The possibility that any man could fulfill that obligation, of course, is excluded. Actually, the fall of Adam had a twofold effect on human nature which renders obedience to the divine law impossible. On the one hand, every man has become, by nature, an enemy to the good which God demands. On the other hand, every human being's natural inclination is towards the evil which God forbids. Natural man is under the wrath of God. He merits from God only wrath, eternal death, and damnation.<sup>26</sup>

Another consequence of the fall is that the damage which human nature suffered therein has been passed on to Adam's posterity. From Adam's lapse comes the bane of original sin. It cannot be escaped. It does not come from outside mankind, but each human

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<sup>23</sup>ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, D3v. Menius discusses the concept of the image of God briefly in his books against the Anabaptists. He does not discuss at all what the loss of the image of God entailed. He does, however, discuss the concept in greater detail during the controversy with Osiander. The concept will be amplified at that point in the thesis. See Chapter IV.

<sup>25</sup>ibid., D3r.

<sup>26</sup>ibid., D3r-D3v.

being inherits it in his flesh and blood nature. It is the poison in human nature.<sup>27</sup> Above all, original sin is

the inclination, the desire and will which so powerfully compels us all our life to renounce the good and right that God commands, and impels us to the forbidden evil, with the result that we so grievously and manifoldly sin with such great contempt for God.<sup>28</sup>

Original sin is not just one sin among many, it is the chief sin of the human race.<sup>29</sup> All other sins flow from it. And, as it inheres in every human being, it is in children no less than adults. No one can rid himself of this sin. For Menius, the natural man cannot even discern his sinful condition except through the divine word.<sup>30</sup>

Menius' view of the condition of natural man conforms to the view of the earliest Lutheran Confessions. It sets him squarely in opposition to Anabaptist anthropology, as he constructed and experienced it, at two points. He does not share what he believes to be Anabaptism's view that the human being has a free will which enables man to participate actively in his own justification.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer lere, f. 334v.

<sup>28</sup>ibid. "die neigung/der lust und wille/welcher uns alle unser lebenlang vom guten und rechten/das Gott gebeut/so gewaltig abzeugt/ und zu dem verbotem argen/so gewaltig zwinget und treibet/das wir mit so grosser Gottes verachtung/so schwerlich und vielfaltig sündigen." This writer was unable to find any basis in Menius' view of original sin for Oyer's statement that for Menius original sin is "an instinct." Oyer, p. 188.

<sup>29</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer lere, f. 335r, calls it the "Heuptsünde."

<sup>30</sup>ibid., f. 335r-335v.

<sup>31</sup>Hans J. Hillerbrand, "The Origins of Anabaptism: Another Look," Archiv fur Reformationgeschichte, LIII (1962), 171, asserts that one point of distinction between the Anabaptists and the Lutheran reformers is in the view that the human being can actively participate in justification.

Menius does not, however, develop Luther's doctrine of the bound will in any detail. Nor does Menius accept the Anabaptist contention that young children cannot be condemned as sinners until they are rationally capable of distinguishing between good and evil.<sup>32</sup>

This anthropology underlies Menius' doctrine of salvation. For him, salvation is inseparably related to the justification of the sinner before God. Justification, in turn, centers around the concept of righteousness. The quest for salvation is the quest for a righteousness which counts in the presence or sight of God.<sup>33</sup> This is the point from which Menius begins his discussion of salvation in 1530.

#### Soteriology

The proposition that the righteous will be saved and the evil condemned is a rational moral principle to which all men give assent. Although Menius claims Scriptural validity for this assertion, he does not argue from Scriptures at this point. Rather, in his discussion of righteousness, he seeks a starting point that is beyond dispute, a starting point which both Scripture and human reason have in common. It might be conjectured that Menius hoped

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<sup>32</sup>Menius, Der Widdertauffer lere, f. 336r.

<sup>33</sup>Even though Menius does not use the expression, "Gerechtigkeit die für Got gilt," in his books against the Anabaptists, the use of Luther's phrase at this point is legitimate. This way of stating the matter does inform Menius' thinking. This can be simply demonstrated by the title which Menius gave to a later book, Von der Gerechtigkeit die vor Gott gilt.

to make his position more convincing by this apologetic approach. At any rate, for the moment, Menius proceeds by arguing on the basis of human reason alone.

In spite of the agreement on the moral principle, just described, there have been only endless disputes among rational men about the definition of what that righteousness is for which God gives salvation. Men have ventured innumerable definitions. These have spawned equally innumerable idolatries in the world. For Menius, this is sufficient evidence that natural man is incapable of arriving at a true understanding of righteousness.<sup>34</sup>

In this context, the divine law serves not just as demand, but also as standard for righteousness. "God has given his law as a mirror in which we can see what kind of piety we have to have if we are to stand before God and be saved."<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, the law even holds out a promise of eternal life to the man who fulfills it. It also condemns the man who does not. Rational man acknowledges the absolute perfection of the divine law as a standard for righteousness, particularly in human relationships. Nevertheless, reason must confess that man attempts to obey this law only unwillingly and reluctantly. Indeed,

man never obeys it, and is completely unable to obey it; but, he is an enemy to it and against it from his heart. Thus, when man is impelled to obey it most heartily and strongly, either because of fear of punishment, or through the hope and desire for reward, he can and is able to do no more than conform to it in external affairs, and give

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<sup>34</sup> ibid., f. 317r.

<sup>35</sup> ibid. "So hat uns Gott vom himel erab sein Gesetz/als zum spiegel geben/darinnen wir uns wol besehen/und erkennen sollen/ . . . was das für ein frömkeit sein mus/dadurch man für Gott bestehen und selig werden kan/. . ."

the impression that he obeys. None the less, sin and unrighteousness are hidden and covered beneath such external appearances, in man's nature and essence.<sup>36</sup>

Most of all, the law serves as demand and standard for righteousness in a man's relationship to God. Here again a mere external appearance of righteousness is insufficient. The human being must be wholly righteous in his whole being. Yet, for Menius, it is precisely just such a righteousness that the natural man, born in original sin, does not have as his own. Neither can he provide it by himself. As a matter of fact, the righteousness which any man can produce of himself has no worth before God for salvation.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, if any man is to have a righteousness that will count before God for salvation, he must receive it from outside himself.<sup>38</sup> Here God's grace in Christ comes to man's rescue. Menius summarizes the entire reconciling act of God in Christ in the statement:

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<sup>36</sup> ibid., f. 317v. "sie es nimermehr thut/und zuthun gantz und gar nicht vermag/Sondern ist jm von hertzen feind und wider/also das wenn sie gleich durch furcht der straffen/oder aber durch hoffnung und gësch der belonung auffs aller hertteste und hefftigste dazu getrieben wird/sie dennoch nicht mehr kan noch vermag/denn das sie sich allein fur den Leuten in eusserlichen geberden also stellet/ als hielt sie es/Und behelt aber nichts deste weniger die sÿne und ungerechtigkeit/unter solchem eusserlichem schein/in der natur verborgen und verdeckt/. . . ."

<sup>37</sup> ibid

<sup>38</sup> ibid. It is interesting to note that, at this point, Menius does not continue to use the concept of righteousness in order to explain the doctrine of salvation. He leaves that concept behind. He has merely used it in order to show the condition of the human being: under the condemnation of God on account of sin, without a righteousness that can count for salvation, and in need of a righteousness from outside himself. Contrary to what might be expected, Menius does not continue by explaining the nature of Christ's righteousness, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, and the role of this righteousness in mankind's salvation. He does explain the Christological elements in the concept of righteousness in his book against Osiander, Von der Gerechtigkeit die vor Gott gilt.

There, the heavenly Father, on account of His gracious will, promised and sent our Lord Jesus Christ to earth in human flesh and blood to take our sin upon himself, and through his innocent suffering and death to release us from eternal death and damnation, restore us to the Father by grace, and save us forever.<sup>39</sup>

A number of theological concepts and problems require clarification here. Menius does not explicate the unique aspects of the several parts of God's work in salvation which he mentions in this passage. Incarnation, vicarious atonement, the passion of Christ, redemption, reconciliation and justification, and grace and salvation: all merge together and tend to become functionally equivalent concepts which, for Menius, identify one and the same reality. Menius expresses that reality most often by the phrase "forgiveness of sins." All together, and individually, they mean "gospel." Although such a fusion of concepts on Menius' part may be legitimate insofar as they all refer to the same reality, the result is that a number of theological issues remain unclarified. For example, the relation of Christ's work to the law of God in terms of suffering the punishment of sin and providing obedience to the law's demand is not resolved. The concept of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, as noted previously, is absent. Menius discusses it elsewhere, particularly in the controversy with Osiander.

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<sup>39</sup> ibid., f. 318r. "Darumb ist nu nach dem gnedigen willen des himelischen Vaters/ unser lieber HERR Jhesus Christus in unser fleisch und blut auff erden zu komen uns verrheissen/und auch geschickt worden/Auff das er solche unsere sünde von uns auff sich neme/uns aus dem ewigen tode und verdarnis lösete/und widerumb beim Vater zu gnaden brechte und ewig selig machete/durch sein unschuldiges leiden und sterben. . . ."

## Reconciliation and Justification

One problem which Menius did solve, even though most briefly, is the problem of the relationship between reconciliation and justification. The importance of this problem and its solution cannot be overestimated. The problem was a key theological issue in the dispute between Menius and the Anabaptists. The fact that it was never debated by them in those terms is beside the point. The manner in which this problem is solved has important consequences in other areas of theology. To be specific, differing solutions to this problem will account for differing viewpoints about the role of the gospel and the sacraments. The problem may be stated in this way: if reconciliation, as the completed work of Christ in suffering for sin, applies to all men, then how can justification as the forgiveness of sins be limited only to those who receive that forgiveness through the gospel and the sacraments, and only they be saved forever?

In the last passage cited above, it is obvious that Menius is referring to the reconciling work of Christ in the salvation of men. But, for Menius, God's work in salvation includes more than reconciliation. It is important to note that in this very context, in fact in that very sentence, Menius continues by including the work of the Holy Spirit as a definite part of salvation. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit's work to which Menius refers is obviously man's justification, a justification which he expresses in terms of renewal. Thus, justification is an integral part of salvation, inseparably connected with reconciliation. Menius writes:



Also, after we have received forgiveness for all guilt and an everlasting dispensation on account of Christ's suffering and death, He spreads abroad in our hearts His Holy Spirit in order that through His power and effective working in our nature, He might free and loose us from its sinful essence, and might properly fit us to inherit eternal life and salvation in true righteousness. <sup>40</sup>

The indispensable connecting link between reconciliation and justification is God's gift of the Spirit, according to Menius. Both are united in the one work of Christ. Reconciliation and justification cannot be separated theologically, even though they may be separated historically. To be sure, Menius does not use the terms reconciliation and justification in this context. That is irrelevant. He obviously does mean the reality which those terms express. And, because the two are connected, the attempt to drive a wedge between them in Menius' theology should be avoided. Menius has expressed the New Testament's view that the reconciliation of Christ has with it, as an integral part, the outpouring of the Spirit upon the individual in his justification. Even though reconciliation and justification are separated by a time span within history, both are united by means of the Spirit as essential, but individuated, elements in the one act of God's work of salvation in Christ. <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* "Dazu auch seinen heiligen Geist in unsere hertzen uber uns ausgösse/auff das wir durch des selbigen krafft und wirckung auch in unser natur/des sündlichen wesens/frey und los/und in warer gerechtigkeit das ewig leben und seligkeit zu ererben recht geschickt würden/nach dem wir durch sein leiden und sterben aller schuld und straffen vergebung/und ewigen Ablas erlanget haben."

<sup>41</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, translated from the German by John S. Black (Edinburg: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), p. 230, criticizes Melancthon and his students, including Menius, for not doing their theological work adequately in relating reconciliation and justification. This issue comes to a head in the Osiandrian controversy. Ritschl's criticism of Menius will be discussed at that point in this dissertation. For the present, it is

The salvation of man moves from reconciliation to justification by means of the work of God's Holy Spirit. The message of

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sufficient to note the connection which Menius has provided here. Oyer, pp. 188-189, failed to take into account the significance of the Holy Spirit as the connecting link between reconciliation and justification in Menius' theology. In fact, Oyer seems to be completely unaware of the theological issue at stake in this matter. In discussing the dispute between Menius and the Anabaptists about the necessity of baptism for infants, Oyer asks in behalf of the Anabaptists (who did not raise the question): "Why, if the validity of baptism was contingent on its acceptance by the person baptized, must the act be performed on the infant who could no more accept it at the time than could an adult Turk who was uninstructed? And why was it necessary to receive the forgiveness earned by Christ personally through a particular act? Such an act constituted a kind of re-crucifixion of Christ." Aside from the fact that Menius would not agree that infants are unable to accept baptism--he leaves that to the power of God to accomplish what He says in His Word--a second disagreement involved here concerns the way in which baptism, as an act through which the Holy Spirit mediates justification through faith, is related to the reconciling work of Christ. To be sure, if reconciliation and justification are not connected by necessity, then it would follow that Christ's perfect reconciliation would apply to all men, including the Turks. Then individual justification would seem unnecessary. Then, too, baptism would be only "believer's baptism"; and, to claim that baptism is necessary for salvation, as Menius does, would make baptism a sort of re-crucifixion of Christ. But Menius has guarded himself from these pitfalls in the passage cited above. Oyer continues: "Menius begged the question: if Christ died for the sins of all men, how could an act performed by only a segment of Mankind determine the validity of that sacrificial death for the forgiveness of sins." Here Oyer gives another indication that he has failed to perceive Menius' point of view. For Menius, it is not the performance of the act of baptism which determines the validity of the sacrificial death of Christ for the baptized person, either in the past, or in the present. Although Menius does not say so explicitly, it is obvious from what he does say that Christ's work is valid for every sinful human being regardless of whether that individual accepts Christ's work and receives its benefits or not. The ninth point in his discussion in 1531, f. 318r, is sufficient to indicate that. Christ did die for the sins of all men, but His death has reference to those upon whom God pours out His Spirit within the church, that church, namely, to whom God has given the gospel and the sacraments. And God uses His gospel in baptism, as a means through which He pours out His Spirit. That entire action comprises God's one work of salvation. Now if that leaves unanswered the question why God pours out His Spirit on some but not on others, and if that leaves unanswered the question why the universally valid work of Christ should be limited with reference to those who receive the Spirit within the church, then it could only be conjectured that, for Menius, the answer to those questions lies in the inscrutable will of God.

reconciliation is proclaimed through the gospel. But the gospel is more than mere proclamation: it is also a summons.<sup>42</sup> The summons is to a renewal of human nature. In this connection, the gospel is not heard in accordance with its true purpose if it is merely heard as a report of previously unknown information. The gospel is a message that reaches its true end when man believes it. Belief in the gospel, for Menius, means that the individual permits himself to be judged, forgiven, and renewed by God.

Now God proclaims [Christ's work] and summons men throughout the world through the gospel. But not just to the end that we know it, but most of all to the end that we believe confidently in our hearts that everything that Christ has suffered and done . . . He did only for us: for the forgiveness of our sins, to give us eternal salvation.<sup>43</sup>

The gospel: that word expresses all of God's gifts, in Menius' theology. How does the individual obtain those benefits which the gospel offers? For Menius, the answer is: through faith. He says:

God the Lord will consider, deem, and accept those [who believe in Christ] as righteous, pious and holy children on account of their faith in Christ. Nor will He hold their sins against them any more. Much less will He judge them or impute their sins to them. Instead, He will give to them His Holy Spirit who will purify them from their sin and make them holy.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Menius, Der Widdertauffer lere, f. 318r.

<sup>43</sup>ibid. "So lesst ers uns nu in alle welt durchs Euangelium verkündigen und ansagen. Nicht allein darumb/das wirs wissen/ sondern viel mehr/und am allermeisten darumb/das wirs tröstlich und von hertzen gleuben sollen/alles was er gethan und gelidden habe/das habe er nicht jm selbs/sondern allein uns/zu vergebung unserer sünden/und ewige seligkeit zu erlangen/gethan und gelidden/ . . . ."

<sup>44</sup>ibid. "dieselbigen wil Gott der HERR/durch solchen jren glauben an Christum/fur recht frome heilige Kinder acten/halten und annemen/jrer sünden nimer mehr gedencken/viel weniger aber richten und rechen/Sondern mit seinem heiligen Geist begaben/welcher sie von sünden gar rein/und heilig machen sol."

Because the gospel's gifts include both renewal and life everlasting, it has a twofold significance for the doctrine of salvation. Salvation is present and future. It begins in the renewal of human nature here in time. To be sure, Menius nowhere develops fully the implication of this thesis in his books against the Anabaptists, but he does do so in his books which he wrote during the Majoristic controversy. But the statement is not inaccurate in view of the fact that Menius speaks of the renewal of the sinful human nature.<sup>45</sup> He who believes the preaching about Christ receives the benefits of Christ through faith; and, particularly in the removal of the burden of guilt, the individual receives an improvement in his natural condition. But he receives more. The Holy Spirit begins to replace the sinful essence of man's nature with a true righteousness. Now this renewal in righteousness can certainly include such works as the renunciation of all personal honor, goods, body and life itself should God demand it. Such works are so closely connected to renewal that Menius can insist, already in 1531, "And this is a useful and necessary work for salvation."<sup>46</sup> Thus, Menius is so insistent on the present work of the renewal effected by the Holy Spirit in salvation that he even uses a theological expression which later on became bitterly contested.

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., f. 313v. "Und dis ist ein nötig und nützlich werck zur Seligkeit." This passage must be noted later in connection with Menius' role in the Majoristic controversy. It should be mentioned here, however, that in 1531, Menius could use the expression that a work is necessary for salvation without receiving the criticism of Luther who wrote the preface to Menius' book.

Salvation also points to the future. The work of the Holy Spirit which is begun in this life reaches its fruition in the life of the world to come. Menius does not elaborate on the nature of the future bliss of salvation in his books against the Anabaptists. He simply repeats the traditional expressions: Seligkeit, ewige Seligkeit, ewiges leben, ewigen himelreichs Kinder und Erben.<sup>47</sup>

Menius' three criticisms of Anabaptist soteriology in his book, The Anabaptist Doctrine (Der Widdertaufer Lere), all related to one central issue: can salvation, which for Menius is expressed most concisely in the concept, forgiveness of sins, be earned or merited by works; or, can forgiveness be received only as a gift of God's grace through faith? Any teaching which affirms the former or denies the latter, including their implications, is a teaching which denies the gospel as Menius understands it.

Thus, in the first place, Menius considers the Anabaptist interpretation of such passages as Matt. 19:17, "If you would enter life, keep the commandments," invalid. According to Menius, no man can do what such a passage demands. Secondly, Menius accuses the Anabaptists of mixing together law and gospel. They have not correctly distinguished between works done prior to faith and works done in faith. Neither count for salvation. Nor can the afflictions which God lays upon believers count for salvation. Menius' final criticism here is that the Anabaptists attribute to Christian affliction the power to achieve salvation. How so? Certainly the Anabaptist position was not expressed so

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., f. 318r.

crassly. Nevertheless, according to Menius, they insisted that affliction was a necessary item for salvation.<sup>48</sup> Menius argues that if affliction is necessary for salvation, then salvation cannot be through faith alone.<sup>49</sup>

### Christology

It should be obvious by now that, for Menius, to speak of salvation is to speak of Christ. It is only logical, therefore, to proceed to a discussion of Menius' Christology. In general, Menius' Christology is characterized by the themes of western catholic Christianity, themes which the Lutherans embraced: Christ's person and office, and His divine and human nature in a personal union. Now, to be sure, Menius writes about Christ's person principally in connection with the Sacrament of the Altar. In connection with salvation, he writes primarily about Christ's work. This does not mean, of course, that Menius viewed Christ's work independently of His person. Both are joined together in Menius' understanding of what it means for Jesus to be the Christ. What Menius writes about Christ's work in salvation is based upon

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., f. 319r.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Menius' argumentation at this point is instructive. He uses the very same argument against the Anabaptists which were to be used against him and Major during the Majoristic controversy. But then Menius refused to concede that the argument applied to him. He says about the Anabaptists in 1531, "Aber man sol und mus sie dennoch gleichwol haben/als nötige ding zur seligkeit. Das ist nichts geredt/Denn sind sie zur seligkeit nötige/so kan man die seligkeit/on sie/gewislich nicht erlangen/Kan man aber die seligkeit/on sie/nicht erlangen/so machet der glaube allein auch nicht selig/Das ist aber falsch/und wider die gantze heilige Schrifft/ . . . ."

that concept of Christ's person which Menius discusses in connection with the Sacrament of the Altar. Conversely, what Menius writes about Christ's person in connection with the Sacrament of the Altar is based on that concept of Christ's work which Menius describes in connection with salvation. This interdependence of Christ's person and work lies at the heart of Menius' evangelical theology. It explains his violent antipathy towards the Anabaptists who, in his view, destroyed Christology and with it a meaningful soteriology. It explains, too, why Menius was horrified at the Anabaptist denial of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. Their denial of that presence contained a rejection of a view of Christ's person which is absolutely necessary if Christ is to be the savior of the human race. For Menius, the necessity of Christ's body and blood being truly present in the consecrated elements did not derive from rational, speculative interests, but from his view of the nature of the savior. Therefore, in the dispute about the nature of Christ's presence in the Sacrament, Menius believes that the gospel is at stake.

The Christ, for Menius, is the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth. Menius never reflects in his books on the way in which the Christological titles apply to Jesus of Nazareth. In his view, the Old Testament Christological titles apply to the historical person, Jesus, in a prediction-fulfillment relationship.<sup>50</sup> Jesus and the Christ are simply synonymous. This identity was already firmly established in the traditional Christology which Menius

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<sup>50</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, J2r.

accepts. Furthermore, Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. "To put it briefly, outside of Christ there is no God nor a divine essence."<sup>51</sup> And, the Scriptures clearly attest to His humanity.<sup>52</sup> The divine nature assumed the human nature.<sup>53</sup> The Christ is the "natural, true, eternal, and almighty God," united with the Father and the Holy Spirit in "one unique, indivisible eternal essence."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Menius, Der Widdertauffer Lere, f. 342v. "Denn kurtzumb ausser dem Christo ist kein Gott noch Göttlich wesen nicht."

<sup>52</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, J2v.

<sup>53</sup> ibid., see also OIr.

<sup>54</sup> ibid. Menius criticizes the Anabaptists for denying this both in 1531 and in 1544. Oyer, p. 192, questions the accuracy of the 1531 accusation, but not because Menius' charge represents a theological conclusion or an over-generalization. Oyer asserts that Central German Anabaptism, insofar as the sources provide evidence, tended towards docetism. Two interpretations might be offered in order to account for Menius' accusation. First, it is conceivable that Menius drew this conclusion as a theological deduction. Because the Anabaptists rejected the implications of the personal union of the divine and human nature in Christ for the presence of Christ's body and blood in the elements of bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, Menius might have deduced from that that their view amounts to a denial of the divinity of Christ. For if the human nature of Christ is confined locally in heaven after the Ascension, then the divine nature must have been separated from the human nature. That, in turn, amounts to a denial that the man Jesus was also true God. Now it is instructive to note that Menius makes this accusation against the Anabaptists in the context of the Lord's Supper. He writes, Der Widdertauffer Lere, f. 342v, "Das sind aber des Teuffels arge list/das er mit den sachen also fein gemelich und einzelig anfehet/den Leuten Gottes wort von den Sacramenten hinweg zu stelen/umb sie darnach allein auff die eusserliche/sichtbare Element/on das wort Gottes/zu weisen/Auff das er sie nur verechtlich mache/wenn er dasselb ausgericht und erein hat/also denn hawet er fort/reisset uns das wort von Christo selbs auch hinweg/und lesst uns jn ansehen/wie er der vernunft alda fur augen stehet/fur einen lautern blossen Menschen/und sagt/Was dürffte Gott des/das er selbs Mensch würde/also liede und stürbe/Wil er gnedig sein/sünde vergeben/und selig machen/so kan ers sonst wol thun/on das/Drumb ist Christus auch nicht warer Gott/So ist denn dem bier schon gegeben." Second, it is also conceivable that this accusation of Menius represents an overgeneralization. In 1531, Menius



These themes are so firmly established in Menius' theology that he does not devote much space to refuting their denial. Furthermore, they are so obviously true for him, that anyone who denies them must be a disciple of the devil.<sup>55</sup>

One element of Christology that Menius clarifies and discusses is the fact that the attributes of the divine nature are given to the human nature. The demand for clarification of this issue arises in connection with the debate with the Anabaptists about the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. The Anabaptists whom Menius knew asserted that the elements of the Sacrament were mere bread and wine. Their reasons for this assertion, according to Menius, was because they thought it impossible for Christ's human body to be present in many places at the same time.<sup>56</sup> Menius answered their objections by asserting that the attributes of Christ's divine nature were given to the human nature in the Incarnation.<sup>57</sup> Menius meant that the attributes of Christ's divine nature, particularly omnipresence, may be predicated of His human nature. Therefore, if the divine nature of Christ is present in all places, the human nature of Christ may also be present in

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does not qualify his charge in any way. In 1544, however, he attributes the denial only to some. Inasmuch as Menius qualifies the charge in 1544, it may be conjectured that he actually knew some Anabaptists who did deny the divinity of Christ.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., f. 342r-343r; Menius, Von dem Geist, J3r.

<sup>56</sup> Both the official records and Menius' description of the Anabaptist point of view in this matter indicate that their arguments are identical with the arguments of Zwingli. Therefore it seems not at all surprising that Menius connected the origins of Anabaptism with Zwingli and the Enthusiasts.

<sup>57</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, Q2v.

all places.<sup>58</sup> For Menius, the denial of the communication of the attributes of the divine nature to the human nature leads to a denial of the validity of the work of Christ in salvation. Menius reasons that if the Anabaptists deny this communication of attributes, they thereby dishonor the savior. If they dishonor the savior, they have denied salvation. "Since he does not seek God's honor, therefore he seeks the salvation of man much less."<sup>59</sup> The debate on this point, then is anything but a peripheral matter for Menius. Even here he sees himself contending for the gospel.

Menius speaks not only about the person, but also about the office of Christ. Christ's office is that He made redemption and payment for mankind's sin.<sup>60</sup> Menius objects to the Anabaptist view of Christ's office. For them Christ merely provided an example or pattern in His suffering for men to follow. According to Menius, the Anabaptists deny the redemptive work of Christ except as it results in an imitatio of His suffering on the part of the believer. Here the radical difference between Menius' and the Anabaptists' doctrine of salvation and Christ comes into full view. For Menius, the Anabaptists have fallen back into a doctrine of works, they have denied the evangelical doctrine of salvation, they have destroyed Christology, and they have, in effect, robbed mankind of salvation. And here at last is the full explanation for Menius' antipathy to the Anabaptists.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Although Menius never uses the term "personal union" in his books against the Anabaptists, he obviously believed that the divine and human natures are united in Christ's person.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Q3r. "Wie er nu Gottes ehre nicht suchet/so suchet er der Menschen heil und seligkeit noch viel weniger."

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., J3v.

## Ecclesiology

The rest of Menius' theology builds on what has already been said about salvation and Christ. The center and heart of Menius' theology is evangelical and Christocentric. All other theological issues are related to that center. Menius devoted the most attention to, and argued in greatest detail against the Anabaptist doctrines of the sacraments, the church and its ministry, and mode of life. Those are not for him the unique, the distinctive, or the most crucial doctrines in Christian theology. They do not provide the basis for, nor do they lie at the center of Christian theology. To be precise, they are a part of ecclesiology. The question might legitimately be raised, therefore, why the views of a relatively small group about doctrines which lie somewhere between the center and the periphery of Christian theology should provoke Menius to such prolix and intemperate rebuttals. The question needs to be qualified. What theological reason can account for Menius' attitude to the Anabaptist views on these doctrines? His eschatological orientation mentioned before does not fully explain his objection to the Anabaptist interpretation of the doctrines involved here. That some Christians reject the validity of infant baptism, deny the presence of Christ's body and blood in the consecrated elements of bread and wine, or prefer lay evangelists to officially certified clergymen, need not, in and of itself, be a sign of the devil's final assault on Christ. Can Menius' attitude be explained simply by stating that Menius did not recognize the fact that the Scriptures themselves are contradictory and their

meaning not always clear?<sup>61</sup> In order to answer this question it is necessary first to explicate Menius' ecclesiology.

The church is, for Menius, the spiritual kingdom of God's Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>62</sup> It is "a spiritual and invisible kingdom whose splendor cannot be seen with physical eyes in the world, but can be seen only with the eye of faith."<sup>63</sup> In this sense, the church is the arena of the Spirit's activity. There He creates faith in the hearts of those who hear the gospel of salvation. In another sense, the church is organized Christendom as Menius perceived and experienced it in his daily life, visible in its varied activities.<sup>64</sup> It is an external association to which hypocrites may also be joined.<sup>65</sup> Menius does not attempt to drive a wedge between these two senses of the term "church." They are united by the fact that God is working among men with the gospel-producing spiritual fruit. This church had its beginning with Adam, included the Old Testament people of God, and has continued until Menius' own time in history. If Menius can speak of the church already in the Old Testament, then its essence must be something other than an historical connection with the man Jesus. Menius finds that essence in God's Word.

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<sup>61</sup> So Oyer argues, p. 288.

<sup>62</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, E2r.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., G4r. "Es ist der Christenheit ein geistlich und unsichtbar Reich/des Herrlichkeit nicht mit leiblichen augen fur der welt/sondern allein mit geistlichen augen des glaubens gesehen wird/. . ."

