

Henry Eyster Jacobs, ed.

# The Formula of Concord



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# The Formula of Concord

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# The Formula of Concord

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Philadelphia

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# Preface by Lutheran Librarian

"THE FORMULA OF CONCORD is the result of controversies within the Lutheran Church after the breach with the Papacy had become complete... It required more than a single generation for the Evangelical faith in all its power to penetrate the minds and lives of even its staunchest adherents; and when we recall the deplorable condition into which the Church had fallen, and the deep ignorance not only of the people, but also of the ministry, described in the introductions to the Catechisms, we cannot wonder at the subsequent internal struggles, when the controversy with the Papists absorbed less attention...

"Political intrigues added their elements of discord, and pressure was brought to bear upon the Church to shape her faith according to the desires of civil rulers for state alliances.

"Men of amiable temper or desponding hearts, were flattered or terrified into making concessions for the sake of peace, in which while they imagined they were yielding little, they were yielding everything... For when for the sake of peace men are willing to yield to Rome so far as not only to consent to the reintroduction of all the superstitious ceremonies of the Mass, but even to erase the word alone out of the doctrine of Justification by Faith, we should not be surprised at the readiness, when the pressure from the other extreme was strongest, with which similar concessions to the detriment of sound doctrine were not only proposed, but forced with violence upon the churches. — Henry Eyster Jacobs, from [“The Lutheran Confessions: A Brief Introduction”](#)

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In republishing the *Formula of Concord*, we seek to introduce this treasure of the Faith to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.



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HENRY EYSTER JACOBS (1844-1932) served as Professor of Systematic Theology and President of the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia. He was president of his church's board of foreign missions, and edited the *Lutheran Church Review*, the *Lutheran Commentary*, and the *Lutheran Cyclopedia*. He wrote and translated many books.

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# Preface To The Book of Concord

THE CHURCH'S CONFESSIONS OF FAITH are its authorized declarations on subjects concerning which its teaching has been misunderstood or misrepresented, or is liable to such misunderstanding and misrepresentation. They are not comprehensive systems of doctrine covering the entire sphere of divine revelation, but have arisen entirely from historical circumstances, where the teaching of the Church has become a matter of controversy. An exception to this statement may probably be found in Luther's Catechisms; and yet, while they were written for other than polemical purposes, they were offered as standards for the more popular presentation of the truths of the Christian religion at a crisis when both pastors and people needed especial guidance. In each Confession the topics treated, as well as the order, the extent, and the mode of treatment of each topic, are not ideal or determined by any effort to present an exhaustive and logical summary of the faith, as a whole, from the Holy Scriptures, but only to meet an historical need and to respond to a call for a particular emergency. Each Confession is in reality only a part of the one Confession of the faith, which the Church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is continually drawing from the Holy Scriptures and from communion with the Church's Lord.

The Holy Scriptures are the sole source and authority of the Church's teaching, and amply sufficient for all ordinary purposes of instruction; but when that which the Holy Scriptures teach is called into question, it is the Church's duty, in all ages, as a witness to the truth and set for its defense, to give clear and unmistakable testimony as to what is the meaning of God's Word on the subjects under discussion. All the authority of such testimonies depends upon their conformity with Holy Scripture. Confessions are authoritative, not because the Church has adopted them, but because of the Word of God which they are found to contain. "We accept the Unaltered Augs-

burg Confession, not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been derived from God's Word." (Formula of Concord.)

What the Church has once confessed, with respect to questions of more than merely temporary or local significance, becomes a part of her very life. If it be what the Confession declares that it is, the very truth of God's Word, expressed in terms so clear and unambiguous as to guard against all misunderstanding, the Church of the future cannot be indifferent to it, but cherishes it as a sacred trust ("the deposit," 1 Tim. 6:20), which is to be transmitted to posterity that later generations may be profited by the experience of their predecessors. Nevertheless, in so doing, the Church cannot restrict its testimony, as new circumstances arise, simply to that which, under entirely different circumstances, has been given at some particular crisis in the past. She is not so bound to the past as to be unable to define her faith in terms adapted to new conditions, but is "ready always to give answer to every one that asketh a reason" of her faith (1 Pet. 1:15). Accordingly, the Augsburg Confession very appropriately asserts the principle of Confessional development in its closing words:

"If anything further be desired, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures".

The simplest and briefest of all the Confessions, the Apostles' Creed, historical investigations show was the product of a gradual growth of four hundred years, as successive controversies furnished the occasion for additional articles. It was not primarily a liturgical formula, as it is with us today, but a clear and distinct utterance on various controverted points, without mentioning those who taught otherwise. A similar growth can be traced without difficulty in the Nicene Creed, where the Council of Nice marks only a particular stage in its formulation, but neither its beginning nor its completion. The Athanasian Creed is the ultimate fruit of centuries of controversy concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation, as the arena for theological discussion is passing from the East to the West.

Neither the structure nor the contents of the Augsburg Confession can be adequately interpreted without the study of the historical occasion for each article. Even where it is least polemical, an historical motive for each statement is present. The Apology is the author's own protest against perversions of the meaning and the attempts to answer the positions of the Augsburg Confession; in other words, it is the official interpretation of those who prepared and presented the Augustana.

When, some years later, after the conciliatory spirit that animates the Augsburg Confession had failed to make an impression on its opponents, Luther, in the Smalcald Articles, provided for the General Council that the Emperor had promised to call a statement of the issues involved in the controversies with Rome that was entirely up to date, while Melancthon supplemented it with an appendix on Church Power, that is the foundation of all Lutheran Church Polity.

The last of the Confessions, the Formula of Concord, after more than a generation had passed since the controversy with Rome was most acute, attempts to afford a common basis upon which Lutherans could stand, and thus end a period of confusion, division, and estrangement that had broken the Lutheran Church of Germany into fragments. Never was there a more careful and discriminating Church document written, guarding in each article against exaggerations on each side, and then, in most precise and definite words, setting forth the teaching from the Holy Scriptures on the subjects concerning which there had been misunderstanding and alienation of feeling. In it the Lutheran Church shows her fidelity in judging errors within, just as in the other great Confessions she had judged errors from without, her borders. To judge others without also judging our own selves (1 Cor. 11; 31) is to be fair and just neither to ourselves nor to others.

Upon the basis of all these Confessions the foundations of the Lutheran Church in America were laid. They were included not only in the Constitutions of many of the earlier congregations, but also in the first Constitution of the Mother Synod. With the entrance of a period when the importance of this confessional position was not recognized, there came into our history retarding and disorganizing forces that threatened the very existence of our

Church as it became anglicized, and that to the present day have greatly divided and confused it.

With a widespread and all but general return towards the confessional position of the Fathers, a period of new life and promise for our Church in America has begun. Upon the hearty acceptance of these Confessions in their historical sense, and their consistent application in the spirit of the Gospel to practice, the General Council, in common with others, offers a basis for the union of the entire Lutheran Church in America, The work in which she has so successfully cooperated in the preparation of a Common Service will not be complete until the agreement possible in such joint work is traced to a more thorough harmony in the faith than had been supposed, and its ultimate expression in agreement as to the terms of confessional statement.

But for the attainment of such end the Confessions must be readily accessible in the common language of the country, and should be found in the studies of all our pastors and in the homes and libraries of all our intelligent people. Even although our Church has never asked its laymen to subscribe to more than the Catechism, yet the importance of their acquaintance with all that, as members of Lutheran synods, they require their pastors to know and teach cannot be questioned.

Heretofore translations into English have been accessible only in expensive editions. The edition of which this is a revision was undertaken in 1882 by a retired clergyman, the Rev. G. W. Frederick, at great pecuniary risk. He spared no expense in providing for the work a most attractive form, and in enabling the editor to introduce any amount of matter, which he deemed of value for illustrating the history and teaching of the Confessions. That edition is not supplanted by this. It will continue to be published by the General Council's Publication Board for the use of scholars. In it will be found the history of each confession, and the various documents upon which they were based. But the popular edition, here offered, fulfills the hope of the editor from the very beginning, to have the Confessions published at such price that they may be scattered broadcast throughout all English-speaking lands, where there are confessors of the Lutheran faith – for Canada and Australia, for South Africa and India, for the West Indies and South Amer-

ica, as well as for the United States of America. Such edition will serve an important office in deepening and strengthening the faith of our people in drawing them together in the bonds of a common fellowship, and in enabling them to appreciate all the more highly their heritage. But beyond this, as the preceding edition was warmly welcomed by eminent representatives of other denominations because of much that they found in it encouraging them in their conflicts, so this edition will continue to a much wider circle than the Lutheran Church the testimony which our Fathers gave, and, while in many other religious bodies confessional lines have vanished and confessional obligations weakened, a standard is here raised around which millions in this western world will rally. The attentive reader, whatever may be his antecedents, will see that the matters here treated are not antiquated or obsolescent, but enter most deeply into the issues of the hour.

The translations included in this volume are those of the two volume edition, except that, for the translation of the Augsburg Confession, credited in that edition to Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth, but which is in reality a reprint of a sixteenth century English translation, published in "The Harmony of the Confessions" in 1586, we have substituted the translation officially approved by the General Council after its preparation by a joint committee of the various synodical bodies, mentioned in the note introducing it at the proper place (p. 32). With this exception, the plates are those of the larger edition. A number of minor changes, however, have been made, suggested by twenty-nine years' use of the translation in the study and the class-room, and by criticisms of which we have been informed.

We send forth this volume with gratitude for the privilege of having been called to edit it and its predecessor, and in the full confidence that it will be a blessing to our Church in America, and, through it, in advancing the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whose name these confessions were written.

HENRY EYSTER JACOBS.

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., February 27, 1911.

# Translation Notes

THE LARGE CATECHISM was translated for this work by Rev. A. Martin, Professor of the German Language and Literature in Pennsylvania College, to whom the Editor is greatly indebted for assistance and advice also in other directions. Some changes have, however, been made to conform it as nearly as possible to the plan of translation adopted in the rest of the volume.

The chief variations of the alternate language, officially received in our churches, from the original language of each Confession, is indicated in brackets, with the exception of the Apology, where they were found so numerous and extensive as to render it necessary to insert them frequently among the footnotes.

The Latin edition of Dr. Fredericus Franke, published by Tauchnitz, Leipsic, 1848, has not only been largely followed in indicating variations, but has also furnished most of the notes.

The paging of Muller's *Symbolischen Bücher* has been printed in the margin, so as to enable this translation to furnish all references to this most widely-received and highly-esteemed edition of the Confessions. As the St. Louis German edition, published in 1880 as a jubilee offering, adopts the same plan, this edition can be readily used also with it by observing the marginal numbers in each. The references in the footnotes conform to the marginal paging. [THESE NUMBERS ARE NOT PRESENT IN THIS EDITION.]

The second edition of the New Market translation (1854), for which our English churches owe so much to the energy and devotion of the brothers Revs. Ambrose and Socrates Henkel, as well as the Swedish edition, published under supervision of the Swedish-Augustana Synod, Chicago, 1878, have been frequently consulted, and have furnished material aid.

