THE ACCOUNT OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN OF THE BAVARIAN NOBILITY whose open letter, with arguments based on divine Scripture, criticises the University of Ingolstadt for compelling a young follower of the gospel to contradict the word of God.

Appended are the articles which Master Arsacius Seehofer of Munich revoked and repudiated at the behest of the University of Ingolstadt on the eve of Our Lady’s Nativity.

Ingolstadt. 1523.

Preface

Brothers: it is time to rouse ourselves from sleep. For our salvation is closer than we think. Therefore, my Christian reader, and you, too, you blind, raging, deluded Pharisees — you who have always resisted the Holy Spirit — if you refuse to believe the words of Christ, at least believe the works which he achieves through them. Put off your great cloak of pride, greed and fleshly lust.

See now, and understand, that, in these last days, Christ our Saviour is enticing and strengthening us by his divine and saving word in such diverse, gracious and wondrous ways (as happened at the beginning of his Church); not only through those learned in Scripture, but also through the great constancy, pain, martyrdom and death of many others, young and old, men and women; while bringing their persecutors to such humiliating and total confusion.

Lest, like Pharaoh, Exodus 4, your hearts become callous and hard; lest you remain untouched; ‘for if the children are dumb’, Luke 19, ‘the very stones will cry out’. And, Joel 2, ‘after this time I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy; they will speak words of wisdom, your man-servants and maid-servants, too; and I will work wonders in heaven and on earth, before the great and awesome day of God comes to pass’. 29

Many are now aware of this saying, and now it is quite evident in the person of the woman mentioned above; since it can be seen from her open letter, which is reproduced here, that she criticises the biblical scholars at the University of Ingolstadt for their persecution of the holy Gospel (as Judith, chapter

famous Adventspostille, or collection of sermons for Advent of November 1521; W4 10 1, p. 1.

27 Exodus 4.21.


29 Joel 2.28; a favourite quotation of Argula von Grumbach in virtually all her writings.

30 schriftgeleerten; the term recalls the scribes who opposed Jesus.
eight, the false priests), and exhorts and instructs them, citing a host of ‘insuperable’ divine writings. (This is scarcely credible, something very rare for the female sex, and completely unheard of in our times.) And what’s more, in the same letter she offers to appear before the same biblical scholars and to be interrogated by them. It can be seen from this that her writing comes from the spirit of God and not from the instruction of others. Moreover, just as holy Esther faced death and destruction in order to save the people, Esther 4, she, too, refuses to let herself be deterred from this Christian initiative of hers by the gruesome punishments imposed in recent times on so many advocates of the divine word. Like the holy Susanna, (Daniel 13) she would prefer to fall into the hands of men for what she does than to sin against God by keeping silent about the truth. And so we should pray to God that these incredibly arrogant and powerful enemies of Christ may be swept aside and vanquished, saying, like Judith 9: ‘O Lord, what honour will be done to your name, if the hands of a woman overcome them’. And we should rejoice and sing with holy Zachariah: ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has visited and redeemed his people.’

NOW FOLLOWS THE CHRISTIAN LETTER OF THE WOMAN WE HAVE MENTIONED, WHOSE NAME WILL BE FOUND AT THE END.

THE LORD SAYS, JOHN 12, ‘I am the light that has come into the world, that none who believe in me should abide in darkness.’ It is my heartfelt wish that this light should dwell in all of us and shine upon all callous and blinded hearts. Amen.

I find there is a text in Matthew 10 which runs: ‘Whoever confesses me before another I too will confess before my heavenly Father.’ And Luke 9: ‘Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, I too will be ashamed of when I come in my majesty’, etc. Words like these, coming from the very mouth of God, are always before my eyes. For they exclude neither woman nor man.

And this is why I am compelled as a Christian to write to you. For Ezekiel 33 says: ‘If you see your brother sin, reprove him, or I will require his blood at your hands.’ In Matthew 12, the Lord

*Judith 8.9f; Judith is cited at length in Argula von Grumbach’s poem, together with Deborah; pp. 183–5 below; if in fact it was the 1483 Koberger edition of Scripture which she used, there is a striking woodcut in it of Judith beheading Holofernes; interesting, too, that the term used for Judith’s criticism of the priests, straffer, in Judith 8, is the same one used in the title of this writing where she criticises, straffer, the University.