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., F3v.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

We preach God's Word . . . from the Holy Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles, and from the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who bore witness to it through His death and resurrection, just as all the elect from the beginning of the world believed and confessed it with one mind.<sup>66</sup>

Ecclesiology is not the center of Christian theology; but, as is now clear, it is connected with and related to the center of that theology: Christ. Moreover, for Menius that connection is very specific. The church is connected to the saving work of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

There is no one who teaches salvation except the Holy Spirit through the word and gospel which He communicates to us through many external signs and means, and He proffers and delivers His work and power through them in a hidden and concealed way, on this occasion only through word and preaching, but on another occasion through sacraments which have been especially instituted and signs which are connected and dependent on the word.<sup>67</sup>

The word to which Menius refers in that passage, the gospel, has been given to the church.<sup>68</sup> The Spirit uses these means, within the

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<sup>66</sup> ibid., D2v. "Wir predigen Gottes wort/ . . . /aus der heiligen Schrifft der Propheten und Aposteln/wie alle auserwelten/ von anfang der welt eintrechtig gegleubt und bekand/und der Son Gottes Jhesus Christus/mit seinem Tod und aufferstehen bezeuget hat." For the best discussion of this notion of the church, which Menius obviously inherited from Melanchthon, consult Peter Fraenkel, Testimonia Patrum The Function of the Patristic Argument in the Theology of Philip Melanchthon (Geneva: E. Droz, 1961).

<sup>67</sup> Menius, Der Widdertauffer Lere, f. 3214. "So ist niemand der es leret on allein der heilig Geist/durchs wort und Euangelium/ welches er uns durch mancherley eusserliche weise und mittel furtragen lesst/und seine werck und krafft darunter so heimlich und verborgen treibet und ausrichtet/jtzund durchs wort und predigt allein/jtzund aber auch durch sonderlich verordnete Sacramenta und Zeichen/dem wort angehengt und zugethan."

<sup>68</sup> ibid. "Gott beide/wort und Sacramenta eingesetzt/und der Christenheit auff erden gegeben. . . ."

church, to make Christ's work in salvation effective for people.

"Through them the Holy Spirit brings us to the Christian faith, and preserves us for eternal salvation."<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, the Spirit works only through the word and the Sacraments.

God refuses to deal with us without God's word and Sacraments. Furthermore (dream what we may) we cannot receive or retain either faith or the Spirit without the word and Sacraments.<sup>70</sup>

Because the Spirit works only through the word, and because the word has its place within the church, it follows that if anyone is to obtain salvation, it is necessary for him to be joined to the word that is proclaimed in the church.

Through word and Sacraments, Christendom, gathered in faith by the Holy Spirit, is to be ruled and preserved. Where there is no word and Sacrament, there is no forgiveness of sins, and where there is no forgiveness of sins, there is no grace, no life and salvation, but only God's wrath, death and eternal damnation.<sup>71</sup>

The church is to proclaim that word, and that word alone, forever.<sup>72</sup>

Menius was aware of the possibility, of course, that the word can be distorted, misinterpreted, and misused. His own vocation as an evangelical reformer stemmed from the conviction that that very

<sup>69</sup> ibid. "Durch sie vom heiligen Geist zum Christen glauben bracht/und darin zur ewigen seligkeit erhalten werden/. . . ."

<sup>70</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, T2r. "Das on Gottes wort und Sacramenta/Gott mit uns nicht handeln wil/und wir auch one wort und Sacramenta (wir treumen gleich was wir wollen? wider rechten glauben noch Geist/erlangen noch behalten mogen."

<sup>71</sup> Menius, Der Widdertauffer Lere, f. 336r. "Denn durchs wort und die Sacramenta mus die Christenheit/vom heiligen Geist im glauben versamlet/regieret und erhalten werden/und wo nicht wort und Sacrament sind/daselbst ist auch kein Christenheit/Wo aber keine Christenheit ist/da ist auch keine vergebung der sünden/wo aber keine vergebung der sünden ist/da ist auch kein gnade/leben noch seligkeit/sondern eitel Gottes zorn/tod und verdammis in ewigkeit."

<sup>72</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, F2r-F3v.

thing had happened in the papcy. The Anabaptists, on the other hand, made the same accusation against the evangelicals. They claimed that the evangelicals taught falsely. Menius accused the Anabaptists of the same thing. What, then, did Menius consider the proper way for settling such disputes? What provisions did he make for determining whether or not the word is proclaimed purely in the church?

A simple appeal to the authority of the Scriptures at this point is insufficient. Whether or not Menius recognized this is difficult to determine. To be sure, the Scriptures are, for him, the supreme authority by which all teaching in the church is to be judged. The Anabaptists agreed with that view. The real question, then, is: who is interpreting the Scriptures correctly? How can that be determined?

At this point in his career Menius solved this problem easily. For him the Scriptures are clear. He can claim, for example, that what he teaches about Baptism and the Lord's Supper, what they are, why they are necessary, and why they are useful, is taken from the "clear Holy Scriptures."<sup>73</sup> For the most part, he simply equates his teaching with what the Scriptures teach. But, then, why do the Anabaptists' interpretation of Scripture differ from his? Menius' view of the clarity of Scriptures has to be explicated more precisely.

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<sup>73</sup> ibid., K3v.

## The Clarity of Scriptures and Hermeneutics

Three things make for the clarity of Scripture in Menius' view. First, the message of Christ. "The holy Scriptures have been given chiefly in order that we might know from them our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."<sup>74</sup> To see Christ in the Scriptures it is necessary to see the two chief doctrines of Scriptures: the commandments and the gospel.

The Scriptures have two kinds of doctrine or preaching: the one about the obedience which God demands in His commandments. The other about the grace which He promises in the gospel and which was won through Christ.<sup>75</sup>

To fail to perceive these two teachings in the Scriptures is to fail to understand them. On the subject of Christ's work, the Scriptures are not contradictory, either. They do not teach salvation by works in one place, and salvation by Christ's work in another. The message of salvation by God's grace alone in Christ through faith is the same in both Testaments.<sup>76</sup> This unity in the Scriptures' teaching about Christ contributes to its clarity about this message. The Christocentric clarity of Scriptures is Menius' primary hermeneutical principle.

The Scriptures are clear, secondly, in the doctrines which relate to Christ, for example, Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the office of Christ. This means, for Menius, that all doctrines in

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, J3r. "Denn wiewol die heilige Schrifft furnemlich darumb gegeben ist/Das wir unsern HERRN und Heiland Jhesum Christum daraus erkennen sollen/. . . ."

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, J4r. "Die Schiriff hat zweierley Lere oder predigten/Die eine vom Gehorsam den Gott in seinen Geboten fordert. Die ander von der gnaden so er im Euangelio verheisset/durch Christum erworben."

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, C4v.



the preaching of the church flow from and are harmoniously related to the central message about Christ. This principle is behind Menius' statement that the Scriptures are clear in doctrines related to the central doctrine about Christ. For example, Menius believed that the body and blood of Christ are present in the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. He was convinced that the Scriptures were clear on this point. The Anabaptists contended that because Christ's body has ascended into heaven, it is impossible for His body and blood to be present in the elements of bread and wine on earth, or in many places at the same time. But if the Anabaptists' view is true, then what is the effect on Christ's person? The divine and human natures are split apart. If Christ's natures are split apart, then serious implications result in the doctrine of salvation. The reality of salvation in Christ becomes questionable.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, when the Scriptures report that Christ said in the words of institution, "Take eat, this is my body," it is speaking clearly about the nature and meaning of the Lord's Supper.

The Scriptures are clear, thirdly, if they are interpreted according to sound principles of grammar and logic. That is, for Menius, the Scriptures should be interpreted in their natural, literal, grammatical, and historical sense. He does not make the assertion in those words, to be sure, but it is apparent that he believed this.<sup>78</sup> Presumably, the clarity of the Scriptures in this

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<sup>77</sup>This entire line of reasoning is apparent in Menius' discussion of Christology in connection with the Lord's Supper in Von dem Geist, 02r-Q3r.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., J2r-J3r.

third sense does not apply to all parts of Scripture. Menius calls the book of Revelation, for example, the Anabaptists' "juggler's bag."<sup>79</sup> Menius' statement that the Anabaptists' teachings are not based on the true meaning of Scripture, but that just the opposite is taught "in many places with bright, clear words," implies that some parts of the Scriptures are clearer than others.<sup>80</sup> The Anabaptists err because they do not interpret Scripture in its proper sense, but substitute their own dreams for the proper sense.<sup>81</sup> It is conceivable, of course, that some of the interpretations which a Christocentric and literal interpretation of the Scriptures demand, can be contrary to what human reason can comprehend or understand. In certain instances the Anabaptists operated with the principle that what is contrary to human reason need not be believed.<sup>82</sup> They insisted, for example, that it is unreasonable that Christ can be present with His body and blood in the elements of bread and wine since He ascended into heaven; and, it is likewise unreasonable to suppose that infants can believe. Menius grants their objection and agrees that such things run counter to human reason. He refuses to concede, however, that the teachings to which the Anabaptists object here are wrong. The task of the Christian

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<sup>79</sup>Menius, Der Widdertauffer Lere, f. 308v. "Gauckelsack."

<sup>80</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, J3r. "Weil die Schrifft solche meinung gar an keinem ort leret/sondern an so viel orten/mit so hellen klaren worten/gleich das widerspiel."

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., J2r.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., Q3r.

is to believe, not to understand.<sup>83</sup> If Christ says that little children can believe, as He does, then they can believe whether human reason can comprehend it or not. And, if Christ says, as He does, that bread is His body and wine is His blood, then it is. Menius leaves it to the power of God to effect what His word says He can do.<sup>84</sup>

The clarity of the Scriptures in the three ways just described are related to each other. Each contributes to each other in the proper interpretation of Scriptures. Sound grammatical interpretation leads to the Christocentric clarity of the Scriptures; and, the Christocentric clarity of the Scriptures leads to proper grammatical interpretation. In that other doctrines are related to the center of Scripture, Christ, they participate in the clarity of Scripture too. All of these aspects of the clarity of Scripture led Menius to the conviction that he can equate his teachings with the teachings of the Sacred Scriptures.

There is one more hermeneutical principle which Menius uses to interpret the Scriptures which needs to be mentioned: the tradition of the church. Menius never denies that the writings of the Fathers must be judged by the gospel-content of the Scriptures. Nevertheless, the testimony of the Fathers is very useful as an aid for interpreting the sense and meaning of the teachings of the Scriptures. For example, the Anabaptists denied the necessity of infant baptism. Among the arguments which Menius used to deny the validity of their interpretation was the argument from tradition.

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<sup>83</sup>ibid., Pir-v.

<sup>84</sup>ibid.

He pointed out that Origen, Cyprian, and Augustine all gave evidence that infants were to be baptized.<sup>85</sup> This is not a matter of the church adopting the practice of infant baptism in contrast to, or independently of the teaching of the Scriptures, and thereby becoming the authority for the practice. The problem, as Menius sees it, is this: what does the New Testament teach about infant baptism? What do such passages as Matt. 28:19 mean? Menius was satisfied that they meant that children should be baptized. In his view, the three hermeneutical principles mentioned above sufficiently justify such a conclusion. But, Menius uses tradition in order to confirm this interpretation. He calls upon the Fathers to show that they too understood the Scriptures in the same way. Tradition, here, serves to corroborate that interpretation which Menius considers to be the clear teaching of the Scriptures. Thus, tradition acts as a safeguard against new and strange doctrines creeping into the church.

The answer can now be given to the question about how disputes are to be settled within the church. In Menius' view it is a matter of submitting the divergent viewpoints to the Scriptures. However, as is now clear, such an appeal to the authority of the Scriptures is not a simple matter. It involves permitting the Scriptures to speak in their clear sense, and that involves the proper use of valid hermeneutical principles.

The word has its context in the church. The Scriptures are the highest authority for judging the doctrine of the word which

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, N2r-v. Menius' use of tradition at this point should not be viewed either as a taking refuge or as a falling back on tradition as Oyer asserts, pp. 228-229.

the church proclaims. And what the church proclaims is the message of the prophets and apostles whose books comprise the Old and New Testament. Thus, interpretation and proclamation are integrally related. Who is responsible for carrying out the task of interpretation and proclamation? Speaking generally, every Christian has that responsibility. But further distinctions are necessary at this point. Menius distinguishes between different offices, and between public and private interpretation and proclamation. Every Christian is responsible for proclaiming the gospel, but only within the confines of his own office.<sup>86</sup> The public proclamation is to be done only by those who have been called into the office of the ministry.

#### The Office of the Ministry

The two chief elements in Menius' view of the office of the ministry are the call (Beruf) and the proclamation of the apostolic doctrine. Since the time of the apostles, men have called other men in God's behalf. Furthermore, in contrast to the call of the apostles, the mediate call to the individual is limited to a specific place in the church. No individual has a universal call that would authorize him to preach any place at any time. Most of all, no individual has the freedom to proclaim in the church any doctrine other than the apostolic doctrine. The call and the obligation

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<sup>86</sup>Justus Menius, Wie ein iglicher Christ gegen allerley Iere, gut und böse, nach Gottes befelch, sich gebürlich halten sol (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1538), C3v. For a more detailed and complementary discussion of the issue involved here, consult below, Chapter V.

to proclaim the apostolic doctrine have importance because they help to guarantee the preaching of the gospel within the church.

The importance which Menius attached to these two elements in his view of the ministry accounts for his hostility to Anabaptist preachers. He was convinced that the Anabaptist preachers lacked both of the elements which he considered to be essential for the Christian ministry. In the first place, the Anabaptist preachers did not have a proper call. Secondly, they went about preaching in many different places without any legitimate call. As far as Menius was concerned, the Anabaptist preachers had usurped the power and role of the apostles; but they did not have the divinely given credentials which were necessary for their activity. Menius repeatedly raised the question of the validity of the Anabaptist preachers' call. He repeatedly asked for evidence that God had authorized them to preach in many different places. Furthermore, in Menius' opinion, the Anabaptist preachers had abandoned the teaching of the apostles. Because Menius believed that it is the devil who tries to set forth error as though it were the truth of the gospel, he concluded that the Anabaptist preachers had to be the ambassadors of the devil. Thus, Menius' antipathy towards the Anabaptist preachers had its origin in his theological concern for the gospel.

Menius offered one more reason why the Anabaptist preachers could not be truly Christian preachers: they did their preaching and teaching in private, and kept their teachings secret. Menius believed that God's purpose in setting forth the gospel in Christ was to get it out to people. The gospel is to be proclaimed publicly to men. Yet, the Anabaptists did not teach or preach publicly

or openly. For this reason Menius accused them of sinning against Christian love. He argued that if the Anabaptists were genuinely convinced that they had the true Christian faith, then they should correct those who sit in darkness and error. Christian love would demand that much.<sup>87</sup> Because the Anabaptist were secretive, Menius concluded once again that they were instigated by the devil rather than by Christ. But this raises another set of problems. How could the Anabaptist preachers preach and teach publicly, when to do so would have been to invite the punishment of the state? More specifically, it raises the question of Menius' view of the relationship between ecclesiastical and civil authorities in their mutual task of preserving the gospel. Behind this question looms the larger question of Menius' view of religious freedom.

In his book, How Each Christian (Wie ein iglicher), Menius dealt with these questions specifically. Every Christian, according to Menius, has a number of responsibilities over against the gospel. First, he is to believe it sincerely. Secondly, he is to confess his faith to everyone. He is to obey everything that God's Word commands; and, he is to shun everything that is against God's Word. The latter he is to condemn and contradict openly. He is to do everything that he can to help others believe and persevere in the Christian faith. Conversely, he is to assist others in forsaking and avoiding everything that is against God's Word. All this, however, is to be done in the office and order (Stand und Orden) in which he finds himself in this life.

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<sup>87</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer Lere, f. 312r-313v.

Menius makes a twofold distinction in his concept of office and order. On the one hand, there is the spiritual authority (geistlich Regiment). And, on the other hand, there is the civil authority (leiblich or weltlich Regiment). These authorities have been instituted by God. Both authorities have the responsibility of honoring God and of promoting the welfare of Christendom. In this connection, both are to promote the gospel and hinder any false teaching. Menius is very insistent that the work of these authorities should be carried out only by those to whom the office is given. This is particularly true within the church. "Therefore, they do not all have an obligation to seize the office [of the minister], so that anyone may step forward to preach and celebrate the Sacraments on his own authority whenever it pleases him."<sup>88</sup>

Menius specifies the responsibilities of both the ecclesiastical and civil authority. The ecclesiastical authority has the responsibility of proclaiming God's will with reference both to pious and evil men. To that end it ordains pastors who have the responsibility of proclaiming openly and publicly the will of God to the people. Pious people should be served with the gospel; the unbelievers should be consigned to eternal death. Ecclesiastical authority is limited to spiritual punishments only. The church has no authority to impose any sort of temporal physical punishment on unbelievers. Such punishment lies in the hands of the civil authority. With reference to the civil authority's role in promoting and protecting the gospel, Menius distinguishes between private and public belief and unbelief. He limits the civil

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<sup>88</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, C2r.



authority's power to public confession only. Because an individual's personal belief or unbelief are secret, hidden within his own heart, the government has no authority to pass judgment on such a private matter. However, the matter is different with respect to a public confession of belief or unbelief, true or false doctrine. Here the civil authority has the responsibility to maintain the public preaching of the true faith only; and, it should see to it that all public affairs are ordered according to God's Word. It should oppose and withstand any error which would attempt to gain a public following among the people. The government must not permit blasphemy, or other public sins which would destroy the true faith in believers. The civil authority is responsible, therefore, for punishing public sins against both tables of the law. It should be noted, in addition, that Menius enjoins these responsibilities on Christian governments only.<sup>89</sup> He recognizes that it is only by God's grace that Christians have the privilege of living under a Christian government.

So much for Menius' point of view. What is the theology behind it? The conflict between God and satan which was described previously as a struggle between faith and unbelief is not confined only to the realm of the spirit. The struggle between God and satan is waged also in the temporal affairs of mankind. God works

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<sup>89</sup>Menius does not define what he means by Christian civil power. He uses two phrases to refer to such civil authority. On the one hand, he says, "wo mit/und wie fene dieselbige Christlich ist"; and, on the other hand, he says, "die Oberkeit . . . Christen ist." Presumably, Menius means that a civil government which adopts a Christian Confession and whose officers are professing Christians may be designated as a Christian civil authority.

for order, peace, tranquility and, in general, for those conditions which foster the welfare of the human race. The devil, in contrast, strives to bring about chaos, disorder, civil unrest and disturbance. God works to achieve His goals in human affairs through the established authority of government. The devil works through disruptive forces such as sects who subvert the public weal.<sup>90</sup> This struggle between God and the devil in civil affairs is not disconnected in Menius' thought from the struggle between God and the devil for faith or unbelief in the hearts of men. The possession of true faith promotes God's will and order in the civil realm; and, conversely, unbelief or false teaching has disruptive social consequences. Sins against the first table of God's law, such as

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<sup>90</sup>Throughout this entire discussion, it should be remembered that Menius writes as a member of the existing established order, and as an exponent of the status quo. He never discusses the question of the relationship between justice and power. For him, apparently, justice is equated with the established order in which the state supports the evangelical faith; its power should be used to support the just position of the evangelicals. The possibility that the Anabaptists might have had some just claims for their practice and viewpoint never engages his attention. But, it should be remembered that Menius writes in an age which was just beginning to experience religious pluralism. What disturbs many 20th century Christians is not that Menius took the position that the Anabaptists were the devil's cohorts, or that the Anabaptists should be suppressed. That was only to be expected in the 16th century. The Anabaptists, in this writer's opinion, would probably have taken the same position if they could have controlled the government, as is indicated by the Anabaptists of Münster. What does disturb many 20th century Christians is that Menius so thoroughly and unquestioningly equated government with justice of the will of God. We have learned too well the lesson that governments can, and sometimes do adopt policies which are unjust and evil. They can even do that in the name of justice and God. They can claim that they are promoting order over chaos to hide tyranny. Is there not some higher standard to which a citizen, or a group of citizens, like the Anabaptists, can legitimately appeal in protesting governmental action? How may an individual or group dissent from the government and not thereby be opposing God or be an instrument of the devil? In Menius' exposition of his point of view, not only is no provision made for Anabaptist dissent, but the whole question of the possibility of legitimate Anabaptist dissent seems to have been ignored by him.

blasphemy, for example, cannot be separated from the inevitable consequences of sins against the second table. The opposite is likewise true. Therefore, when Menius advocates the use of civil force for the suppression of such religious public confessions as those which disagree with the established Evangelical doctrine, he is proceeding once again from a concern for the truth of the Christian gospel.

In view of Menius' theological frame of reference, it is not surprising that he advocated the punishment and execution of Anabaptists. The ground for Menius' conviction that the Anabaptists had abandoned the gospel at key points has already been indicated. There was a related conviction. Menius believed that false doctrine would lead to insurrection. Consequently, he refers to the Anabaptists as a "revolutionary spirit." What grounds did he have for making such an accusation? First, there was the close personal connection of early Central German Anabaptism with Thomas Müntzer. Menius had personal contact with Melchior Rinck in 1525. At that time Rinck was a disciple of Thomas Müntzer. Rinck's two-directional connection between Müntzer and Anabaptism gave Menius grounds for linking Anabaptism with the social revolutionary forces which precipitated the Peasant's War. Furthermore, the other major leaders of Central German Anabaptism prior to 1531, Hans Hut and Hans Römer, had also been associates of Thomas Müntzer. Even after his baptism in 1526 by Hans Denck, Römer preached that the Turks would destroy the German nobility in a decisive battle near Nurenberg. Third, there were civil disturbances. Römer was the leader of a conspiracy to attack the city of Erfurt. He planned to have his

followers burn the city on January 1, 1528.<sup>91</sup> Then, too, there was the riot in 1530. This riot was precipitated by some Anabaptists when one of their members was about to renounce his Anabaptist faith. There was the so-called "Prophet." He and forty of his followers fortified a house and tried to fight off the civil forces with stones.<sup>92</sup> Finally, there were Hans Krug, Hans von Fulda, and Peter the Baptist. They practiced adult baptism, but were primarily engaged in robbing, burning, looting, and raping. Krug even confessed that he was driven by the spirit of the devil.<sup>93</sup>

Fourth, there was the eschatological expectation on the part of some Anabaptists that God was going to overthrow the existing civil authorities and exalt the members of the Bund. The mere use of that term as a designation by Anabaptists for themselves carried social revolutionary overtones, much the same as the term "comrade" might in some political circles of the United States today. Fifth, there was the Münster episode. Sixth, there was Menius' experience with Anabaptists who deserted their spouses and children. When the first arrests were made at Reinhardsbrunn in 1528, some Anabaptists fled. They left their children behind, and the state had to assume responsibility for them.<sup>94</sup> Menius reports that he knew of more

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<sup>91</sup>Paul Wappler, Die Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526-1584, Vol. II in Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte Thüringens, edited by the Thüringischen Historischen Kommission (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1913), pp. 42-45.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., II, 81-85.

<sup>93</sup>Günther Franz, editor, Urkundliche Quellen zur hessischen Reformationsgeschichte (Marburg: N. G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951), IV, 71-73.

<sup>94</sup>Wapper, Täuferbewegung in Thüringen, II, 49.

instances of family dissolution on the part of Anabaptists than he liked. Taking all of these considerations together, Menius undoubtedly was convinced that he had sufficiently valid reasons for advocating the civil suppression of Anabaptists. Likewise, he was undoubtedly convinced that his description of Anabaptism was accurate. Above all, in view of the above, Menius felt that he must attribute to satanic deception the Anabaptist claim that they were advocates of genuine Christianity.

#### The Definition of Anabaptism, Once More

Of course, not all Anabaptists in Thuringia, not even all of the Anabaptists whom Menius<sup>1</sup> knew, exhibited these traits. Why, then, was Menius unable to perceive the differences? Why could he not, for instance perceive a shift in Anabaptism away from an earlier connection with Thomas Muntzer, or from socially radical ideas, especially since some of the Anabaptists whom he interrogated disclaimed any inclination to social insurrection. To answer those questions, it should be pointed out first that the very factors mentioned above provided the basis on which Menius based his definition of Anabaptism. With the exception of a shift in attitude towards obedience to government, the other factors persisted, according to Menius, throughout the fourth decade of the sixteenth century. His definition of Anabaptism as a revolutionary group was reinforced, furthermore, by the group in Münster. The pious, God-fearing type of Anabaptist, therefore, would have been, for Menius, an exception rather than the rule. Because definitions are not based on the exception, Menius probably felt there was no need to revise his initial definition.

Second, the Anabaptist movement was in a state of transition and flux from its very beginning. It was composed of widely diverse characteristics throughout the two and a half decades during which Menius was acquainted with it. In such a situation, Menius would have found it extremely difficult to comprehend shifts in thinking and attitudes after his initial understanding of Anabaptism had been formulated. Therefore, even when Anabaptists told Menius that they believed that citizens should obey the government, he probably suspected that they were not telling the truth.

Third, there was Menius' theological prejudice. Convinced that false doctrine inevitably leads to social dissolution, he would also have been convinced that even the pious, harmless Anabaptist would eventually cause social revolution given the opportunity. Given the man Menius, in the socially and religiously homogeneous society of Thuringia in the sixteenth century there was no way for him to question his thesis.

It goes without saying that Menius was not an advocate of religious toleration. Menius asserts that every individual has the freedom to believe privately in his heart whatever he desires. He does not, however, have the freedom to proclaim publicly, or to confess publicly, religious views that contradict the gospel. Naturally, Menius and the Lutherans have been criticized for their religious intolerance. But the question must be asked if Menius' attitude was not the only possible point of view which he could, with a good conscience, have espoused. An experiment in religious pluralism or toleration was unknown to him. But an even more important consideration here is the fact that in the Saxon territories, civil and ecclesiastical authority were closely interconnected.

There was only one church. The state fostered that church. For Menius to have advocated or wished to permit the public toleration of Anabaptist doctrines would have meant advocating the toleration of such doctrines not just in the state, but also within the church. Such toleration could only be construed as implying religious indifference or relativism.

Any confessional group must insist that its confession is true. If it is prepared to grant another confession equal status, or acknowledges that another confession is true, it thereby denies the truth of its own confession, or implies the relativity of truth. The Anabaptists themselves did not advocate that. They would not tolerate Lutheran doctrines within their midst. Menius saw the issue. He asserted that either the Anabaptist taught the Christian gospel truthfully and genuinely, or they did not.<sup>95</sup> For him, there could be no other possibility. He implies by that position that there is an objective Christian doctrine which is true and genuine. There is an absolute norm. A religious viewpoint that is not genuinely Christian, he felt, cannot be acknowledged as Christian at all. Because there was an Evangelical confession which had been accepted for Thuringia, Menius in the premises could not in good conscience advocate anything else but the suppression of Anabaptism.

At this point, then, an attempt will be made to answer the question about the definition of Anabaptism which was introduced earlier.<sup>96</sup> The problems involved in an appropriate definition of

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<sup>95</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, H3r.

<sup>96</sup>Supra, pp. 159-167.

Anabaptism are extremely intricate and complex, and an exhaustive discussion of the issues lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. No attempt will be made, therefore, to provide a definitive answer to these questions. The concern of this study is simply to determine whether there was any legitimate basis for Menius' view of Anabaptism.

First, as far as the definition of Anabaptism is concerned, contemporary scholarship has generally come to view Anabaptism as "a third way alongside Catholicism and Protestantism, or fourth, if Spiritualism is added."<sup>97</sup> In this view, the distinctive characteristic by which Anabaptism is defined is not adult baptism, but the doctrine of regeneration: a regeneration that gave "the believer the power to make a valid confession of faith and to keep the commands of Christ under the watchful eye of a disciplining church."<sup>98</sup> Such a view sees Anabaptism as a unique movement which attempted to restore the church to its New Testament purity.<sup>99</sup> One consequence of this view of Anabaptism is that it divides the movement into two groups with reference to the Anabaptist attitude towards the state: a revolutionary type of Anabaptism, and a non-revolutionary type. Other political revolutionaries are then excluded from Anabaptism

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<sup>97</sup> Rollin Armour, Anabaptist Baptism: A Representative Study, Vol. II in Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, edited by John S. Oyer, et al. (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1966), p. 137.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., II, 135.

<sup>99</sup> This view has been espoused, for example, by George Huntston Williams, The Radical Reformation. Oyer seems to operate with such a point of view, especially when he criticizes Menius' definition of Anabaptism, although he states that he uses the term to mean any one "who practices or advocates adult or believers' baptism," p. 5.



by definition.<sup>100</sup> Above all, anti-pedobaptism cannot be equated with Anabaptism.

The important question for this dissertation is whether the definition of Anabaptism just described actually applies to those individuals in Central Germany, and especially Thuringia, whom Menius designated Anabaptists. In the period before 1530, when Menius wrote his first book against the Anabaptists it certainly does not. It has already been noted that the leaders of the movement in that geographical region were closely associated with M $\ddot{u}$ ntzer; that some engaged in socially destructive actions; that some deserted their families; that one group incited a riot; and that there was an eschatology which expected the imminent overthrow of the German nobility and the exaltation of the members of the Bund to a position of power. In fact, from the sources for Central Germany for the period from 1525 to 1531, it is difficult to find one Anabaptist who could be described as a genuine Anabaptist according to the definition mentioned above. Melchior Rinck is the only exception. It was at this time, however, that

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<sup>100</sup>Harold S. Bender states in his article, "State, Anabaptist-Mennonite Attitude Toward," The Mennonite Encyclopedia (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), IV, 612, "The notion of revolution was of necessity utterly foreign to the Anabaptist mind in general, granting of course the reality of the exceptions in the case of the revolutionary type. Any 'left-wing' element in the Reformation which advocated or practiced overthrow of the state at any time and place must therefore be considered non-Anabaptist or deviationist in central character, regardless of any practice of adult baptism or any genetic connection with original peaceful Anabaptism." But the question must be asked if the reality of a revolutionary type of Anabaptist is acknowledged, can other revolutionary elements which practiced adult baptism logically be excluded from Anabaptism?" Hereafter this encyclopedia should be referred to as ME.