Additional matter, prepared as Introduction and Appendix to this work, but which has swollen to such an extent as to exceed the limits of this volume, will be published in the near future. The second volume will comprise a brief outline of the history of the Confessions; the documents from which Melancthon elaborated the Augsburg Confession; the non-Lutheran Confessions of Augsburg – the Tetrapolitan of the Reformed cities, Zwingli's *Ratio Fidei* and the Confutation of the Augsburg Confession by the Papists (so indispensable for an intelligent study of the Apology, which is its answer); the Variata in its two chief forms; the Official Appendix to the Book of Concord – viz. the Catalog of Testimonies; together with a minute index on the basis of the exhaustive index in Muller.

With all the care that has been taken, the Editor fully expects that errors that have escaped his notice will be occasionally detected. Had he waited until satisfied that his work would be all he could wish, it would never have appeared. All that he claims is that, with all the means at his command, he has made a sincere effort to supply a deeply felt want.

In the hope that it may stimulate a fresh interest in the priceless treasures that are the heritage of the Lutheran Church, and promote their more thorough study, and that it may bear also its part, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, in bringing to a clear understanding of the faith and uniting upon a firmly-grounded scriptural platform our perplexed and divided people, this new edition of the Confessions is, in God's name and for His glory, presented to the American public.

HENRY E. JACOBS

Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa., February 27, 1882.



# The Formula Of Concord

# Part First. Epitome

*Of the Articles in Controversy among the Theologians of the Augsburg Confession, Set forth and Reconciled in a Christian Way, according to God's Word, in the Following Recapitulation.*

## Introduction

*Of the comprehensive summary rule and standard according to which all dogmas should be judged, and the controversies that have occurred should, in a Christian way, be decided and set forth.*

Parallel Passages. Sol. Dec., 568; Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art ii:15.

- I. [517] We believe, teach and confess that the only rule and standard according to which at once all dogmas and teachers should be esteemed and judged are nothing else than the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament, as it is written (Ps. 119:105): "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." And St. Paul (Gal. 1:8): "Though an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed."

Other writings, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever reputation they may have, should not be regarded as of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures, but should altogether be subordinated to them, and should not be received other or further than as witnesses, in what man-

ner and at what places, since the time of the apostles, the [purer] doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved.

- II. And because directly after the times of the apostles, and even in their lives, false teachers and heretics arose, and against them, in the early Church, symbols, i. e. brief, plain confessions, were composed, which were regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith, and confession of the orthodox and true Church, namely, THE APOSTLES' CREED, THE NICENE CREED \_\_, AND \_\_ THE ATHANASIAN CREED; we confess them as binding upon us, and hereby reject all heresies and dogmas which, contrary to them, have been introduced into the Church of God.
- III. [518] Moreover as to the schism in matters of faith which has occurred in our time, we regard the unanimous consensus and declaration of our Christian faith and confession, especially against the Papacy and its false<sup>1</sup> worship, idolatry, superstition, and against other sects, as the symbol of our time, viz. THE FIRST UNALTERED AUGSBURG CONFES-  
SION \_\_, DELIVERED TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. AT AUGSBURG IN THE YEAR 1530, IN THE GREAT DIET, TOGETHER WITH ITS \_\_ APOLOGY, and the Articles composed at Smalcald in the year 1537, and subscribed by the chief theologians of that time.

And because such matters pertain also to the laity and the salvation of their souls, we confessionally acknowledge the SMALL AND LARGE CATECHISMS of Dr. Luther, as they are included in Luther's works, as the Bible of the laity, wherein everything is comprised which is treated at greater length in Holy Scripture, and is necessary that a Christian man know for his salvation.

In accordance with this direction, as above announced, all doctrines should be adjusted, and that which is contrary thereto should be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith.

In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved, and the Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard, according

to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas should and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they be good or evil, right or wrong.

But the other symbols and writings cited are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a witness<sup>2</sup> and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those who then lived, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned [by what arguments the dogmas conflicting with the Holy Scripture were rejected and condemned].

## **Chapter I. Of Original Sin**

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, Art. ii.; Apology, Art. ii Smalcald Articles, Part. III., Art. i.; Sol. Dec. 573 sqq.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

[519] Whether Original Sin be properly and without any distinction man's corrupt nature, substance and essence, or indeed the principal and best part of his essence [substance], namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers? Or whether, even since the fall, there be a distinction between man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and Original Sin, so that the nature is one thing, and Original Sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, is another?

### **Affirmative**

**The pure doctrine, faith and confession according to the above standard and comprehensive declaration:**

1. We believe, teach and confess that there is a distinction between man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God, pure and holy, and without sin, but also as we have it [that nature] now, since the fall, namely, between the nature itself, which ever since the fall is and remains a creature of God, and Original Sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.

2. We believe, teach and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because the dogma that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin conflicts with the chief articles of our Christian faith, concerning Creation, Redemption, Sanctification and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.

For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the fall, but also our bodies and souls since the fall, notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as his work, as it is written (Job 10; 8): “Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about.” Deut. 32:18; Isa. 45:9 sqq.; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Job 10:8; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Eccl. 12:1.

[520] This human nature, nevertheless without sin, and, therefore, not of other’s but our own flesh, the Son of God has assumed into the unity of his person, and according to it become our true brother. Heb. 2:14: “Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same.” Again, v. 16; 4:15: “He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren,” “yet without sin.” Therefore Christ has redeemed it, as his work, sanctifies it as his work, raises it from the dead and gloriously adorns it as his work. But Original Sin he has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; he also will not raise it, or with the elect adorn or save it, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the; corruption which infects the nature, and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.

3. But, on the other hand, we believe, teach and confess that Original Sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature, that nothing healthy or uncorrupt in man’s body or soul, in inner or outward powers, remains, but, as the Church sings:

“Through Adam’s fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human.”

This unspeakable injury cannot be discerned by the reason, but only from God's Word.<sup>3</sup> And [we affirm] that the nature and this corruption of nature no one but God alone can ever separate from one another; and yet this fully comes to pass, through death, in the resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally, without original sin, and separated and sundered from it, as it is written (Job 19:26): "I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold."

## Negative

Rejection of the false opposite dogmas.

1. Therefore we reject and condemn the dogma that Original Sin is only a *reatus* or debt, on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature.<sup>4</sup>
2. [521] Also that evil lusts are not sin, but concreated, essential properties of the nature, as though the above-mentioned defect and evil were not true sin, because of which man without Christ [not ingrafted into Christ] is to be a child of wrath.<sup>5</sup>
3. We likewise reject the error of the Pelagians, by which it is alleged that man's nature, even since the fall, is incorrupt, and, especially with respect to spiritual things, *in naturalibus*, i. e. in its natural powers, it has remained entirely good and pure.<sup>6</sup>
4. Also that Original Sin is only external, a slight, insignificant spot, sprinkle, or stain dashed upon the nature, beneath which [nevertheless] the nature has retained its powers unimpaired even in spiritual things.<sup>7</sup>
5. Also that Original Sin is only an external impediment to unimpaired spiritual powers, and not a despoliation or want of the same, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice its natural power is not thereby removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily washed away, as a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.<sup>8</sup>

6. Also, that in man the human nature and essence are not entirely corrupt, but that man still has something good in him, even in spiritual things, namely, piety, skill, aptness or ability in spiritual things to begin to work, or to co-work for something [good].<sup>9</sup>
7. On the other hand, we also reject the false dogma of the Manichaeans, when it is taught that Original Sin, as something essential and self-subsisting, has been infused by Satan into the nature, and intermingled with it, as poison and wine are mixed.
8. Also that not the natural man, but something else and extraneous to man, sins, and, on this account, not the nature, but only Original Sin in the nature, is accused.<sup>10</sup>
9. [522] We reject and condemn also as a Manichaean error the doctrine that Original Sin is properly, and without any distinction, the substance, nature and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that no distinction between the corrupt nature, considered by itself, since the fall, and Original Sin, can be conceived of, nor can they be distinguished from one another even in thought.<sup>11</sup>
10. Moreover this Original Sin is called by Dr. Luther natural sin, personal sin, essential sin (*Natursünde, Personsünde, Wesentlichle Sünde*); not that the nature, person or essence of the man is, without any distinction, itself Original Sin, but that, by such words, the distinction might be indicated between Original Sin which inheres in human nature, and other sins which are called actual sins.
11. For Original Sin is not a sin which is committed, but it inheres in the nature, substance and essence of man, so that though no wicked thought ever should arise in the heart of corrupt man, nor idle word be spoken, nor wicked deed be done, yet the nature is nevertheless corrupt through Original Sin, which is born in us by reason of the sinful seed, and is a fountain-head of all other actual sins, as wicked thoughts, words and works, as it is written (Matt. 15:19): “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.” Also (Gen. 6:5; 8:21): “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.”

12. Thus it is also well to note the diverse signification of the word “nature,” whereby the Manichaeans cover their error and lead astray many simple men. For sometimes it means the essence [the very substance] of man, as when it is said: God created human nature. But at other times it means the disposition and the vicious quality [disposition, condition, defect or vice] of a thing, which inheres in the nature or essence, as when it is said: The nature of the serpent is to bite, and the nature and disposition of man is to sin, and is sin; here the word nature does not mean the substance of man, but something that inheres in the nature or substance.

13. [523] But as to the Latin terms “substance” and “accident,” because they are not words of Holy Scripture, and besides unknown to the ordinary man, they should not be used in sermons before ordinary, uninstructed people, but simple people should be excused from this [in this matter regard should rightly be had to the simple and uneducated]. But in the schools, among the learned, these words are rightly retained in disputations concerning Original Sin, because they are well known and used without any misunderstanding, to distinguish exactly between the essence of a thing and what is attached to it in an accidental way.

For the distinction between God’s work and that of the devil is thereby designated in the clearest way, because the devil can create no substance, but can only, in an accidental way, from God’s decree [God permitting] corrupt a substance created by God.

## **Chapter II. Of the Free Will**

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, xviii.; Apology, xviii.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. i.; Sol. Dec., ii.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

Since the will of man is found in four dissimilar states, namely: 1. Before the fall; 2. Since the fall; 3. After regeneration; 4. After resurrection of the body, the chief question is only concerning the will and ability of man in the second state, namely, what powers, in spiritual things, he has, from himself, since the fall of our first parents, and before regeneration, and whether, from his own powers, before he has been born again by God’s Spirit, he be



able to dispose and prepare himself for God's grace, and to accept [and apprehend] or not, the grace offered through the Holy Ghost in the Word and holy [divinely-instituted] sacraments.

## **Affirmative**

The pure doctrine concerning this article according to God's Word.

1. Concerning this subject, our doctrine, faith and confession is, that, in spiritual things, the understanding and reason of man are [altogether] blind, and, from their own powers, understand nothing, as it is written (1 Cor. 2:14): "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because he is examined concerning spiritual things."
2. [524] Likewise we believe, teach and confess that the will of unregenerate man is not only turned away from God, but also has become an enemy of God, so that it has inclination and desire for that which is evil and contrary to God, as it is written (Gen. 8:21): "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Also (Rom. 8:7): "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." Yea, as unable as a dead body is to quicken and restore itself to bodily, earthly life, just so unable is man, who by sin is spiritually dead, to raise himself to spiritual life, as it is written (Eph. 2:5): "Even when we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ;" (2 Cor. 3:5): "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything good, as of ourselves, but that we are sufficient is of God."
3. Yet God the Holy Ghost effects conversion, not without means; but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word,<sup>12</sup> as it is written (Rom. 1:16): "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Also (Rom. 10:17): "Faith cometh by hearing of the Word of God." And it is God's will that his Word should be heard, and that man's ears should not be closed.<sup>13</sup> With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia, in Acts 16, are attentive to it, and are thus converted through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose work alone the conversion of

man is. For, without his grace, and if he do not grant the increase, our willing and running, our planting, sowing and watering, all are nothing, as Christ says (John 15:5): “Without me, ye can do nothing.” In these short words he denies to the free will all power, and ascribes everything to God’s grace, in order that no one may boast before God: 1 Cor. 1:29 [2 Cor. 12:5; Jer. 9:23].