*unüberwindlichen; in the Koberger edition the term is used in Jerome’s Preface to Judith for Holofernes, who of course was overcome by Judith herself; it is much loved in contemporary German and used, for example, for the power of the planets in astrological treatises.

*She was accused of being a tool in the hands of Luther and Melanchthon.

*Esther 4.16.

*Susanna v. 22f.

*Cruel their arrogance by the hand of a woman. For your power depends not upon numbers, nor your might upon men of strength; for you are God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forlorn, saviour of those without hope’ (Judith 10f).

*Luke 1.68, 76; the birth of John the Baptist, so named at the insistence of his mother, Elisabeth, a child who will be called the prophet of the Most High.

*Ich leche kum inn die welt’; the wording is close to that of the Koberger edition: ‘Ich leche kam inn die welt’; John 12.46; the theme of light runs throughout her writings.

*Matthew 10.32.


*A point repeated in her poem: Nicht ausgeschlossen weib noch man; God does not confine his Spirit so closely; so in achen engen stall; neither peasant nor woman is excluded; p. 176f. below.

*Ezekiel 33.8; the duty of open proclamation is stressed in v. 7; und verkünd es in von mir’ (Koberger); again, the idea that she has no choice but to speak out is repeatedly aired in her writings.
says: 'All sins will be forgiven; but the sin against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven, neither here nor in eternity.' \(^{43}\) And in John 6 the Lord says: 'My words are spirit and life...'. \(^{44}\)

How in God's name can you and your university expect to prevail, when you deploy such foolish violence against the word of God\(^{45}\), when you force someone to hold the holy Gospel in their hands for the very purpose of denying it, as you did in the case of Arsacius Seehofer? When you confront him with an oath and declaration such as this, and use imprisonment and even the threat of the stake to force him to deny Christ and his word?

Yes, when I reflect on this my heart and all my limbs tremble. What do Luther or Melanchthon teach you but the word of God? You condemn them without having refuted them. Did Christ teach you so, or his apostles, prophets, or evangelists? Show me where this is written! You lofty experts\(^{46}\), nowhere in the Bible do I find that Christ, or his apostles, or his prophets put people in prison, burnt or murdered them, or sent them into exile.... Don't you know that the Lord says in Matthew 10? 'Have no fear of him who can take your body but then his power is at an end. But fear him who has power to despatch soul and body into the depths of hell.' \(^{47}\)

One knows very well the importance of one's duty to obey the authorities. But where the word of God is concerned neither Pope, Emperor nor princes – as Acts 4 and 5 make so clear – have any jurisdiction.\(^{48}\) For my part, I have to confess,

in the name of God and by my soul's salvation, that if I were to deny Luther and Melanchthon's writing I would be denying God and his word, which may God forfend for ever. Amen.

Haven't you read the first chapter of Jeremiah, where the Lord says to him: 'What do you see?' He says: 'I see a vigilant rod.' Says the Lord: 'You see correctly, for I am ceaselessly vigilant in order to bring my words to pass.' He asks him again: 'What else do you see?' 'I see a burning pot, and the face of God from midnight.' \(^{49}\) Says the Lord: 'You have seen correctly; for from midnight every evil will be revealed to every inhabitant of the earth. The pot burns; and truly you and your university will never extinguish it. And neither the Pope with his decreets, nor Aristotle, who has never been a Christian, nor you yourselves can manage it. You may imagine that you can defy God, cast down his prophets and apostles from heaven, and banish them from the world. This shall not happen. I beseech you, my dear masters, let him stay;\(^{50}\) have no doubt about it: God will surely preserve his holy and blessed word. As he has hitherto declared; has done in the Old and New Testament, still does, and will continue to do.

God will fall upon you, as the prophet says, Hosea 13: 'They puffed up their hearts and forgot me. I will be to them as a lion in their path. And will fall upon them like a bear who sees her young being stolen.' \(^{51}\) And Hosea 6: 'I smote them with the words of my mouth. Woe to you! for you have made your

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\(^{43}\) Lit. 'there' Matthew 12.31.

\(^{44}\) John 6.63.

\(^{45}\) Perhaps a reference to the kingdom of heaven suffering violence since the coming of John the Baptist: Matthew 11.12.

\(^{46}\) 'Yr hohen meister'.

\(^{47}\) Matthew 10.28.

\(^{48}\) Peter and John resist the rulers, elders and scribes in Jerusalem; Acts 4. 19f.; 5.29.