Menius was forming his picture of Anabaptism. It is necessary to ask, therefore, whether the individuals about whom Menius writes in 1531 are genuine Anabaptists, or whether they are simply radical anti-pedobaptists. If the definition that is current today is adopted, one would have to conclude that they were the latter. In that case, the term "Anabaptist" is a misnomer. It is not really useful at all for describing the phenomena that Menius knew and wrote about.<sup>101</sup>

There is another possibility, of course. The definition of Anabaptism which has gained currency in contemporary scholarship might be incorrect and inadequate for the early period of the Anabaptist movement. Incipient Anabaptism in Central Germany has a different spirit from the Anabaptism of the Swiss Brethren. Early Anabaptism in Central Germany is a disordered, chaotic, diverse movement. Only in the course of time did it begin to flow into the channels of that kind of Anabaptism which is considered normative today. In that case, the definition of Anabaptism described previously should be reserved for a later period. As long as it is recognized that Menius is not writing about that kind of Anabaptism, neither he nor Anabaptism need be judged harshly.

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<sup>101</sup>Oyer, p. 5, says correctly, "It [Anabaptism] was never a very useful word because of its lack of precision. In former centuries, especially the sixteenth, it was a term of contempt, coined probably to bring certain persons under the punishment prescribed in the Justinian Code for those who were baptized a second time. The term has lost most of the hostility previously attached to it, but it has not gained in precision. It was used in the sixteenth century for a motly array of radicals or left-wingers." Robert Friedman makes essentially the same point in his article, "Anabaptist," ME, 1, 114-116.

From all this it seems valid to conclude that Menius' first book against the Anabaptists is a fairly accurate description of the Anabaptism which was current in Central Germany at that time. Of course, it must be realized that his book reflects a composite view of what he had discovered about Anabaptism from different kinds of Anabaptists. Not all of the theological views which he attributes to Anabaptists would have been advocated by every Anabaptist.<sup>102</sup> Nor would all of the behavioral practices which he documents have been practiced by every Anabaptist. Menius' designation of Anabaptists as revolutionary spirits (aufrehrisch) appears to be warranted by the situation.

What may be questioned in Menius' books is his theological evaluation of Anabaptism as satanic. However, because such a judgment is a conviction of Menius' personal faith, it cannot be validated or disproved by historical research. The most that can be said is that such a viewpoint is consistent with Menius' theological confession.

Anabaptism in Central Germany after 1531 presents a mixed picture. It is at this time that Melchior Rinck began to channel the converts to Anabaptism into moderate and peaceful directions. Men like Fritz Erbe, Alexander, Hans Bott, and the pious type of Anabaptist came to the foreground. As was mentioned previously, Menius

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<sup>102</sup>The question whether any Anabaptists taught that Jesus was not truly God, as Menius says, must remain an open question. Oyer, p. 192, doubts the validity of Menius' charge, and asserts that "insofar as the Central German Anabaptists deviated from orthodox Christology, they erred in the opposite direction; they were docetic." Menius first made this charge in 1530. Unfortunately, there is no source material for Central German Anabaptism on this point prior to 1530. The only exception is the testimony of Melchior Rinck in Hesse.

was unable to perceive this shift. However, it should be noted that even after 1531 somewhat radical views still appeared. In 1533, for example, one of Rinck's followers, Margaret Garkochin, still asserted to Menius that M<sup>u</sup>ntzer's revolution was God's will and work, and that what power the civil authority had it had taken by usurping it from the people.<sup>103</sup> From the same trial record there is the frank acknowledgement by a wife that she had deserted her husband.<sup>104</sup> Fritz Erbe's wife is reported to have been insane.<sup>105</sup> Even as late as 1543 the trial records report that one woman had no answer to give to the question whether civil authority was given and instituted by God, or whether people should be obedient to it.<sup>106</sup> The degree to which such views were characteristic of Central German Anabaptism after 1531 cannot be determined. But whatever the real situation, Menius did not change his original view.

At all events, there does seem to be some, though probably not much basis for Menius' point of view even in 1544 when he wrote his second book. However, because a definite change had taken place in the Anabaptist movement in Central Germany, Menius' second book against the Anabaptists is not as valuable or as useful as the

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<sup>103</sup>Wappler, Die Stellung, p. 174.

<sup>104</sup>ibid., p. 172.

<sup>105</sup>ibid., p. 174.

<sup>106</sup>ibid., p. 213.

first as far as determining the nature of Anabaptism is concerned. Its value is greater as a source for Menius' own theology than it is for a description of Anabaptism.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Oyer's evaluation of Menius' book, Von dem Geist, is accurate. He says, p. 202, "It is difficult to escape the conclusion that for Menius the pattern of Anabaptist error had jelled into a fixed pattern. His view of M<sup>u</sup>ntzer as originator is too clear; his picture of Anabaptism is too diabolically black; his delineation of the truth of the Evangelical position is too pure and white. Here we have to deal with a myth, although one that is by no means without basis in historical fact."

## CHAPTER IV

### MENIUS' DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

From the way in which he developed his theological polemics against the Anabaptists, it is apparent that Menius considered the differing views of soteriology to be the fundamental source of conflict. However, it has already been noted,<sup>1</sup> that with reference to the Anabaptists, Menius did not explicate completely either the concept of the righteousness that avails before God, or the doctrine of justification as such. However, during the controversy which arose on account of Andrew Osiander's view of the doctrine of justification, Menius did both: he set forth his understanding of the concept of righteousness; and, he explained the way in which the believer receives the righteousness which avails before God for justification. It is the purpose of this chapter of the dissertation, first, to summarize briefly the relevant aspects of Osiander's theology; second, to summarize Menius' polemics against Osiander; and, finally, to describe Menius' doctrine of justification.

#### Osiander on Justification

In order to understand Osiander's doctrine of justification, it is necessary to comprehend the two basic concepts of his system: the

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 167-170.

image of God and the righteousness of God.<sup>2</sup> These two concepts are closely connected in his thought, and integrate his system into a coherent whole. According to Osiander, God, who is love, bears a Son from eternity. In other words, God comprehends and represents Himself in His holy, divine Logos, into which flows His entire divine essence. The Logos becomes incarnate in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is the image of God. Thus, the image of God is not only the complete divine essence, proceeding eternally in the Logos, but it is also the full bodily form which that image was to become in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Adam, because he was created in the image of God, had the divine essence dwelling within him, and he bore the image of the Christ who was to come.

The righteousness of God, according to Osiander, is God Himself in His love. The righteousness of God dwelt within Adam in the state in which he was created by God, and so he was righteous, too. Adam had confidence towards God, and he was in a state of complete peace. But, because of his fall into sin, Adam completely lost the essential, in-dwelling righteousness of God, and the divine image was destroyed. As a consequence, every man is obliged to suffer the punishment of God for his sins and to fulfill all the demands of the divine law. Because of sin, however, no member of the human race is capable of effecting his own salvation. Therefore, God effects the renewal of the human race through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>2</sup>The following summary of Osiander's theology is based primarily on the summaries of his books which are provided in W[ilhelm] Möller, Andreas Osiander: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften, Vol. V in Leben und ausgewählte Schriften der Väter und Begründer der luthischen Kirche (Elberfeld: R. L. Friderichs, 1870). For a more detailed biographical and theological bibliography, cf. supra, pp. 118-119.

Osiander distinguishes two parts in Christ's mediatorial activity; and, he distinguishes between reconciliation and justification. The first part of Christ's mediatorial activity consists in this that in His relation to God, Christ acted as a mediator for the sins of mankind. The second part consists in this that in His relation to mankind, Christ turned God towards the human race. Christ suffered the punishment which all men should have borne, and to do this He was true man; and, He also fulfilled the law as a substitute for men, and for this He was true God. The mediatorial work of Christ is the objective work of reconciliation which took place over fifteen hundred years ago. Reconciliation consists in the forgiveness of sins, and must be distinguished from justification which Osiander considers to be the process of actually making the individual righteous, or the renewal of the believer's nature so that it once more becomes the original human nature in the image of God.

Reconciliation, because it is an historical event connected with the life of Jesus Christ, happened only once. Justification, because it is connected to the life of the believer, takes place repeatedly in the ongoing history of mankind. According to Osiander, justification means to make a godless individual into a righteous one, that is, to bring a dead man to life. Thus, justification is not merely an imputation of the forgiveness of sins and merits of Christ, but it involves actually making the believer righteous.

This making righteous in justification occurs through faith in Christ, or the Word. Osiander distinguishes between an inner and an outer word. The inner word is God's eternal resolve to be gracious; and, the outer word is Christ who contains the inner



word. The gospel, which proclaims the outer word, Christ, communicates the inner word as well. Whenever the believer believes the outer word, he receives the inner word, that is, the essential righteousness of God in Christ. Because Christ dwells within the believer through faith, His righteousness completely fills the sinner and enables the believer to perform righteous works. Although sin still clings to the believer, it is only as one drop compared with a whole pure ocean. However, it is not the human nature of Christ which justifies the believer by dwelling within him. Only the divine nature of Christ justifies the believer because only Christ's divine nature contains the essential righteousness of God.

#### Menius' Polemic against Osiander

Menius' polemic against Osiander includes both specific and general criticisms. Menius directs specific attention to four important theological aspects of the doctrine of justification about which he thinks that Osiander teaches falsely. First, Menius accuses Osiander of destroying the personal union of the divine and human natures of Christ. Second, he claims that Osiander distorts the meaning and nature of reconciliation by separating it from justification. Third, he asserts that Osiander misinterprets the meaning of righteousness, and perverts the actual role of righteousness in justification. Finally, he maintains that Osiander misconstrues the way in which God imparts righteousness to the believer. Criticizing Osiander's doctrine of justification in general, Menius evaluates negatively its effects on the believer.

- (1) It destroys the assurance of salvation for the believer, and
- (2) The sinner is left in his sin. Each of these criticisms of Menius will now be described in detail.

According to Menius, Osiander teaches two incorrect things about the person and nature of Christ. First, Osiander maintains that Christ is the believer's righteousness and makes the believer righteous only according to the divine nature. In support of that view, Osiander argues that the human nature of Christ was not righteous in itself. Therefore, the human nature of Christ cannot be the sinner's righteousness. According to Osiander, Christ's human nature was righteous only because of the personal union with the divine nature in which the divine essential righteousness dwelt. Menius declares against this that Osiander's view of the human nature of Christ is too low. Menius asserts that the human nature of Christ was righteous, holy, and pure in and of itself because it was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Both the human and divine natures of Christ, the whole Christ, are the righteousness which avails before God for the justification of the sinner. As a result of such a separation of the two natures, Menius accuses Osiander of a second error. Osiander destroys the personal union of Christ. Menius insists that Osiander's view is ultimately Zwinglian. He contends that the attributes of the human and divine natures are communicated to each other, so that whatever may be predicated of the divine nature may also be predicated of the human nature and vice versa. Thus Menius says:

But if the office and work of the Mediator cannot be ascribed wholly and simultaneously to His person, but has to be ascribed variously and specially to one or the other nature according to its peculiar characteristics and attributes, as Osiander perversely contends;

then, it would have to follow that Christ cannot sit at the right hand of the Father according to His humanity, that is, be omnipresent, create, preserve and rule everything with the Father. On the contrary, according to the peculiar characteristic and attribute of the humanity He could only be in one place at a time. On this basis Zwingli tried to prove that Christ's body<sup>3</sup> and blood could not be in the Sacrament of the Altar.

It ought to be pointed out in this connection that even though Menius used the concept of the exchange of attributes between Christ's divine and human nature, he did not contribute any new or significant insight or development to that concept.<sup>4</sup>

Proceeding, Menius asserts that Osiander's view of the doctrine of reconciliation is wrong for two reasons. Osiander claims that Christ's reconciliation is the objective basis for the forgiveness of sins. However, because the forgiveness of sins is not yet

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<sup>3</sup>Justus Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt: Wider die neue Alcumistische Theologiam Andreae Osiandri (N.p., 1552), Q2v-Q3r. "Solten aber des Mitlers ampt und werck/nicht alle und zugleich der personen/sondern den naturen ein jeglichs nach jhren Idiomatis und eygenschafften/unterschiedlich und in sonderheit zugeeignet werden/wie Osiander verkehrlich streittet/So müste folgen/das auch Christus nach der menscheit/nicht könne zur rechten des Vaters sitzen/das ist/mit dem Vater allenthalben gegenwertig sein/und zugleich alles mit jhm schaffen/erhalten und regieren/Sondern müste nach der menscheit/art und eigendtschafft/nur an einem ort allein sein/Aus welchem grund der Zwingel beweisen wolt/Das Christus leib und blut/nicht köndten im Sacrament des Altars sein."

<sup>4</sup>Perhaps because of his enthusiasm for Menius, Schmidt erroneously claims just the opposite. He says, "In reference to the Person of Christ he proved much more conclusively than in his Censura, that the office and work of the Mediator must not be ascribed only to one or the other of the two natures, but must be ascribed to the entire Person. In doing so, he developed the doctrine of the communication of attributes with a consistency which had seldom occurred before." Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Justus Menius, der Reformator Thüringens (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1867), II, 158. "In Bezug auf die Person Christi weist er viel gründlicher als in seiner Censur nach, dass das Amt und Werk des Mittlers nicht der einen oder der andern der beiden Naturen allein, sondern der ganzen Person zugeeignet werden müsse, und entwickelt dabei die Lehre von der communicatio idiomatum in einer Consequenz, wie es bis dahin kaum geschehen war."

righteousness, reconciliation is not yet the sinner's justification. Justification occurs as the essential righteousness of God in Christ dwells in the believer and makes him righteous. If reconciliation were the sinner's justification, Osiander argues, then every sinner would be righteous prior to his birth. He would have been righteous fifteen hundred years ago. Such a view is incorrect, Menius thinks, first, because it divides reconciliation from its inseparable effect. Both reconciliation and justification must remain united because they both proceed from the same work of the Mediator: His obedience in suffering for sin and fulfilling the law of God. It is incorrect, secondly, because it denies that the obedience of Christ is the believer's righteousness through imputation. Menius thinks that Osiander's contention that everyone would have been justified already fifteen hundred years ago if reconciliation were the sinner's justification, is foolish. He tries to turn the argument against Osiander. If the essential righteousness of God is the righteousness of the believer, as Osiander maintains, then every member of the human race would have been righteous already from eternity. Menius argues that if it is the essential righteousness of God that is imputed to the human being and makes him righteous, then, since the essential righteousness of God was present from eternity, and not just won fifteen hundred years ago, then the individual would have to be righteous from eternity.<sup>5</sup> However, in this argument Menius ignores the problem of how the essential righteousness of God is to be communicated to the individual. As a result, the argument does not refute Osiander. In fact, it is completely beside the point.

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<sup>5</sup>Menius, NIV.

Concerning righteousness, Menius asserts Osiander's definition of the righteousness that avails before God is completely false. For Osiander, the righteousness that avails before God is the essential righteousness of God dwelling in the believer and actually making him righteous. Menius claims that the essential righteousness of God is actually the righteousness of a judge. It is not God's essential righteousness which makes the sinner righteous. As will be shown later, for Menius, God's essential righteousness means that God is holy, and that God gives due retribution in strict accordance to His law. According to Menius, Adam was not created in the essential righteousness of God, even though he was created according to the pattern of God's essential righteousness. Instead, Adam was created with a perfect knowledge of the divine righteousness, as the pattern of that righteousness is communicated through the divine law, and with the ability to will that righteousness perfectly. Menius says, "Adam was created in the image of God in this way that he had in himself something of the divine righteousness which God demands in the law from every human being."<sup>6</sup> After Adam's fall into sin, God depicted His righteousness in His divine law. The purpose of God in salvation, therefore, is not to restore mankind to the essential righteousness of God. On the contrary, God's purpose, according to Menius, is to bring the

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<sup>6</sup>Justus Menius in Censurae: Das ist/Erkenntnis aus Gottes Wort und heiliger Schrifft/Über die Bekendtnis Andreae Osiandri/Von dem einigen mitler Jhesu Christo/und von der Rechtfertigung des Glaubens (n.p., 1552), D4r. "Adam zum Bilde Gottes also geschaffen gewesen ist/das er von der Göttlich Gerechtigkeit in jm gehabt hat/welche Gott im Gesetze von allen Menschen fordert."

human race to everlasting salvation; and, while a human being is alive on earth, God's purpose is to restore mankind to that condition in which Adam was created: to perfect obedience to the divine law.

Concerning the way in which God imparts the righteousness of Christ to the believer and its role in justification, Menius dismisses out of hand Osiander's distinction between the inner and outer word. He calls it a subtle distinction which does not help simple folk at all; and, he writes off Osiander's distinction because it is never mentioned in the Scriptures.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Menius was probably much closer to Osiander at this point than he was ready to acknowledge. Menius asserts, "God word is not merely an empty voice of a preacher, but is at the same time an effective power of the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup> Thereby he silently acknowledges the necessity of making some sort of distinction between the word as it is heard, and the power which it contains. That was what Osiander was trying to express by his distinction between the inner and the outer word.

The general criticisms which Menius directs against Osiander are two in number. Menius contends that Osiander's doctrine of justification takes away the assurance of salvation from the human conscience. Secondly, Menius thinks that Osiander's doctrine of justification leaves the sinner in his sin. It is a fact, according

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<sup>7</sup> Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit, Nr.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., D4v. "Gottes wort nicht alleine ein blosse stimme eines Predigers/sondern zu gleich auch eine wirckende krafft des heiligen Geistes mit ist."

to Menius, that God will not dwell in a sinner. However, if it is God's essential righteousness which makes a man truly righteous in fact and deed, as Osiander teaches, then no sinner could ever expect God to come and dwell in him. Because Osiander separates redemption, reconciliation and satisfaction from justification, and denies that the obedience of Christ is the sinner's righteousness, then the sinner's sin must remain. If the sin remains, then God will never come into or dwell in the sinner with His essential righteousness. Therefore, the sinner would be left in his sin, in despair, and subject to God's everlasting condemnation. It follows, too, that no believer could ever be assured of salvation. The experience of all of God's holy men has been that as they grew in faith, they became ever more aware of their sinfulness and considered their righteousness to be nothing but filthy rags. Their only assurance of salvation came as they looked away from themselves to the promises of God's grace and mercy in Jesus Christ.

#### Menius' Doctrine of Justification

Having now described Menius' objections to the most important aspects of Osiander's doctrine of justification, it is necessary to set forth Menius' understanding of this doctrine. Properly speaking, the doctrine of justification is a particular way of describing the gospel message of the beneficial work of Jesus Christ on behalf of the human race. This doctrine sets forth the meaning of salvation in metaphors borrowed from legal concepts. It seeks to make intelligible the relationship between God and the human race on the basis of the philosophical concept of justice. It tries to explain the way in which God's just wrath against, and punishment of,

unjust human beings can be removed and the way in which unjust human beings can become just before God.

It might be expected that Menius, in discussing the doctrine of justification, would confine himself to metaphors derived from legal terminology. But that is not the case. In one passage of his major book against Osiander, Menius defines the article of justification as the way in which poor sinners can "get free of sins, become righteous, be reconciled to God, received into grace, become alive and saved."<sup>9</sup> From this definition it is clear that, for Menius, justification embraces more in its scope than the idea of justice; more, too, than the way in which an unrighteous human being can acquire a righteousness which would enable him to stand before God. For Menius, justification is roughly synonymous with the doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ. The essential element in that doctrine of salvation is the forgiveness of sins. In fact, Menius attaches so much importance to the forgiveness of sins, that it can be concluded legitimately that for him the forgiveness of sins means justification, salvation, reconciliation, and so forth. Menius writes:

Christ makes righteous in this way, that He bears away the believer's sins, pays for them, and makes satisfaction for them so that they are forgiven to him. Thus the knowledge of Christ, through which He justifies, is

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<sup>9</sup>Menius, *Von der Gerechtigkeit*, C2v. "Vom Articul der Iustification/das ist/wie wir armen sündler für Gott der sünden loss/gerecht/Gott versünet zu gnaden angenommen/lebendig und selig werden müssen."



nothing else than that a person believes that sin has been taken away through Christ and is forgiven to the believer for His sake.<sup>10</sup>

In that statement, Menius includes in the concept forgiveness of sins all of the elements in the doctrine of salvation which, in other places, he distinguished and separated. It is not surprising, therefore, that Menius uses the idea of righteousness as only one among several theological concepts to explain the doctrine of justification. Furthermore, it is obvious from this definition that Menius does not distinguish precisely between reconciliation and justification. Nor does he separate rigidly the ideas of forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the gift of grace, vivification and everlasting salvation in his definition of justification. Instead, in his presentation of the doctrine of justification, Menius mixes various Biblical metaphors for the general idea of salvation.

Menius' refusal to distinguish between the various Biblical metaphors for the beneficial work of Christ, and to develop systematically the doctrine of justification as a particular way of expressing that work accounts for one of the principal differences between him and Osiander. At this point Osiander was a much more precise and careful theologian than Menius. Nevertheless, Menius did elaborate sufficiently his concept of righteousness in his books against Osiander to make possible a coherent presentation of his doctrine of justification.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Klv. "Er eben damit gerecht mache/das er der gleubigen sünde tregt/dafür bezalt und gnug thut/das sie jnen vergeben werden/ Also/das die erkendnis Christi/dadurch er gerecht macht/anders nichts sey/denn das man gleube/das die sünde durch jhn weg genommen/ und umb seinet willen den gleubigen vergeben werden."

For Menius, righteousness is ultimately rooted in the eternal and essential righteousness of God, of which there are two parts: being and activity. On the one hand, Menius says, "God's essential righteousness is that through which God is and is called righteous."<sup>11</sup> Menius does not explain what he means by that statement. Possibly what Menius means is that the essential righteousness of God is that quality of God which makes Him eminently just and warrants our calling Him just. On the other hand, Menius says:

For the essential righteousness of God is, and is called, the righteousness of the judge, a commanding and judging righteousness; that is, the kind of righteousness which commands that a man ought to be pious and do right and which forbids sin and wrongdoing as the divine law teaches. . . . Second, the eternal, essential righteousness of God judges in such a way that it pronounces righteous and blessed those who are pious and do right. On the other hand, it condemns as sinners those who are evil and do wrong. It is impossible for the essential righteousness of God to condemn anyone who is pious and righteous, or to pronounce righteous a sinner who is not pious or righteous.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the previous statement, Menius here describes God's essential righteousness in terms of an activity rather than as a quality. God acts in accordance with His essential righteousness; and, in His activity, God judges and commands, prohibits or condemns.

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, K4v. "Gottes wesentliche gerechtigkeit sey/davon Gott selbst gerecht ist und heist/. . . ."

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, M1r. "Denn die wesentliche gerechtigkeit Gottes ist und heist/Iusticia iudicis/des Richters gerechtigkeit/Iudicia mandans/und iudicans/das ist eine solche gerechtigkeit/die da gebeut/man sol fromm sein/und recht thun/Sündigen aber und unrecht thun/das verbeut sie/wie das Göttliche gesetz lehret/und kurtz zuvorn auch angezeigt ist/das ist eins. Zum andern/So richtet auch die ewige wesentliche gerechtigkeit Gottes/also/das sie die jenigen/so fromm sein und recht thun/gerecht und selig spricht/Und dagegen die jenigen/so böse sein/und unrecht thun/also sündig verdammet/Und ist unmöglich/das die wesentliche gerechtigkeit Gottes/entweder einen der fromm und recht ist/verdammen/oder aber einen sündig/der nicht fromm noch gerecht ist/recht sprechen könne."

God renders a verdict on the activity of the individual. The verdict judges the individual's being as either pious or evil; and, it judges the individual's activity as either righteous or unrighteous.

Presumably, what Menius means by the essential righteousness of God, then, is this: God's essential righteousness is that quality of the divine majesty which, as a perfection of the divine nature, is called justice. To say it differently, the essential righteousness of God consists in this that God's activity, illustrated in one specific, His judging of the human race, conforms to that quality of God's nature which is justice.

Against this background, Menius' concept of righteousness of human beings can be set forth. Here again, being and activity are related. Menius contends that at the human level righteousness can only be complete obedience to the divine law. "Thus, of necessity, righteousness has to be this that a human being renders complete obedience to the divine law with his whole heart, his whole soul, his whole mind, and with all his powers."<sup>13</sup> In this context the law is both descriptive and prescriptive. It describes both the essential righteousness of God, and original human nature as created by God. It does so by asserting that mankind had that quality of perfection which characterized the divine nature, or righteousness. That is to say, prior to the fall into sin, mankind's activity conformed in every respect to the nature in which

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<sup>13</sup> ibid., H2r. "So mus von noth wegen auch dieses gerechtigkeit sein/da man dem Göttlichen gesetz/von gantzem hertzen/von gantzem seelen/von gantzem gemüte/und aus allen krefftten/vollkommenen gehorsam leistet."

he was created by God. Mankind's activity was in unity with his being. Thus, because original human nature as created by God was created in the image of God, and because the law depicts the image of God, it follows that the law describes the essential nature of mankind. Menius indicates all this in the following passage:

Both of these things are to be understood from the doctrine of the law. For it actually shows what the essential righteousness of God is, to which a human being in his nature and essence is to conform and be identical. He would, too, if the image of God, according to which God created the human race in the beginning, were still complete and undamaged in human nature. For about this there is no doubt, that God at no time would have the human race righteous in any other way, than according to the image in which God originally created it. Therefore, it is also certain that the righteousness which the divine law depicts for man is nothing else than the same pattern of the essential righteousness of God, according to which the human race was originally created, and to which the human race ought to be like.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, when Menius asserts that the righteousness of man consists in conformity to the divine law, he means that a human being may be considered righteous only if his behavior and activity under the conditions of existence authentically express that nature which was originally created in the image of God.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Llv-L2r. "Dieses beides verstehet man aus der lehre des Gesetzes/Denn dieselbige seiget eigentlich an/was die wesentliche gerechtigkeit Gottes sey/welcher der mensch inn seiner natur und wesen gleich und ehlich sein solt/und were es auch/so das bildet Gottes/nach dem der mensch von Gott anfenglich geschaffen ist/jnn des menschen natur noch gantz und unverrückt were. Denn daran je freilich kein zweiffel ist/das Gott nochmals den menschen nicht anderst gerecht haben wil/denn wie er jhn anfenglich nach seinem bild gerecht geschaffen hat. Darumb auch gewis ist/das die gerechtigkeit/so das Göttliche gesetz dem menschen fürmalet/gar nichts anders ist/denn eben dasselbige bild der wesentlichen gerechtigkeit Gottes/nach welchem der mensch anfenglich geschaffen gewesen ist/und demselbigen auch nochmals ehlich sein solt."

However, because of the fall of mankind into sin, there is not now, nor has there ever been, any human being who is actually righteous, excepting Jesus Christ. The fall means, for Menius, that every human being has lost the essential human nature in which he was created; or, to use his language, the fall means that the image of God has been lost. Therefore, the law is descriptive of the essential nature of mankind, but it is not descriptive of the actual nature of mankind under the conditions of existence. Nevertheless, because the law is descriptive of essential human nature, it summons every man to conform to that nature; in this way the law becomes prescriptive. Thus, by relating human righteousness to a legal standard, Menius indicates two things. On the one hand, the law points up the split, or disunity, between what human nature was, as originally created, and what human nature, since the fall of mankind into sin, actually is. That is to say, the law shows every man that he is separated from his essential nature, that his activity does not conform to the righteousness that is part of his essential nature, and that, as a consequence, he is unrighteous. In showing this, the law is a mirror both of original sin and of actual sins. On the other hand, the law, because it describes essential human nature, imposes on the human being the command to conform to that nature. It demands of every man that he be righteous, that is, that he act in conformity with his essential nature.

This demand of the law places every human being in an impossible situation. For every human being, estranged from his essential nature, cannot act in conformity with that essential nature. But, to act in conformity with essential nature is precisely the righteousness which God expects of the human being. Therefore,

every human being is under the condemnation of God. However, even though no fallen human being is able to conform to his essential nature, he is still required by God to do so. "God demands from every human being in the law the righteousness which counts before God, even though no human being can produce it."<sup>15</sup>

The inability of every member of the human race to conform to his essential nature means that, in actuality, every human being is a sinner. In this context sin is not merely certain types of activity, nor is it merely specific transgressions against certain commandments. Rather, sin is, in its most profound sense, the condition of human nature of being separated from its essential being. Menius asks:

What then is sin? One has to answer that sin is that element in human nature which opposes the divine law and hinders and keeps every human being from completely fulfilling the divine law with the obedience that he owes it.<sup>16</sup>

On account of that split, human nature has become recalcitrant and opposed to its own true nature. "Sin is nothing but the disobedience and recalcitrance in the human nature against the divine law."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, N2v. "Die gerechtigkeit . . . die für Gott gilt/die Gott im gesetz von allen menschen fordert/und sie gleichwol kein mensch nicht leisten kan."

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, H2r. "Was denn sünd sey? Wird man freilich auch night anders antworten können/denn das/das sünde sey/das in der menschlichen natur/dem Göttlichen gesetz widerstrebt/und alle menschen verhindert und auffhelt/das sie das Göttliche gesetz mit schuldigem gehorsam/vollkömlich nicht erfüllen können."

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* "Die sünde (so nichts anders denn der ungehorsam und widerspenstigkeit/in der menschlichen natur ist/wider das Göttliche gesetz). . . ."

Several consequences result from the situation just described. First, mankind is under the wrath of God. God requires of every member of the human race that he be and act in conformity with essential human nature. Failure to do so results in divine punishment: everlasting condemnation. And, because no human being actually does conform to essential human nature, because every human being is, in fact, unrighteous, every member of the human race is faced with the prospect of everlasting condemnation. Second, if the human race is to be freed from the divine punishment for failure to act in conformity with essential human nature, some way must be provided for the divine punishment to be removed. And, finally, some way must be provided in order that the human race might obtain that righteousness which God requires.