## Negative

**Contrary false doctrine.**

We therefore reject and condemn all the following errors, as contrary to the standard of God’s Word:

1. [525] The host [insane dogma] of philosophers who are called Stoics, as also of the Manichaeans, who taught that everything that happens must have happened so, and could not have happened otherwise, and that everything that man does, even in outward things, he does by necessity, and that he is coerced to evil works and deeds, as in chastity, robbery, murder, theft and the like.<sup>14</sup>
2. We reject also the gross error of the Pelagians, who taught that man by his own powers, without the grace of the Holy Ghost, can turn himself to God, believe the Gospel, be obedient in heart to God’s Law, and thus merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
3. We reject also the error of the Semi-Pelagians,<sup>15</sup> who teach that man, by his own powers, can make a beginning of his conversion, but without the grace of the Holy Ghost cannot complete it.
4. Also when it is taught<sup>16</sup> that, although man by his free will before regeneration, is too weak to make a beginning, and, by his own powers, to turn himself to God, and in heart to be obedient to God; yet, if the Holy Ghost, by the preaching of the Word, have made a beginning, and offered therein his grace, then the will of man, from its own natural powers, to a certain extent, although feebly, can add, help and co-operate therewith,<sup>17</sup> can qualify and prepare itself for grace,<sup>18</sup> and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel.

5. Also that man, after he has been born again, can perfectly observe and completely fulfill God's Law, and that this fulfilling is our righteousness before God, by which we merit eternal life.<sup>19</sup>
6. Also that we condemn the error of the Enthusiasts, who imagine that God, without means, without the hearing of God's Word, also without the use of the holy sacraments, draws men to himself, and enlightens, justifies and saves them.<sup>20</sup>

[Note: Enthusiasts are those who expect the illumination of the Spirit [celestial revelation] without the preaching of God's Word. -ed]

7. Also that in conversion and regeneration God entirely exterminates the substance and essence of the old Adam, and especially the rational soul, and, in this conversion and regeneration, creates a new soul out of nothing.<sup>21</sup>
8. [526] Also, when the following expressions are employed without explanation, viz. that the will of man, before, in, and after conversion, resists the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him intentionally and persistently; "for," as Augustine says, "in conversion God changes the unwilling into willing, and dwells in the willing."

As to the expressions of ancient and modern church teachers, when it is said: *Deus trahit, sed volentem trahit*, i. e. "God draws, but he draws the willing," and *Hominis voluntas in conversione non est otiosa sed agit aliquid*, i. e. "In conversion the will of man is not idle, but effects something,"<sup>22</sup> we maintain that, inasmuch as these expressions have been introduced for confirming the false opinion concerning the powers of the natural free will in man's conversion, against the doctrine concerning God's grace, they are not in harmony with the form of sound doctrine, and therefore, when we speak of conversion to God, should be avoided.

But, on the other hand, it is correctly said that, in conversion God, through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men, and that after such conversion, in the daily exer-

cise of repentance, the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also co-operates in all the deeds of the Holy Ghost, which he works through us.

9. Also what Dr. Luther has written, viz. that man's will is in his conversion purely passive,<sup>23</sup> i. e. it does nothing whatever, is to be understood in respect of divine grace in kindling new motions, i. e. when God's Spirit, through the heard Word or the use of the holy sacrament, lays hold upon man's will, and works [in man] the new birth and conversion. For if [after] the Holy Ghost has wrought and accomplished this, and man's will has been changed and renewed alone by his divine power and working, then the new will of man is an instrument and organ of God the Holy Ghost, so that he not only accepts grace, but also, in the works which follow, co-operates with the Holy Ghost.

[527] Therefore, before the conversion of man, there are only two efficient causes,<sup>24</sup> namely, the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, as the instrument of the Holy Ghost, whereby he works conversion. To this Word man ought to listen, nevertheless it is not from his own powers, but only through the grace and working of the Holy Ghost, that he can believe and accept it.

### **Chapter III. Of the Righteousness of Faith before God**

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, iv., vi., xii., xx.; Apology Chap. ii.; Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art. i.; Part III., Art. xiii.; Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec, iii.

#### **Statement of the Controversy**

Since it is unanimously confessed in our churches, upon the authority of God's Word and according to the sense of the Augsburg Confession, that we poor sinners are justified before God, and saved alone by faith in Christ, and thus Christ alone is our righteousness, who is true God and man, because in him the divine and human natures are personally united with one another (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21), the question has arisen: "According to which nature is Christ our righteousness?" and thus two contrary errors have arisen in some churches.

For the one side<sup>25</sup> has held that Christ alone, according to his divinity, is our righteousness, if he dwell in us by faith; contrasted with which divinity, dwelling in men by faith, all the sins of men should be regarded as a drop of water to the great ocean. On the contrary, others<sup>26</sup> have held that Christ is our righteousness before God, alone according to the human nature.

### **Affirmative**

#### *Pure Doctrine of the Christian Churches against both errors just mentioned.*

1. [528] Against both the errors just recounted, we unanimously believe, teach and confess that Christ is our righteousness, neither according to the divine nature alone, nor according to the human nature alone, but the entire Christ according to both natures, alone in his obedience, which as God and man he rendered the Father even to death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: “As by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).
2. Therefore we believe, teach and confess that our righteousness before God is, that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit or worthiness of ours preceding, attending or following, for he presents and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ’s obedience, on account of which righteousness we are received into grace by God, and regarded righteous.
3. We believe, teach and confess that faith alone is the means and instrument whereby we lay hold of Christ, and thus in Christ of that righteousness which avails before God, for the sake of which this faith is imputed to us for righteousness (Rom. 4:5).
4. We believe, teach and confess that this faith is not a bare knowledge of the history of Christ, but such a great gift of God that thereby we come

to the right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in him that alone for the sake of his obedience, out of grace, we have the forgiveness of sins, and are regarded holy and righteous before God the Father, and eternally saved.

5. We believe, teach and confess that, according to the usage of Holy Scripture, the word justify means in this article, “to absolve,” that is, to declare free from sins. Prov. 17:15: “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are abomination to the Lord.” Also (Rom. 8:33): “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”

And when in place of this, the words regeneration and vivification are employed, as in the Apology,<sup>27</sup> this is done in the same sense; for by these terms, in other places, the renewal of man is understood, and [which] is distinguished from justification by faith.

6. [529] We believe, teach and confess also that although many weaknesses and defects cling to the rightly believing and truly regenerate, even to the grave, yet they have reason to doubt neither of the righteousness which is imputed to them by faith, nor of the salvation of their souls, but should regard it certain that for Christ’s sake, according to the promise and [immovable] Word of the holy Gospel, they have a gracious God.
7. We believe, teach and confess that, for the maintenance of the pure doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith before God, it is necessary that the exclusive particles, i. e., the following words of the holy apostle Paul, whereby the merit of Christ is entirely separated from our works, and the honor given to Christ alone, be retained with especial care, as when the holy apostle Paul writes: “Of grace,” “without merit,” “without law,” “without works,” “not of works.” All these words, taken together, mean that “we are justified and saved alone by faith in Christ” (Eph. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; 3:24; 4:3 sqq.; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 11).
8. We believe, teach and confess that although the contrition that precedes, and the good works that follow, do not belong to the article of

justification before God, yet such a faith should not be imagined as can coexist with a wicked intention to sin and to act against conscience. But after man is justified by faith, then a true living faith worketh by love (Gal. 5:6). Thus good works always follow justifying faith, and are surely found with it, if it be true and living; for it never is alone, but always has with it love and hope.

## **Antithesis or Negative**

### **Contrary Doctrine Rejected.**

Therefore we reject and condemn all the following errors:

1. That Christ is our righteousness alone according to his divine nature.<sup>28</sup>
2. That Christ is our righteousness alone according to his human nature.<sup>29</sup>
3. That in the expressions of the prophets and apostles, when the righteousness of faith is spoken of, the words “justify” and “be justified” do not signify to declare or be declared free from sins, and obtain the forgiveness of sins, but actually to be made righteous before God, because of love infused by the Holy Ghost, virtues and the works following them.<sup>30</sup>
4. [530] That faith looks not only to the obedience of Christ, but to his divine nature, as it dwells and works in us, and that by this indwelling our sins are covered.<sup>31</sup>
5. That faith is such a trust in the obedience of Christ as can exist and remain in a man who has no genuine repentance, in whom also no love follows, but he persists in sins against conscience.<sup>32</sup>
6. That not God himself, but only the gifts of God, dwell in the believer.<sup>33</sup>
7. That faith saves, on this account, viz. because by faith the renewal, which consists in love to God and one’s neighbor, is begun in us.<sup>34</sup>
8. That faith has the first place in justification, although also renewal and love belong to our righteousness before God, in such a manner that

they [renewal and love] are not the chief cause of our righteousness, but, nevertheless, our righteousness before God is, without this love and renewal, not entire or complete.

9. That believers are justified before God, and saved partly by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and by the beginning of new obedience, or in part by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but in part also by the beginning of new obedience.
10. That the promise of grace is imputed to us by faith in the heart, and by the confession which is made with the mouth, and by other virtues.
11. That faith without good works does not justify, and therefore that good works are necessarily required for righteousness, and without their presence man cannot be justified.

## Chapter IV. Of Good Works

Parallel Passages. Augsburg Confession, vi., xx.; Apology (III.); xx.: Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xiii.; Cf. Art. ii.; Formula of Concord, Sol Dec, iv.

### Statement of the Controversy

Concerning the doctrine of good works two divisions have arisen in some churches:

1. [531] First, some theologians have differed with reference to the following expressions, where the one side wrote:<sup>35</sup> "Good works are necessary for salvation." "It is impossible to be saved without good works." Also: "No one has ever been saved without good works." But the other side,<sup>36</sup> on the contrary, wrote: "Good works are injurious to salvation."
2. Afterwards a schism arose also between some theologians with respect to the two words, "necessary" and "free," since the one side<sup>37</sup> contended that the word "necessary" should not be employed concerning the new obedience, which does not proceed from necessity and coercion, but from the free will. The other side has retained the word "nec-



essary,” because this obedience is not at our option, but regenerate men are bound to render this obedience.

From this disputation concerning the terms a controversy concerning the subject itself afterwards occurred. For the one side contended that among Christians the law should not at all be urged,<sup>38</sup> but men should be exhorted to good works alone from the Holy Gospel. The other side contradicted this.