\(^{49}\) Jeremiah 1.11;13; the Latin, aquilo, the north, the north wind, is consistently translated by the Koberger and other late fifteenth century German editions, such as the Biblia Germanica(Augsburg 1477) and Biblia deutsch (Augsburg 1480) by mitternacht, midnight.

\(^{50}\) 'Bitt euch... in lenger bleyben zu lassen'; the meaning seems to be that God's Word, Christ, should not be driven away but allowed to stay; cf. Matthew 21.39, the parable of the vineyard.

\(^{51}\) Hosea 13.8.
counsel without me.' Isaiah 30.52 And Ezekiel 13: 'Woe to the fools, to those who prophesy according to their own conceits. They see useless things, and teach lies. They say: 'The Lord says' when I have neither spoken nor sent them. For a handful of barley53 and a piece of bread they kill souls which are not dying, and declare souls living which do not live. And they lie to my people, so that they believe their lies...'.54 And what does God say in Ezekiel 33? 'The warning of the Lord was like a cheerful ditty to them until the punishment came, for they did not know that a prophet was among them.'55 And Jeremiah 48: 'God became the butt of their scorn, as if they had discovered him among thieves.'56

Greed has possessed you; you would be much readier to suffer God's word if you did not profit from the publication of the Decretal.57 The gospel does not pull in so many dollars58 for its advisers. I have seen how my dear lord and father of blessed memory had to pay twenty gulden for a piece of advice four lines long; not that it did him a cent of good. But what does David say in Psalm 37? 'I have been young and now am old, and have yet to see the children of righteousness having to beg for bread.'59 I beseech you. Trust in God. He will not desert us, for every hair on our heads is numbered and in his care, as

Matthew 10 says.60 I had to listen for ages to your Decretal preacher61 crying out in the Church of Our Lady: Ketzer/ketzer, 'Heretic, heretic!' Poor Latin, that! I could say as much myself; no doubt; and I have never been to university. But if they are to prove their case they'll have to do better than that. I always meant to write to him, to ask him to show me which heretical articles the loyal worker for the gospel, Martin Luther, is supposed to have taught.

However I suppressed my inclinations; heavy of heart, I did nothing. Because Paul says in 1 Timothy 2: 'The women should keep silence, and should not speak in church.'62 But now that I cannot see any man who is up to it, who is either willing or able to speak, I am constrained by the saying: 'Whoever confesses me', as I said above. And I claim for myself Isaiah 3: 'I will send children to be their princes; and women, or those who are womanish, shall rule over them.'63 And Isaiah 29: 'Those who err will know knowledge in their spirit, and those who mutter will teach the law.'64 And Ezekiel 20: 'I raise up my hand against them to scatter them. They never followed my judgements, they rejected my commandments, and their eyes were on the idols of their fathers. Therefore I gave them commandments, but no good ones; and judgements by which they could never live.'65 And Psalm 8: 'You have ordained

52 Hosea 6.5; Isaiah 30.1.
53 'ain handtuol gersten'; in the Basel edition 'ein huot vol gersten' which means, if anything, a handful of barley; probably a misreading of the manuscript: cf. Bezel, Sendbrief, p. 170.
54 Ezekiel 13.17.19; the criticism of the 'daughters of Israel' by Ezekiel is omitted.
55 Ezekiel 33. 32f.
56 Jeremiah 48.27; in today's editions the reference is to Israel, not God, but in Koberger it reads: 'wan o israel, er was dir zu einem gespött'.
57 'gyeng euch nicht ab / ann vertrückung des Decrets'.
58 Lit. pennies.
59 Psalm 37.25.

60 Matthew 10.30f.
61 Basing his preaching on Canon Law; if the reference is to Hauer's sermons in Drei christlich predig, it is less than just, because the latter, in the printed version at least, seeks to refute Luther from Scripture as well as other authorities.
62 Jedoch mein gäst ernidertrückt'; 1 Timothy 2.12; cf. 1 Corinthians 14.34f., which is rather closer to her words, and appears to be conflated with 1 Timothy.
63 Isaiah 3.4, 12.
64 Isaiah 29. 24.
65 Ezekiel 20. 23ff.
praise out of the mouth of children and infants at the breast, on account of your enemies.\textsuperscript{66} And Luke 10: 'Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit, and said: “Father, I give you thanks, that you have hidden these things from the wise, and revealed them to the little ones’.\textsuperscript{67} Jeremiah 3: “They will all know God, from the least to the greatest.”\textsuperscript{68} John 6,\textsuperscript{69} and Isaiah 54: “They will all be taught of God.”\textsuperscript{70} Paul in 1 Corinthians 12: ‘No one can say “Jesus”, without the spirit of God.’\textsuperscript{71} Just as the Lord says of the confession of Peter in Matthew 16: ‘Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father’.\textsuperscript{72}