The two elements mentioned last are, for Menius, the indispensable conditions for the justification of the human race. They are the essence of justification and righteousness.

If Christ has first of all taken all sin upon Himself, completely paid for them and made satisfaction; and, in addition, has completely fulfilled the law for the sinner so that God accepts both, and imputes this work to the poor sinner as if he himself had done it, on account of his faith, then I should like to have Osiander tell me what more is necessary for the justification of a poor sinner?<sup>18</sup>

It is at this point that the role of the Mediator becomes clear in Menius' doctrine of justification. For Menius, the righteousness

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<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, Hlv. "Nun möcht ich von Osiandro das gern hören/was doch einem armen sündler zu seiner rechtfertigung/weiter und noch mehr von nöten sein solt/wenn Christus erstlich alle sünde von jhm auff sich genommen/dafür gantzlich bezalt/und gnug gethan/zu dem auch das gantze Gesetze für jhn vollkommenlich erfüllet hat/also/das Gott solchs beides annimpt/und es dem armen sündler/als ob ers selbst gethan het/umb des willen/das ers gleubt/zurechnet."

of Christ consists in this that He was obedient to the divine law. This obedience consisted of two things. On the one hand, Christ suffered the punishment for transgressions against the divine law. And, on the other hand, He kept the law perfectly. He did both in behalf of the human race. As a true human being, Christ overcame the split between essential and fallen human nature: that is the ultimate meaning of Menius' doctrine of the righteousness of Christ. That is the sense behind the affirmation that Christ conformed perfectly to the law, because the law is the pattern of righteousness according to which mankind was created. In Christ, then, activity and essence were in unity. This gives Christ, according to Menius, a twofold righteousness. On the one hand, Christ was righteous because as God He partook of the divine essential righteousness. Here, once again, the two elements in Menius' concept of righteousness are evident. He says, concerning Christ:

He had two kinds of righteousness: the one, which is God's eternal and essential righteousness, which He had on account of His divine nature and essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity; the other, which He won and secured in addition to the first in our assumed human nature under the law.<sup>19</sup>

The most important aspect of the righteousness of Christ for the human race is this that it was performed in behalf of the human race. Menius emphasizes repeatedly that what Christ did, he did for mankind. Furthermore, equally important is the fact that what Christ

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, M3r. "[Christus hat] wol zweyerley gerechtigkeit gehabt/Die eine/welche Gottes ewige und wesentlich gerechtigkeit ist/ und er won wegen seiner Göttlichen natur und wesens/mit dem Vater und heiligen Geist/von ewigkeit her/Die ander aber/die er uber die ersten/in unser angenommenen menschlichen natur unter dem gesetz/ uns auffgebracht und erworben hat."



accomplished by His obedience is exactly what God demands of each human being as the righteousness which avails for salvation. Menius says:

Therefore, the obedience of the Mediator, Christ Jesus, by which He fulfilled the law for us, is the righteousness which God demands from all mankind in order that all human beings might stand righteous before God's judgment and be saved forever, if they had the righteousness which Christ perfectly completed for us.<sup>20</sup>

A human being, therefore, who has the righteousness of Christ has the righteousness which counts for salvation. But the question must be asked in what way the individual obtains and receives the righteousness of Christ? If the obedient work of Christ was offered in behalf of the human race, is it not already the possession of every individual? If Christ's saving work for mankind was accomplished once and for all time, then are not all human beings already saved?

It must be acknowledged that Osiander clearly perceived the theological problem which is involved here. He solved the problem by asserting that reconciliation and redemption are historical works of Christ which only provide the basis for the individual's justification. They are not yet the individual's justification. Justification, for Osiander, is an actual making righteous of the individual. Therefore, it is necessarily tied to the historical life of each human being. Osiander must be credited with taking seriously the historical nature of Christianity.

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<sup>20</sup>Menius in *Censurae*, Clr. "Und derhalben/So ist auch dieser gehorsam damit der miltler Christus Jhesus das Gesetz erfüllet hat/für uns/eben die Gerechtigkeit/die Gott von allen menschen fordert/damit auch alle menschen für Gottes gericht bestunden/und ewig selig wurden/wenn sie die selbigen hetten/Wie der HErr Christus sie für uns volnbracht hat."

For reasons which will be mentioned later, Menius pays little heed to this problem. He argues against Osiander that the individual's justification simply cannot be separated from reconciliation and redemption. He defines reconciliation as "the stilling and putting aside of God's wrath with the result that He again becomes gracious to the poor sinners who had offended Him and made Him angry."<sup>21</sup> In this passage, reconciliation consists in the putting away of God's wrath, and the bestowal of God's grace. However, in another passage, Menius asserts that reconciliation consists in Christ's suffering for sin, and His fulfilling of the law.

The Lord Christ, first of all, paid for our sins with his suffering, and made satisfaction for them. Secondly, He fulfilled the whole law for us poor sinners by being completely obedient with respect both to God and to mankind. Thereby He reconciled us to God.<sup>22</sup>

But those two items are precisely the elements of justification as Menius defines it! Menius describes redemption in a circular way when he speaks of the "redemption that occurred on the cross through the shedding of the Lord Christ's guiltless blood and through his death when He redeemed us from sin, the wrath of God, and the punishment of eternal death and damnation."<sup>23</sup> As far as redemption is

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<sup>21</sup> Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit, E4v. "Das versüßen nichts anders sey/denn Gottes zorn ablehnen und stillen/das er den armen sündern/so jn beleidiget und erzürnet haben/widerumb gnedig werde."

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., N1r. "Es hat der HErr Christus mit seinem leiden erstlich für unsere sünde bezalt/und-gnug gethan/Darnach auch das gantze gesetz/mit vollkommenen gehorsam gegen Gott und menschen/für uns arme sündler erfüllet/und uns damit Gott versünet."

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., E4v. "Die erlösung verstanden werd/so am Creutz/durch vergiessung des unschuldigen bluts/und den tod des Herrn Christi geschehen ist/da er uns von sünden/Gottes zorn/und von der straff des ewigen todes und verdammis erlöst hat."

concerned, Menius isolates only one element which he includes in justification: Christ's suffering the penalty for sin. It is obvious from these definitions that Menius considers all three as essentially the same thing. He says so in the following passage:

Therefore, the use of all these concepts in the Holy Scriptures is quite interchangeable, so that they can all be used together or one or two of them can be posited for all. Even if only one or the other is expressed and named, nevertheless, all are to be understood. For example, whenever the Scriptures assert that Christ has reconciled us to God, justification is also to be understood thereby even though the term is not expressly mentioned.<sup>24</sup>

Of the three concepts, Menius gives priority almost always to justification. Whereas Osiander insists that justification is a consequence of, and follows reconciliation, Menius insists, most frequently just the opposite. For Menius, justification precedes and causes reconciliation.

God cannot, neither does He want to become satisfied or gracious, so that He would free and exempt the sinner from the punishment of death and condemnation, and let Himself be reconciled unless the sinner first of all be justified: that is, that first of all there be punishment for sin, and His law be completely fulfilled with perfect obedience. The Mediator, Christ Jesus, does both of these things at the same time with one work. For He submits Himself to the law, fulfills it completely for us, and takes on Himself the punishment and curse of the law which we had earned by our transgression and had loaded on us. In this way, such obedience of the Mediator, Jesus Christ, at the same time redeems and justifies the poor sinner and reconciles him to God who was filled with wrath. For if the sinner is justified, so also God

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<sup>24</sup> ibid., E3r-E3v. "Darumb ist der gebrauch in der heiligen schrift allenthalben gemain/das sie allesamt zugleich/oder jr eins oder zwey/für allesamt gesetzt werden/Und da gleich nur eins oder zwey gesatzt und genandt wird/das sie gleichwol nichts deste weniger allesamt verstanden werden/Als wenn die schrift sagt/ Christus hab uns mit Gott versünet/so wird die rechtfertigung darunter zu gleich verstanden/ob sie wol nicht ausdrücklich genandt wird."

is reconciled; and, if God is reconciled, then He forgives sin and releases the condemned sinner from death and the bands of hell, receives him into grace and saves him.<sup>25</sup>

However, because Menius can equate justification with the forgiveness of sins, as mentioned previously, he can also insist that reconciliation must precede justification. Even though it reflects a certain confusion of thought, the following passage illustrates this.

For where there is to be redemption from death and damnation, in order that a person may be saved, there has to be first of all forgiveness of sins. But if there is to be forgiveness of sins, then God first has to be reconciled and gracious. If God is to be reconciled and gracious, then the sinner has to be previously justified. For it is clear and obvious that no one can become free or saved from death and damnation unless he first is rid of his sins. But no one can be rid of his sins except through forgiveness. But if it is also certain that God will not forgive anyone without a previous reconciliation, it is also certain that no one can be reconciled unless he becomes righteous.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> ibid., E2r-E2v. "Es kan aber noch wil Gott nicht zu frieden noch gnedig werden/das er den sündler aus der straffe des tods und verdammis/loss und ledig/nach sich versünen lassen wölle/der sündler sey denn zuvor gerechtfertiget/das ist/die sünde sey denn zuvor gestrafft/ und sein gesetz mit vollkommenem gehorsam gantzlich erfüllet. Solchs beides/richtet der Mitler Christus Jesus mit einem werck zugleich aus/da er sich unter das gesetz thut/erfüllet dasselbige vollkömlich für uns/und lest die straff und fluch des Gesetzes/so wir mit unser ubertrettung verdienet/und auff uns geladen hatten/uber sich gehen/ Also/das solcher gehorsam des Mitlers Jhesu Christi/zugleich den armen sündler erlöset und rechtfertiget/und Gott der da erzürnet ist/ versünet. Denn wenn der sündler gerechtfertiget wird/so wird auch Gott versünet/und wenn Gott versünet wird/so vergibt er die sünde/ und lest den verdampften sündler aus des todes und der hellen banden loss/nimpt jhn zu gnaden an/und macht jhn selig."

<sup>26</sup> ibid., G4v. "Denn wo erlösung vom tode und verdammis sein sol/das man könne selig werden/da mus zuvor vergebung der sünden sein/Wo aber vergebung der sünden sein sol/da mus Gott zuvor versünet und gnedig sein/Wo Gott sol versünet und gnedig werden/da mus der sündler zuvor gerechtfertigt sein. Denn das ist ja klar und offenbar/das aus dem tode und verdammis/niemand loss noch selig werden kan/er sey denn zuvor der sünden loss/welcher niemandt loss werden kan/anders denn durch vergebung. So ist das auch gewis/das Gott niemande die sünde vergeben wil/ohn vorgehende versünung/So kan niemand zur versünung kommen/er werd denn gerecht."

So far Menius has only shown how it is possible for any human being to be saved. The work of Christ has yet to be made available to the individual for his salvation. That happens in three stages: the proclamation of the gospel, faith, and imputation.

Even though redemption, reconciliation, and justification are united as the work of Christ in Menius' theology; and, even though that work of Christ was effective for the whole human race, Menius does not apply its benefits indiscriminately to every human being. The qualifications which limit Christ's work, as far as Menius is concerned, are its connection to the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, and acceptance of that offer of grace through faith. The first of these qualifications is what matters at this point. Menius gives a rather cavalier treatment to the whole problem involved here, but his meaning is clear enough. The saving work of Christ is connected to the preaching of the gospel and to the sacraments.

The righteousness, satisfaction, reconciliation, grace, redemption, life and salvation which the Mediator, Christ, has won for us through His obedience, as state previously He causes to be proffered, offered and given to the whole world through the preaching of the Gospel and through the Holy Sacraments.<sup>27</sup>

He states the matter a little more forcefully, but not much more, when he says, "Reconciliation and the righteousness of Christ comes to us, and becomes our own, through the office of the ministry."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Menius In Censurae, D3v-D4r. "Die Gerechtigkeit/Gnugthuung/Versüning/Gnade Erlösung/Leben und Seligkeit/welche uns/wie droben angezeigt/der mitler Christus/durch seinen gehorsam erworben hat/lest er aller welt durch die Predigt des Euangelij/und durch die heiligen Sacramenta fürtragen/anbieten und schencken."

<sup>28</sup>Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit, N4r. "Die versüning und gerechtigkeit Christi/durchs Predigamt zu uns komme/und unser werde. . . ."

Menius believed that the preaching of the gospel is powerful enough to awaken the very faith which believes that preaching. The preaching of the gospel has its origin in the command of Christ to His disciples. Presumably, therefore, the saving work of Christ is limited to the preaching of the gospel because Christ has so limited it.<sup>29</sup>

If the work of Christ is limited in the first instance by its proclamation, it is further limited by its acceptance in faith on the part of the believer. The individual who believes that Christ's work was performed in his behalf, receives the benefits of that work. Faith, according to Menius, "is the one thing that grasps and accepts the word of the divine promise in which God promises and pledges that He will forgive sins, count as righteous, grant grace, and save

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<sup>29</sup>Menius, as Albrecht Ritschl correctly pointed out, does not explore the relationship between the individual's justification and the preaching of the gospel, the sacraments, the ministry, and the church. "However far Osiander's Lutheran opponents thought they had occasion to enter into his way of regarding the matter, they also were unable to discover any other objective intermediary between the general result of Christ's work and the justification of the individual than the so-called means of grace. Thus Menius says that 'the righteousness which Christ has earned for us by His obedience, He causes to be presented, offered, and given to everyone through the preaching of the gospel, and through the holy sacraments. Whoever, therefore, believes in the promise, really receives these treasures of grace.' But faith itself also exists only as operation of the Word of God received by hearing. We ought not to be surprised that the Lutherans never got beyond this formula. For it had Luther's authority on its side, and the epigoni of Luther had not learned from Melancthon anything of the discipline of accurate theological thinking. Must not the question have pressed itself upon them how those processes to which they pointed stood related to the idea of the Church? Does the Church take its rise first of all from those who are justified through the instrumentality of the gospel and the sacraments? or do not rather the means of grace, presuppose the existence of the community of believers? For, after all, the gospel--the keys of the kingdom of heaven--are intrusted principaliter to the Church, and the sacraments cannot even be thought of apart from it." Albrecht Ritschl, A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation, translated by John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), p. 230.

for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>30</sup> By believing in Christ, it is as though the individual himself had suffered the punishment for sin and perfectly fulfilled the law. Menius thinks of faith in terms of knowledge, "belief" or intellectual assent, and confidence.

The Holy Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists proclaim and witness to all this so that we should not only know and believe that everything took place and happened as they say, but also that we should take comfort in it and trust that God actually wants to and will impute Christ's obedience to us for righteousness as if we ourselves had performed and paid it.<sup>31</sup>

But the aspect of faith which Menius emphasizes most frequently in his books against Osiander, as well as elsewhere, is confidence. In a passage which is typical for him, Menius says:

Therefore, a poor sinner who believes in Christ, even though he has no carnal righteousness of his own in his flesh and blood, but rather mere sin, may indeed joyfully boast, in spite of the accusation of his bad conscience and the law of God, the judgment-seat of God, and against the devil and death, who would condemn and devour him on account of his sins.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit, S2v-S3r. "Der glaub allein ist/der das wort der Göttlichen verheissung fasset und annimpt/darinnen Gott verheisset und zusaget/das er umb des Herrn Christi willen die sünde vergeben/gerecht schetzen/zu gnaden annemen/und selig machen wöll."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., N2v. "Welchs alles die heilige schrifft der Propheten/Aposteln und Euangelisten/darumb verkündigen und zeugen/das wirs nicht allein wissen und gleuben sollen/das es alles also ergangen und geschehen sey/wie sie dauon zeugen/Sondern das wirs uns auch getrösten und darauff verlassen sollen/Gott wölle und werde eigendlich den gehorsam Christi/uns zur gerechtigkeit zurechnen/als hetten wir selbst jhn geleistet und bezalet."

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., K4v. "Derwegen ein armer sündler/so an Christum gleubet/wider die anklage seines bösen gewissens/des Göttlichen gesetzes/für Gottes gericht/wider den Teuffel und Todt/so jhn umb seiner sünden willen verdammen und verschlingen wollen/mit aller frewdigkeit wol rhümen mag/ob er wol in seinem fleisch und blut keine eigene fleischliche gerechtigkeit/sondern viel mehr eitel sünde hab."

In fact, as he himself says, the whole purpose of the evangelical preaching is to bring the believer to the assurance of God's mercy and grace, forgiveness and salvation. "We preach . . . in order to comfort poor, terrified, threatened consciences."<sup>33</sup> And that, finally, is the real basis for Menius' objection to Osiander's system. Menius was convinced that the result of Osiander's teaching was the destruction of the assurance of faith.

The third and final link between the individual and the saving work of Christ is imputation. By imputation Menius means that God considers the individual who has faith to possess the righteousness of Christ. That is to say: in God's sight it is as if the believer himself had done the work of Jesus Christ of suffering for sin and fulfilling the law.

God desires and actually will impute the obedience of Christ to us for righteousness as if we ourselves had offered and paid it. He receives us by grace and esteems us as righteous for Christ's sake as if we were righteous by nature and all our deeds and life were nothing but *simon pure righteousness*.<sup>34</sup>

Imputation is simply another way of saying "pronouncement." God pronounces the individual who has faith righteous. The basis for the pronouncement of God is faith. Menius says in this connection:

Faith is a virtue which God esteems so dear, which avails so much in His sight, and is so acceptable, that

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, R3v. "Wir predigen . . . die armen/erschrocken/ angefochten gewissen zu trösten."

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, N2v. "Gott wolle und werde eigentlich den gehorsam Christi/uns zur gerechtigkeit zurechnen/als hetten wir selbst jhn geleistet und bezalet/und uns umb Christus willen/so zu gnaden annemen und gerecht schetzen/als weren wir von natur so gerecht/und alles unser thun und leben nichts anders/denn eitel lauter gerechtigkeit."



any human being who has this virtue, God considers and pronounces him righteous on its account.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, in contrast to Osiander, the pronouncement of God is the decisive factor in the individual's personal justification.

Therefore, there is no doubt that the one whom God pronounces righteous must also certainly, truly and indeed be righteous before Him, whether or not he appears righteous or unrighteous before the world, either in his own eyes or in the eyes of others.<sup>36</sup>

To be pronounced righteous, for Menius, is the same as to be righteous.

"This is correctly and well said," he affirms, "that on account of the divine pronouncement all sinners and ungodly persons become righteous."<sup>37</sup> The actual personal righteousness of the believer should not be considered as a necessary factor in his justification. Even though the believer is completely a sinner in his actual nature, nevertheless, because of God's pronouncement he is truly righteous.

It was suggested before that there were reasons why Menius, like Melanchthon before him, paid little heed to the problem that arises because of the temporal separation between the work of Christ and the justification of each individual believer in the ongoing history of mankind. The major reason is Menius' view of imputation. Through imputation the believer is truly righteous because of God's

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<sup>35</sup> ibid., Slr-Slv. "Der glaub ist eine tugendt/die für Gott so thewr geachtet wird/für jhm so viel gilt/und so angenehme ist/das welcher mensch solche tugend an jm hat/derselbige mensch umb jhrent willen/von Gott für gerecht gehalten und gesprochen wird."

<sup>36</sup> ibid., D3v. "Derwegen ist kein zweiffel nicht/welchen Gott gerecht spricht/das derselbige auch gewislich warhafftig/und mit der that gerecht für jhm sein müsse/er scheine gleich für der welt/beyde in seinen eigen/und anderer leute augen/wie er wolle/gerecht oder ungerecht."

<sup>37</sup> ibid., Elv. "Dieses ist recht und wol geredt/denn umb des Göttlichen gerechtsprechens willen/werden alle sündler und gottlosen gerecht."

pronouncement that he is righteous on account of the work of Christ which is received through faith in the gospel. God's pronouncement, made possible because of the historical work of Christ, repeatedly makes present again for the human race in preaching and the sacraments the benefits of Christ's work. That means, of course, that the historical work of Christ has a transhistorical significance. Menius, although he was not as precise and careful as Osiander, did, at least, have a more accurate feeling for the theology of the New Testament than Osiander had. The second reason why Menius ignored the historical problem was his concern that the gospel message of the forgiveness of sins be not obscured or distorted in any way. He believed, and rightly so, that if the renewal of the believer were made a part of the righteousness before God, then the "exclusive terms" (particulae exclusivae) of the doctrine of justification such as "freely" would have to be sacrificed. If the believer obtains righteousness in some other way than through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, then the Biblical teaching about the justification of the sinner would be forfeited. Menius' feeling for the exclusive nature of justification prompted him to accuse Osiander of teaching an "alchemical" doctrine of justification which corresponds to the work-righteousness of the later scholastics.<sup>38</sup>

In conclusion, it ought to be stated that Menius' books against Osiander are of uneven theological quality. They suffer from the common faults of their day such as a sarcastic tone and conclusions drawn from the opponent's position which the opponent had not

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., OI, Plr.

affirmed. They contain some specious arguments such as Menius' contention that if God's essential righteousness saves the individual then every human being would have been justified already from eternity. They are wordy, repetitive, and they emphasize some issues at the expense of others. The detailed statements about the work of Christ are repeated over and over; but, there is no substantive discussion of the way in which the righteousness of Christ is related to the office of the ministry, the church, and the preaching of the gospel in word and sacrament. Schmidt's evaluation of Menius' book, Concerning the Righteousness which Avails before God (Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt), is obviously overly enthusiastic. Schmidt says:

In it Menius manifested a precision of conception, a clarity of presentation and a basic knowledge of Biblical theology which was found together in only the fewest theologians of his age.<sup>39</sup>

As a matter of fact, in that book Menius only repeats the theological emphases of Luther and Melancthon. There is nothing unique or creative about Menius' theology in that book at all. Every good thought which it contains can be found already in the Augsburg Confession or its Apology.

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<sup>39</sup>Schmidt, II, 156. "Dabei bekundet er eine Schärfe der Auffassung, Klarheit der Darstellung und gründliche Kenntniss der biblischen Theologie, wie sie nur bei den wenigsten Theologen jener Zeit beisammengefunden werden."

## CHAPTER V

### MENIUS' DOCTRINE OF THE NEW LIFE

#### A Problem for the Thesis

Thus far, the theological chapters of this thesis have discussed the essential aspect of the theology of Justus Menius. Chapter II attempted to demonstrate that Menius built his theology on the unique foundation of the gospel. This essential aspect can also be viewed, metaphorically, as the center of a system of theology from which flow a number of complementary theological viewpoints. These viewpoints included such items as Menius' anthropology, his view of the law of God, of the person and work of Christ, and of the office of the ministry. Menius set forth his view of all of these items in his polemic against the Anabaptists. In every case there was no doubt that Menius was a dedicated disciple of the evangelical theology of his teachers and mentors, Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon. Chapter III attempted to present Menius' theology as he developed it in the controversy with Andrew Osiander. Once again it became clear that the principal focus of Menius' theology is on the gospel. Menius' objected to Osiander's system of theology because Menius was convinced that Osiander's doctrine of justification resulted in the destruction of the central affirmation of evangelical Lutheran theology: the good news of God's grace for the sinful human being's justification on account of the righteousness of Jesus Christ which God imputes to the believer through faith. So far the conclusion would be warranted that Menius was one of

Luther's faithful students, a theologian who accurately reproduced the Lutheran theological insights.

In this chapter it is necessary to examine Menius' doctrine of the new life, particularly his view of the necessity of the new life as he espoused it during the Majoristic controversy. An examination of the whole controversy is beyond the scope of this dissertation. The purpose here is only to present Menius' theology as he developed it because of his involvement in that controversy. As far as Major's phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," is concerned, it is sufficient to note, at this point, the evaluation which Menius wrote in 1556.

It is necessary for all those who have received through faith in Christ the forgiveness of their sins, righteousness, the Holy Spirit, eternal life and salvation purely out of God's grace and mercy without any of their own works and merits for the sake of the unique mediator, Jesus Christ, alone, that they continually fight against the remaining sin in their flesh as long as they live and until they die, bring forth the proper fruits of repentance, and exercise, prove and fix their faith in such new obedience to which the Holy Spirit motivates and moves them in order that they do not lose again all the heavenly blessings and treasures of grace and be condemned eternally with the devil. . . . I understand this and nothing else to be the meaning of Dr. Major's phrase when he asserts that good works are necessary for salvation, not that they might obtain salvation but that they must certainly follow as fruits of faith in those who have already been saved and have become the children of God through faith in Christ purely out of grace without any works or merit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Justus Menius, "Urtheil und Bekenntniss über Majors Satz an Schnepf," printed in Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Justus Menius: Der Reformation Thüringens (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1867), II, 188-189. "Dass allen Denen, so durch den Glauben an Christum Vergebung ihrer Sünden, Gerechtigkeit, heiligen Geist, ewiges Leben und Seligkeit aus lauter Gottes Gnade und Barmherzigkeit ohne alle ihre eignen Werke und Verdienste, allein um des einigen Mittlers Jesu Christi willen erlangt haben, von nöthen sei, damit sie alle solche himmlische Güter und Gnadenschätze nicht wiederum verlieren und ewig mit den Teufeln verdammt werden, dass sie bis in ihren Tod wider die übrigen Sünden im Fleisch durch ihr ganzes Leben

However, even though Menius would neither use nor reject Major's phrase, he did defend the notion that the new life is necessary to retain salvation as the passage quoted above demonstrates. In fact, in that passage, Menius interpreted Major's position in the very same language in which he, Menius, customarily set forth his own position. Menius' defense of that position filled the last four years of his life with much distress. His reputation as a truly evangelical theologian was made suspect and even blemished. Menius' contemporaries and subsequent scholarship have roundly condemned Menius' position as an unacceptable distortion of evangelical Lutheran theology.<sup>2</sup> The question arises, therefore, if it is possible to defend the thesis which this dissertation has demonstrated thus far.

#### Menius' Position

There can be no doubt about Menius' view on this matter. He was convinced that his position, as he presented it, was thoroughly evangelical. He believed that there would have been no controversy about his teaching if his opponents would have judged it on the

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immerdar streiten und rechtschaffene Früchte der Busse wirken, ihren Glauben in solchem neuen Gehorsam üben, beweisen und gewiss machen, dazu sie dann vom heiligen Geist angeregt und getrieben werden . . . . Auf solche Meinung und nicht anders muss ich D. Majoris Rede verstehen, da er setzt, Gute Werke seien nöthig zur Seligkeit, nicht sie damit zu erlangen, sondern dass sie bei denen, so durch den Glauben an Christum aus lauter Gnaden ohne alle Werke und Verdienste schon selig und Kinder Gottes worden sind, als Früchte und Wirkung des heiligen Geistes gewisslich folgen müssen."

<sup>2</sup>Schmidt, II, 184-252, is sympathetic to Menius, but Schmidt limits himself to a purely historical presentation. He does not discuss the theological issues. For a description of the positions taken in the older literature, consult Gustav Wolf, Quellenkunde der deutschen Reformationsgeschichte (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1915), II, 39-56.

basis of its total context and would not have drawn conclusions from his teaching which he did not espouse.<sup>3</sup> Menius' conviction about the evangelical nature of his position had a twofold basis. First, he insisted that he had laid an evangelical foundation prior to asserting that the new life is necessary to retain salvation. The following statement indicates that Menius developed the evangelical doctrine of justification before he asserted the necessity of the new life to retain salvation:

I am not teaching in this matter about the way in which a poor, condemned sinner may be saved or what is necessary for salvation. On that matter I have previously taught and proved with sufficient clarity that such cannot happen on account of any kind of law or work, but that it has to take place only through faith in Christ. But, I do teach in this matter the way in which a poor, condemned sinner, no longer condemned to eternal death under the wrath of God, but saved and accepted by grace through faith in Christ, ought to conduct himself in order that he may remain saved and not fall from grace and salvation and be condemned again, and what is necessary for him in this connection.<sup>4</sup>

That statement is typical. Because of such statements, however, Menius' enemies accused him of abandoning the gospel and returning to the papacy. That was a short-hand way of saying that Menius was teaching

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<sup>3</sup>Justus Menius, "Antwort," printed in Schmidt, II, 217.

<sup>4</sup>Justus Menius, Bericht Der bitteren Warheit lusti Menii Auff die Unerfindlichen aufflagen M. Flacii Illyrici/und des Herrn Niclas von Amsdorffs (Wittenberg: n.p., 1558), L2v-L3r. "So lere ich auch an diesem ort nicht davon/wie ein armer verdampfter Sünder möge selig werden/und was im dazu von nöten sey/dann davon hab ich zuvor gelart/ und mit gnugsamer erklerung bewiesen/das solchs durch gar keinerley gesetz noch werck geschehen könne/sonder das es allein durch den Glauben an Christum geschehen müsse. Davon aber lere ich a diesem ort/wie ein armer sünder/der nun nicht mehr unter Gottes zorn zum ewigen tode verdampft/sondern durch den Glauben an Christum zu gnaden angenommen und selig worden ist/sich halten sol/das er selig bleibe/ und aus dem stande der gnaden und seligkeit nicht widerumb ausfalle und verdamnet werde/was im dazu von nöten sey/davon/lere ich an diesem ort."

that a man is justified and saved by the works of the law. In no way did Menius intend for his statement to be interpreted with respect to the dispensation of grace or within the framework of the doctrine of justification.

Second, Menius asserted repeatedly that he had never used or approved of the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation."

Over and over Menius said:

I have said and say again that I have never used it [the phrase that good works are necessary for salvation] in my whole life, either in sermons or books, and no one could truthfully convict me of that. My meaning is now and always has been that such an expression would be better left unused because of the possibility of harmful misunderstanding.<sup>5</sup>

He never moved from his position that Major's phrase should be interpreted or left unused, but Menius refused to condemn it as heretical because he was convinced that it was a valid statement in the doctrine of the law.<sup>6</sup>

Because Menius did not use the objectional phrase, he believed that he was unjustly accused of abandoning his former evangelical position. However, the question which must be answered is whether or not Menius' position on the necessity of the new life to retain salvation vitiated his own evangelical theology.