## **Affirmative**

**Pure Doctrine of the Christian Churches concerning this Controversy.**

For the thorough statement and decision of this controversy, our doctrine, faith and confession is:

1. That good works certainly and without doubt follow true faith, if it be not a dead, but a living faith, as the fruit of a good tree.
2. We believe, teach and confess also that good works should be entirely excluded, as well when the question at issue is concerning salvation, as in the article of justification before God,<sup>39</sup> the apostle testifies with clear words, where it is written: “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, .... Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,” etc. (Rom. 4:6 sqq.). And elsewhere: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).
3. [532] We believe, teach and confess also that all men, but those especially who are born again and renewed by the Holy Ghost, are bound to do good works.
4. In this sense the words “necessary,” “should” and “must” are employed correctly and in a Christian manner, also with respect to the regenerate, and in no way are contrary to the form and language of sound words.

5. Nevertheless by the words mentioned, “necessity” and “necessary,” if they be employed concerning the regenerate, not coercion, but only due obedience is understood, which the truly believing, so far as they are regenerate, render not from coercion or the impulse of the Law, but from the free will; because they are no more under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14; 7:6; 8:14).
6. Therefore we also believe, teach and confess that when it is said: The regenerate do good works from the free will; this should not be understood as though it were at the option of the regenerate man to do or to forbear doing good when he wished, and nevertheless could retain faith when he intentionally persevered in sins.
7. Yet this should not be understood otherwise than as the Lord Christ and his apostles themselves declare, namely, that the liberated spirit does not do this from fear of punishment, as a slave, but from love of righteousness, as children (Rom. 8:15).
8. Although this free will in the elect children of God is not complete, but is burdened with great weakness, as St. Paul complains concerning himself (Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:17).
9. Nevertheless, for the sake of the Lord Christ, the Lord does not impute this weakness to his elect, as it is written: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).
10. We believe, teach and confess also, that not works,<sup>40</sup> but alone the Spirit of God, through faith, maintains faith and salvation in us, of whose presence and indwelling good works are evidences.<sup>41</sup>

## **Negative**

### **False Contrary Doctrine**

1. [533] We reject and condemn the following modes of speaking, viz. when it is taught and written that good works are necessary to salvation. Also, that no one ever has been saved without good works. Also, that it is impossible without good works to be saved.

2. We reject and condemn the unqualified expression: Good works are injurious to salvation,<sup>42</sup> as offensive and detrimental to Christian discipline.

For, especially in these last times, it is no less needful to admonish men to Christian discipline [to the way of living aright and godly] and good works, and instruct them how necessary it is that they exercise themselves in good works as a declaration of their faith and gratitude to God, than that the works be not mingled in the article of justification; because men may be damned by an epicurean delusion concerning faith,<sup>43</sup> as well as by Papistic and Pharisaic confidence in their own works and merits.

3. We also reject and condemn the dogma that faith and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost are not lost by willful sin, but that the saints and elect retain the Holy Ghost, even though they fall into adultery and other sins, and persist therein.<sup>44</sup>

## **Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel**

### **Statement of the Controversy**

Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel be properly not only a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, but also a preaching of repentance<sup>45</sup> and censure, rebuking unbelief, which is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.

### **Affirmative**

**Pure Doctrine of God's Word.**

**Parallel Passages.** Apology, iv., 5 sqq.; 62 sqq.; (III.), 65 sqq.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. ii., iv.; Sol. Dec, v.

1. [534] We believe, teach and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church as an especially brilliant light, whereby, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God may be rightly divided.

2. We believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, which teaches what is right and pleasing to God, and reprove everything that is sin and contrary to God's will.
3. Therefore everything that reprove sin is and belongs to the preaching of the Law.
4. But the Gospel is properly such a doctrine as teaches what man who has not observed the Law, and therefore is condemned by it, should believe, viz. that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and, without any merit of theirs [no merit of the sinner intervening], has obtained and acquired forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.
5. But since the term Gospel is not used in one and the same sense in the Holy Scriptures, on account of which this dissension originally arose, we believe, teach and confess that if by the term Gospel the entire doctrine of Christ be understood, which he proposed in his ministry, as also did his apostles (in which sense it is employed, Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21), it is correctly said and written that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and of the forgiveness of sins.
6. But if the Law and the Gospel be contrasted with one another, as Moses himself is called a teacher of the Law, and Christ a preacher of the Gospel, we believe, teach and confess that the Gospel is not a preaching of repentance or reproof, but properly nothing else than a preaching of consolation, and a joyful message which does not reprove or terrify, but against the terrors of the Law consoles consciences, points alone to the merit of Christ, and again comforts them by the precious preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.
7. [535] As to the revelation of sin, because the veil of Moses hangs before the eyes of all men as long as they hear the bare preaching of the Law, and nothing concerning Christ, and therefore do not learn from the Law to perceive their sins aright, but either become presumptuous hypocrites [who swell with the opinion of their own righteousness] as the Pharisees, or despair as did Judas; Christ takes the Law into his

hands, and explains it spiritually (Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14). And thus the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all sinners (Rom. 1:18), how great it is; by this means are instructed in the Law, and then from it first learn to know aright their sins — a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them.

Therefore, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God,<sup>46</sup> is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are for the first time led aright to the Law, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in his Law requires of us, nothing of which we can observe, and therefore should seek all our righteousness in Christ —

8. Yet as long as all this (namely, Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still not properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a "strange work"<sup>47</sup> of Christ, whereby he attains his proper office, i. e. to preach grace, console and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel.

## Negative

Contrary Doctrine which is Rejected.

1. Therefore we reject and regard incorrect and injurious the dogma that the Gospel is properly a preaching of repentance or reproof, and not alone a preaching of grace.<sup>48</sup> For thereby the Gospel is again converted into a law, the merit of Christ and the Holy Scriptures obscured, Christians robbed of true consolation, and the door opened again to [the errors and superstitions of] the Papacy.

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1. Cf. Preface to Book of Concord, § 3.↩

2. Cf. § 2.↩

3. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. i., § 3.↩

4. This error is ascribed especially to Albertus Pighius. Köllner's Symbolik of Catholic Church, 285, 290.↵
5. Taught by Pelagians, both ancient and modern; cf. Council of Trent, Sess. V. (p. 6 Tauchnitz edition).↵
6. Almost the very words of Vict. Strigel in the disputation with Flacius at Weimar in 1560. Cf. Carpzov, 1179.↵
7. Almost the general opinion of the Scholastics; for they contended that since the fall men were destitute only of the *donum supernaturale*, Cf Kollner, p. 284.↵
8. Ascribed to D'Andrada, a Romish opponent of Chemnitz, who thus wrote in his *Defensio Trid. fidei Cathol.*, lib. v., p. 451 sqq.↵
9. Also taught by Strigel in his declaration, written 1562.↵
10. Ascribed by Augustine to the Manichaeans. Cf. Sol. Dec. ↵
11. The doctrine of Flacius and his adherents.↵
12. Cf. Augsburg Confession, v.: 4.↵
13. Ps. 95 . 7, 8; Heb. 3:7. Apology, xiii., 13; xxiv., 70; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii.,§ 3 sqq.; Sol. Dec., 597.↵
14. Of the Stoics, Chrysippus especially taught this doctrine of necessity. Cf. *Cicero de fato*, c. 17 sq. The Manichaeans are erroneously said to have denied all moral liberty. See Epistle of Secundus the Manichaean to Augustine, § 2.↵
15. Massilians.↵
16. By Synergists. Cf. Sol. Dec. ↵
17. Asserted by Strigel in Weimar Disputation.↵

18. Formula of Erasmus, employed by Melanchthon in *Loci Theol.* Ed. 1548.↩
19. Doctrine of Papists and monks (of. *Sol. Dec.* ii.: 79); also of Schwenkfeldians, *Sol. Dec.*, xii.: 33.↩
20. The error of the Anabaptists and Schwenkfeldians. Cf. Augsburg Confession, Art. V.: 4; Formula of Concord, Ep. xii.: 22 sqq.; *Sol. Dec.*, xii.: 30 sqq.↩
21. Error of the Flacians.↩
22. Expressions of Chrysostom, the Scholastics and Melanchthon.↩
23. Cf. *Sol. Dec.*, ii.: 89.↩
24. Melanchthon had added a third cause: “A will assenting to and not resisting God’s Word.” See *Examen Ordinandorum*, p. 36 (edition of 1556) Cf. *Sol. Dec.*, ii.: 90.↩
25. Andrew Osiander († 1554) and his followers.↩
26. Francis Stancar († 1574) and his followers.↩
27. Art. iv.: 65 sq.; xii.: 46.↩
28. Error of Osiander.↩
29. Error of Stancar, following Peter Lombard.↩
30. Error of Osiander; also of the Papists. Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. vi.. Cap. 10.↩
31. Error of Osiander.↩
32. Osiander charged the Lutherans with this error. It is that of the Antinomians. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. iii., § 42 sqq.↩

33. Perhaps taught by Stancar, who, according to Planck, iv.: 467 sq., taught that the Holy Ghost is sent not according to his essence, but according to his effect, operation and manifestation.↵
34. Errors 6-11 were taught by George Major († 1574).↵
35. George Major, Justus Menius and others, based on expressions of Melancthon. See Frank's Theology of the Formula of Concord, ii.: 149 sqq.↵
36. Nicolaus Amsdorf († 1565).↵
37. Antinomians. Cf. Epitome, vi.↵
38. Opinion of John Agricola († 1666).↵
39. Major had made a distinction between eternal salvation and justification.↵
40. Major and Menius to the contrary.↵
41. Cf. Apology (III.): 63.↵
42. Amsdorf.↵
43. Cf. SoL Dec, iv.: 87.↵
44. Antinomians (see above, iii.: 17).↵
45. Insisted on by Agricola. Cf. Apology (III.): 66; xii.: 29.↵
46. Agricola maintained that this was sufficient for exciting repentance.↵
47. Cf. Sol. Dec, in loco.↵
48. Ascribed not only to Agricola, but to Anton, Otto, Paul Crell and Christopher Pezel.↵



## Chapter VI. Of the Third Use of the Law

Parallel Passages. Sol. Dec, vi.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art, iii.: 40; Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec, ii: 65 sqq.

### Statement of the Controversy

[536] Since the Law was given to men for three reasons: *first*, that thereby outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient men [and that wild and intractable men might be restrained, as though by certain bars]; *secondly*, that men thereby may be led to the knowledge of their sins; *thirdly*, that after they are regenerate and [much of] the flesh notwithstanding cleaves to them, they may have, on this account, a fixed rule, according to which they should regulate and direct their whole life; a dissension has occurred between some few theologians, concerning the third use of the Law, viz. whether it is to be urged or not upon regenerate Christians. The one side has said, Yea;<sup>1</sup> the other, Nay.<sup>2</sup>

### Affirmative

The true Christian Doctrine Concerning this Controversy.

1. We believe, teach and confess that although men rightly believing [in Christ] and truly converted to God have been freed and exempted from the curse and coercion of the Law, they nevertheless are not on this account without Law, but have been redeemed by the Son of God, in order that they should exercise themselves in it day and night [that they should meditate upon God's Law day and night, and constantly exercise themselves in its observance (Ps. 1:2)], (Ps. 119). For even our first parents before the fall did not live without Law, which Law of God was also written upon their hearts, because they were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26 sq.; 2:16 sqq.; 3:3).
2. We believe, teach and confess that the preaching of the Law is to be urged with diligence, not only upon the unbelieving and impenitent, but also upon the rightly believing, truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.