Do you hear this? That it is God who gives us understanding, not any human being? As Paul, too, says in 1 Corinthians 2: ‘Your faith should not be in human wisdom...’\textsuperscript{73} You, with your papal laws, will not be able to coerce us, not by a long chalk. We have witness enough from Scripture that they have no right to make laws without God’s command, as Jeremiah 23 says.\textsuperscript{74} Where, however, it is based in the Bible, the book which contains all God’s commands, we will be happy and pleased to accept it. But where it is not, it has no validity for us at all. Or only in so far as it is my duty to spare my weak and foolish brother, until he, too, has been instructed. For God says, Deuteronomy 4: ‘Add nothing to my word, and subtract nothing from it’.\textsuperscript{75} And Proverbs 30: ‘Add nothing to the words of God, lest you be reproved, and be found a liar.’ Just before that we find: ‘The word of God is a fiery shield to all who put their trust and confidence in him.’\textsuperscript{76} Isaiah and Jeremiah: ‘The word which I say to you, proclaim to them from my mouth...’\textsuperscript{77}

How are the lawmakers and their representatives to endure if they invent laws out of their own heads and not from the counsel and the word of God? In my view the Lord is referring to them in Matthew 15: ‘O you hypocrites! You have made the command of God vain because of your impositions.' And declares that it is an empty honour if He is honoured by human commandments.\textsuperscript{78} And Luke 11: ‘Woe to you who are wise in the law! You impose heavy burdens on people which they cannot bear but do not move a finger to carry them yourself.’ And later in the same chapter: ‘Woe to you who are wise in the law!’\textsuperscript{79} You do not go in yourselves, and prohibit those who want to go in from doing so. You who have the key of knowledge and shut up the kingdom of heaven....\textsuperscript{80} Hear the Lord in Matthew 24: ‘If the wicked servant starts beating his fellow, when the hour comes unexpectedly he will be separated from the others and set among the hypocrites, and then there will be nothing but howling and gnashing of teeth’,\textsuperscript{81} from which God defend us all.

My heart goes out to our princes, whom you have seduced and betrayed so deplorably. For I realise that they are ill informed about divine Scripture.\textsuperscript{82} If they could spare the time from other business, I believe they, too, would discover the

\textsuperscript{66} Psalm 8.2.
\textsuperscript{67} Luke 10.21.
\textsuperscript{68} Jeremiah 31.34 is meant.
\textsuperscript{69} Cf. John 6.45: ‘And it is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God.’
\textsuperscript{70} Isaiah 54.13.
\textsuperscript{71} 1 Corinthians 12.3.
\textsuperscript{72} Matthew 16.17.
\textsuperscript{73} 1 Corinthians 2.5.
\textsuperscript{74} Jeremiah 23.32; the lawmakers referred to are canon lawyers.
\textsuperscript{75} Deuteronomy 4.2.
\textsuperscript{76} Proverbs 30.6, 5.
\textsuperscript{77} Isaiah 59.21; Jeremiah 1.9.
\textsuperscript{78} Matthew 15.7ff.
\textsuperscript{79} gesetzweisenn.
\textsuperscript{80} Luke 11.46, 52.
\textsuperscript{81} Matthew 24.49ff.
\textsuperscript{82} The Basel edition is a little stronger: ‘I know well that they do not read the holy Scriptures’, cf. Halbach, p. 108.
truth that no one has a right to exercise sovereignty over the word of God. Yes, no human being, whoever he be, can rule over it. For the word of God alone – without which nothing was made – should and must rule.

If one could enforce faith why weren’t all unbelievers given instructions to believe long ago? The difficulty is that it is the word of God which has to teach us, not flesh and blood. You won’t be able to gain any such fame with Arscarius Seehofer, prettifying him up with his coerced and dictated oath, calling him a Master of Arts. For you have forgotten one thing: that he is only eighteen years old, and still a child. Others won’t forget. From the way in which the news has come to me from other places in such a short time, you will surely be notorious throughout the entire world.