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<sup>5</sup> ibid., 03r. "Dazu habe ich gesagt und sage noch, dass ich ihr mein Leben lang weder in Predigten noch Schriften nie geführt habe, und wird michs auch in Wahrheit Niemand überführen können. . . [sic] Und ist meine Meinung je und allewege gewesen, wie auch noch, dass solche Weise zu reden billiger nachgelassen denn geführt würde, um des ärgerlichen Missverständes willen."

<sup>6</sup> ibid.



In order to work towards an answer to this question, it is necessary to examine three issues which were discussed in detail during the controversy about Menius' position. The first of these issues pertained to the doctrine of the law. Menius asserted that with regard to the dispensation of the law it is totally appropriate to teach that good works are necessary for salvation. The second issue concerned the whole matter of necessity. Granted that good works and the new life are necessary, for what reason are they necessary? This was the fundamental issue which was settled by Article IV of the Formula of Concord. Menius asserted that the new life is necessary in order for salvation to be preserved.

The final issue related to the distinction between the terms justification and salvation. Menius maintained that the two must be distinguished, justification being a narrower concept than salvation. Here he tried to come to terms with the role time plays in the earthly life of the justified believer. Each of these issues will now be discussed in turn.

#### The Doctrine of the Law: Good Works are Necessary for Salvation

Article I of the "Conclusion and Decree of the Synod of Eisenach" granted that the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," could be tolerated "abstractly and with respect to the idea (abstractive et de idea)" in the doctrine of the law.<sup>7</sup> To

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<sup>7</sup>"Conclusio et decretum synodi Isenacensis anno MDLVI celebratae, qua Majoris et Menii error damnatus est," printed in Schmidt, II, 223. "Etsi haec oratio: bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem, in doctrina legis abstractive et de idea tolerari potest, tamen multae sunt graves causae, propter quas vitanda et fugienda est, non minus quam illa: Christus est creatura."

be sure, the decree also asserted that there are good reasons for not using the phrase anyway, primarily because the phrase could be grossly misinterpreted. In any case, Article I vindicated Menius' position to a limited extent. It recognized the absolute validity of the demand of the moral law for the human being at every point in the life of the human being.

At this point it will be helpful to recall certain features of Menius' presentation of the doctrine of the law.<sup>8</sup> According to Menius, the law of God is the expression of the original pattern of righteousness of the human being in which God created the human race. Menius wrote in his book against the Bloodfriends:

There can be no doubt that in His law our Lord God does not oblige, demand or desire from the human being anything else than that he should live and walk in accord with the image of God in which the human being was originally created. For who could or would think or say that in His law God requires the human being to be or live otherwise than according to the image in which God originally created him.<sup>9</sup>

In Menius' view, the law of God is both description and demand. The demand originates in the fact that the human being, because of the fall and the subsequent transmission of original sin, no longer possesses fully the image of God in which the human race was created. Besides that, no human being has the kind of righteousness which could count before God for salvation. Menius wrote:

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<sup>8</sup>Supra, pp. 164-167.

<sup>9</sup>Justus Menius, Von den Bluffreunden aus der Wiedertauf (Erfurt: Gervasius Sthürmer, 1551), Jlr. "Und hat sonder zweiffel unser Herr Gott dem menschen im Gesetz/nichts anders aufflegen/auch nichts anders ihm gebieten/noch von im haben wöllen/denn das er nach dem bild Gottes/darnach er anfenglich geschaffen gewesen/nachmals leben und wandlen solt/Denn wer kan oder darff das dencken oder sagen/das Gott im Gesetz vom menschen fordern solt/anders zu sein/oder anders zu leben/denn nach dem bilde/darinnen er zu im anfenglich ist geschaffen gewesen."

Both of these things are understood from the doctrine of the law. For both actually show what the essential righteousness of God is, to which the human being is to conform and be identical in his nature and essence. He would, too, if the image of God, according to which God created the human race in the beginning, were still complete and undamaged. For about this there can be no doubt that God at no time would have the human race righteous in no other way, than according to the image in which God originally created it. Therefore, it is also certain, that the righteousness which the divine law depicts for mankind is none other than the same pattern of the essential righteousness of God, according to which the human race was originally created, and to which the human race ought to conform.

One of the consequences of the work of Christ, according to Menius, is that the human being who receives the benefits of Christ's work begins to be restored to the image in which God originally created him. That means that the believer truly begins to fulfill the law of God and conforms himself to the pattern of divine righteousness. Of course, the believer never achieves perfect conformity to the pattern of righteousness which is depicted in the divine law. Nevertheless, a real beginning of renewal does take place as the believer becomes more and more willingly obedient to the divine will. Menius describes this renewal in these words:

And then, after we have already been made righteous by faith, then, on account of the righteousness of faith,

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<sup>10</sup>Justus Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt: Wider die neue Alcumistische Theologiam Andreae Osiandri (N.p., 1552), Liv. "Dieses beides verstehet man aus der lehre des Gesetzes/Denn dieselbige zeigt eigentlich an/was die wesentliche gerechtigkeit Gottes sey/welcher der mensch inn seiner natur und wesen gleich und ehlich sein solt/und were es auch/so das bildt Gottes/nach dem der mensch von Gott anfenglich geschaffen ist/inn des menschen natur noch gantz und unverrückt were. Denn daran je freilich kein zweiffel ist/das Gott nochmals den menschen nicht anderst gerecht haben wil/denn wie er ihn anfenglich nach seinem bild gerecht geschaffen hat. Darumb auch gewis ist/das die gerechtigkeit/so das Göttliche gesetz dem menschen fürmalet/gar nichts anders ist/denn eben dasselbige bild der wesentlichen gerechtigkeit Gottes/nach welchem der mensch anfenglich geschaffen gewesen ist/und demselbigen auch nochmals ehlich sein solt.

God is willing to dwell in us, rule and motivate us through His Holy Spirit, roots out sin from our flesh daily and makes us obedient to righteousness.

But no matter what words Menius uses to describe the renewal of the believer, it is always apparent that Menius conceives of one consequence of justification to be the accomplishing in the believer of obedience to righteousness.

The result of the preceding argument is the continual validity of the law for the believer throughout the entire period of his life on earth. Because the believer's renewal is never completed during his life on earth, the law always demands obedience from the human being, including the believer. The law's demand for the believer originates in the fact that the believer, too, still has his human nature which has been corrupted by original sin. "All human beings, even the greatest holy men of God, have the inherited sin from Adam in their nature as long as they live in the flesh on earth."<sup>12</sup> Thus the law of God continually accuses even the believer. Furthermore, for the above reasons, the promise of the law remains perpetually valid.

Now what is the promise of the law? The law promises life and salvation to anyone who keeps its demands perfectly. The idea here goes back to those Biblical statements in which God promises life and salvation to those who keep His commandments. To say that good

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 03v. "Und darnach/wenn wir nun durch den glauben schon gerecht worden sein/Also den wölle Gott/umb solcher gerechtigkeit des glaubens willen/in uns auch selbst wonen/und durch seinen heiligen Geist/uns regieren und treiben/die sünde teglich im fleisch abzütöden/und der gerechtigkeit zugehorsamen."

<sup>12</sup> Menius, Bericht Der bitteren Wahrheit, K2v. "Alle Menschen/ auch die aller grössisten heiligen Gottes/die Erbsünde von Adam in irer natur haben/und behalten/so lang sie im fleisch auff erden leben."

works are necessary for salvation was in one context a way of saying that if anyone could keep the law perfectly he could be saved. On the basis of this promissory aspect of the law, Menius asserted that the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," could not be rejected out of hand. The phrase expresses a valid and legitimate aspect of the doctrine of the law.

However, Menius used other arguments to support his contention that Major's phrase is valid in the dispensation of the law. In the propositions which Menius prepared for disputation with the visitors in November 1554, Menius distinguished between the statement that "good works are necessary for salvation," and the statement that "good works are necessary to merit salvation."<sup>13</sup> Menius rejected the latter thesis, he affirmed the former. Menius argued that if good works are not necessary for salvation, then Christ's work would not have been necessary.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Menius argued that God's threat to punish those who do not fulfill the law would also lose its power.<sup>15</sup> Thus, for Menius, the assertion that good works are necessary for salvation is necessary if the law is to have the power to expose and condemn sin. Behind all of this argumentation, however, is the concern to preserve the validity

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<sup>13</sup>Justus Menius, "De Quaestione An bona opera ad salutem sint necessaria Disputatio seu Collatio Justii Menii Anno 1554, mense Novembri Gotae In 110 propositiones redacta & Visitoribus oblata," handwritten document in the Herzog August Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel, f. 207, nos. 4-6.

<sup>14</sup>ibid., f. 209r-209v, nos. 42-46.

<sup>15</sup>ibid., f. 208v, nos. 33-36; f. 210r, nos. 54-57; 210v, nos. 58-62.

and the absolute nature of the moral law. In spite of the objections of Amsdorf, the Synod of Eisenach vindicated this position of Menius.<sup>16</sup>

Although the theologians at the Synod of Eisenach were willing to tolerate the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," in the doctrine of the law, their toleration was strictly qualified. They were willing to acknowledge the validity of the phrase only as a theoretical possibility in the doctrine of the law. According to the theologians who opposed Menius, the law of God is, indeed, an eternal unchangeable rule or standard which demands obedience from the human being. Such obedience is heartfelt love to God and man without any sin or evil desires. The law promises temporal and eternal blessings to those who perform such obedience. On the other hand, the law threatens anyone who disobeys it with God's wrath and judgment and with temporal and eternal punishments. As far as the theologians were concerned, what has been termed the promissory aspect of the law must be understood abstractly. They argued that the law's promise of life everlasting does not refer to the real life situation of the human being. After the fall of mankind into sin, no human being is able to obey the law perfectly. The result is that the law's promise can never be obtained. For

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<sup>16</sup>Amsdorf, and Flacius later on, objected to the words, "abstractive et de idea," in Article I of the Synod's decree. Amsdorf insisted that the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," can have no other meaning than that good works earn salvation. The words, "abstractive et de idea," are new and have never been used in the church before. Such new phrases, according to Amsdorf, are confusing and could easily be used by the papists for their advantage. Amsdorf objected to the terms also because he heard Menius say that he, Menius, could not tolerate or accept those words either. Amsdorf's "Answer to the Duke," is printed in part by Schmidt, II, 238-240.

that reason the theologians concluded that to use the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," can only lead to confusion in the church.<sup>17</sup>

So far, Menius' defense of the validity of the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," has been confined to the dispensation of the law. At no time in any of his published books did he defend the validity of the phrase in the dispensation of the gospel. He could accept Article II of the "Conclusion" of the Synod of Eisenach with a clear conscience, and assert in good faith, as he did, that he had never taught otherwise than that article teaches. Article II declared that the phrase could not be tolerated in the doctrine of the gospel.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, it is true that in his propositions for disputation with the visitors in November 1554, Menius did claim that even the gospel teaches that good works are necessary for salvation.<sup>19</sup> At the Synod of Eisenach he dismissed all accusations against him because of his statements in those propositions by claiming that he had merely composed them for private discussion and did not intend to offer them as his position in the matter. The propositions were intended to provide a basis for friendly discussion and nothing else.<sup>20</sup> Aside from those

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<sup>17</sup>Schmidt, II, 223-226.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 226: "In foro justificationis et salvationis haec propositio: bona opera necessaria sunt ad salutem, nullo modo ferenda est."

<sup>19</sup>Menius, "De Quaestione," f. 209r, no. 41. "Non autem sola lex, sed Evangelium etiam ipsum probat bona opera ad salutem necessaria esse," f. 213r, no. 109. "In summa: Bona opera ad salutem necessaria esse non legis solum sed et evangelii praedicatio testatur."

<sup>20</sup>Schmidt, II, 216.

propositions Menius never connected the necessity of good works or of the new life with the dispensation of the gospel.

The general accusation against Menius was that even if he did not intend for his position to affect the dispensation of the gospel, his position did, in fact, destroy the gospel. Two passages from the pen of Menius were cited against him in this regard. The first was from his booklet of 1556, Concerning the Preparation for a Blessed Death (Von der Bereitung zum seeligen Sterben). In that booklet, Menius made the statement:

The Holy Spirit creates righteousness and life in the believers. This beginning, although it is indeed wholly weak and incomplete in this life while we walk in the flesh, is still necessary for salvation.<sup>21</sup>

The second statement was from Menius' Sermon on Salvation.

Do you hear there, dear Christian, you who have been reconciled to God, accepted by grace, and made a child and heir of life everlasting, salvation and majesty through faith in Christ, what is still necessary for salvation (which happens without the addition of all and any sort of law and work solely out of God's grace and mercy alone for Christ's sake through faith), in order that you may stand and continue in it?<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Justus Menius, Von der Bereitung zum seeligen Sterben. Predigt von der Seligkeit (1556). This writer was unable to obtain a copy of this booklet. The above is all the bibliographical information which this writer could discover. The quotation occurs in various sources, although Schmidt does not print it except as a quotation by the theologians. The quotation occurs in Schmidt, II, 211. "Fäheth er (der heilige Geist) auch in den Gläubigen an Gerechtigkeit und Leben, welcher Anfang in diesem Leben, weil wir auf Erden in diesem sündlichen Fleisch wandeln, ob er gleich noch ganz schwach und unvollkommen ist, ist er doch gleichwohl zur Seligkeit nöthig und wird künftiglich nach der Auferstehung vollkommlich vollendet werden."

<sup>22</sup>Justus Menius, Von der Bereitung zum seeligen Sterben. Predigt von der Seligkeit (1556). Consult the previous footnote. "Hörst Du da, lieber Christ, der Du durch den Glauben an Christum von Sünden, Gottes Zorn, Tod, Teufel, und Hölle erlöset, mit Gott versöhnet, zu Gnaden angenommen, ein Kind und Erbe des ewigen Lebens, Seligkeit und Herrlichkeit worden bist, was Dir zu Deiner Seligkeit (die Dir ohne Zuthun aller und allerlei Gesetz und Werk aus lauter Gottes Gnaden und Barmherzigkeit allein um Christus willen



It should be noted in this connection, that Menius never wrote an extensive defense of these statements. Usually Menius is a prolific writer about any particular point which he makes, but as far as these statements are concerned he was unusually reticent. He did not explain in detail the reasoning behind these statements. However, although there is not much material from the pen of Menius on the subject of why the new life is necessary to retain salvation, the material which is available sets forth his point of view clearly. The matter which needs to be discussed at this point is this: why are good works, why is the new life necessary?

#### Why Good Works Are Necessary

Menius asserted that the new obedience is necessary to retain salvation. Why? What motivated Menius to make such an assertion? He himself gave six reasons. First, Menius claimed that he wanted to silence the papists who accused the Lutherans of despising good works and of teaching that the human being could be saved even if he continued to live in all kinds of sin. Second, Menius wanted to oppose the Antinomians. Third, he desired to respond to the Osiandrians who claimed that their opponents did not deal adequately with the whole notion of renewal. Fourth, Menius wanted to oppose the notion of an infused righteousness of the kind advocated by the Augsburg Interim. Fifth, Menius wished to oppose the

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durch den Glauben widerfahren ist) noch weiter von nöthen ist, dass Du darinnen bestehest und dabei bleiben mögest u. s. w."

notion that those who had received the Holy Spirit could no longer sin. Finally, Menius claimed that he wanted to instruct the common rabble who misused their evangelical freedom.<sup>23</sup>

Whether or not Menius was sincere in listing all of these reasons, or whether or not he was merely attempting to give legitimacy to his ideas in the face of accusations, as some of his critics implied,<sup>24</sup> cannot be determined.

It is a fact that Menius had a long-standing concern for the necessity of the new obedience of the believer. In the first decade of his career as an evangelical reformer, Menius was already demonstrating that concern. One of the books which he wrote in those early years, Christian Household Stewardship (Oeconomia Christiana), was an attempt to set forth the practical implications of the gospel, as Menius understood it, for reforming the mores and customs of the people. Menius' concern can likewise be seen in his opposition to the bigamy of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, in his activity as a visitor, in his efforts at school reform in Eisenach, in his denunciation of the behavior at the Ducal Court at Weimar during the aftermath of the Schmalkald War, and in his polemic against the Anabaptists. The Anabaptist movement, in particular, made Menius sensitive to the way in which those people who had heard his evangelical preaching gave evidence of a renewal of life.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Schmidt, II, 196, fn. 1. The reasons were given by Menius in his 1556 booklet, Von der Bereitung zum Seeligen Sterben.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., II, 282-283, refers to passages in which Flacius attempted to prove that Menius was a supporter of the Leipzig Interim. The implication was that Menius defended Major's phrase because he was in collusion with those who defended adiaphoristic practices.

<sup>25</sup>Consult Menius' refutation of the Anabaptists charge that the evangelical preaching did not improve the behavior of its

Already in 1531, Menius had written about the necessity of good works in his book, The Anabaptist Teaching (Der Widdertaufer lere). In that book Menius had made the statement:

However, in addition to these works, there are several others which no one can do unless he has previously received faith and the Holy Spirit. It is impossible that any hypocrite, by his own ability, could use them in a false way. For example, to confess Christ and His word, in which faith trusts, before everyone, friend or foe, to show the basis and cause for the same, and if the need arises, to risk honor, goods, body, life and everything that a person has for its sake and rest on it.<sup>26</sup> And this is a necessary and useful work for salvation.

That statement is significant not only because it demonstrates Menius' concern for the necessity of the good works of the new life. It is significant also because it demonstrates that in 1531 there was not the same kind of sensitivity to the assertion that works are necessary for salvation as there was in 1556. Luther, who read the book and who wrote a preface for it apparently did not take exception to Menius' statement. It was obvious precisely what Menius meant by the statement. No doubt, however, that one reason for the lack of sensitivity to such a statement in 1531 was that the Lutherans had not yet been confronted with the type of issues which arose in the aftermath of the Leipzig Interim.

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hearers in Von dem Geist/der Widerteuffer./Justus Menius/Mit einer Vorrede./D. Mart. Luther (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1544), F4r-Hlr.

<sup>26</sup> Justus Menius, Der Widerteuffer lere und geheimnis/Aus heiliger Schrifft widerlegt (Wittenberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1530), f. 313v. The version of this book which was used by this writer was printed in the 1548 Wittenberg Edition of Luther's Works. "ES sind aber über diese werck noch etliche andere/welche gewislich niemand thun kan/er habe denn zuvor den glauben und heiligen Geist empfangen/und ist nicht möglich/das sie irgend ein Heuchler aus im selb/zum falschen schein solt furwenden können/Als da ist/Christum und sein wort/daran sich der glaube helt/frey öffentlich und für jederman/freunden und feinden/bekennen/des selbigen grund und

Menius attempted to formulate the connection between the believer's justification and his new life in faith to a certain extent in his books against the Anabaptists and Osiander. His position as he developed it in those books was relatively simple. Menius maintained, in effect, that the preaching of the gospel would inevitably result in the improvement of the life of the believer. The task of the theologian was to preach the gospel as it was set forth in the Scriptures. Through such preaching, the power of the Holy Spirit would be effective. If moral improvement was lacking on the part of some, that should not be interpreted as meaning that there was something wrong with the Evangelical preaching. The difficulty lay in the sinfulness of the human heart, which, even though exposed to the Word of God, could still continue to fall. Menius was generous in his judgment of the people. He excused their failure to live up to the rigorous demands of discipleship by pointing out that even believers still have the old man. But, on the other hand, he could point to evidence that the preaching of the Evangelicals was bearing fruit. By trusting in God, the Christian could be assured that in His own time, God's will would be done. He did not, however, attempt to provide a theological explanation of the relationship between the individual's reception of the gospel, and the new life of the believer beyond saying that reception of the gospel should result in a new life.<sup>27</sup>

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ursachen furlegen/und wie es die not erfodert/ehr/gut/leib/leben und alles das man hat/daran wagen und auffsetzen. Und dis ist ein nötig und nützlich werck zur seligkeit."

<sup>27</sup>Menius, Von dem Geist, F4v-Hlr.

Menius did, however, present his ideas on the way in which the new life was to be sustained, and the way in which the new life should manifest itself. The new life could be sustained only through the repeated and continued proclamation of the gospel. For Menius, this included the exercise of the whole intent of the doctrine of the office of the keys. This office was to be exercised, first of all, through catechetical instruction. Menius pointed out that part of the regular duty of the parish pastor was to instruct the children of the parish in the basic teachings of the Small Catechism. The pastor was to provide such instruction through weekly sermons on the six chief parts of Christian doctrine in the parish church. All of the children of the parish were expected to attend these sermons. Secondly, the pastor exercised the office of the keys through the practice of confession and absolution. The parish pastor had the responsibility to listen to the confession of the people every Saturday evening. Furthermore, the pastor exercised the office of the keys through an ongoing program of lay visitation.<sup>28</sup> Most of all the new life is sustained through the preaching of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments.<sup>29</sup>

The new life, according to Menius, would manifest itself in service to the neighbor in one's calling, in bearing the cross, in a growing awareness of one's sinfulness, and in joyful confidence in God's forgiveness. In 1528, in his book, Christian Household

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<sup>28</sup>Schmidt, II, 100-105.

<sup>29</sup>Menius, Der Widerteuffer Lere, f. 336r. "Denn durchs wort und die Sacramenta mus die Christenheit/vom heiligen Geist im glauben versamlet/regieret und erhalten werden/und wo nicht wort und Sacrament sind/das selbst ist auch kein Christenheit."

Stewardship (Oeconomia Christiana), Menius had attempted to demonstrate the way in which the new life of the believer could be given practical expression within the household. In his 1538 book, How Every Christian (Wie ein iglicher Christ), Menius had emphasized that God expects the new life to express itself within one's own calling. True good works, Menius teaches throughout his career, are the works which the Ten Commandments impose upon particular stations in life and vocations. Because of sin, every calling in life has its particular crosses and tribulations; and, for that reason, the new life should manifest itself in humble submission to those crosses and by bearing them. For Menius, therefore, one aspect of the new life is faithful dedication to one's obligations and duties. The father who rules his own household well gives evidence of his faith.

The manifestation of the new life is present, but always and only in its beginning stages. All believers, even the greatest men of God still have a sinful human nature, corrupted by original sin, and must confess that they are sinners. Therefore the new life manifests itself in continual repentance and trust in the promise of the gospel. In order that the believer may be assured of God's grace, God gives His Holy Spirit to the believer. The Holy Spirit effects three things in the believer. First, the Holy Spirit enables the believer to fight against sin. Secondly, the Holy Spirit provides the believer with an internal testimony that the believer is a child of God in spite of the onslaughts of the conscience, sin, death and hell. Finally, the Holy Spirit

gives the believer the power to confess the believer's faith in the fact of the onslaughts of the devil and the world.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps another reason why Menius defended the position that the new life is necessary to retain salvation stemmed from his awareness that salvation could be lost. Menius was convinced that God's purpose in justifying the sinner was to make the sinner truly righteous, and not to create hypocrites. Menius was convinced, too, that God's purpose could be thwarted by the believer's willful disobedience to God's law. Such willful sinning could destroy faith and cause the believer to lose salvation and go back under the wrath of God. At this point the question could be raised, "What responsibility does the believer have to avoid sin and thus prevent his own falling from grace?" Menius' statement that the new life is necessary to retain salvation is a response to the implications of that question.

Menius' position on the necessity of the new life, therefore, was an attempt to clarify the responsibility of the believer with respect to the life-long demand of the law. Menius did not mean that the believer could merit salvation in any way. His position was directed against the possibility that the believer could negate his own salvation. Thus, the new life is necessary to retain

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<sup>30</sup>Menius, Bericht Der bitteren Wahrheit, K4r. "Hab ich ordenlich und unterschiedlich erzelet/was des heiligen Geistes krafft und wirckung sey in allen gleubigen/als nemlich. 1. Das er inen helffe wider die sünde/die sie im fleisch noch uberig haben/kempffen/dieselben abtöden und ausfegen. 2. Das er inen innerlich in iren hertzen zeugnis gebe/das sie durch den glauben Gottes kinder sind/wider alle anfechtung des gewissens/der Sünden/Todes und der Hellen etc. 3. Das er inen in der verfolgung hertz und mut gebe/sie kecke mache/iren glauben an Christum frey zu bekennen/wider alle wüttereij des Teuffels/und der Welt.

salvation because the believer has the responsibility to shun sin on account of which he would lose his salvation. Menius used a positive statement to express a negative possibility. Admittedly, this negative possibility was, and is, a difficult concept to integrate into the doctrine of justification and the new life. Menius' intention was to say that the new life is necessary for salvation in order to prevent a consequence which could occur because of its absence.

The theologians who opposed Menius at the Synod of Eisenach took the position, in effect, that Menius' way of formulating the issue was simply impossible and inadmissible if the purity of the gospel is to be preserved. To be sure, the believer has the responsibility to shun sin and thus to avoid the loss of salvation. However, it is an altogether different matter, they thought, to turn that negative into a positive and say that the new life is necessary to retain salvation. In dealing with the issue of necessity, the theologians confined themselves to the question, "Why are good works and the new life necessary?" They did not attempt, as did the Formula of Concord, to clarify the various meanings and uses of the term, "necessary."<sup>31</sup> They merely asserted that good works and the new life are not necessary for salvation, but for other reasons.<sup>32</sup> The theologians were concerned to preserve in every respect the exclusively gratuitous nature of the gospel at every point in the life of the believer.

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<sup>31</sup>Consult the discussion in Article IV, On Good Works, in Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche (4th edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 939-946.

<sup>32</sup>Schmidt, II, 228. Article III of the Eisenach "Conclusion," reads, "In foro novae obedientiae post reconciliationem nequaquam bona opera ad salutem, sed propter alias causas necessaria sunt."



The theologians objected specifically to Menius' addition of the words "for salvation" (zur Seligkeit) in his statement. They argued that to say that something is necessary for salvation makes the necessary element a cause of salvation whether the individual means it or not. Here the theologians might have adduced against Menius a passage from one of his own books that seems to contradict the thesis that he espoused. In 1531, Menius had discussed the claim of the Anabaptists that Christian suffering is necessary for salvation. Menius responded:

In addition, it is contrary to and completely against the mode and nature of faith that it should cling to God's grace in Christ and at the same time to the merit of one's own work and suffering. And here the leaders of the gang cannot help themselves even if they say so at length and in many works . . . Indeed [they say,] no one should place his faith in the merit of his work and suffering, but one has to have them nevertheless as necessary items for salvation. That is not stating it right. For if they are necessary for salvation, then salvation cannot be obtained without them. But, if one cannot obtain salvation without them, then faith alone does not save. But that is false and against the whole Sacred Scriptures.<sup>33</sup>

#### The Distinction Between Justification and Salvation

"At every point in the life of the believer": those words relate to the third issue in this controversy. They introduce the element of time. That element runs through the entire discussion

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<sup>33</sup>Menius, Der Widerteuffer Lere, f. 319r-319v. "Dazu/so ist es je des glaubens art und natur entgegen und aller ding zu wider/das er sich durch Christum an Gottes gnade/und zu gleich auch an seiner eigenen werck und leiden verdienst halten sol. Und kan die Rottenmeister hie nicht helffen/ob sie lang und viel sagen wolten . . . Ey man sol ja den glauben auff der werck und leiden verdienst nicht setzen/Aber man sol und mus sie dennoch gleichwol haben/als nötige ding zur seligkeit. Das ist nichts geredt/Denn sind sie zur seligkeit nötig/so kan man die seligkeit/on sie/gewislich nicht erlangen/Kan man aber die seligkeit/on sie/nicht erlangen/so machet der glaube allein auch nicht selig/Das ist aber falsch/und wider die gantze heilige Schrifft."

as the source of problems. It is, in fact, the main element which makes it so difficult to express adequately and satisfactorily the relationships in the evangelical doctrines of reconciliation, justification and the new life. Justification, as the forensic imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the human being who has faith, is already in this life a participation in the salvation of the life of the world to come. Nevertheless, the present participation in salvation is obviously not the full participation in salvation which the believer will enjoy in the world to come. In the meantime, as already noted, the believer can lose his salvation through willful disobedience of the law of God. Is there a difference, therefore, between justification and salvation? During the Synod of Eisenach, Menius argued that there was.