3. [537] For although they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, yet, in the present life, this regeneration and renewal are not complete, but are only begun, and believers are, in the spirit of their mind, in a constant struggle against the flesh, i. e, against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death. On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, will and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine upon the way before him, in order that he may do nothing from self-imposed human devotion [that he may frame nothing in a matter of religion from the desire of private devotion, and may not choose divine services not instituted by God's Word]; likewise, that the old Adam also may not employ his own will, but may be subdued against his will, not only by the admonition and threatening of the Law, but also by punishments and blows, so that he may follow and surrender himself captive to the Spirit (1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 6:12; Gal. 6:14; Ps. 119:1 sqq.; Heb. 13:21 [Heb. 12:1]).
4. Then as to the distinction between the works of the Law and the fruits of the Spirit, we believe, teach and confess that the works which are done according to the Law, as long as they are and are called works of the Law, are only extorted from man by the force of punishment and the threatening of God's wrath.
5. But the fruits of the Spirit are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and are done by believers so far as they are regenerate [spontaneously and freely], as though they knew of no command, threat or reward; for in this manner the children of God live in the Law and walk according to the Law of God, a manner which St. Paul, in his Epistles, calls the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind [Rom. 7:25; 8:7 (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 6:2)].
6. Thus the Law is and remains both to the penitent and impenitent, both to regenerate and unregenerate men, one and the same Law, namely, the immutable will of God; and the distinction, so far as it concerns obedience, is alone in the men, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does what is required him by the Law out of constraint and unwillingly (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the be-

liever, so far as he is regenerate, without constraint and with a willing spirit, does that which no threatening [however severe] of the Law could ever extort from him.

## **Negative**

### **False Contrary Doctrine.**

[538] Therefore we reject as a dogma and error injurious and conflicting with Christian discipline and true piety that the Law in the above-mentioned way and degree should not be urged upon Christians and those truly believing, but only upon unbelievers and those not Christian, and upon the impenitent.

## **Chapter VII. Of the Lord's Supper**

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, x.; Apology, x.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. vi.; Small Catechism, 365; Large Catechism, 499; Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec. vii.

Although the Zwinglian teachers are not to be reckoned among the theologians who acknowledge and profess the Augsburg Confession, as they separated from them when this Confession was presented,<sup>3</sup> nevertheless since they are intruding themselves [with their assembly], and are attempting, under the name of this Christian Confession, to introduce their error,<sup>4</sup> we have wished also to make such a report as is needful [we have judged that the Church of Christ should be instructed also] concerning this controversy.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

Chief Controversy between our Doctrine and that of the Sacramentarians upon this article.

Whether in the Holy Supper the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly and essentially present, are distributed with the bread and wine, and received with the mouth by all those who use this sacrament, whether they be worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving; by the believing, for consolation and life; by the unbelieving, for judgment [so that the believing receive from the Lord's Supper consolation

and life, but the unbelieving take it for their judgment]? The Sacramentarians say, No; we say, Yea.

[539] For the explanation of this controversy it is to be noted in the beginning that there are two kinds of Sacramentarians. Some are gross Sacramentarians, who declare in clear [deutschen] words what they believe in their hearts, viz. that in the Holy Supper nothing but bread and wine is present, and distributed and received with the mouth.<sup>5</sup> Others, however, are subtle Sacramentarians, and the most injurious of all, who partly speak very speciously in our own words, and assert that they also believe in a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, yet that this occurs spiritually through faith.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless beneath these specious words, precisely the former gross opinion is contained, viz. that in the Holy Supper nothing is present and received with the mouth except bread and wine. For with them the word spiritually means nothing else than the Spirit of Christ, or the power of the absent body of Christ, and his merit, which are present; but the body of Christ is in no mode or way present, except only above in the highest heaven, to which in heaven we should elevate ourselves by the thoughts of our faith, and there, and not at all in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, should seek this body and blood [of Christ].

### **Affirmative**

Confession of the Pure Doctrine concerning the Holy Supper against the Sacramentarians.

1. We believe, teach and confess that, in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, and are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine.
2. We believe, teach and confess that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood otherwise than as they sound, according to the letters; so that the bread does not signify the absent body, and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that, on account of the sacramental union, they [the bread and wine] are truly the body and blood of Christ.<sup>7</sup>

3. As to the consecration, we believe, teach and confess that no work of man or declaration of the minister [of the church] produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this should be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. [540] But at the same time we also unanimously believe, teach and confess that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of the institution of Christ should in no way be omitted, but should be publicly recited, as it is written (1 Cor. 10:16): “The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” etc. This blessing occurs through the recitation of the Word of Christ.
5. Moreover the foundations upon which we stand against the Sacramentarians in this matter are those which Dr. Luther has laid down in his Large Confession concerning the Lord’s Supper.<sup>8</sup>

The first is this article of our Christian faith: Jesus Christ is true, essential, natural, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

The second: That God’s right hand is everywhere; at which Christ is in deed and in truth placed according to his human nature, [and therefore] being present rules, and has in his hands and beneath his feet everything that is in heaven and on earth [as Scripture says (Eph. 1:22)]: There [at this right hand of God] no man else, or angel, but only the Son of Mary, is placed; whence he can effect this [those things which we have said].

The third: That God’s Word is not false, and does not deceive.

The fourth: That God has and knows of many modes of being in a place, and not only the one [is not bound to the one] which philosophers call local [or circumscribed].<sup>9</sup>

6. We believe, teach and confess that the body and blood of Christ are received with the bread and wine, not only spiritually by faith, but also orally; yet not in a Capernaitic,<sup>10</sup> but in a supernatural, heavenly mode,

because of the sacramental union; as the words of Christ clearly show, where Christ directs to take, eat and drink, as was then done by the apostles, for it is written (Mark 14:23): “And they all drank of it.” St. Paul likewise says (1 Cor. 10:16): “The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” i. e. he who eats this bread, eats the body of Christ, which also the chief ancient teachers of the Church, Chrysostom, Cyprian, Leo I., Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, unanimously testify.

7. [541] We believe, teach and confess that not only the truly believing [in Christ] and worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelieving, receive the true body and blood of Christ; yet not for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent (1 Cor. 11:27,29).

For although they repel Christ from themselves as a Saviour, yet they must admit him even against their will as a strict Judge, who is present also to exercise and render judgment upon impenitent guests, as well as to work life and consolation in the hearts of the truly believing and worthy.

8. We believe, teach and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests, viz. those who do not believe; concerning whom it is written (John 3:18): “He that believeth not is condemned already.” By the unworthy use of the Holy Supper this judgment is augmented, increased, and aggravated (1 Cor. 11:29).
9. We believe, teach and confess that no true believer, as long as he retain living faith, however weak he may be, receives the Holy Supper to his judgment, which was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, and yet penitent, for the consolation and strengthening of their weak faith (Matt. 9:12; 11:5, 28).
10. We believe, teach and confess that all the worthiness of the guests of this heavenly feast is and consists alone in the most holy obedience and absolute merit of Christ, which we appropriate to ourselves by true faith, and of it [this merit] we are assured by the sacrament. This wor-

thiness does not at all depend upon our virtues or inner and outward preparations.<sup>11</sup>

## Negative

### Contrary condemned Doctrines of the Sacramentarians.

On the other hand, we unanimously reject and condemn all the following erroneous articles, which are opposed and contrary to the above-presented doctrine, simple [simplicity of] faith, and the [pure] confession concerning the Lord's Supper:

1. [542] The Papistic transubstantiation, where it is taught in the Papacy that in the Holy Supper the bread and wine lose their substance and natural essence, and are thus annihilated; that they are changed into the body of Christ, and the outward form alone remains.
2. The Papistic sacrifice of the mass for the sins of the living and the dead.
3. That [the sacrilege whereby] to laymen only one form of the sacrament is given, and the cup is withheld from them, against the plain words of the testament of Christ, and they are [thus] deprived of his blood.
4. When it is taught that the words of the testament of Christ should not be understood or believed simply as they sound, but that they are obscure expressions, whose meaning must be sought first in other passages of Scripture.<sup>12</sup>
5. That in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is not received orally with the bread; but that with the mouth only bread and wine are received, and the body of Christ only spiritually by faith.<sup>13</sup>
6. That the bread and wine in the Holy Supper are nothing more than [symbols or] tokens, whereby Christians recognize one another.<sup>14</sup>
7. That the bread and wine are only figures, similitudes and representations of the far, absent body of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

8. That the bread and wine are no more than a memorial,<sup>16</sup> seal and pledge, through which we are assured, when faith elevates itself to heaven, that it there becomes participant of the body and blood of Christ as truly as, in the Supper, we eat bread and drink wine.<sup>17</sup>
9. That the assurance and confirmation of our faith [concerning salvation] occur in the Holy Supper alone through the external signs of bread and wine, and not through the truly present true body and blood of Christ.
10. That in the Holy Supper only the power, efficacy and merit of the far absent body and blood of Christ are distributed.<sup>18</sup>
11. That the body of Christ is so enclosed in heaven that it can in no way be at one and the same time in many or all places upon earth where his Holy Supper is celebrated.<sup>19</sup>
12. [543] That Christ has not promised, neither can afford, the essential presence of his body and blood in the Holy Supper, because the nature and property of his assumed human nature cannot suffer or permit it.
13. That God, according to [even by] his omnipotence (which is dreadful to hear), is not able to render his body essentially present in more than one place at one time.<sup>20</sup>
14. That not the omnipotent Word of Christ's testament, but faith, produces and makes [is the cause of] the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper.
15. That believers should not seek the body [and blood] of Christ in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, but from the bread should raise their eyes to heaven, and there seek the body of Christ.<sup>21</sup>
16. That unbelieving, impenitent Christians in the Holy Supper do not receive the true body and blood of Christ, but only bread and wine.<sup>22</sup>
17. That the worthiness of the guests in this heavenly meal consists not alone in true faith in Christ, but also in the external preparation of men.<sup>23</sup>



18. That even the truly believing, who have and retain a true, living, pure faith in Christ, can receive this sacrament to their judgment, because they are still imperfect in their outward life.<sup>24</sup>
19. That the external visible elements in the Holy Sacrament should be adored.<sup>25</sup>
20. Likewise, we consign also to the just judgment of God all presumptuous, ironical, blasphemous questions (which out of regard to decency are not to be mentioned), and other expressions, which very blasphemously and with great offence [to the Church] are proposed by the Sacramentarians in a gross, carnal, Capernaitic way concerning the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this sacrament.
21. [544] As, then, we hereby utterly [reject and] condemn the Capernaitic eating [manducation] of the body of Christ, which the Sacramentarians, against the testimony of their conscience, after all our frequent protests, willfully force upon us, and in this way make our doctrine odious to their hearers, as though [we taught that] his flesh were rent with the teeth, and digested as other food; on the contrary, we maintain and believe, according to the simple words of the testament of Christ, in the true, yet supernatural eating of the body of Christ, as also in the drinking of his blood, a doctrine which man's sense and reason does not comprehend, but, as in all other articles of faith, our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and this mystery is not embraced otherwise than by faith alone, and is not revealed elsewhere than in the Word alone.