What have our princes done to merit such conduct from you? Is this the reward for their frequent generosity, bestowing wealth on the poor among you? How do you make them look? Why do you make them and this university of yours, which they are rightly praised for founding, the laughing stock of the whole world? Ah, what loyalty you return for the good they have done you! What gratitude! How dare you?

For it is certain that they will soon become aware of the truth, and of your wicked and poisonous envy. God will give them a true understanding. That is my heartfelt, dutiful prayer. For they are the rulers of my fatherland, and I, too, was brought up for a while under their noble father and mother, my gracious lord and lady, and came to know their good living and godly fear. God be their reward, here in time and in eternity.

My heart goes out to them; for they have no one with enough integrity to tell them what is going on. And I realise very well that it is for their wealth, torn from them every day, that they are loved rather than for themselves. I am prepared to write to them in this vein, since, because of other business, they have no leisure to sit down and read for themselves. Although there is nothing more needful than the word of God, as the Lord says in Luke 10: ‘That is the best part – to listen to the word of God.’ And what does he add in Luke 9: ‘If one were to win all this world, but lose one’s soul, how could it be regained?’ But they put their trust in you as the biblical scholars. That is why they installed you. And for this purpose you have no small revenue from the land and living of their poor subjects. This university was founded by their parents, to their great merit, and maintained at great expense.

I am quite convinced that if they knew the truth, they would not continue to act on your requests as they have now done with Seehofer and would not have given permission for him to be murdered, as indicated in his oath. May God be their reward eternally. I hope things will improve. Who knows why they gave such an instruction?

Have no doubt about this: God looks mercifully on Arscarius, or will do so in the future, just as he did on Peter, who denied the Lord three times. For each day the just person falls seven times and gets up on his feet again. God does not want the death of the sinner, but his conversion and life. Christ the Lord himself feared death; so much so that he sweated a bloody sweat. I trust that God will yet see much good from this young man. Just as Peter, too, did much good work later, after his

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81 Luke 10. 42 (Mary and Martha).
83 *schröffen weisen*.
84 'von irer armen leuten gründe und boden'.
85 'Ich hoff ain Got will noch vill gutz aus dysem jüngiung zukumen'; in the Basel edition this is more explicit, hoping that he will, like Peter do much good for the Christian church: ‘thet er vil guts der christenlischen kirchen'; the similarity of the Nuremberg version to the formulation in her letter to Duke Wilhelm suggests its authenticity; Bezel, *Sendbrief*, p. 171.

Lit. 'pennies'.
denial of the Lord. And, unlike this man, he was still free, and did not suffer such lengthy imprisonment, or the threat of the stake.

A disputation is easily won when one argues with force, not Scripture. As far as I can see that means that the hangman is accounted the most learned. It's easy to see, though, that the devil has helped to arrange this fine hullabaloo. God will not put up with your ways much longer. In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul says: 'the devil turns himself into an angel of light'. So it is no wonder that confidence tricksters turn themselves into apostles of Christ. Remember Matthew 10: 'There has to be conflict, the son against the father, the daughter against the mother, the bride against the mother in law, and one's servants will become one's enemies.' And John 16: 'The time will come when they will kill you and think that they do God a service. For they know neither the Father nor me.' And Paul in 1 Corinthians 11: 'Conflict must take place, so that those who are approved may be revealed.' Also 2 Corinthians 4: 'If the Gospel is hidden, it is to those who are perishing...'

What a fine way to observe the imperial mandate that has just been issued on 6 March! In which it is crystal clear that the Gospels are to be preached as God has commanded, together with the teachers approved by the Christian Church! Nothing at all is said about any Roman Church. I can find no word in the Bible about this Roman Church. I'd be glad if you could show me what God has said about the Roman Church. I have read in the histories of the saints that they were generally martyred by the same gathering, Find scant good said about it. May God better it!

Are you not ashamed that [Seehofer] had to deny all the writings of Martin, who put the New Testament into German, simply following the text? That means that the holy Gospel and the Epistles and the story of the Apostles and so on are all dismissed by you as heresy. It seems there is no hope of a proper discussion with you. And then there's the five books of Moses, which are being printed too. Is that nothing? It would be easier, and more profitable, to engage in discussion with a Jew. I hear nothing about any of the refuting a single article [of Arsacius] from Scripture. What do I hear is that a learned lawyer came forward to him and asked: 'Why was he crying? Wasn't he a heretic?' But jurisprudence is no value here.