Menius distinguished between justification (Rechtfertigung) and salvation (Seligkeit). According to Menius, justification consists of two parts: the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. Salvation, on the other hand, includes much more than justification. Salvation is the state in which the believer has that righteousness as his own. The believer's human nature is actually renewed and restored to the divine image in which the human race was originally created. Menius introduces another distinction at this point. In the world to come, the believer shall be in everlasting possession of salvation. In this life, salvation is real but it is always only in its beginning stages. Salvation is never complete in this age. It exists as a hope. Thus, the Holy Spirit begins to renew the believer and, at the same time, provides the believer with the hope of an everlasting possession of salvation. For that reason, Menius limits salvation

in its fullest sense to the life of the world to come. Menius says in his defense at the Synod of Eisenach:

However, because we will not be eternally righteous in faith and saved in hope (for faith and hope must cease in that life I Cor. 13), on that account therefore, the righteousness and salvation in which we are to walk forever in the future life must begin in this life. For that reason, that which pertains to the fulfillment of our incipient redemption and salvation is not only justification through faith, in which we receive the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the obedience of Christ as righteousness, but also that we are renewed and the Holy Spirit begins in us true righteousness and salvation now and will complete it in the future, finally that there pertains to and is necessary for salvation not only the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the obedience of Christ, but also the gift of the Holy Spirit who renews us.<sup>34</sup>

Menius appealed to Luther in support of this position. He referred to Luther's frequent assertions that the believer's redemption is never completed in this life. The term of Luther which Menius cites at this point is Erlösung, not Seligkeit. Whether or not Luther would have concurred with Menius' distinction between justification and salvation is a judgment which lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, Menius himself had never made such a distinction before 1556. The fact is that Menius had used

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<sup>34</sup>Schmidt, II, 219. "Weil wir aber nicht ewig also im Glauben gerecht und in der Hoffnung selig werden (denn Glaube und Hoffnung müssen aufhören in jenem Leben I Cor. 13), derowegen denn die Gerechtigkeit und Seligkeit, darin wir im künftigen Leben fürder ewig wandeln sollen, in diesem Leben anfangen müssen. Darum gehört zur Vollendung unserer angefangenen Erlösung und Seligkeit nicht allein die Rechtfertigung des Glaubens, dass uns die Sünde vergeben und der Gehorsam Christi zur Gerechtigkeit zugerechnet werden, sondern dass auch wir verneuert werden und wahre Gerechtigkeit und Seligkeit mit uns hier durch den heiligen Geist angefangen und künftiglich auch vollendet werden, also dass zur Seligkeit nicht allein Vergebung der Sünden und Zurechnung des Gehorsams Christi, sondern auch die Gabe des heiligen Geistes, dadurch wir verneuert werden, gehören und von nöthen sein."

the two terms interchangeably in his previous books. In a statement in his 1531 book, The Anabaptist Teaching (Der Widdertaufer lere), for example, Menius combined the term salvation with terms that ordinarily have reference to justification, redemption (Erlösung), and reconciliation (Versöhnung). Menius wrote:

Briefly, there is no other salvation than that one believes that our dear Lord Jesus Christ won and earned for us the forgiveness of sins, grace and life everlasting with God the Father by means of His guiltless suffering and death.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, Menius says in his book against Osiander, Concerning the Righteousness which Counts before God (Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt),

For that reason redemption from death, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the justification of the sinner depend on each other inseparably as cause and effect.<sup>36</sup>

Menius continued:

Therefore we use all these concepts in the Holy Scriptures as synonymous. One may be used for the other. One can use them all simultaneously or we may use one or two in place of all of them. Even if one or two is expressed and named, nevertheless all are to be understood. For example, whenever the Scriptures assert that Christ has reconciled us to God, justification is also to be understood even though the term is not expressly mentioned.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Menius, Der Widdertaufer lere, f. 321r. "Das kurtzumb kein andere seligkeit ist/denn so man gleubt/das unser lieber HERR Jhesus Christus/durch sein unschuldiges leiden und sterben uns vergebung der sünden/gnad und ewiges leben bey Gott dem Vater erworben und verdienet habe.

<sup>36</sup>Menius, Von der Gerechtigkeit die für Gott gilt, E3r. "Und derhalben/das erlösung vom tode/vergebung der sünden/versöhnung mit Gott/und rechtfertigung des sünders/also wie causa und effectus/unzertrenlich an einander hangen."

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. "Darumb ist der gebrauch in der heiligen schrift allenthalben gemein/das sie allesamt zugleich/oder ir eins oder zwey/für allesamt gesetzt werden/Und da gleich nur eins oder zwey gesetzt und genandt wird/das sie gleichwol nichts desto weniger

Even though Menius does not use the term salvation in the passage quoted above, his stress on the functional equivalency of the terms, taken together with the following statement should be enough to warrant the conclusion that until the controversy under discussion he used salvation interchangeably with justification to denote the whole saving action of God in Christ. In another passage in the book against Osiander, Menius wrote:

For if there is to be redemption from death and damnation, in order that one may be saved, there has to be first of all forgiveness of sins. But if there is to be forgiveness of sins, then God has to be reconciled and gracious. If God is to be reconciled and gracious, then the sinner has to be justified previously. For it is clear and obvious that no one can become free or saved from death and damnation except through forgiveness. But if it is also certain that God will not forgive anyone without a previous reconciliation, it is also certain that no one can be reconciled unless he then becomes righteous and so forth, as stated above.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, this passage from Menius' "Opinion" which he wrote against Osiander:

Righteousness, satisfaction, reconciliation, grace, redemption, life and salvation which the mediator, Christ, has won for us through His obedience, as stated previously, He proffers, offers and gives to

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allesampt verstanden werden/Als wenn die schrifft sagt/Christus hab uns mit Gott versünet/so wird die rechtfertigung darunter zu gleich verstanden/ob sie wol nicht ausdrücklich genandt wird."

<sup>38</sup> ibid., G4v. "Denn wo erlösung vom tode und verdammis sein sol/das man könne selig werden/da mus zuvor vergebung der sünden sein/Wo aber vergebung der sünden sein sol/da muss Gott zuvor versünet und gnedig sein/Wo Gott sol versünet und gnedig werden/da mus der sündler zuvor gerechtfertigt sein. Denn das ist ja klar und offenbar/das aus dem tode und verdammis/niemand loss noch selig werden kan/er sey denn zuvor der sünden loss/welcher niemandt loss werden kan/anders denn durch vergebung. So ist das auch gewis/das Gott niemand die sünde vergeben wil/ohn vorgehende versünung/So kan niemand zur versünung kommen/er werd denn gerecht etc. wie droben auch angezeigt.

to the whole world through the preaching of the gospel and through the holy sacraments.<sup>39</sup>

In that passage, the term salvation apparently stands as the equivalent for justification. It would appear as if Menius could not even substantiate a rigid distinction between justification and salvation on the basis of his own writings.

Preger is correct in his analysis that Menius used the term salvation in two different senses. Preger points out that on the one hand Menius uses the term salvation to refer to the present possession of the believer of the righteousness of Christ through faith. On the other hand, Menius uses the term salvation to refer to the actual renewal of the corrupted human nature which will only be completed in the life of the world to come.<sup>40</sup> Behind those different conceptions lay Menius' attempt to come to terms with the issue of time.

The theologians at the Synod who opposed Menius resolved the issue of time in a different manner. They argued that the two words, justification and salvation, are interchangeable. They referred to chapter four of Romans in which St. Paul interprets salvation as the forgiveness of sins, and to similar passages. They distinguished between the reality of the kingdom of Christ and the mode of its presence. The theologians asserted that although the believer, on this earth, is still in the flesh, feels his sin, and is subject to

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, D3r-D3v. "Die Gerechtigkeit/Gnugthuung/Versünung/Gnade Erlösung/Leben und Seligkeit/welche uns/wie droben angezeigt/der mitler Christus/durch seinen gehorsam erworben hat/lest er aller welt durch die Predigt des Euangelii/und durch die heiligen Sacramenta fürtragen/anbieten und schencken."

<sup>40</sup> Wilhelm Preger, Mattias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1950), I, 386.

temporal death, nevertheless, the believer has already, through faith, the righteousness which he will have after his resurrection.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, the believer is truly saved already. He is a member of the kingdom of Christ even though the mode of that kingdom's presence is different in this life than the mode of presence which that kingdom will assume in the life of the world to come.

Furthermore, the theologians asserted that faith alone makes the believer righteous at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the believer's life. Of course, Menius had not affirmed anything to the contrary. However, the theologians were convinced that Menius' position had the net effect of depriving faith of its unique role in the salvation of the believer. The theologians maintained that to assert that the new life is necessary in order to retain salvation, as Menius did, made the believer's works a cause of salvation. They thought that Menius' position had the effect of making faith merely a preparation for salvation, and of giving the real cause of salvation to the new life, or works.<sup>42</sup> Accordingly, the theologians rejected Menius' phrase and position. The new life, they maintained, is only and always an effect of faith, never a cause of faith. The theologians thought that Menius' position had the net effect of making the new life a cause of salvation. However, it is against the nature of a cause, they reasoned, for a cause to be preserved by its effect. Thus, for example, the Creator is not preserved by the creature.<sup>43</sup> So faith cannot be preserved

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<sup>41</sup>Schmidt, II, 232-233.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., II, 230.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., II, 231.

by the new life which is the effect of faith. Menius, according to the theologians, confused cause and effect.

Just as Menius did not defend the phrase, "good works are necessary for salvation," with regard to the dispensation of the gospel, so also Menius did not intend for his defense of the phrase, "the new life if necessary to retain salvation," to destroy the gospel. In order to guard himself against the accusation that his position would rob the troubled conscience of its only consolation, Menius wrote:

In the meantime, however, in both life and death, we must not build or stand upon our renewal. As was previously stated, our renewal is not complete in itself and cannot stand in the presence of God. Instead, we must build and stand upon the righteousness of faith alone. This righteousness is the forgiveness of sins and the obedience of the Lord Christ by which He has fulfilled the divine law for us completely and which God imputes to us as righteousness.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of that disclaimer, the question remained if Menius' position did, in effect, destroy the gospel and rob the troubled conscience of its consolation. The theologians at the Synod of Eisenach were convinced that it did.

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<sup>44</sup>Menius, Bericht Der bittern Warheit, L2v. "Mitler weil aber/ müssen wir beid im leben und sterben/nicht auff unsere vernewerung/ die/wie gesagt/an ir selbst unvolkomen ist/und für Gottes gericht nicht bestehen kan/Sondern allein auff des Glaubens gerechtigkeit/ (welche ist vergebung der sünden/und der gehorsam des HErrn Christi/ damit er das Göttliche gesetz für uns volkomenlich erfüllet hat/ welcher auch uns zur gerechtigkeit fur Gott zugerechnet wird) fussen und bestehen."



## CHAPTER VI

### MENIUS' DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY

This chapter will describe and set forth Menius' doctrine of the ministry. The first task will be to state the various questions and problems connected with this doctrine which Menius confronted and wrote about, either explicitly or implicitly. Secondly, it will be necessary to give a description of Menius' doctrine as he presented it in the years between 1538 and 1556 together with a summary statement of his views. The final part of this chapter will discuss the controversy between Menius and Flacius about the doctrine of the ministry.

#### The Problem

Even after the Synod of Eisenach in 1556, some of Menius' enemies continued to accuse him of teaching false doctrine and of forsaking the gospel. Flacius, in particular, attempted to link Menius with those who supported the Leipzig Interim, and accused Menius of being an Adiaphorist. He also accused Menius of teaching that good works are necessary for salvation. Flacius' accusations set in motion another bitter controversy between two followers of Luther, a controversy which developed into a dispute about the doctrine of the ministry. It pitted a competent lay theologian supposedly defending the truth of the gospel against an ecclesiastical official, who, in theory at least, had the responsibility of defending the truth of the gospel.

So important, in fact, was the controversy between Menius and Flacius about the doctrine of the ministry, that it merits a detailed discussion. Two reasons in particular make this subject noteworthy. This was the first controversy about the doctrine of the ministry between Lutheran theologians; and, inasmuch as both men had been co-workers with Luther and appealed to him in support of their positions, it may be possible to gain some insight into Luther's, and the developing Lutheran doctrine of the ministry.<sup>1</sup>

The primary issue in this controversy was the relationship between the authority and responsibility of those who have been called and ordained into the church's public office of the ministry, and the authority and duty of every baptized Christian to judge as true or false the doctrine which is being proclaimed and taught in the church. This issue, however, raised a number of other important questions.

What is the basis for the authority to judge the doctrine which is to be taught and proclaimed in the church? If one answers that such authority derives from the call of God, then a number of questions must be answered. Is this call merely the general call of God in Christ to the believer so that the authority to judge church

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<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Preger, "Menius and Flacius im Streite über Amt und Priesterthum," Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche, XXXIV (1857), 122, adds a third reason. He asserts that the controversy was important because Flacius was the most distinguished proponent of Luther's point of view. Preger's discussion of the controversy is valuable because he quotes extensively from the sources. However, his article is marred by his strong bias in favor of Flacius and because of his inadequate knowledge of Menius' entire doctrine of the ministry. Preger was interested primarily in demonstrating that Flacius' views were identical with the views of Luther; and, in doing so, to repudiate the doctrine of the ministry advocated by Wilhelm Löhe.

doctrine resides with the lay believer by virtue of his baptism? Or, is this call a special, but regulated call which God issues through men who ordain other men into the church's office of the ministry, so that the called and ordained clergy, and they alone, have the authority and duty to judge between true and false doctrine? Or, finally, in situations of extreme necessity, may this call be an extraordinary call which God issues immediately to a particular individual, so that such an individual has the authority to judge the doctrine of the church's clergy? If so, what are the signs which authenticate such a special call?

Perhaps, however, a call from God is not, in and of itself, sufficient basis for the authority and responsibility to judge doctrine. Perhaps a call is to be exercised only in connection with an office or vocation. If so, does baptism provide the basis for such an office and vocation? Or, is the office of the ministry within the church the sole basis for the authority and responsibility to judge church doctrine?

In this connection it is necessary to distinguish also between public and private authority and responsibility, between the public ministry and baptized Christians. Granted that baptism authorizes and requires all Christians to judge true and false doctrine, is such authority and responsibility unlimited? Is it to be exercised publicly, or only privately? What are the conditions for a public exercise of the baptismal vocation to judge doctrine? Is it ever appropriate for a lay person to judge the doctrine of those whose vocation is the office of the public ministry? Or, on the contrary, is the authority and responsibility to judge doctrine publicly reserved exclusively for the church's office of the

ministry? If so, what protection does the laity have against ministers who pervert the gospel? The question becomes particularly urgent whenever there is a controversy about the correct interpretation of Scriptural doctrine among those who have been called into the office of the ministry.

Furthermore, if the Scriptures alone provide the basis for judging between the true doctrine of the gospel and false doctrine, then in what way are controversies such as those just mentioned to be resolved? The answer that in such cases the called and ordained ministers must listen to the creeds of the church as well as to the past teachers of the church is not decisive. It is possible to dispute, too, about the meaning and intention of the creeds. It may also be pointed out that the tradition of the church does not interpret the Scriptures at all times and in all places in the same way. If the ministry of the church cannot resolve a controversy, at what point may the members of the laity, on the basis of their baptism, exercise the authority to judge doctrine in the church? Indeed, at what point do they have the responsibility to do so?

#### Menius' View in 1538

All of these issues came to the surface in the controversy between Menius and Flacius. These two followers of Luther discussed all of these issues either explicitly or implicitly. Menius had discussed some of these issues previously in his polemics against the Anabaptists. In his 1538 treatise, How Each Christian Should Conduct Himself (Wie ein iglicher Christ), Menius had expounded his basic understanding of the duties and responsibilities of all baptized Christians, of the office of the ministry, and of the civil

office with respect to the promotion of true doctrine and the prevention of false doctrine. In that book Menius had formulated precisely and concisely his views on the authority and responsibility of each. The following is a summary of Menius' position on this matter as he set it forth in 1538.

According to Menius, every Christian must believe the whole word of God, and confess his faith in public. The Christian must also obey everything which God's word demands of him. On the opposite side, every Christian must oppose everything which is contrary to God's word, and contradict and condemn false doctrine in public. The Christian must also turn away from everything which God's word has not commanded. With respect to other people, Menius argues that every Christian has the responsibility to help and counsel those who live according to God's command and who confess the true faith. On the opposite side, however, the Christian has the responsibility to shun and avoid those who follow the devil and false teachings.<sup>2</sup>

Menius acknowledges that there is absolutely no distinction between Christians as far as the responsibilities mentioned above are concerned. So far the authority and responsibility of the baptized Christian and clergy are identical. Both have authority and responsibility to judge false doctrine publicly. However, at this point Menius introduces a significant element into the argument. God has, argues Menius, separated human life into two kinds of government. To the first pertains everything spiritual; and, to the second, pertains everything bodily or secular. Within each government

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<sup>2</sup>Justus Menius, Wie ein Igllicher Christ gegen allerley lere/gut und böse/nach Gottes befelh/sich gebürlich halten sol (Wittemberg, n.p., 1538), B3v-B4v.

there are particular offices. Each office has particular duties and responsibilities. The purpose of these offices is to provide an environment in which Christendom and Christian faith may be fostered and advanced, while unbelief may be hindered.<sup>3</sup> According to Menius, God has placed every human being into a particular office and station in life, and expects the individual to exercise his faith in that particular office and station.

Furthermore, Menius circumscribes the individual Christian's authority and responsibility for faith and life. He limits both the authority and responsibility of the individual to the particular functions of an office. Fostering Christian faith and hindering false doctrine, according to Menius, is to take place "only in one's office and in accordance with a precise command."<sup>4</sup> As far as the particular responsibilities for doctrine which is associated with the public exercise of the office of the ministry is concerned, Menius refuses to permit every baptized Christian to assume such responsibilities. "But there is no obligation, on that account, for one and all to seize the [ministerial] office, or for anyone to step forward on his own, whenever it pleases him, and preach and celebrate the sacrament."<sup>5</sup>

Next Menius sets forth the authority and responsibility of ecclesiastical and civil officials with respect to promoting true

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<sup>3</sup> ibid., C1r-C2r.

<sup>4</sup> ibid., C1v. "Alleine nach seinem Ampt und gemessenem befehlh."

<sup>5</sup> ibid., C2r. "So sind sie aber darumb nicht auch schuldig/das sie alle sampt das Ampt angreifen/und ein jeder wenn und so offft es jnen gelüstet/fur sich selbst aufftreten/predigen und Sacrament reichen müssen."

Christian doctrine and hindering false doctrine. Ordained clergymen, in Menius' view, have a special responsibility and vocation. It is their task publicly to proclaim the gospel, expose and refute false doctrine; and, in the case of higher ecclesiastical officials, to supervise the doctrine which their subordinates proclaim in the congregations. The civil government, on the other hand, is the guardian of the gospel within the area of its jurisdiction. Civil officials are responsible for punishing those who teach false doctrine. They are required to prohibit the dissimulation of false doctrine; and they are to preserve and promote the proclamation of the true doctrine within their territory. Civil officials have no authority to judge doctrine. That is the task of ecclesiastical officials. Ecclesiastical officials have no authority to punish advocates of false doctrine. That is the task of civil officials.<sup>6</sup>

Menius realizes that ecclesiastical officials themselves could be guilty of promoting false doctrine in the name of the gospel; and, he realized, too, that in such a case, they would have the civil officials as their allies in error. The bishops and princes who remained loyal to the pope were Menius' prime example of just such a situation. In such and similar cases, Menius knew that the followers of the true doctrine of the gospel could be persecuted. What, then, is the authority and responsibility of the Christian who believes the true doctrine, if he should be subjected to tyrannical, anti-Christian ecclesiastical and civil officials?

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<sup>6</sup>ibid., C3v-D4r.

Menius answers in a twofold way. First, he addresses the Christian pastor. Menius says that, first of all, a Christian pastor should remember that the authority of the word of God surpasses the civil authority. Therefore, the Christian pastor should, on the basis of the word of God, instruct the authorities wherein they are in error, and admonish them to abandon their error. If the authorities do not heed such instruction and admonition, the pastor should simply let the matter rest in God's hands, and be confident that the righteous judge will deal with the matter in His own time and in His own way. It is very significant that Menius mentions the Christian pastor specifically in this context. It is the authority and responsibility of the ecclesiastical office publicly to rebuke false doctrine. Presumably this is an indication that, for Menius, the authority and responsibility for judging false doctrine publicly was an exclusive function of the office of the ministry.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, Menius addresses the laity. He does not advise the same course of action for the laity which he advised for the pastor. Instead, Menius advises the pious lay person to see the will of God in such tyranny, and to submit humbly to that will. At most he suggests that the lay person emigrate to another territory. The possibility of revolution, of a lay uprising against the authorities in the name of the true doctrine, or of lay public preaching and judging false doctrine is not even considered by Menius.<sup>8</sup> The reason for all this will be demonstrated below. Suffice

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<sup>7</sup>ibid., Fv.

<sup>8</sup>ibid., F2r-F2v.



it to say for now that Menius considered all such action beyond the scope and function of the layman's office and calling.

#### Menius' View in 1544

In his book, On the Spirit of the Anabaptists (Von dem Geist der Widderteufer), which he published in 1544, Menius introduced some previously unmentioned aspects of his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. In that book he was obliged to defend the Lutherans against the general Anabaptist criticism that Lutherans did not worship God truly. The Anabaptists concluded, therefore, that true Christians should avoid the Lutheran churches. One particular variant of this Anabaptist accusation was that Lutheran clergymen were not true Christian ministers.

In responding to that accusation, Menius set the Lutheran ecclesiastical order against the background of the spiritual and civil realms, just as he had done in 1538.

we also teach the way in which every believer ought to serve God in his own particular office and calling, in order that both the spiritual kingdom of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, (which is the holy communion, the church) and the temporal and bodily kingdom of the world, the government, may be preserved and built up. Above all, we teach that the government should also provide the congregation with the pure Christian doctrine of the holy gospel and the true worship of God. . . .<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Justus Menius, Von dem Geist der Widderteufer (Wittemberg, n.p., 1544), E2r. "Daruber leren wir auch/wie ein jeder gleubiger in sonderheit/nach seinem stand vnd beruff Gott dienen sol/zu erhaltung vnd bawung beide des geistlichen Reichs seines lieben Sons Jhesu Christi (welchs ist die heilige Gemeine/oder Kirche) und auch dieses zeitlichen und leiblichen Weltreichs/Die Oberkeit/das sie für allen dingen/die Gemeine mit reiner Christlicher lere des heiligen Euan-gelij/und rechtem Gottesdienst. . . ."

Menius continues:

we also instruct the subjects in general that each one should learn Christian doctrine for himself and live according to it; to act honorably, quietly and obediently under his duly constituted authorities. . . .<sup>10</sup>

Finally, Menius says:

And, in general, whatever God commands in the Holy Scriptures for each particular office: the government, fathers, mothers, children, relatives, workers, all sorts of business, we teach each one to exercise his faith in his own office, to show obedience to God, to praise and honor God and to serve the neighbor.<sup>11</sup>

From these statements it is obvious that Menius thinks of service to God in connection with the duties and responsibilities of a particular office. Every office, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, has its own particular function and service. Every individual is to serve God by performing the duties of his own particular office.

Next, Menius turns his attention to offices within the church. His implicit argument is that only those clergy who have been validly called into the office of the ministry which God has instituted can be considered true ministers. Menius asserts that there are a variety of offices in the church, all of which are filled only by means of a legitimate call. Menius writes:

As far as the office is concerned, it is apparent that our Lord God has ordered many kinds of offices and

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, E2v. "unterrichten wir auch die unterthanen in gemein/Das ein jeder für sein Person die Christlichen lere zu lernen/ und darnach zu leben/unter seiner ordentlichen Oberkeit sich erbarlich/still/und gehorsamlich zu halten. . . ."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* "Und in Summa was Gott in der heiligen schrift/einem jedern Stand in sonderheit befihlt/Oberkeiten/Hausvetern/Hausmuttern/Kindern/Gesinde/Arbeitern/allerley Handlern/In den selben leren wir einen jeden seinen glauben uben/und gehorsam gegen Gott beweisen/Gott dem HErrn zu lob und ehren/und dem Nehesten zu nutz dienen."

servants in His church, such as have been described by the church historians since the beginning of the world, and as St. Paul teaches in Ephesians 4.<sup>12</sup>

Of these, the highest office is that of the apostle; and the apostle, like the Old Testament prophet, was called immediately by God.

The office of the apostle, which is the highest and chief office of all, has its call from God Himself without any means, just as in the Old Testament the office of the prophet was the highest, and the prophets were called and sent by God Himself without any means. Now because God called and sent both the prophets and apostles Himself without any means, He also gave to them especially great and splendid gifts, in order to perform miracles by<sup>3</sup> which the whole world could recognize their call.

The apostolic office is the supreme office in the church because of the doctrine of salvation which the apostles proclaimed. The connection between the apostolic office and the message of the gospel is the most essential feature in Menius' doctrine of the ministry. Unless this element is understood in its true scope and significance, Menius' positions, both with regard to the Anabaptists and with regard to Flacius, cannot be genuinely appreciated.

In order to preserve the gospel pure and unadulterated in the church forever, the apostles wrote down their doctrine in the Holy

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, E4r. "So viel das Ampt belanget/ist wissentlich/das unser HERR Gott seiner Kirchen mancherley Empter und Diener/verordnet hat/wie solchs der Kirchen Historian von anfang der welt ausweisen/und S. Paulus Ephe. 4 leret."

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, E4v. "Das Apostelampt/welchs unter allen das hochste und furnemst ist/hat seinen beruff on alle mittel von Gott selbst/Gleich wie im alten Testament der Propheten ampt auch das allerhöchste war/und die Propheten/on alle mittel von Gott dem HERRN selbs beruffen und gesand werden musten. Und darumb das Gott beide Propheten und Apostel/on alle mittel selbst berufft und sendet/gibt er jnen auch sonderliche hohe und herrliche gaben/Wunderwerck zu thun/dabey alle welt jren beruff erkennen moge."

Scriptures of the New Testament. The doctrine which ministers teach and preach in the church, therefore, must conform to the doctrine of the apostles, or what is the same, to the Holy Scriptures.

In addition to writing down their doctrine, the apostles also appointed other offices in the church, and called men to fill them.

For the preservation of such doctrine and faith after the apostles passed away, God through the apostles appointed and instituted other offices in the church, as St. Paul says: some should be pastors and teachers. These, in other places, St. Paul and the other apostles call bishops and presbyters.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore:

since these are not allowed to teach any new or unknown doctrine, but are to preserve the teaching of the apostles in the church perpetually and since they do not receive such doctrine immediately from God Himself, but they must learn it from the writings of the apostles and prophets, for that reason God has appointed, through the apostles, that there be in the church pastors and teachers, bishops and presbyters, or as we customarily call them, ministers and parish pastors. These are educated among us from adolescence on and ought to be called and appointed to such offices in a regular manner.<sup>15</sup>

To sum up: God has instituted the office of the ministry in the church through the apostles. The essential task of this office is

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<sup>14</sup> ibid., F2r. "So hat er zu erhaltung solcher Lere und glaubens/nach dem Apostelamt/durch die Aposteln/andere Emptere/ in der Kirchen verordenen/und anrichten lassen. wie S. Paulus sagt/das etliche Hirten und Lerer sein sollen/welche anderswo von S. Paulo und den andern Aposteln sonst auch Bischoue und Eltesten genennet werden."

<sup>15</sup> ibid. "Und dieweil diese keine newe unbekandte Lere auffbringen/sondern die Lere der Aposteln/In der Kirchen fur und fur/ erhalten sollen/Sie auch solche Lere sucht on mittel von Gott selbst empfangen/sondern von den Aposteln und Propheten aus der selbigen schrifftten lernen müssen/Derwegen so ist auch von Gott durch die Apostele verordnet/das solche Leute die in der Kirchen/Hirten und Lerer/Bischoue und Eltesten/oder wie wirs zu nennen pflegen/Seelsorger und Pfarher sein sollen und können unter uns von jugent auffferzogen/und ordenlicher weise zu solchen Emptern beruffen und verordnet werden sollen."

to proclaim the doctrine of salvation. God called the apostles immediately. Since the time of the apostles, however, men have called and call other men into the office of the ministry in regularly appointed ways.

In 1544, however, Menius did not discuss the whole matter of apostolic succession, even though that matter should be considered at this point. However, in the Confession which he wrote at the time of the Interim, in 1548, Menius did give attention to the view of apostolic succession which was current among those who remained in fellowship with the pope. In Article X, Concerning the Signs and Marks of the True Church, Menius writes:

However, it is wrong and tyrannical to assert that the church rests on the succession of the papal bishops. For they openly prove that they are not members of the true church of Christ because they condemn and persecute the doctrine which has been based on the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles and which has been maintained, believed and confessed harmoniously in the church at all times by all Christians. They also pervert the proper use of the holy sacraments, going against the institution and order of the Lord Christ. Thus in fact they separate themselves from the Lord Christ who is the only true head of the church, as well as from the prophets and apostles who are the chief members of the church.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Justus Menius, Konfession und Bekenntnis des Glaubens der durchleuchten Hochgebornen Fürsten und Herrn Herrn Johans Fridrichen des mittlern, Herrn Johans Wilhelm, und Herrn Johans Fridrichen des jüngern Hertzogen zu Sachsen Landgrauen zu Düringen und Marggrauen zu Meissen usw. landschafft zu Düringen übergeben auffm landtage zu Weimar. Anno MDXXXXIX. Psalm 119. Ich rede von deinen zeugnissen für Königen, und scheme mich nicht. Gedruckt zu Königsberg in Preussen. Printed in Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Justus Menius, der Reformator Thüringens (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes, 1867), II, 48. "Das aber ist unrecht und Tyrannei, dass vorgegeben wird, die Kirche stehe auf der Succession der päpstlichen Bischöfe, welche doch öffentlich beweisen, dass sie keine Glieder der wahrhaftigen Kirche Christi sind, damit, dass sie die Lehre in der heiligen Propheten und Apostel Schriften gegründet und in der Kirche je und allewege von allen Christen einträchtig gehalten, geglaubt und bekannt verdammen und verfolgen, den rechten Gebrauch der heiligen Sakramente wider des Herrn Christi Einsetzung und Ordnung

That is all Menius ever says explicitly about apostolic succession. It is difficult to construct his view of authentic succession on the basis of his books and written statements. Nevertheless, the assumption is not unwarranted that Menius did have some conception of the authentic nature of apostolic succession. Sufficient evidence for that assumption is provided by two facts. First, in Menius' view the apostles delivered their doctrine to men whom they called into the office of the ministry. Secondly, for Menius the apostolic doctrine and office of the ministry were to continue interdependently in the church forever. Although Menius never says so explicitly, it seems as if apostolic succession, for him, consists in the continuation of the correct interpretation and proclamation of the gospel by men who have been ordained into the ministerial office. Through such ordination men receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit enables the ordained person to interpret correctly the divine mysteries of the Holy Scriptures. This gift of the Spirit for the correct interpretation of the Scriptures, not the succession through the pope and his bishops, apparently counts for authentic apostolic succession. Menius says in Article XII, On the Power and Authority of the Church,

The interpretation of the Scriptures, wherever it speaks of things which are too high for human reason, is not an office, power or ability which belongs to certain special

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verkehren und sich also von dem Herrn Christo, welcher das einige wahrhaftige Haupt der Kirche ist, item von den lieben Propheten und Aposteln, welche die vornehmsten Glieder sind, mit der That selbst absondern."

individuals such as popes or bishops. Nor do such men have the prerogative to interpret the Scriptures in a way which suits their pleasure or fancy. The interpretation of the Scriptures is a special gift of the Holy Spirit. The bishops do not bequeath His gifts to their successors, but they are given by God the Holy Spirit to special people when and to whom it pleases Him. Such interpretation is accepted and believed not on account of the person of the interpreter (be he called pope, bishop or barber), but for this reason alone: that such interpretation be in accordance with the Scriptures.<sup>17</sup>

To return to the 1544 book, there remains one extremely important statement by Menius which must be considered. Having just asserted that the New Testament office of the ministry was instituted in order to preserve the teaching of the apostles, Menius goes on to compare that ministry to the Old Testament ministry of the prophets. He writes:

So it was also in the Old Testament. First God Himself called and sent the prophets and revealed and made known His doctrine through them for the first time. Afterwards the priests<sup>18</sup> of the tribe of Levi were to preserve such doctrine.