## **Chapter VIII. Of the Person of Christ**

From the controversy concerning the Holy Supper a disagreement has arisen between the pure theologians of the Augsburg Confession and the Calvinists, who also have confused some other theologians, concerning the person of Christ and the two natures in Christ and their properties.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

Chief Controversy in this Dissension.

The chief question, however, has been whether, because of the personal union, the divine and human natures, as also their properties, have really, that is, in deed and truth, a communion with one another in the person of Christ, and how far this communion extends?

The Sacramentarians have asserted that the divine and human natures in Christ are united personally in such a way that neither has really, that is, in deed and truth, in common with the other that which is peculiar to either nature, but that they have in common nothing more than the names alone. For “union,” they plainly say,<sup>26</sup> “makes common names,” i. e. the personal union makes nothing more than the names common, namely, that God is called man, and man God, yet in such a way that God has nothing really, that is, in deed and truth, in common with humanity, and humanity nothing in common with divinity, as to its majesty and properties. Dr. Luther, and those who hold with him, have, against the Sacramentarians, contended for the contrary.

## **Affirmative**

**Pure Doctrine of the Christian Church concerning the Person of Christ.**

**Parallel Passages.** Ecumenical Creeds: Augsburg Confession, III.; Apology, III.; Smalcald Articles, Part I.; Small Catechism, Creed, Art. ii.; Large Catechism, ib.; Formula of Concord, Sol. Dec, viii. Cf. Martin Chemnitz, *De duabus naturis*.

[545] To explain this controversy, and settle it according to the guidance [analogy] of our Christian faith, our doctrine, faith and confession is as follows:

1. That the divine and human natures in Christ are personally united, so that there are not two Christs, one the Son of God, the other the Son of man, but that one and the same is the Son of God and Son of man (Luke 1:35; Rom. 9:5).
2. We believe, teach and confess that the divine and human natures are not mingled into one substance, nor the one changed into the other, but each retains its own essential properties, which can never become the properties of the other nature.

3. The properties of the divine nature are: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, to be, of itself, everywhere present, to know everything, etc.; which never become properties of the human nature.
4. The properties of the human nature are: to be a corporeal creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and circumscribed, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, heat, and the like; which never become properties of the divine nature.
5. As the two natures are united personally, i. e. in one per son, we believe, teach and confess that this union is not such a combination and connection that neither nature should have anything in common with the other, personally, i. e. because of the personal union, as when two boards are glued together, where neither gives anything to the other, or takes anything from the other.<sup>27</sup> But here is the highest communion, which God has truly with [assumed] man, from which personal union and the highest and ineffable communion that follows therefrom, all results that is said and believed of the human concerning God, and of the divine concerning the man Christ; as the ancient teachers of the Church explained this union and communion of the natures by the illustration of iron glowing with fire, and also by the union of body and soul in man.<sup>28</sup>
6. [546] Hence we believe, teach and confess that God is man and man is God, which could not be if the divine and human natures had, in deed and truth, absolutely no communion with one another.

For how could a man, the son of Mary, in truth be called or be God, the Son of the Highest, if his humanity were not personally united with the Son of God, and he thus had really, i. e. in deed and truth, nothing in common with him, except only the name of God?

7. Hence we believe, teach and confess that Mary conceived and bore not a mere man, and no more, but the true Son of God; therefore she is also rightly called and is the mother of God.

8. Hence we also believe, teach and confess that it was not a mere man who, for us, suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to the majesty and almighty power of God, but a man whose human nature has such a profound, ineffable union and communion with the Son of God that it is [was made] one person with him.
9. Therefore the Son of God truly suffered for us, nevertheless according to the property of the human nature, which he assumed into the unity of his divine person, and made it his own, so that he might suffer and be our high priest for our reconciliation with God, as it is written (1 Cor. 2:8): “They have crucified the Lord of glory.” And (Acts 20:28): “We are purchased with God’s blood.”
10. Hence we believe, teach and confess that the Son of man is really, that is, in deed and truth, exalted, according to his human nature, to the right hand of the almighty majesty and power of God, because he [that man] was assumed into God when he was conceived of the Holy Ghost in his mother’s womb, and his human nature was personally united with the Son of the Highest.
11. This majesty, according to the personal union, he [Christ] always had, and yet, in the state of his humiliation, he abstained from it, and, on this account, truly grew in all wisdom and favor with God and men;<sup>29</sup> therefore he exercised this majesty, not always, but when [as often as] it pleased him, until, after his resurrection, he entirely laid aside the form of a servant, and not the nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation and declaration of the divine majesty, and thus entered into his glory (Phil. 2:6 sqq.), so that now not only as God, but also as man, he knows all things, can do all things, is present with all creatures, and has, under his feet and in his hands, everything that is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, as he himself testifies (Matt. 28:18; John 13:3): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And St. Paul says (Eph. 4:10): “He ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” Everywhere present, he can exercise this his power, and to him everything is possible and everything known.

12. [548] Hence, being present, he also is able, and to him it is very easy, to impart his true body and blood in the Holy Supper, not according to the mode or property of the human nature, but according to the mode and property of the right hand of God, as Dr. Luther says in our Christian Faith for Children [according to the analogy of our Christian faith comprised in his Catechism]; which presence [of Christ in the Holy Supper] is not [physical or] earthly, or Capernaite; nevertheless it is true and substantial, as the words of his testament sound: “This is, is, is my body,” etc.

By this our doctrine, faith and confession the person of Christ is not divided, as it was by Nestorius, who denied the *communicatio idiomatum*, i. e. the true communion of the properties of both natures in Christ, and thus separated the person, as Luther has explained in his book concerning the Councils. Neither are the natures, together with their properties, confounded with one another [or mingled] into one essence, as Eutyches erred; neither is the human nature in the person of Christ denied, or extinguished, nor is either creature changed into the other,<sup>30</sup> but Christ is and remains, for all eternity, God and man in one undivided person, which, next to the Holy Trinity, is the highest mystery, as the Apostle testifies (1 Tim. 3:16), upon which our only consolation, life and salvation depend.

### **Negative**

Contrary False Doctrines concerning the Person of Christ.

[549] Therefore we reject and condemn, as contrary to God’s Word and our simple [pure] Christian faith, all the following erroneous articles, when it is taught:

1. That God and man in Christ are not one person, but that the one is the Son of God, and the other the Son of man, as Nestorius raved.
2. That the divine and human natures have been mingled with one another into one essence, and the human nature has been changed into Deity, as Eutyches fanatically asserted.

3. That Christ is not true, natural and eternal God, as Arius held [blasphemed].
4. That Christ did not have a true human nature [consisting] of body and soul, as Marcion imagined.
5. That the personal union renders only the names and titles common.<sup>31</sup>
6. That it is only a phrase and mode of speaking<sup>32</sup> when it is said: God is man, man is God; for that the divinity has nothing in common with the humanity, as also the humanity has nothing really, that is, in deed and truth, common with the divinity [Deity].
7. That the communication is only verbal when it is said: “The Son of God died for the sins of the world;” “The Son of man has become almighty.”
8. That<sup>33</sup> the human nature in Christ has become an infinite essence in the same manner as the divinity, and from this, essential power and property, imparted and effused upon the human nature, and separated from God, is everywhere present in the same manner as the divine nature.
9. That the human nature has become equal to, and like the divine nature, in its substance and essence, or in its essential properties.
10. That the human nature of Christ is locally extended in all places of heaven and earth, which should not be ascribed even to the divine nature.
11. That, because of the property of his human nature, it is impossible for Christ to be able to be at the same time in more than one place, much less to be everywhere with his body.<sup>34</sup>
12. That only the mere humanity has suffered for us and redeemed us, and that the Son of God in suffering had actually no participation with the humanity, as though it did not pertain to him.<sup>35</sup>

13. That Christ is present with us on earth in the Word, the sacraments and all our troubles, only according to his divinity, and this presence does not at all pertain to his human nature, according to which he has also nothing more whatever to do with us even upon earth, since he redeemed us by his suffering and death.<sup>36</sup>
14. That the Son of God, who assumed human nature, since he has laid aside the form of a servant does not perform all the works of his omnipotence in, through and with his human nature, but only some, and those too only in the place<sup>37</sup> where his human nature is locally.
15. That, according to his human nature, he is not at all capable<sup>38</sup> of omnipotence and other attributes of the divine nature against the express declaration of Christ (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” And [they contradict] St. Paul [who says] (Col. 2:9): “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”
16. That to him [to Christ according to his humanity] great power is given in heaven and upon earth, namely, greater and more than to all angels and other creatures, but that he has no participation in the omnipotence of God, and that this also has not been given him. Hence they devise an intermediate power, that is, such power between the almighty power of God and the power of other creatures, given to Christ, according to his humanity, by the exaltation, as is less than God’s almighty power, and greater than that of other creatures.<sup>39</sup>
17. [550] That Christ, according to his human spirit, has a certain limit as to how much he should know, and that he knows no more than is becoming and needful for him to know for [the execution of] his office as judge.
18. That not even yet does Christ have a perfect knowledge of God and all his works; of whom, nevertheless, it is written (Col. 2:3): “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”
19. That it is impossible for Christ, according to his human mind, to know what has been from eternity, what at the present time is everywhere occurring, and will be yet to [all] eternity.

20. When it is taught, and the passage (Matt. 28:18): “All power is given unto me,” etc., is thus interpreted and blasphemously perverted, viz. that to Christ according to the divine nature, at the resurrection and his ascension to heaven, was restored, i. e, delivered again all power in heaven and on earth; as though, in his state of humiliation, he had also, according to his divinity,<sup>40</sup> divested himself of this and abandoned it. By this doctrine, not only are the words of the testament of Christ perverted, but also the way is prepared for the accursed Arian heresy, so that finally the eternal divinity of Christ is denied, and thus Christ, and with him our salvation, are entirely lost where this false doctrine is not [constantly] contradicted from the firm foundation of God’s Word and our simple Christian [Catholic] faith.

## **Chapter IX. Of the Descent of Christ to Hell**

**Parallel Passages.** Ecumenical Creeds; Augsburg Confession, iii.; Small Catechism, 357; Large Catechism, 452 sqq.; Formula of Concord, Sol Dec, ix.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

Chief Controversy concerning this Article.

[522] There has also been a controversy among some theologians, who have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession concerning the following article: When, and in what manner, the Lord Christ, according to our simple Christian faith, descended to hell, whether this was done before or after his death? Also, whether it occurred according to the soul alone, or according to the divinity alone, or in body and soul, spiritually or bodily? Also, whether this article belongs to the passion or to the glorious victory and triumph of Christ?

But since this article, as also the preceding, cannot be comprehended by the senses or by the reason, but must be grasped alone by faith, it is our unanimous advice that there should be no disputation concerning it, but that it should be believed and taught only in the simplest manner; according as Dr. Luther of blessed memory, in his sermon at Torgau in the year 1633,<sup>41</sup> has, in a very Christian manner, explained this article, separated from it all



useless, unnecessary questions, and admonished all godly Christians to Christian simplicity of faith.

For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended to hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation [and even] from the jaws of hell. But how this occurred, we should [not curiously investigate, but] reserve until the other world, where not only this point [mystery], but also still others, will be revealed which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason.

## **Chapter X. Of Church Rites which are [commonly] called Adiaphora or Matters of Indifference**

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, xv., xxvi.; Apology, vii.:30 sqq.; xv.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xv.; Formula of Concord, Sol Dec, x.