I would have thought that you would have suspended your scholastic squabbles until the coming Council had been summoned, in pursuance of the imperial mandate which has been read out here publicly from the pulpit. The reason is obscure to me, up to now no one has been much worried by Luther. It doesn't seem to worry our clergy. If some of them could at least read the Psalter that would be something.

Although I can't discover anywhere else where it has been proclaimed. Nor in any other territory either. It seems those in Dietfurt have good ground to rejoice that they have led the way in this great matter which pertains to faith and eternal

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89 der züchtiger; lit. 'the chastiser'; this argument is taken from Luther's Appeal to the German Nobility. 'Wenn es Kunst were mit fewt ketzer ubirwindenn / So waren die hencker die geleristen doctores... WA 6, p. 155 / 22-24.
90 'ein feine faßnacht'.
91 2 Corinthians 11.14; cf. 2.11.
92 Matthew 10 .35f.
93 John 16.2f.
94 1 Corinthians 11.19; 2 Corinthians 4.3.
95 Not clear what is meant; a reference to Hus?
96 Antisemitism was strong in and around Regensburg; in 1519 the expulsion of the Jews in Regensburg had taken place, being following by a pilgrimage fever to the church of Our Lady.
97 'schul gezeuch'.
98 The reason for the whole Seehofer affair.
99 'die treffenligsten'.

salvation. I would have thought it would have been proclaimed by the university. Especially to you in this diocese and territory; perhaps you think it is too lofty for any Christian to pronounce.  

I beseech you for the sake of God, and exhort you by God’s judgement and righteousness, to tell me in writing which of the articles written by Martin or Melanchthon you consider heretical. In German not a single one seems heretical to me. And the fact is that a great deal has been published in German, and I’ve read it all. Spalatin sent me a list of all the titles. I have always wanted to find out the truth. Although of late I have not been reading any, for I have been occupied with the Bible, to which all of [Luther’s] work is directed anyway – to bring us to read it. My dear lord and father insisted on me reading it, giving me it when I was ten years old. Unfortunately I did not obey him, being seduced by the afore-named clerics, especially the Observants who said that I would be led astray.

Ah, but what a joy it is when the spirit of God teaches us and gives us understanding, flitting from one text to the next – God be praised – so that I came to see the true, genuine light shining out. I don’t intend to bury my talent, if the Lord gives me grace. The gospel”, says Christ, Luke 7, “is preached to the poor, and blessed is the one who is not offended by me…” As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9: “I preach the unvarnished gospel, lest I abuse my power.” I speak truly to you of the light that shines again in the world. Psalm 118: “As your word is disclosed it shines forth and gives understanding to the lowly.” Psalm 36: “In you is the well of life, and in your light we will see light.” John 2: God sought no human witness, “for he knew what was in everyone”. John 16: “The spirit will explain who I am.” John 14: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” And in John 9 the Lord says: “I am come for judgement upon this world. So that those who do not see should see, and those who do see should be made blind. The Pharisees said: “Are we blind, then?” The Lord answers: “If you were blind you would be without sin. But if you say: We understand, then your sin stands.” And John 8: “Whoever abides in my word is my disciple.” And in the same chapter: “Whoever is of God, hears the word of God. Therefore if you do not hear it you are not of God…” And John 10: “My little sheep know my voice, but a stranger’s voice they do not know and so they do not follow him.” Matthew 24: “Heaven and earth will pass

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100 ‘erschrecken künde’.
101 The contact with Spalatin is interesting.
102 Cf. Luther’s Weihnachtspostille of November 1521, which Argula would probably have read: ‘O das gott wolst, meyn und aller lehr außlegung untzergengen, unnd eyglicher christen selbs die blosse schrift und lautter gottis wortt für sich nehme!’ (Would that God would let my interpretation and that of all the others teachers disappear, so that every Christian could read the simple Scripture and the pure word of God for themselves) Wt 10, 1, p. 728 / 9–11,18–22; note the wish of Staupitz, in De amore Dei, p. 108, that all books would be lost and love alone remain, which both Luther and Argula will have read: “Wolt got die bucher wern alle verloren...und wer allein die lieb funden.”
103 ‘sprayert von einem in das anden’; lit. ‘takes a walk from one to the other’; a typical Lutheran note.
104 Matthew 25.18.
106 1 Corinthians 9.18.
107 Psalm 119.130.
108 Psalm 36.9.
109 John 2.25.
110 John 16.13ff.
111 John 14.6.
113 John 8.47.
114 John 10.4ff.
away. But my words will not pass away’. And Isaiah 40: ‘The word of God stands for ever’. 115