This statement makes several important assertions. First of all, it indicates that God's call to those who proclaimed His word originated

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<sup>17</sup> ibid., II, 49. "Auslegung der Schrift, wo dieselbe von Dingen, so menschlichem Verstand zu hoch sind, redet, ist nicht ein Amt, Gewalt oder Macht, das sonderlichen gewissen Personen zusteht, als den P<sup>ä</sup>psten oder Bischöfen, also dass dieselben der heiligen Schrift einen Verstand oder Auslegung zu dichten haben nach ihrem Wohlgefallen und Gutdünken, sondern es ist eine sonderliche Gabe des heiligen Geistes, welche Gaben die Bischöfe nicht einer auf den andern erben, sondern von Gott dem heiligen Geist sonderlichen Leuten, wann und welchen er will, seines Gefallens gegeben wird, welcher Auslegung nicht von wegen der Person des Auslegers (er heisse Papst, Bischof oder Bader), sondern allein von deswegen, dass solche Auslegung der heiligen Schrift gemäss ist, angenommen und geglaubt wird."

<sup>18</sup> Menius, Von dem Geist, F3r. "Gleich also ists unterm altem Testament auch gewesen/da Gott erstlich selbs Propheten beruffen und gesand/und durch die selbigen die Lere dem volck hat erstlich offenbaren und bekand machen/und darnach dieselbigen durch die Priester vom geschlecht Levi fur und fur erhalten lassen."

independently of the congregation of believers. Secondly, it asserts that the prophetic message of the Old Testament, and by analogy, the apostolic message of the New Testament, antedates the community. The church, Menius implies, arises from the Word, and not vice versa. Thirdly, the offices within the community, whether they be the offices of priest, bishop or presbyter do not arise from the will or desire of the community. The ministry calls the community into being, and not vice versa. Menius' view, therefore, is incompatible with the notion that the community institutes the ministerial office on the basis of its own authority in order to take care of its public needs and merely for the sake of good order. As is obvious from the statement quoted above, Menius conceives of the ministerial office as an institution which originates in the immediate call of God. It has its basis in the divine will, although this office belongs to the church and never exists for its own sake, independently of the church. Menius, too, can say, "For God has instituted both word and sacrament and given them to Christendom on earth."<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Menius does not conclude from such a statement that inasmuch as the divine word and the sacraments are the possession of the church the office of the ministry is merely a convenient method of performing the duties which are the responsibility of all Christians.

Menius fills out his understanding of the doctrine of the ministry with two more assertions, both of which were contained in

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<sup>19</sup>Justus Menius, Der Widdertauffer lere und geheimnis, aus heiliger schrifft widerlegt (Wittemberg: Nickel Schirlentz, 1530), 321r. "Denn dazu sind von Gott/beide/wort und Sacramenta eingesetzt/und der Christenheit auff erden/gegeben."



his Confession of 1548. The first occurs in Article XII, On the Ministers of the Church. Menius writes:

It is absolutely necessary for the church to have ministers to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments according to Christ's institution and command. These ministers should be set apart and ordained with the laying on of hands according to the apostolic decree.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted in that statement that the office of the ministry has been given a status which makes it an absolute necessity in the church. In addition, Menius specifies that the clergyman is to be ordained through the laying on of hands. Although Menius does not say so, it is obvious from the general thrust of his doctrine that the laying on of hands is to be done by other ordained clergymen. There is no evidence to suppose that Menius would have affirmed the notion that the lay members of a congregation, whenever they please, have the authority or the power to lay hands on whomsoever they might desire.

Secondly, Menius addressed the question of the way in which the church should settle doctrinal controversies. He wrote about church councils in Article XI, On the Power and Authority of the Church, and said:

The resolution of erroneous and controverted matters should be determined and accepted in councils; however, not according to the discretion, desire or pleasure of people, be they called popes, bishops or whatever, apart from or contrary to the Holy Scriptures and divine word,

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<sup>20</sup>Schmidt, II, 50. "Dass die Kirche Diener habe, das Evangelium zu predigen und die heiligen Sakramente nach des Herrn Christi Einsetzung und Befehl zu administiren, ist in alle Wege von Nöthen, welche sollen mit Auflegung der Hände nach Verordnung der heiligen Apostel abgesondert und ordinirt werden."

but they are to be settled and accepted only according to the content and meaning of the Holy Scriptures and the divine word.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, for Menius, the Scriptures remain the supreme authority in the church by which all teaching is to be judged. If more than one faction in the church disputes about doctrine, both appealing to the Scriptures as the source of their doctrine, the church, assembled in a council, under the authority of the Scriptures, is to resolve the issue.

To summarize: for Menius the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ is the supreme standard and authority in the church for all times. The apostles, whom God chose immediately to be the chief and infallible witnesses of this gospel, possessed a special office in which they performed their divinely appointed task of planting the gospel message. In order to assist them in their task, God empowered them for miraculous deeds. These deeds were signs for other people. Since apostolic times, however, such signs have ceased. It is no longer necessary, or possible, for ministers to imitate the marvellous deeds of the apostles.

The apostolic word, on the other hand, must be proclaimed in the church forever. In order to guarantee the purity of this word, the gospel, the apostles committed their doctrine to writing. Their books are contained in the Holy Scriptures. In addition, the apostles called and appointed other men to succeed them in the

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 49-50. "Determinaciones irriger und streitiger Sachen sollen in Conciliis nicht nach Gutdünken, Wollen und Wohlgefallen der Personen, die heissen Päpste, Bischöfe oder wie sie wollen, ohne und wider die heilige Schrift und Gottes Wort, sondern allein nach Inhalt und Ausweisung der heiligen Schrift und göttlichen Worts gestellt und angenommen werden."

proclamation of the gospel. These men called and appointed others, and so the process continues and will continue for all time.

Furthermore, in addition to the call and appointment of men into the office of the ministry, it is also necessary for the ordained clergymen to have the special gift of the Holy Spirit for the chief function of his office; the correct interpretation of the apostolic word, the Scriptures. The special gift of the Holy Spirit for that task is imparted by the laying on of hands in ordination. It is the church, of course, who calls and ordains; and it is the church which possesses the divine word and the sacraments. Nevertheless, the office of the ministry has its own unique status. Its basis is the institution of God through the apostles for the sake of the gospel. Not anyone, therefore, when and where he pleases, may come forward and exercise the office of the ministry, to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. All Christians are required to proclaim the true doctrine and confess their Christian faith in public, of course, but they are to do so only within the limits of their own particular office, vocation and station in life. A father, for example, is required to instruct his household in Christian doctrine. He is even required to confess his faith in public, as a father, before friend and foe alike. However, the father has no authority or responsibility, simply because he is a member of the church or a Christian, to go about preaching the gospel or administering the sacraments.

The test of all preaching in the church is the apostolic word in the Holy Scriptures. If the called and ordained clergy should dispute and become embroiled in controversy about the correct

interpretation of that word, a church council should settle the controversy. The council, however, must settle the controversy strictly in accordance with the Holy Scriptures.

#### The Controversy with Flacius

In brief and summary form, the last four paragraphs set forth Menius' doctrine of the ministry. The task now is to discuss the controversy about the doctrine of the ministry between Menius and Flacius.

In this controversy Menius faced and discussed an altogether new and different set of problems connected with the office of the ministry. Ever since the Leipzig Interim had been introduced into Electoral Saxony in 1548, Flacius had published many books against what he regarded as the errors of the Wittenberg theological faculty, especially Philip Melanchthon and his supporters. In 1556, Flacius began attacking Menius. He tried to link Menius with the so-called Adalphorists. He accused Menius of abandoning the gospel in favor of a doctrine of salvation by works. Flacius carried on his publishing campaign even though he had not been called or ordained into the office of the public ministry. As far as Flacius was concerned, the gospel of salvation was at stake. Because of fear and cowardice, in his opinion, the occupants of the ministerial office had not publicly condemned what Flacius regarded as theological aberrations in the Leipzig Interim. Indeed, in their attempt to defend their cowardice, the called and ordained clergy had even resorted to espousing additional false doctrine. Only he, Flacius felt, and then only because of the dire necessity of the situation, had

publicly defended the gospel and openly condemned the false doctrine of the clergy. So, the basic problem which arose in the dispute between Menius and Flacius was this: may a lay member of the church, on the basis of his membership in the fellowship of believers and because of what he regards as a situation of dire necessity, carry out the task of judging what he thinks is false doctrine of the called and ordained members of the office of the ministry? In what way did Menius respond?

Menius' main line of argumentation against Flacius was on the basis of the divinely appointed church order. He accused Flacius of presuming to perform a task which is the responsibility of the called and ordained clergy alone, namely, the task of judging church doctrine and teachers. Menius thought that the public publishing activity of Flacius was essentially a teaching activity identical with the teaching office of the church. Therefore, Menius considered Flacius' activity illegitimate. Flacius did not have any sort of a call to perform such an activity. Menius thought that Flacius' activity amounted to a gross violation of the divinely appointed order of the church.

The only justification for Flacius' activity which Menius could imagine was a special, divine call. However, Menius refused to grant the possibility that Flacius would have such a call. He repeated against Flacius the same argument which he had used in 1544. Special, immediate divine calls, according to Menius, ended with the apostles.

From then on the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures were to be and remain the single and eternal foundation upon which the entire Kingdom of Christ, which is the whole church and Christendom must be built for all

times. The consequence is that from then on until the last day, God Himself will never call or send again either a prophet or apostle immediately.<sup>22</sup>

He says specifically against Flacius:

Now, if Flacius wants to assert and boast that he has been called and sent immediately by God to judge so many churches and schools, to criticize and reform them, then I say without shame that he is a liar. Since the prophets and apostles whom God called immediately, God will never again call anyone as He called them. Even less will he give a new teaching and doctrine by which the doctrine and preaching of the apostles may be judged.<sup>23</sup>

The call which Menius considered valid was the call which conformed to the divinely appointed order for the church. This order Menius gleaned from the New Testament, particularly Acts 20 and Ephesians 4. He stated his understanding of the valid call in the following words:

This shall forever be considered the divinely ordered call, that each church have its own called and qualified ministers, pastors, deacons, teachers, and so forth, who lead them, rule them, and who expound to

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<sup>22</sup>Justus Menius, Verantwortung Justi Menij Auff Matth. Flacij Illyrici gifftige und vnwahrhafftige verleumbdung und lesterung (Wittenberg: n.p., 1557), H2r. "und sollen der Propheten und Aposteln Schrifftten zu ewigen zeiten/biss an der Welt ende/das einige und ewige Fundament sein und bleiben/darauff des gantze Reich Christi/das ist/die gantze Kirche vnd Christenheit/bis ans ende der Welt/erbawet werden sollen. Ephe. 2. Also/das Gott nu hinfortan biss an Jüngsten tage/durch sich selbs on mittel weder Propheten noch Aposteln beruffen oder senden wil."

<sup>23</sup>ibid., H2r-H2v. "Will nun Illyrikus fürgeben und rühmen, er sei ohne Mittel von Gott berufen und gesandt, so vieler christlichen Kirchen und Schulen Lehrer zu richten, zu rechtfertigen und zu reformiren: so sage ich ohne alle Scheu dagegen, dass er lügt, denn Gott will über die Propheten und Apostel, die or ohne Mittel berufen hat, weiter auf solche Weise ohne Mittel Niemand nicht berufen, so wenig er will eine neue Lehre oder Predigt geben über die Lehre und Predigt geben über die Lehre und Predigt, die er den Aposteln gegeben hat." The quotation in its modern form has been taken from Wilhelm Preger, pp. 125-126. For the sake of modern German forms, subsequent quotations will also be taken from Preger.

them what the prophets and apostles have received from God and the Lord Christ as that has been recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Thus St. Paul ordained Titus, Timothy and others into such an office and commanded them that they should perform such duties in the Christian community.<sup>24</sup>

Suppose that Flacius did have a valid call into a congregational, pastoral office. Would he then have the authority and responsibility to carry on his activity? According to Menius, the answer would be a definite, "No!"

Even if he did have evidence of a valid call, indeed, if it were incontrovertible, documented and true that he had been called to the teaching office by a church and had publicly performed such an office, still, in what way could he prove that he had been called to be the judge, master and reformer of other churches and their ministers.<sup>25</sup>

For Menius, mere possession of a church office does not give someone the authority to exercise the function of judging the doctrine of other ecclesiastical officials as Flacius had done. Such activity lies outside the realm of the office of the congregational, pastoral office. Such activity, according to Menius, is the duty of higher ecclesiastical officials, the government, and church councils.

Furthermore, Menius set forth his own understanding of the fact that all Christians are priests. He wrote:

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, H2r. "Dieses aber soll nunmehr der göttliche und ordentliche Beruf sein, dass eine jede Kirche ihr berufe Diener, Pfarrherrn, Diakonen, Lehrer usw., welche tauglich sind, dasjenige vorzutragen und zu erklären, was die Propheten und Apostel von Gott und dem HERRN Christo empfangen, in der h. Schrift verfasset, und nach ihnen gelassen haben: wie S. Paulus Titum, Timotheum und andere zu solchem Amte verordnet und ihnen befohlen hat, dass sie dergleichen in christlichen Gemeinden auch thun sollten." Quoted from Preger, p. 125.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, H3r. "und ob er gleich gut wahrhaftig Zeugnis hätte, ja ob es gleich unwidersprechlich, wissentlich und wahr wäre, dass er etwa von einer Kirche zum Lehramt berufen worden, und dasselbige auch öffentlich geföhret hätte, womit will er beweisen, dass er darum auch über andere Kirchen und ihre Diener zum Richter, Meister und Reformator berufen sei?" Quoted from Preger, p. ]26.

It is true that all Christians are priests. It is true also that they ought to make spiritual sacrifices at all times and in all places by offering prayers, giving of thanks and all sorts of good works. Likewise they should be patient in all sorts of trials, and so forth.<sup>26</sup>

It is interesting to note in this connection the similarity between Menius' view of the priesthood of all Christians and the view which John Hall Elliott sets forth on the basis of his exegetical study of I Peter 2:4-10. Elliott concludes:

The ierateuma and its task cannot be compared to the mediatorial activity of the Levitical priesthood. Implied in the description of its task, "to offer Spiritual sacrifices," is a responsibility of witness toward the world. Mediation in the strict "two way" sense is not suggested, but rather a "one way mediation," as it were, of God's will, through holy obedience and well-doing, to all that is non-Church.<sup>27</sup>

Menius keeps the office of the ministry separate and distinct from the fact that all Christians are priests. He does not attempt to provide a basis for the ministerial office or any of its activities in a notion of the "universal priesthood of all believers." He never even uses that term. All Christians are priests, but their priestly duties are different from the duties of those who have been called into the ministerial office.

Flacius, however, did not believe it necessary for him to legitimate his activity on the basis of a call into the office of the public ministry. He believed that he had the authority and responsibility

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<sup>26</sup>Menius in Verantwortung quoted from Preger, p. 129. "Dass alle Christen Priester sind, das ist wahr, also, dass sie an allen Orten, zu allen Zeiten geistliche Opfer thun mögen mit Beten, Danksagen und allerlei guten Werken, item mit Geduld in allerlei Trübsalen etc."

<sup>27</sup>John Hall Elliott, The Elect and the Holy. An Exegetical Examination of I Peter 2:4-10 and the Phrase Basileion ierateuma. Vol. XII in Supplements to Novum Testamentum, edited by W. C. van Unnik, P. Bratsiotis, et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), p. 221.



to publish because of the fact that he was a baptized Christian.

Flacius wrote:

First of all, all Christians renounce the devil and all his works in their baptism; and, on the other hand devote and commit themselves to Christ. They vow to serve Him alone, and always to seek His honor and the neighbor's good as best they can. Likewise, they vow to war and fight mightily against the devil and all his power.<sup>28</sup>

Along with baptism and priesthood, Flacius also justified his activity on the basis of the Ten Commandments. Flacius writes:

In the second place, I have received the stern commandment and a strict order from the Ten Commandments in their entirety that I should love God with my whole heart and my neighbor as myself.<sup>29</sup>

For Flacius, to obey the Ten Commandments meant to struggle against false doctrine and for true doctrine. The claim of the neighbor, his need for the gospel, Flacius felt, were the source of a duty and responsibility which transcended the sociological structure of order and office. Flacius was convinced that he was constrained to write and publish, even if such activity violated the regular order in the church.

Menius responded to this line of argumentation by asserting, in effect, that the only true service to the Ten Commandments, the only true baptismal worship of God, is that which occurs within the

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<sup>28</sup>Flacius in *Apologia*, quoted from Preger, p. 134. "Erstlich entsagen alle Christen in der Taufe dem Teufel und allen seinen Werken und dagegen ergeben und verpflichten sie sich Christo, dass sie ihm allein dienen, seine Ehre und des Nächsten Heil, auf's beste sie immer können, suchen und für die Ehre Christi wider den Teufel und alle seine Gewalt aufs heftigste fechten und streiten wollen."

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.* "Zum andern, so hab ich aus den zehn Geboten in Summa ein hartes Gebot und ernsten Befehl, dass ich Gott soll lieben von ganzem Herzen und meinen Nächsten als mich selbst."

confines of one's own individual office, station and vocation in life. Menius argues against Flacius:

It is downright laughable that Illyricus would try to validate a call on the basis of his baptism, the Ten Commandments, and his lectureship at the University of Wittenberg. . . . He says that he vowed to Christ in his baptism that he would serve Him against the devil and all his followers by confessing the divine truth, and that he would renounce the devil with all his power and means.

Here I ask all reasonable Christians, indeed even the slanderer Illyricus himself, what it means to serve Christ? What does it mean to confess the divine truth? What does it mean to renounce the devil with his power and means? Is it possible to serve Christ by disobeying His word, command and ordinance? Or is it not Christ's word, command and ordinance which His apostles taught, appointed and commanded? St. Paul commanded his disciple Titus to appoint each church and each city on the island of Crete with its own bishop. And in Acts 20, St. Paul admonishes the presbyters at Miletus and Ephesus to take heed both to themselves and to the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit made them bishops.

There you see clearly the way in which the call and arrangement of church order is to be maintained according to the divine ordinance which the Lord Christ has instituted and appointed through His apostles. It is, namely, first of all, that no one who has not been called, examined, and tested should be installed into such an office. Secondly, each city and every church activity ought to have its own special minister.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Menius, Verantwortung, H3v-H4v, quoted from Preger, p. 128. "Dass aber Illyricus seinen Beruf aus der Taufe, aus den 10 Geboten und aus dem, dass er an der Universität zu Wittenberg eine Lectur gehabt, beweisen will, ist überaus lächerlich. . . . Er sagt, er hab Christo in der Tauf geschworen, dass er ihm wider den Teufel und allen seinen Anhang dienen, die göttliche Wahrheit bekennen und den Satan mit aller seiner Pracht und Finanzerei verfluchen wolle.

"Hie frage ich alle verständige Christen, ja auch den Lästere Illyricum selbst, was das heisse und sei, die göttliche Wahrheit bekennen? was das heisse, den Satan mit seiner Pracht und Finanzerei verfluchen? Kann man auch Christo dienen ohne und wider sein Wort, Befehl und Ordnung? Oder ist das nicht des HErrn Christi Wort, Befehl und Ordnung, was seine Apostel gelert, geordnet und befohlen haben? S. Paulus befiehlt seinem Jünger Tito, er soll in der Insel Creta die Kirchen also bestellen, dass eine jede Stadt ihren eigenen und besonderen Bischof habe. Und Act. 20 vermahnet S. Paulus die Aeltesten zu Milet und Ephesus, sie sollen Acht haben beides auf sich

Menius concludes:

If Illyricus had the authority and responsibility to do what he does on the basis of his baptism and the Ten Commandments, it would have to follow without contradiction that all true Christians would be required to do the same. But if every uncalled person in every church would judge and rule all church servants, and would approve or condemn such servants according to his own pleasure: My dear man, what would be the result of that?<sup>31</sup>

Menius can see only complete and utter chaos within the church if Flacius' position were to be accepted as legitimate. As a consequence, Menius pits the office of the ministry against the authority and responsibilities of baptized members of the Christian community.

The main argument, however, on which Flacius rested his case was the argument from necessity. According to Flacius, whenever the gospel is at stake, church order and all other custom must be suspended. Flacius argued:

As far as the matter of vocation is concerned, it ought to be known, first of all, that although the congregation should and must submit to those who are ordained over them, and that on the basis of God's command; and, secondly, that no one should interfere with the office of the ordained ministers, but ought to be obedient and follow them; still, all of this may not be understood to apply to a situation

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selbst und auf die ganze Heerde, unter welche sie der heilige Geist gesetzt habe zu Bischöfen.

Da siehest du klar, wie es nach der göttlichen Ordnung, die der HErr Christus durch seine Apostel aufgerichtet und eingesetzt hat, mit dem Beruf und Bestellung des Kirchenregiments soll gehalten werden, nämlich dass keiner soll unberufen, unverhört und ungeprüft zu solchem Amt gelassen werden, das ist eines. Zum andern hörest du, dass eine jede Stadt und ein jedes Kirchspiel soll seine eigene besondere Diener haben."

<sup>31</sup> ibid., J1v-J2r, quoted from Preger, p. 129. "So Illyricus von wegen seiner Taufe und der 10 Gebot pflichtig wäre, dermassen, wie er thut, zu handeln, so müsste unwidersprechlich folgen, dass alle getaufte Christen dergleichen auch thun müssten. Wenn nun ein jeder Unberufene in allen Kirchen, über alle Diener richten und regieren, dieselben seines Gefallens recht sprechen oder verdammen wollte, lieber was wollte doch daraus werden?"

of dire necessity. For necessity, as they say, breaks iron. Necessity also breaks the law. Furthermore, as the lawyers say, "necessity has no law."<sup>32</sup>

To support this argument, Flacius gave the following examples: St. Paul publicly rebuking St. Peter at Antioch because the truth of the gospel was at stake; lay people who legitimately baptize in emergency; and, Melanchthon's teaching activity in the whole Reformation period. From all this, Flacius concluded that, as a general principle, Christians have the obligation to perform the function of the office of the ministry in situations of emergency.

Of all the arguments which Flacius used in the controversy with Menius, the argument from necessity was undoubtedly the strongest. Menius did not attempt to refute that argument theologically. He did not even try to come to terms with it within the framework of his own doctrine of the ministry. Instead, he merely tried to prove that a situation of dire necessity had not existed. He pointed out that during the time when the Interim was being introduced, he, Menius, himself had written against its aberrations, and

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<sup>32</sup>Flacius in his Apologia, quoted from Preger, p. 132. "Was aber belanget die Vocation, ist zu wissen, erstlich dass, obwohl die ordentliche Personen aus Gottes Befehl sollen und müssen denen vorstehen, welchen sie verordnet sind, auch sich Niemand in ihr Amt mengen, sondern ihnen gehorsamen und folgen soll, so ist doch solches nicht von der äussersten Noth zu verstehen. Denn Noth, wie man sagt, bricht Eisen. Noth bricht auch Gesetz, und wie die Juristen sagen, necessitas no habet legem."

As Hellmut Lieberg has pointed out, in his Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), p. 135, Luther had taught that in cases of necessity the non-ordained Christian had the obligation to exercise the duties of the office of the ministry. Lieberg writes, "Der Notfall ist weiter dadurch gegeben, dass der vorhandene Diener am Wort in Irrlehre fällt und sein Amt in Widerspruch zu Christi Einsetzung versieht. Da kann und muss jeder Christ auch ohne besondere Berufung zum Amt sich öffentlich zu Worte melden, um für die Wahrheit einzutreten, wengleich auch dabei die Regel zu beachten ist, 'das es sittig und tzuchtig zu gehe.'" The issue between Menius and Flacius, therefore, was whether or not such a situation of necessity existed.

had composed a confession of the true faith. Perhaps the reason Menius did not respond to the argument from necessity was because there was no way to fit it into his doctrine of the ministry. Flacius' argument is based, obviously, on a highly subjective interpretation of a situation. The question which must be answered, however, is this: by what criteria can one determine whether or not a situation of "dire necessity" exists? To say that whenever the truth of the gospel is at stake such a situation exists is not sufficient. The criteria which are required must demonstrate, in and of themselves, that the truth of the gospel is at stake.

Furthermore, the examples which Flacius used to support his argument do not, in fact, prove a case against Menius. None of the examples which Flacius used constituted a breach of the ecclesiastical order which Menius taught. All three examples could be harmonized easily with Menius' doctrine. St. Paul's admonition of St. Peter at Antioch was appropriate because St. Paul, too, was an apostle. Lay baptism in an emergency situation is a private, not a public exercise of the administration of the sacrament. Melancthon, though unordained, was called to perform his teaching and interpreting activity by legitimate authority; and, Melancthon never exercised the office of the public ministry. Perhaps another reason, therefore, why Menius did not respond to Flacius' argument in a complete and thorough manner was because he felt that Flacius' argument was simply beside the point.

Flacius appealed to Luther in order to support his argument from necessity. He used various quotations from Luther to support his notion that the priesthood of Christians provides the basis

for the function of the means of grace. However, there is simply no basis for Flacius' claim that the following statement correctly reproduces the essential characteristic of Luther's doctrine of the ministry:

It is clear, indeed, from the statements of Luther, that all Christians are priests, that they have the authority and responsibility on the basis of their call from God to teach the word of God, especially those who are qualified. However, that certain ones are elected to office is because not all are qualified, not all have the time to teach, or the students to teach; and, especially, this happens that there might be and remain a useful order in the church.<sup>33</sup>

Nor is there any basis, insofar as it pertains to Luther, for Preger's statement:

According to Flacius, however, who sees in the administration of the means of grace nothing else than the public exercise of the functions of the universal priesthood which takes place in a special order, the office of the ministry rests primarily on the basis of the faith of all Christians. Consequently, Flacius cannot imagine an office in which the primary and sole administration of the means of grace would be given by an immediate, divine command. The administration of the means of grace has been given jure divino only to the entire communion of believers. Wherever this communion organizes itself into individual congregations, there it institutes an office out of itself in order to take care of its public needs and for the sake of good order. This office does publicly for the congregation and in the stead of all the rest, those things which belong to the office of the universal priesthood. In this view Flacius is in complete harmony with Luther. . . .<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Flacius in Apologia, quoted from Preger, p. 137. "Aus welchen Zeugnissen Lutheri ist je klar, dass alle Christenmenschen Priester sein, wohl Macht und Beruf von Gott haben, das Wort Gottes zu lehren, sonderlich die da tüchtig sind; dass aber etliche zum Amt erwählet werden, ist die Ursach, dass nicht alle tüchtig sind, auch nicht alle zu lehren stet Zeit und Zuhören haben, und auf dass eine nützliche Ordnung in der Kirche Gottes sei und Erhalten werde."

<sup>34</sup>Preger, p. 138. "Nach Flacius dagegen, der in der Verwaltung der Gnadenmittel nichts Anderes als die in besonderem Auftrag stattfindende öffentliche Ausübung von Functionen des allgemeinen Priesterthums sieht, ruht das Predigtamt primärer Weise auf der Grundlage des Glaubens aller Christen. Consequenter Weise kann

By appealing to Luther, Flacius introduced an additional element into the controversy. This added issue was the question of the meaning and intention of Luther's doctrine of the ministry.<sup>35</sup>

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also Flacius nicht von einem Amtsstande sprechen, dem durch unmittelbar göttlichen Befehl die primäre und alleinige Verwaltung der Gnadenmittel gegeben wäre. Jure divino ist die Verwaltung der der Gnadenmittel nur der Schaar der Gläubigen gegeben, und wo diese dann zu einzelnen Gemeinden sich organisirt, da setzt sie um des öffentlichen Bedürfnisses und um der Ordnung willen einen Amtsstand aus sich heraus, der öffentlich für die Gemeinde an Statt der Uebrigen das, was des gläubigen Priesterthums amt ist, vollzieht. Und mit dieser Anschauung steht Flacius in vollster Harmonie mit Luther. . . ."