Concerning ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been introduced into the Church for the sake of good order and propriety, a dissension has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession.

### **Statement of the Controversy**

[552] The chief question has been, whether, in time of persecution and in case of confession, even if the enemies of the Gospel do not agree with us in doctrine, yet some abrogated ceremonies, which in themselves are matters of indifference and are neither commanded nor forbidden by God, may without violence to conscience be re-established in compliance with the pressure and demand of the adversaries, and thus in such ceremonies and adiaphora we may [rightly] have conformity with them? The one side<sup>42</sup> says. Yea; the other<sup>43</sup> says, Nay, thereto.

### **Affirmative**

**The Pure and True Doctrine and Confession concerning this Article.**

1. For settling also this controversy we unanimously believe, teach and confess that the ceremonies or church rites which are neither com-

manded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no service, nor are even a part of the service of God. Matt. 15:9: "In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

2. We believe, teach and confess that the Church of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies, in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the Church of God.
3. Nevertheless, that herein all inconsiderateness and offence should be avoided, and especial care should be taken to exercise forbearance to the weak in faith (1 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 14:13).
4. We believe, teach and confess that in time of persecution, when a bold [and steadfast] confession is required of us, we should not yield to the enemies in regard to such adiaphora, as the apostle has written (Gal. 5:1): "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage." Also (2 Cor. 6:14): "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," etc. "For what concord hath light with darkness?" Also (Gal. 2:5): "To whom we gave place, no, not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you." For in such a case it is no longer a question concerning adiaphora, but concerning the truth of the Gospel, concerning [preserving] Christian liberty, and concerning sanctioning open idolatry, as also concerning the prevention of offence to the weak in the faith [how care should be taken lest idolatry be openly sanctioned and the weak in faith be offended]; in which we have nothing to concede, but should boldly confess and suffer what God sends, and what he allows the enemies of his Word to inflict upon us.
5. [553] We believe, teach and confess also that no Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine and all its articles, as also in the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying: "Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith."<sup>44</sup>

## Negative

False Doctrines concerning this Article,

Therefore we reject and condemn as wrong, and contrary to God's Word, when it is taught:

1. That human ordinances and institutions should be regarded in the churches as in themselves a service or part of the service of God.<sup>45</sup>
2. When such ceremonies, ordinances and institutions are violently forced upon the Church of God, contrary to the Christian liberty which it has in external things.<sup>46</sup>
3. Also, that in the time of persecution<sup>47</sup> and public confession [when a clear confession is required] we may comply with the enemies of the Gospel in the observance of such adiaphora and ceremonies, or may come to an agreement with them, — which causes injury to the truth.<sup>48</sup>
4. Also, when these external ceremonies and adiaphora are abrogated in such a manner as though it were not free to the Church of God to employ one or more<sup>49</sup> [this or that] in Christian liberty, according to its circumstances, as may be most useful at any time to the Church [for edification].

## Chapter XI. Of God's Eternal Foreknowledge [Predestination] and Election

Parallel Passages. Formula of Concord, xi.

[554] Concerning this article no public dissension has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>50</sup> But since it is a consolatory article, if treated properly, and by this means the introduction in the future of a controversy likely to cause offence may be avoided, it is also explained in this writing.

## Affirmative

The Pure and True Doctrine concerning this Article.

1. First of all, the distinction between foreknowledge and preJestination, that is, between God's foreknowledge and his eternal election, ought to be accurately observed.
2. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written (Dan. 2:28): "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."
3. This foreknowledge is occupied alike with the godly and the wicked; but it is not the cause of evil or of sin, so that men do what is wrong (which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man); nor the cause of their ruin [that men perish], for which they themselves are responsible [which they ought to ascribe to themselves]; but only regulates it, and fixes to it a limit [how far it should progress and] how long it should last, and that everything, notwithstanding that in itself it is evil, should serve his elect for their salvation.
4. The predestination or eternal election of God, however, is occupied only with the godly, beloved children of God, and this is a cause of their salvation, which he also provides as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this [predestination of God] our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it (John 10:28; Matt. 16:18).
5. This is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.
6. But the Word of God leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life,<sup>51</sup> in whom all are written and elected that are to be saved, as it is written (Eph. 1:4): "He hath chosen us in him"[Christ]" before the foundation of the world."
7. [555] Thus Christ calls to himself all sinners, and promises them rest, and he is anxious that all men should come to him and permit him to help them. To them he offers himself in his Word, and wishes them to hear it, and not to stop their ears or [neglect and] despise the Word. He

promises besides the power and efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and divine assistance for perseverance and eternal salvation [that we may remain steadfast in the faith and attain eternal salvation].

8. Therefore we should judge concerning this our election to eternal life neither from reason nor from the Law of God, which would lead either into a dissipated, dissolute epicurean life, or into despair, and would excite in the heart of men pernicious thoughts (and such thoughts cannot be effectually guarded against as long as they follow their own reason), so that they think to themselves: "If God has elected me to salvation, I cannot be condemned, although I do whatever I will." And again: " If I am not elected to eternal life, it matters not what good I do; for my efforts are nevertheless all in vain."
9. But the true judgment concerning predestination must be learned alone from the Holy Gospel concerning Christ, in which it is clearly testified that "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all," and that "he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (Rom. 11:32; Ez. 18:23; 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2).
10. To him, therefore, who is really concerned about the revealed will of God, and proceeds according to the order which St. Paul has observed in the Epistle to the Romans, who first directs men to repentance, knowledge of sins, to faith in Christ, to divine obedience, before he speaks of the mystery of the eternal election of God, this doctrine [concerning God's predestination] is useful and consolatory.
11. That, however, "many are called, few are chosen," does not mean that God is unwilling that all should be saved, but the reason is that they either do not at all hear God's Word, but willfully despise it, close their ears and harden their hearts, and in this manner foreclose the ordinary way to the Holy Ghost, so that he cannot effect his work in them, or, when it is heard, they consider it of no account, and do not heed it. For this [that they perish] not God or his election, but their wickedness, is responsible (2 Pet. 2:1 sqq.; Luke 11:49, 52; Heb. 12:25sq.).

12. [556] Moreover, a Christian should apply himself [in meditation] to the article concerning the eternal election of God, so far as it has been revealed in God's Word, which presents Christ to us as the Book of Life, which, by the preaching of the holy Gospel, he opens and spreads out to us, as it is written (Rom. 8:30): "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called." In him, therefore, we should seek the eternal election of the Father, who, in his eternal divine counsel, determined that he would save no one except those who acknowledge his Son, Christ, and truly believe on him. Other thoughts are to be entirely banished [from the minds of the godly], as they proceed not from God, but from the suggestion of Satan, whereby he attempts to weaken or to entirely remove from us the glorious consolation which we have in this salutary doctrine, viz. that we know [assuredly] that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life, and that no one can pluck us out of his hand; as he has promised this gracious election not only with mere words, but has also certified it with an oath, and sealed it with the holy sacraments, which we can [ought to] call to mind in our most severe temptations, and from them comfort ourselves, and thereby quench the fiery darts of the devil.
13. Besides, we should endeavor with the greatest pains to live according to the will of God, and, as St. Peter admonishes (2 Ep. 1:10), "make our calling sure," and especially adhere to [not recede a finger's breadth from] the revealed Word, that can and will not fail us.
14. By this brief explanation of the eternal election of God his glory is entirely and fully given to God, that alone, out of pure mercy, without all merit of ours, he saves us, according to the purpose of his will; besides, also, no cause is given any one for despondency or an abandoned, dissolute life [no opportunity is afforded either for those more severe agitations of mind and faintheartedness or for epicureanism].

### **Antithesis or Negative**

**False Doctrine concerning this Article.**

[557] Therefore we believe and hold: When the doctrine concerning the gracious election of God to eternal life is so presented that troubled Chris-

tians cannot comfort themselves therewith, but thereby despondency or despair is occasioned, or the impenitent are strengthened in their wantonness, that such doctrine is treated [wickedly and erroneously] not according to the Word and will of God, but according to reason and the instigation of Satan. “For,” as the apostle testifies (Rom. 15:4), “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” Therefore we reject the following errors:

1. As when it is taught that God is unwilling that all men repent and believe the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>
2. Also, that when God calls us to himself he is not in earnest that all men should come to him.<sup>53</sup>
3. Also, that God does not wish every one to be saved, but, without regard to their sins, alone from the counsel, purpose and will of God, some are appointed to condemnation, so that they cannot be saved.<sup>54</sup>
4. Also, that not only the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also in us is a cause of God’s election, on account of which God has elected us to everlasting life.<sup>55</sup>

All these erroneous doctrines are blasphemous and dreadful, whereby there is removed from Christians all the comfort which they have in the holy Gospel and the use of the holy sacraments, and therefore should not be tolerated in the Church of God.

This is a brief and simple explanation of the controverted articles, which for a time have been discussed and taught with conflicting opinions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession. Hence every simple Christian, according to the guidance of God’s Word and his simple Catechism, can distinguish what is right or wrong, where not only the pure doctrine is stated, but also the erroneous contrary doctrine is repudiated and rejected, and thus the controversies, full of causes of offence, that have occurred, are thoroughly settled and decided.

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, grant the grace of his Holy Ghost, that we all may be one in him, and constantly abide in this Christian unity, which is well pleasing to him! Amen.

## **Chapter XII. Of Other Factions [Heretics] and Sects, which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession**

**Parallel Passages.** Sol. Dec. xii. Cf. Augsburg Confession, i.: 6, 6 V. 4; ix.: 3; xii.: 7 sqq.; xiv.; xvi.: 3; xvii.: 2, 3; Apology, ix., xvi.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii.: 3 sqq.; Large Catechism, 492, | 47 sqq. Formula of Concord, Ep. ii.: 13.

In order that such [heresies and sects] may not silently be ascribed to us, because, in the preceding explanation, no mention of them has been made, we wish at the end [of this writing] simply to enumerate the mere articles wherein they [the heretics of our time] err and teach what is contrary to our Christian faith and confession above presented.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists**

The Anabaptists are divided into many sects,[^bjo] as one contends for more, another for less error; nevertheless, they all in common propound [profess] such doctrine as is neither to be tolerated nor allowed in the Church, the commonwealth and worldly government or domestic life.

#### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in the Church**

1. That Christ did not assume his body and blood of the Virgin Mary, but brought them with him from heaven.<sup>56</sup>
2. That Christ is not true God, but only [is superior to other saints, because he] has more gifts of the Holy Ghost than any other holy man.<sup>57</sup>
3. That our righteousness before God consists not only in the sole merit of Christ, but in renewal, and thus in our own godliness [uprightness] in which we walk.<sup>58</sup> This is based in great part upon one's own special, self-chosen [and humanly-devised] spirituality [holiness], and in fact is nothing else than a new sort of monkery.