Now I don’t find such promises from human beings, or papal laws or utterances. 2 Corinthians 1: ‘The word of God in his promises is a Yes which excludes any No.’ 116 ‘From this word was made heaven and earth and all that is in it, and without it nothing was made.’ John 1. 117 And God was the word by which the dead were quickened, the sinner converted, the blind made to see, the lame made straight, the dumb to speak and so on.... That is a treasury of salvation, not a pit for cash, 118 like the Decretals. Through it life is promised to us. Matthew 4 and John 6. 119

I cry out with the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 22: ‘Earth, earth, earth! Hear the word of the Lord.’ 120 I beseech and request a reply from you if you consider that I am in error, though I am not aware of it. For Jerome was not ashamed of writing a great deal to women, to Blesilla, for example, to Paula, Eustochium and so on. 121 Yes, and Christ himself, he who is the only teacher 122 of us all, was not ashamed to preach to Mary Magdalene, and to the young woman at the well. 123

115 Matthew 24. 35; Isaiah 40. 8; the latter is almost the battle-cry of the Reformation.
116 2 Corinthians 1. 19.
117 John 1. 3.
118 lit. for pennies.
120 Jeremiah 22. 29.
121 It seems clear that Argula von Grumbach learnt of them from Jerome’s prefaces to the biblical books, found in the German translations from the Vulgate, such as the Koberger edition, where Jerome mentions them in his introduction to the Song of Songs; it may be worth remembering that her much loved uncle was called Jerome (Hieronymus).
122 maister.
123 John 20. 15 ff.; John 4. 7 ff.

I do not flinch from appearing before you, from listening to you, from discussing with you. 124 For by the grace of God I, too, can ask questions, hear answers and read in German. There are, of course, German Bibles which Martin has not translated. You yourselves have one which was printed forty one years ago, when Luther’s was never even thought of.

If God had not ordained it, I might behave like the others, and write or say that he perverts (Scripture); that it is contrary to God’s will. Although I have yet to read anyone who is his equal in translating it into German. May God, who works all this in him, be his reward here in time and in eternity. And even if it came to pass — which God forbids — that Luther were to revoke his views, that would not worry me. I do not build on his, mine, or any person’s understanding, but on the true rock, Christ himself, which the builders have rejected. But he has been made the foundation stone, and the head of the corner, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3: ‘No other base can be laid, than that which is laid, which is Christ’. 125

God grant that I may speak with you in the presence of our three princes and of the whole community. 126 It is my desire to be instructed by everyone. Philosophy can avail nothing. As Paul says to the Colossians, chapter 2: ‘Be careful of philosophy and the lofty speech of those who are wise in the things of the world’. 127 And what does he say in 1 Corinthians 1: ‘God has

124 Again the Basel edition differs somewhat, being briefer, and perhaps, as Bezzel suggests, (Sendbrief, 171), sharper: ‘I am not ashamed to appear before you, and to speak with you gentlemen, for I too can ask questions and read in German’; one wonders, however, if the manuscript may have been simply misread by the printer here, for the reference to ‘gentlemen’ seems redundant, and ‘euch herren’ may have been substituted by mistake for ‘euch zu horen’.
125 1 Corinthians 3. 11.
126 ‘und ganztzen gemayn’.
127 Colossians 2. 8.
made human wisdom folly? In 1 Corinthians 3: 'All the wisdom of the world is folly to God.'128

Jurisprudence cannot harm me;129 for it avails nothing here; I can detect no divine theology in it. Therefore I have no fears for myself, as long as you wish to instruct me by writing, and not by violence, prison or the stake. Joel 2: 'Turn again; return to the Lord. For he is kind and merciful.'130 The Lord laments in the words of Jeremiah 2: 'They have forsaken me, the well of living water, and have dug out broken cisterns which cannot hold any water.'131

With Paul, 1 Corinthians 2, I say: 'I am not ashamed of the gospel which is the power of God to salvation to those who believe.'132 The Lord says, in Matthew 10: 'Should you be called forward do not worry about what you will say. It is not you who speak. In that same hour you will be given what you have to say. And the spirit of your Father will speak through you.'133

I have no Latin; but you have German, being born and brought up in this tongue. What I have written to you is no woman's chit-chat, but the word of God; and (I write) as a member of the Christian Church, against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail. Against the Roman, however, they do prevail. Just look at that church! How is it to prevail against the gates of Hell? God give us his grace, that we all may be saved, and may (God) rule us according to his will. Now may his grace carry the day. Amen.