<sup>35</sup>The best contemporary discussion of Luther's doctrine of the ministry and the theological problems which related to the controversy between Menius and Flacius in Hellmut Lieberg's Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon. Wilhelm Brunotte, Das Geistliche Amt bei Luther (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1959), is another valuable discussion of Luther's doctrine of the ministry. Lieberg argues that Luther's doctrine of the ministry contained a polarity between the priesthood of all Christians on the one hand, and the divinely appointed office of the ministry on the other. This polarity accounts for the seemingly contradictory utterances of Luther about the office of the ministry. This same polarity exists in Menius' doctrine of the ministry, but Menius emphasizes primarily the divine institution of the office. Brunotte plays down the element of the priesthood of all Christians in Luther's thought. Brian A. Gerrish offers an excellent discussion of the particular issue which was in dispute between Menius and Flacius, the issue of the relationship between universal priesthood and the office of the ministry, in his article, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther," Church History, XXXIV (December 1965), 404-422. The conclusions of this dissertation are in agreement with the conclusions of Gerrish. He points out the need for a positive foundation of the special ministry without impairing the universal priesthood of believers. He notes that Luther's statements on the doctrine of the ministry originated in a variety of historical circumstances, and can be used, therefore, to support a variety of different interpretations. Gerrish raises the question whether or not a coherent doctrine of the ministry can be found in Luther. He notes that there are two general lines of interpretation of Luther's doctrine. On the one hand, there are those who assert that the special ministry is based on the common priesthood. Flacius and Preger would be examples of this interpretation. On the other hand, there are those who assert that the special ministry is based on a divine institution. Gerrish offers a third interpretation by concluding, "Luther's way of relating priesthood and ministry identifies the functions of each, but makes a distinction between their normal spheres of exercise," XXXIV, 422. As far as this writer can

Preger believes that Menius and Flacius had widely differing views of the ministry. He tries to get at the issue by pitting the priesthood of Christians against the office of the ministry. This issue comes to a head in connection with what Preger calls the "office of the means of grace." Preger says that Flacius considers the occupant of the "office of the means of grace" to have no other authority than that which he has already received as a member of the priesthood of believers. For Menius, on the other hand, the sacred ministry has its basis outside of and independent from the believing community. He goes on to say with regard to Menius:

If, now, that is the case, then it has to be concluded that for him the basis of the office of the ministry rests on an immediate divine law which institutes a special divine office just like the office of the means of grace.<sup>36</sup>

Preger sides with the view of Flacius against Menius. He claims that Flacius had correctly reproduced the view of Luther. With Flacius Preger claims that those statements of Luther which forbid someone from usurping the office of another, "means only that one who is

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discern, that statement would also apply to the doctrine of Menius. The passages from Luther which Flacius used more frequently were from Luther's treatise, De instituendis ministris Ecclesiae, 1523, D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Ser. I (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1883), XII, 160-196; and De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae, VI, 484-573. Menius on the other hand, cited passages from Luther's great commentary on Galatians, WA XL, i, particularly 59, line 16 to 60, line 9. A recent exegetical study of the issues involved in this controversy is Elliott, The Elect and the Holy.

<sup>36</sup>Preger, p. 138. "Ist nun letzteres der Fall, so bleibt nichts Anderes übrig, als ihm seine Grundlage in einem unmittelbar göttlichen Gesetz zu geben, einen besonderen Amtsstand als ebenso göttlich angeordnet hinzustellen, wie die Gnadenmittel selbst."



not called should not force himself into the office of another, or cause a disturbance with his actions, except in a case of necessity."<sup>37</sup>

Apart from the fact that Preger introduces a concept which is totally foreign to the thought of Menius, namely, the notion of a special "office of the means of grace," his attempt to play off his notion of the universal priesthood with its possession of the means of grace against the divine institution of the office of the ministry is totally inappropriate. Furthermore, there is not really as much divergence between the views of Flacius and Menius as Preger claims. Flacius' view is merely confused. On the one hand, Flacius, too, based the office of the ministry on a divinely commanded institution just as Menius did, as the statement on page 294 above makes clear. If the office of the ministry rests on a divine institution, how then can Flacius claim that this office has its basis in the need for a convenient order in the church? However, Flacius neglects to associate with the office of the ministry the concern for the apostolic doctrine of the gospel as Menius does. Apparently Flacius did not think through the matter well enough to see the implications which his view had for apostolic succession or the concern for correct Scriptural interpretation. It involves a contradiction, then, for Flacius to argue that the office of the ministry is simply a convention which the church uses to avoid confusion. Furthermore, it does not necessarily follow that

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<sup>37</sup> ibid., p. 139. "Denn alle solche Sprüche gehen, mit Flacius zu reden, nur dahin, dass ein Unberufener sich nicht soll in ein fremdes Amt eindringen, auch sonst keine Unordnung mit seinem Thun anrichten, ausserhalb der äussersten Noth."

because the administration of the divine word and the sacraments has been given jure divino to the church there is, then, a contradiction if one speaks of a divinely appointed special office of the ministry.

But what about the situation of dire necessity? To be sure, one could grant the hypothetical possibility that emergency situations may arise in which the regular order of the church may have to be temporarily suspended. Menius apparently was unable to conceive of such a situation. Emergency situations are rough edges which never fit neatly into any system of thought. In any case, it is inappropriate to build a doctrine of the ministry on justifications for actions which may be appropriate for a state of emergency.

In conclusion, Menius' doctrine of the ministry proceeds from the seminal thought of the gospel. Nothing in his doctrine has independent status or importance in and of itself. The office exists not merely to provide convenient order for the church, or to avoid confusion. For Menius, the office of the ministry was instituted by God to preserve forever the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have described in broad outlines the life of Justus Menius and his role in taking the reform movement down to the parish level. They have provided a summary exposition of the major themes and doctrines of his theology. His writings against the Anabaptists have been evaluated..

The purpose of this final chapter will be to evaluate both the theology of Menius and his reforming activity. These conclusions and evaluations may be grouped under three general headings: the value of Menius' theological writings; the characteristics of Menius' theology; and, finally, Menius' contribution to the Lutheran Church.

#### The Value of Menius' Theological Writings

Menius was a prolific, if wordy, writer. To be sure, the amount of material from his pen is nowhere near as voluminous as that of Martin Luther. However, when one takes into consideration the responsibilities of his position, including the visitation of clergy and churches, the bookkeeping involved in his position as visitor, the supervision of his own parish, the conferences which he attended as a representative of Electoral and later Ducal Saxony, the interrogation of Anabaptists and the correspondence which that involved, and the service which he rendered on several theological commissions, it becomes apparent that Menius' theological writings represent a considerable achievement. Do these many and varied theological

writings, the books, pamphlets, commentaries, translations, polemical tracts, sermons and letters which Menius wrote over the span of about half a century possess any contemporary value?

They obviously have historical value. These writings provide the historian with source material for the theology of the first generation of Luther's students, for early Lutheranism's conception of and attitude towards the incipient Anabaptist movement in Central Germany, and for the way in which some Lutherans carried out the reformation of the church. Through these writings the contemporary historian can catch a glimpse of the character of the men who led and effected one of the most significant movements in the history of the church. The value of Menius' books against the Anabaptists for the historian has already been discussed and need not be restated.

But do they have any value other than historical? At first it might not seem that they do. Menius was not an original theologian. He was content, indeed, he apparently made a determined effort, simply to reproduce the theology of Luther. Time after time during the Synod of Eisenach Menius appealed to Luther as the authority for his position. Luther's influence on Menius' theological writings is discernible in all of them and at all periods in Menius' life. In his exegesis of the Sacred Scriptures Menius offers Luther's exegesis. Likewise, Menius' discussion of such doctrines as the Person and Nature of Christ, the Church and its Ministry, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and so forth, shows his indebtedness to Luther's theology at all points. John Constable's evaluation of Brenz would be equally valid if applied to Menius. Discussing Brenz's Lutheran views on the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacramental

elements, Constable says, "Brenz held these views tenaciously, views which made him 'a second Luther' with little theological originality."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, even if Menius' writings are not too valuable as original contributions to theology, they do have this value: they are helpful aids to an understanding of Luther's theology, particularly such aspects of Luther's theology as are in dispute. For example, Luther's doctrine of the Church and its Ministry has been the subject of ongoing debate ever since the first controversy on that doctrine arose in the sixteenth century between Menius and Flacius. Through the writings of Menius on the ministry of the church in that controversy, the contemporary historian and theologian can obtain some insight into Luther's own understanding of church and ministry.

In a sense, Menius' theological writings may almost be considered as commentaries on the theology of Luther. Menius was an early student of Luther and had learned theology at Wittenberg under the tutelage of the master. He was in close contact with Luther as a student, later as a co-worker and personal friend. Menius submitted some of his writings to Luther for Luther's approval and Luther responded on occasion by writing forwards for Menius' books. Menius corresponded with Luther and requested advice and counsel on theological matters from him. The writings of Menius reflect the student's acceptance of and use of the teaching of his mentor. From the works of Menius, therefore, it is possible to gain insight into the theology of Luther and that fact alone enhances their value.

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<sup>1</sup>John Wesley Constable, "Johann Brenz's Role in the Sacramentarian Controversy of the Sixteenth Century" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1967), p. 181.

The quality of Menius' theological writings is as varied as the writings themselves. As a polemicist, Menius was a formidable foe, even if he does not rank with the Luther of The Bondage of the Will. Menius was a better apologist than a polemicist, and some of his expositions of the Evangelical Lutheran theological position are outstanding. They are lucid, complete, well-reasoned. But Menius is at his theological best when he is writing on practical subjects within the realm of social ethics. And that leads to another reason for asserting that Menius' theological writings possess more than historical value.

The little tracts on marriage, on the duties and responsibilities of parents and god-parents with respect to the candidate for baptism, the book on Christian household stewardship, the book on the duties of the various classes of Christians with respect to true and false doctrine are invaluable, in themselves, as eloquent discussions of some practical aspects of Christian living within the social structure. Those writings of Menius are almost devotional. They certainly are pastoral. In some cases they are delightful, even after four centuries. In his books on matters relating to the family and society Menius is a kind, wise, nurturing Christian curate of his parishioners' spirits and bodies. Those writings are not characterized by the harshness of tone, the wordiness, the vehemence and rudeness of his polemical books against the Anabaptists, Osiander, or Flacius. Those books may still be read with profit today.

## The Characteristics of Menius' Theology

It would be logical to assume that Menius' theology would possess the same characteristics as the theology of Martin Luther. That assumption can be verified by an examination of Menius' theological writings. Because Luther influenced Menius, and because Menius was not an original theologian but attempted to reproduce faithfully Luther's theology, it would be surprising if Menius' theology were not characteristically Lutheran. In order to demonstrate the Lutheran character of Menius' theology, there are five items which ought to be mentioned.

First and foremost, Menius' theology was evangelical. "Evangelical" means more than that Menius acknowledged that the sinner receives the forgiveness of sins by grace through faith for Christ's sake alone without the works of the law. It means more, too, than that Menius was associated with a confessional group which protested the abuses of the papacy of his time. It also means more than that Menius' theology was conservative in contrast to the left-wing theologies which sprang up in the sixteenth century. It does not even mean merely that Menius took the Sacred Scriptures as the source and norm for the doctrines which he taught in the church. Certainly "evangelical" does not mean only that Menius proclaimed a "Christian" philosophy, a "Christian" program for reform, or a "Christian" way of life as Erasmus had done. While "evangelical" includes elements of all those things, yet it finally means something qualitatively different from them.

The evangelical character of Menius' theology must be understood with reference both to the totality of his theology and to each particular element of that totality. The evangelical character of Menius' theology does not derive from the sum of so-called "evangelical"

doctrines to which Menius subscribed, but rather from the way in which the sum of doctrines are related to Christ. Thus, Menius' theology is evangelical because of his view of the natural condition of the human race, under the wrath of God and in need of redemption, as well as because of his view of the release of the human race from that condition through the redemption of Christ. Menius' theology is evangelical just as much because of his view of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar as it is evangelical because of his view of the union of the divine and human nature in the man Jesus who suffered and died for the redemption of the whole human race. Menius' theology is evangelical just as much because of his view of the permanent validity of the law of God in the natural and social relationships of mankind as it is evangelical because of his view of the freedom of the Christian man through the Gospel. The sum total of Menius' theology is evangelical, therefore, because it is Christocentric in such a way that every particular doctrine in that theology is related to Christ. The relationship of every particular doctrine to Christ is then carried out in such a way that the affirmation of redemption through Christ remains central and pure.

The second characteristic of Menius' theology is this: it is biblical. The Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are, for Menius, the source and norm of his teaching. They are to him simply the Word of God. Even if Menius merely reproduces the theology of Luther, Menius does so with the assurance that Luther has correctly interpreted the Scriptures. With Luther, Menius considers the writings of the Fathers of the Church to be witnesses to the proper interpretation of the Scriptures. Still, the Scriptures are the judge of all



the teachers in the Church. Furthermore, Menius' theology is biblical in the sense that he used biblical materials profusely. Passages from the Sacred Scriptures appear over and over in Menius' writings. On occasion, some of these passages appear as expressions of principle, as maxims by which Menius interprets events in history and in his own life. Frequently passages from Scripture serve as proof for the truth of his doctrine. Incidents from biblical narratives Menius used as examples to illustrate particular points of theology. Thus Menius can use examples from the Old Testament of the Israelites worshipping in a temple as sufficient justification for the use of houses of worship among Christians. Biblical words and concepts provide the substance of Menius' thought and writings. Like Luther, Sacred Scriptures provide the theological atmosphere in which Menius thrived and grew. His knowledge of those Scriptures was intimate and profound.

The third and fourth characteristics of Menius' theology may be considered together. Menius' theology was confessional and doxological. The so-called Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds are the backdrop for the one confession to which Menius was supremely loyal and devoted: the Confession of Augsburg. That is not to imply that Menius placed the authority of the Augsburg Confession above the authority of the church's ancient creeds. It merely means that in the sixteenth century the Augsburg Confession was a specific response to certain abuses which had been introduced into the church and was, therefore, more prominent in the contemporary life and discussion. At the time of his death in 1558, the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Luther, the Smalcald Articles which Menius signed, and the Tractate and Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope were not viewed as confessions by Menius. It was different with the

Augsburg Confession. Menius regarded that confession as a standard for the doctrine of the Evangelical Church and as an expression of his own personal belief. At the time of the Leipzig Interim, and during his own trial for false teaching at the Synod of Eisenach, Menius repeatedly indicated his allegiance to that confession and expressed his conviction that no teaching in the church should contradict it.

Furthermore, like the Augsburg Confession itself, Menius' theology is doxological. A song of praise to God for the good news of the Gospel sounds in almost all of Menius' writings. Menius thanks God that in the world's last days He has caused the wonderful light of the Gospel to shine in the darkness of the medieval papacy. Menius praises God for the gift of His beloved Son, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He rejoices that God has raised up His servant Martin Luther as a spokesman for the Gospel. Menius is thankful for the civil officials who have undertaken the task of promoting and protecting the Gospel within their territories. Menius' vehemence against the Anabaptists can be explained, in part, as a result of his fear that the light of the Gospel might be extinguished again. It may even be conjectured that Menius' antipathy to Flacius as well as his advocacy of the teaching that the new life is necessary for salvation stemmed from his shock that Flacius would so openly and vehemently attack those men whom God had chosen for introduction of the evangelical reforms. In any case, there abounds in Menius' writings a sense of gratitude, joy and praise for the precious gift of the Gospel.

Finally, the theology of Justus Menius is practical. His works are replete with references to his concern that the blessings of the Gospel be available to the lives and needs of men. He desires to console and comfort guilty consciences which have been alarmed by the

wrath of God on account of sin. He wants to nourish the lives of people through the institution of the church. He wants to train up the young for a mature and effective life within the social relationships of this world. When life at the Ducal Court became a scandal for the simple people, Menius wrote a letter of rebuke to the princes. To effect his goals, Menius wrote practical treatises about marriage, baptism, and household stewardship. He revised Luther's Small Catechism apparently in order to make the catechism a more effective instrument in the Christian training of the young. He offered weekday sermons on the catechism and provided opportunities for personal confession and absolution on Saturdays. He celebrated the Sacrament of the Altar and preached the Gospel every Sunday as well as on Saints' Days. In all these ways, Menius gave evidence that for him the end of theology is in the lives of men.

#### Menius' Contribution to the Lutheran Church

The dissertation concludes, at last, with an attempt to assess the contribution which Menius made to the Lutheran Church. This contribution, apart from his theological writings, falls into two broad areas: Menius' activity as a member of the Saxon Visitation Commissions in reforming the church life of northwestern Thuringia; and, his pastoral concern for the religious and social life of his people.

A great portion of Menius' contribution as a visitor must, of necessity go unnoticed, unmentioned in detail, unacknowledged and unrecognized. Menius claimed that he spent many hours laboring on parish record books, many hours writing up visitation reports, and many hours in examining the pastors and curates under his supervision. Those records were not available to this writer for this dissertation.

It might be profitable as a future project to attempt to gather all of the visitation materials on which Menius worked, if that is possible, in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of the many details connected with the evangelical reform of Thuringia. Furthermore, an examination of Menius' correspondence might also prove an invaluable source of information for various aspects of Menius' contribution to the reform of the church life, and of his contribution to the Lutheran Church in general. This writer has compiled a bibliography of Menius' correspondence, but only a relatively few of his letters were available. At any rate, on the basis of the source material which was available for investigation, it has to be concluded that, at the moment, much of his work remains and probably will remain unknown.

What may be observed, however, is Menius' devotion to the Lutheran Church. For several years he was willing to live above a pig-pen in Eisenach because his work required this sacrifice of convenience. His salary was meager all his life. He was a man who continually and unselfishly labored to reform, to nourish, to strengthen the Church of the Augsburg Confession in spite of unpleasant circumstances. That sort of devotion and consecration is the sort of contribution which can best be attested by the fact that the church survived and flourished. Menius' example and his faithful devotion to his ministry is the kind of contribution which has made the Lutheran clergy, at its best, truly pastoral.

Other contributions of Menius to the Lutheran Church, particularly in the area of practical church life have become antiquated, important as they were in the sixteenth century. The church order which he helped draft in 1548, with its prescriptions for all aspects of the religious life of the people, is no longer followed. The

revision of Luther's Small Catechism which he prepared in 1532 is used no longer. His description of the duties and responsibilities of spouses cannot be easily translated into modern social realities. His conception of the duties of the citizen in the political realm, although relevant in principle, does not deal with the issues which face the Christian citizen who lives in the context of democratic political institutions. Menius' practical books were written for another time, another place. Yet, those contributions helped to make the Lutheran Church what it was in the sixteenth century. In the opinion of this writer, the Lutheran Church was, and still is, the better for it.

Justus Menius, the co-worker of Martin Luther, was a minor figure in the reformation of the sixteenth century. He had his role. He played it well.

## APPENDIX I

### Menius' Correspondence

- Menius to Myconius. Erfurt, June 24, 1525. ZVThGA X (1882), 246-247.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, February 2, 1526. WABr IV, 26-27.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, end of January 1527. WABr IV, 163-164.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), April 9, 1527. WABr IV, 191-192.
- Myconius to Lang and Menius. Gotha, April 21, 1527. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 437.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg, mid-May 1527), WABr IV, 201-202.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, August 12, 1527. WABr IV, 228-229.
- Luther to Menius. Weimar, May 1, 1528. WABr IV, 446.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, May 23, 1528. WABr IV, 469.
- Menius to Myconius. Erfurt, July 5, 1528. ZVThGA X (2883), 247-248.
- Menius to Myconius. Erfurt, July 22, 1528. ZVThGA X (1882), 249.
- Menius to Myconius. Place unknown, June 11, 1529. ZVThGA X (1882), 251.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, September 2, 1529. CR I, col. 1094.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 12, 1529. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 438.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, February 19, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 440.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, February 24, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 440.
- Luther to Myconius and Menius. (Wittenberg, end of February 1530). WABr V, 244.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 23, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 441.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 27, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 442.
- Luther to Menius. Weimar, April 12, 1530. WABr V, 274.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 27, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 443.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 27, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 445.

- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, September 17, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 446.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha), September 26, 1530 (?). ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 11.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, October 23, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 448.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, 1530. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 450.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 5, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 451.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 9, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 452.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg, second half of March 1531). WABr VI, 61.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha), April 7, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 452.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 12, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 453.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 14, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 453.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 30, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 454.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 3, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 455.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 23, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 455.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 19, 1531. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 457.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), October 18, 1531. WABr VI, 208-211.
- Menius to the Sequestrators of Thuringia. Eisenach, March 26, 1632. ZVThGA X (1882), 251-252.
- Veit Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, August 31, 1532. Kolde, Ana. Luth., pp. 181-182.
- Dietrich to Menius. Wittenberg, October 25, 1532. ARG XXII (1925), 193.
- Menius to Luther. (Eisenach, beginning of 1533). WABr VI, 413-414.
- Dietrich to Menius. Wittenberg, March 23, 1533. Kolde, Ana. Luth., pp. 184-185.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), August 26, 1533. WABr VI, 514.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, March 16, 1534. WABr VII, 42-43.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, April 16, 1534. WABr VII, 60.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), June 10, 1534. Lost. Cf. WABr VII, 71.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, July 14, 1534. WABr VII, 89.

- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), June 7, 1535. WABr VII, 186-187.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), August 8, 1535. WABr VII, 225-226.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), August 24, 1535. WABr VII, 240.
- Dietrich to Menius. Wittenberg, October 25, 1532. ARG XXII (1925), 193.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, no date, 1535. CR II, col. 872-873.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 10, 1536. ZVThGA XXXVI (1929), 458.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), July 17, 1537. WABr VIII, 100-101.
- Myconius to Menius. Place unknown, 1537. Lost. Delius, p. 49.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, October 30, 1538. Kolde, Ana. Luth., pp. 331-332.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 31, 1538. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 2.
- Medler to Menius. Naumberg. December 10, 1538. ARG XXVI (1929), 123.
- Wolfgang Musculus to Myconius and Menius. Augsburg, February 7, 1539. ARG XXXV (1938), 136.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), February 23, 1539. WABr VIII, 374-375.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 27, 1539. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 5.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, May 29, 1539. WABr VIII, 441.
- Menius to Creutziger. Place unknown, sometime before September 12, 1539. Lost. Cf. Kawerau, Briefwechsel Jonas, pp. 364-365.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, September 30, 1539. ARG XXII (1925), 196.
- Dietrich to Menius. (Nuremberg), January 8, 1540. ARG XXII (1925), 197.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), May 11, 1540. WABr IX, 107.
- Elector John Frederick to Menius. Place unknown, about June 13, 1540. Lost. Cf. CR III, col. 1040.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), August 10, 1540. WABr IX, 211-212.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), August 27, 1540. WABr IX, 221-222.
- Menius to Luther. Place unknown, August or September 1540. Kolde, Ana. Luth., pp. 366-367.
- Menius to Myconius. Worms, November 2, 1540. CR III, col. 1127.
- Menius to Myconius. Worms, November 7, 1540. CR III, col. 1140.
- Menius to Myconius. (Worms), November 22, 1540. CR III, col. 1162.



- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, November 24, 1540. ARG XXII (1925), 199.
- Menius to Myconius. (Worms), December 2, 1540. CR III, col. 1189.
- Menius to Sebastian Boetius. (Worms), December 15, 1540. CR III, col. 1215.
- Menius to Myconius. Worms, December 17, 1540. CR III, col. 1235.
- Menius to Myconius (Worms), January 17, 1541. CR IV, col. 30-31.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, January 29, 1541. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 5.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), February 18, 1541. Tentzel, Suppl. III, 99-100.
- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), March 1, 1541. CR IV, col. 1071-1072.
- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), March 12, 1541. CR IV, col. 117.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), March 18, 1541. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 75-76.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 18, 1541. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 7.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 19, 1541. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 9.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), March 25, 1541. WABr IX, 346-347.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, April 10, 1541. CR IV, col. 160.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), May 19, 1541. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 77.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), June 13, 1541. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 79-80.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha, August 1541). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 84-85.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), September 8 (1541). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 85-86.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 11, 1541. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 11.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 21, 1541. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 13.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 12 (1541). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 88-89.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), January 10, 1542. WABr IX, 588-591.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, January 25, 1542. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), 13.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 12, 1542. ZVThGA XXXVII (1931), pp. 14-15.

- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), February 25, 1542. WABr IX, 633.
- Myconius to Menius, Gotha, April 30, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 91-92.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, May 1, 1542. WABr X, 55.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 26, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 92-93.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 4, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 93-94.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 17, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 95-96.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 3, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 96-97.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 4, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 97-98.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 27, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 98-99.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 31, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 99-100.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, August 3, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 100.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, August 11, 1542. WABr X, 115-116.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, August 24, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 101-102.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, August 26, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 103.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, September 22, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 104-105.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, October 20, 1542. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 196-197.
- Luther to Menius. Wittenberg, December 6, 1542. WABr X, 214-215.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Leipzig, January 6, 1543. CR V, col. 14-15.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha), February 9 (1543). Scherffig, Briefe,  
p. 190.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, February 17, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 107-109.
- Veit Dietrich to Menius. (Nuremberg), March 29, 1543). ARG XXII  
(1925), 200.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 30, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 110-112.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 21, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 113-114.

- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 5, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 116.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 7, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 117-118.
- Luther to Menius. (Wittenberg), May 8, 1543. WABr X, 309-314.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha, mid-May 1543). Delius, Br. Myc., p. 119.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, May 18, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 120-122.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 4, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 123-124.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 19, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 128-129.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, June 25, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 129-130.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 19, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 130-131.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, July 25, 1543. CR V, 150-151.
- Menius to Myconius. Mühlhausen, August 15, 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
p. 132.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, September 10 (?), 1543. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 133-134.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, December 16 (1543). ARG XXII (1925), 201.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, February 13, 1544. CR V, col.  
311-312.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, April 17, 1544. CR V, col. 366.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, May 1, 1544. ARG XXII (1925), 202.
- Menius to Myconius. Mühlhausen, July 21, 1544. ARG XXXV (1938),  
349-350.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, August 2, 1544. CR V, 452-453.
- Menius to Myconius. Mühlhausen, August 14, 1544. ARG XXVII (1930),  
275.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, August 18, 1544. CR V,  
col. 467.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, September 5, 1544. Delius, Br. Myc.,  
pp. 153-154.

- Menius to Elector John Frederick. Mühlhausen, September 18, 1544. Schmidt, ZVThGA X (1882), 255-256.
- Elector John Frederick to Menius. Torgau, September 19, 1544. Schmidt, ZVThGA X (1882), 257.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 19, 1544. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 156.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 3 (1544). Delius, Br. Myc., p. 158.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg, December 11, 1544. ARG XXII (1925), 204.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 15 (1544). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 159-160.
- Menius to Myconius. (Eisenach), January 1, 1545. ZVThGA X (1882), 254-255.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, January 3, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 161-163.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, February 17, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 165.
- Menius to Myconius. Eisenach, February 19, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 166.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, February 23, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 166-167.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha), March 1, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 167.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 10, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 169.
- Medler to Menius. Naumberg, April 4, 1545. ARG XXVI (1929), 124.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 26, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 170-171.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, April 28, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 171-172.
- Streitberger to Menius. Braunschweig, May 15, 1545. ARG XXVI (1929), 125.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, May 22, 1545. CR V, col. 758-759.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, mid-June 1545. CR V, col. 779.
- Streitberger to Menius. Braunschweig, June 30, 1545. ARG XXVI (1929), 125.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, July 25 (1545). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 172-173.

- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, August 14, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 174-175.
- Myconius to Menius. (Gotha), August 29 (1545). Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 175-176.
- Melanchthon to Menius. Place unknown, September 9, 1545. CR V, 848-849.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nuremberg. September 22, 1545. ARG XXII (1925), 205.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, October 7, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 176-177.
- Medler to Menius. Naumberg, October 29, 1545. ARG XXII (1925), 126.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 4, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 178-180.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, November 6, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 180-181.
- Dietrich to Menius. Place unknown, December 13, 1545. ARG XXII (1925), 206.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, December 24, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 184-185.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, 1545. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 177-178.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, January 1, 1546. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 186-187.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, January 9, 1546. Delius, Br. Myc., pp. 188-191.
- Myconius to Menius. Gotha, March 9, 1546. Scherffig, Briefe, pp. 251-253.
- Myconius to (Menius). (Gotha), undated. Delius, Br. Myc., p. 195.
- Medler to Menius. Naumberg, January 25, 1547. ARG XXII (1925), 127.
- Menius to the Burgomaster and Council of Mühlhausen. Eisenach, May 12, 1547. ZVThGA X (1882), 257-259.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nürnberg, June 28, 1547. ARG XXII (1925), 207.
- Menius to the sons of Elector John Frederick. (Gotha), October 13, 1547. ARG XII (1915), 76-77.
- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), undated 1547. CR VI, col. 568-569.
- Dietrich to Menius. Nürnberg, August 16, 1548. ARG XXII (1925), 208.

- Menius to Jobst vom Hain. Eisenach, November 16, 1549. ZVThGA X (1882), 259-260.
- Menius to John Frederick the Second. Gotha, May 16, 1549. ZVThGA X (1882), 262-263.
- Menius to Ambsdorf. Eisenach, November 16, 1549. ZVThGA X (1882), 259-260.
- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), February 27, 1550. CR VII, col. 553.
- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), October 16, 1550. CR VII, cols. 677-679.
- Mörlin to Menius. Königsberg, May 18, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 119.
- Kötteritz to Menius. Königsberg, May 19, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 120.
- Mörlin to Menius. (Königsberg), June 12, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 122.
- Kötteritz to Menius. Königsberg, September 9, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 125.
- Mörlin to Menius. Königsberg, September 9, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 123.
- Kötteritz to Menius. Königsberg, November 22, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 126.
- Mörlin to Menius. Königsberg, November 26, 1552. ARG XXIV (1927), 127.
- Vechelde to Menius. Place unknown, September 13, 1553. ARG XXIV (1927), 129.
- Menius to John Frederick the Second. Butteltstadt, September 22, 1553. ZVThGA X (1882), 263-264.
- Kötteritz to Menius. Königsberg, November 11, 1553. ARG XXIV (1927),
- Vechelde to Menius. Leipzig, January 4, 1554. ARG XXIV (1927), 134.
- Mörlin to Menius. Braunschweig, February 13, 1554. ARG XXIV (1927), 135.
- Vechelde to Menius. Leipzig, May 24, 1554. ARG XXIV (1927), 136.
- Kötteritz to Menius. Königsberg, June 8, 1554. ARG XXIV (1927), 137.
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- Melanchthon to Menius. (Wittenberg), May 20, 1555. CR VIII, col. 845-846.
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(1702), 1045-1049.

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