128 1 Corinthians 1.20; 1 Corinthians 3.19.
129 'schat mir nit'.
130 Joel 2.12.
131 Jeremiah 2.13.
132 Romans 1.16 is meant.
133 Matthew 10.19.
The fifth Article
That no confidence should be placed in any work.

The sixth Article
That it is impossible for faith to remain without good fruit.

The seventh Article
Where Scripture says a reward is given because of one's works
one should understand that one is saved by faith.

The eighth Article
That those who presume to think they are justified by works
build on sand, not on the rock.

The ninth Article
That one should trust no one in the Church unless he convey
the certain word of God.

The tenth Article
That nothing should be taught or done in the Church unless
the Lord is known to have taught and commanded it.

The eleventh Article
That it is unseemly for a bishop to teach anything else than the
word of God.

The twelfth Article
Those who teach God's word are bishops.

The thirteenth Article
That a man who divorces his wife has the right to take another;
likewise the wife that has been divorced may marry another;
except for the guilty party in the dissolution of the first
marriage.

The fourteenth article
That one should not take an oath, except for the sake of God's
honour and one's neighbour's necessity.

The fifteenth article
That it is quite unseemly to take an oath for the sake of
temporal goods.

The sixteenth article
The law given by Moses demands more of human beings than
is possible.

The seventeenth article
The gospel of Christ is not spiritual, but literal, 134 contrary to
St Paul's teaching, who says in 2 Corinthians 3 that the letter
kills, but the spirit gives life; this means that the letter is the law
of Moses and the spirit the law of the gospel ....

THE ARTICLES REVOKED AND REPUDIATED BY THE SAID ARSACIUS
SEEHOFER:

I, Arsacus, citizen of Munich, Master of Arts, swear by the
holy Gospel that I hold in my hands and confess by this writing
which I have written with my own hand, and hereby read and
declare with my own mouth before you, Lord Rector and
Council and whole scholarly community of the renowned
University of Ingolstadt:
Although I have hitherto been suspected of the sacrilegious,
false and erroneous ideas of the Lutheran heresy, and of
committing various transgressions, 135 that I spread it in many

134 'nicht ein geyst sey / sonder buchstaben'.
135 beleck: blemishes.
ways, by teaching, writing and advocacy, and translated it into German to the best of my ability; and as a result landed up in the prison of the Lord Rector and Council of the above named university, to await due punishment (as by common law should be visited upon the advocates of heresies); however I was pardoned at the special command and gracious act of their eminences, the high born princes and lords, Lord Wilhelm and Lord Ludwig, being brothers and Counts Palatinate…, and this dread punishment was cancelled; provided that I now should humbly confess and revoke my errors.

Therefore I hereby confess that everything that I have read out from the writings of Philip Melanchthon in my lectures, and everything else which was spoken or written by me, and has just been read out by the notary of this university, is the most awful arch-heresy and knavery and that, in accordance with the prohibition of his Holiness the Pope, his Imperial Majesty and my most eminent and gracious lords, I will never again adhere to or make use of any of it; but – as is fitting for a pious Christian – will believe everything which has been set down and ordained by the holy Roman Christian Church and the holy Councils, and has been accepted by honourable Christian tradition, and will betake myself, body and soul, to the Ettal monastery, not to leave the same without being commanded so to do by our gracious Lords, so that I have no desire to read or spread Lutheran ideas. May God almighty help me…

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER GRACE AND PEACE

See, Christian reader, the deep blindness among the Ingolstadt theologians who not only force Christians to deny the pure word of God and the whole of Scripture, but also in the last article make a liar of St Paul, for they say that he understands by the letter the law of Moses and by the spirit the law of the gospel; although he himself, at just that point, says that God is Spirit, while the letter is the writing in books and the voice in human ears, whether it be law or gospel; the Spirit, however, is God working in our hearts so that we believe the word, that is, become alive, and thereafter grow and bring fruit. They know not what they say. They demonstrate to the whole world that they have yet to learn what the gospel is.

The peace of God be with you. Amen.

136 'ein recht ertzketzer / und buberey'.
137 'mich mit meinem selbs leyb / in das Closter Ectal stellen'.