4. That<sup>59</sup> children who are not baptized are not sinners before God, but righteous and innocent, who, in their innocency, because they have not yet attained their reason [the use of reason], will be saved without baptism (which, according to their assertion, they do not need). Therefore they reject the entire doctrine concerning original sin, and what belongs to it.
5. [559] That children should not be baptized until they have attained their reason [the use of reason], and can themselves confess their faith.
6. That the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and the children of God, even without and before baptism. For this reason also they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children, nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of God's promise, which pertains only to those *who keep God's covenant and do not despise it* (Gen. 17:7 sqq.).
7. That<sup>60</sup> that is no true Christian congregation [church] wherein sinners are still found.
8. That no sermon should be heard or attended in those churches in which the Papal masses have previously been observed and said.
9. That no one [godly man] should have anything to do with those ministers of the Church who preach the Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession, and censure the sermons and errors of the Anabaptists; also, that no one should serve or in any way labor for them, but should flee from and shun them as perverters of God's Word.

#### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in the Government**

1. That,<sup>61</sup> under the New Testament, the magistracy is not an estate pleasing to God.
2. That a Christian cannot, with a good, inviolate conscience, hold or exercise the office of magistrate.
3. That a Christian cannot, without injury to conscience, use the office of the magistracy against the wicked in matters as they occur [matters so

requiring], nor may subjects invoke for their protection and screening the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God.

4. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, take an oath, neither can he by an oath do homage [promise fidelity] to his prince or sovereign.
5. That, under the New Testament, magistrates cannot, without injury to conscience, inflict capital punishment upon transgressors.

#### **Articles that cannot be tolerated in Domestic Life**

1. That a Christian cannot [with an inviolate conscience] hold or possess property, but is in duty bound to devote it to the church.
2. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, be a landlord, merchant, or cutler [maker of arms].<sup>62</sup>
3. That on account of diverse faith married persons may be divorced and abandon one another, and be married to another person of the same faith.<sup>63</sup>

#### **Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians**

1. That all who regard Christ according to the flesh as a creature have no true knowledge of Christ as reigning King of heaven.
2. That, by his exaltation, the flesh of Christ has so assumed all divine properties that Christ as man is in might, power, majesty and glory equal to the Father and to the Word, everywhere as to degree and condition of essence, so that now there is only one essence, property, will and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of the Holy Trinity.
3. That the Church service [ministry of the Word], the Word preached and heard, is not a means whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith and new obedience.

4. That the water of baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals adoption and works regeneration.
5. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means through and by which Christ distributes his body and blood.
6. That a Christian who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can, in this life, observe and fulfill the Law of God perfectly.
7. That there is no true Christian congregation [church] where no public excommunication [and some formal mode of excommunication] or no regular process of the ban [as it is commonly called] is observed.
8. [561] That the minister of the church who is not on his part truly renewed, regenerate, righteous and godly cannot teach other men with profit or distribute true sacraments.

### **Error of the New Arians**

That Christ is not true, essential, natural God, of one eternal, divine essence with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, but is only adorned with divine majesty beneath and beside God the Father [is so adorned with divine majesty, with the Father, that he is inferior to the Father].

### **Error of the Anti-Trinitarians**

This is an entirely new sect, not heard of before in Christendom, composed of those who believe, teach and confess that there is not only one, eternal, divine essence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but as God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three distinct persons, so each person has its essence distinct and separate from the other persons of the Godhead; and nevertheless [some of them think] that all three, just as in another respect three men distinct and separate from one another are of equal power, wisdom, majesty and glory, or [others think that these three persons and essences] are unequal with one another in essence and properties, so that the Father alone is properly and truly God.

These and like errors, one and all, with whatever other errors depend upon and follow from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession and Apology, the Smalcald Articles and Luther's Catechisms, against which all godly Christians, of both high and low station, should be on their guard as they love the welfare and salvation of their souls.

That this is the doctrine, faith and confession of us all, for which we will answer, at the last day, before the just Judge, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that against this we will neither secretly nor publicly speak or write, but that we intend, by the grace of God, to persevere therein, we have, after mature deliberation, testified, in the true fear of God and invocation of his name, by signing with our own hands this Epitome.

Bergen May 29th, 1577.

[^bjo] Among those of the sixteenth century were the Münzerites, Münsterites, Hoffmanites, Mennonites.

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1. Luther against Agricola, 1538 and 1539; Erlangen, Ed. 32:1, 64; De Wette's Luther's Letters, v.: 147.↩
  2. Called Modern Antinomians. See "New Confession of the Antinomians" Schlüsselberg:, Catalog. Haeretic, iv.: 45↩
  3. For they offered the "Tetrapolitan Confession," and Zwingli his own "Fidei Rationis."↩
  4. Preface to Book of Concord, p. 12, 15.↩
  5. Carlstadt, Zwingli, OEcalampadius.↩
  6. Bucer, Peter Martyr, Calvin and the Crypto-Calvinistic theologians of Leipsic and Wittenberg.↩

7. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. vi; Large Catechism, 601:14. The meaning of this expression is explained by Sol. Dec, vii.: 14: “With the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, offered and received.”↵
8. Wittenberg, 1528, Erlangen Ed., 30:151.↵
9. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 98 sqq.↵
10. The word is derived from John 6:26, 52: “As though his flesh were rent with the teeth and digested like other food,” § 42.↵
11. Cf. § 38.↵
12. Zwingli, OEcalampadius, Calvin. John vi. especially was appealed to.↵
13. See Consensus Tigurinus, Art. ix.↵
14. Zwingli, De vera et falsa religione (Opp. iii., p. 145 sq.).↵
15. Opinion of Zwingli, Calvin, Beza, Bullinger. See Planck, iv.; 21, 63.↵
16. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 115 sqq.↵
17. Calvin, e. g. Comment on 1 Cor. 11:23.↵
18. See Calvin’s Institutes, iv., chap, xxii., § 18.↵
19. See Consensus Tigurinus, xxi.; Niemyer, xxiv., p. 196. Cf. Sol. Dec. vii:119.↵
20. Beza used almost these words: Oreophagia, p. 152 sq.↵
21. Consensus Tigurinus, xxi.↵
22. All the Sacramentarians.↵

23. Doctrine of the papists; Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., chaps. 7 and 11.↩
24. Id.↩
25. With worship, *latria*; see Council of Trent, Sess. xiii., chaps. 5 and 6.↩
26. See below, § 24-28. Borrowed by Sacramentarians from Theodore.↩
27. Cf. Sol. Dec. viii.: 14, 15.↩
28. So Gregory of Nyssa, Basil, John Damascenus. See Catalogue of Testimonies,↩
29. See Luke 2:52.↩
30. Error of Monophysites, Schwenkfeldians. See below, xii.: 29.↩
31. See above, § 3. Cf. § 26.↩
32. Zwingli termed it *alloeosis*, Cf. Sol. Dec, viii., § 89 sqq.↩
33. Charged by Bullinger, Beza, Peter Martyr against the Wittenberg theologians. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii., § 63.↩
34. “Let them no longer ascribe to the glorified body of Christ the property of being in many places at once.” — Calvin’s *Institutes*, iv.: 17, 29. “The body of Christ, since its resurrection, is limited, and received into heaven till the last day.”— Ib. 26.↩
35. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 40 sqq.↩
36. Calvin. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 78 sqq.; 87 sqq.↩
37. I. e. in heaven. Cf. above, vii.: 32. Also note to vii.: 14.↩
38. Beza in Mompelgard Colloquy: “The finite is not capable or participant of the infinite.”↩

39. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 54, 55. Errors 16-19 were held by some of the Calvinists.↵
40. The Crypto-Calvinists taught that Christ was exalted according to both natures.↵
41. Erlangen Edition, 20:165 sqq.↵
42. The authors of the Leipsic Formula: Melanchthon, Paul Eber († 1569), Bugenhagen († 1558), George Major († 1574), John Pfeffinger († 1573).↵
43. Especially Flacius, Nicol. Gallus († 1570), John Wigand († 1587), Amsdorf, Joach. Westphal († 1574).↵
44. Irenaeus in Ep. to Victor, Bishop of Rome, in Eusebius's Church History, V.: 24. Cf. Augsburg Confession, xxvi.: 44.↵
45. Opinion of the Papists. See Confutation, I., Art. xv; II., Art. v. Cf. Apology, XV.: 40.↵
46. Cf. Apology, xv.: 37.↵
47. As when the Augsburg Interim was introduced by force.↵
48. See extracts from Leipsic Interim, Walch's Introduction, p. 865; 01 text of Interim, Gieseler's Church History, iv.: 201-203.↵
49. Sol. Dec, X.: 30. An error of the Papists, who affirmed that in ecclesiastical rites nothing ought to be changed without the consent of the Pope. Cf. Council of Trent, Sess. xxv., p. 85 (Tauchn. Ed.)↵
50. But between them and the Reformed. A controversy on this subject arose at Strasburg in 1561 between Jerome Zanchi and John Marbach.↵
51. Phil. 4:3; Rev. 17:8.↵

52. For defense of this error see Calvin's Institutes, iii.: xxi. sqq.↵
53. Cf. Calvin's Institutes, iii.; xxiv.↵
54. "They are abandoned to this depravity, because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgment of God to display his glory in their condemnation." — Calvin's Institutes, xxiv.: 14.↵
55. Charged by the Calvinists against the Lutherans; more justly attributed to Arminians. Cf. above, § 13. Faith can never be a cause "*on account of which*," God elects, since it is never a cause "on account of which," we are justified. See the *propter Christum per fidem* of Art. IV. of the Augsburg Confession. Cf. above, § 13.↵
56. In order to avoid the taint of Adam. Melchior Hoffman and Simon Menno taught thus.↵
57. This error is referred to Ludwig Hetzer, David George or Joris, and Trechsel.↵
58. Münzer, Hoffman and others insisted upon good works for justification.↵
59. Errors 4-6 held by Anabaptists generally.↵
60. In errors 7-9 the Anabaptists have followed the Donatists.↵
61. Errors 1-4. See Confession of Mennonites, 37, 38; Gieseler's Church History, iv.: 874.↵
62. For they thought that these occupations conflicted with mutual love. Cf. §§ 16, 17.↵
63. Confession of Mennonites, 39. The Münsterites defended polygamy.↵



# Part Second. Solid Declaration

Solid, Plain and Clear Repetition and Declaration.

Of Certain Articles of the Augsburg Confession, concerning which, for some time, there has been controversy among some theologians who subscribe thereto, Stated and Settled according to the Analogy of God's Word and the Summary Contents of our Christian Doctrine.

## Preface

[565] By the inestimable goodness and mercy of the Almighty, the doctrine concerning the chief articles of our Christian religion, which under the Papacy was horribly obscured by human opinions and traditions, has been again explained and corrected, in accordance with God's Word, by Dr. Martin Luther of holy and blessed memory, and the Papistic errors, abuses and idolatry have been rebuked. This pure reformation, however, has been regarded by its opponents as introducing new doctrine; it has been violently and falsely charged with being directly contrary to God's Word and Christian ordinances, and has to bear the burden of numberless other calumnies and accusations. On this account the electors, princes and estates that have embraced the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, and have reformed their churches in a Christian manner according to God's Word, at the great Diet of Augsburg in the year 1530 had a Christian Confession prepared from God's Word, which they delivered to the Emperor Charles V. In this they clearly and plainly made a Christian Confession as to what was held and taught in the Christian evangelical churches concerning the chief articles, and those especially in controversy between them and the Papists. This Confession was received by their opponents with disfavor, but, thank God, remains to this day without refutation or invalidation. From our inmost hearts we herewith once again confess this Christian Augsburg Confession, which is so thoroughly grounded in God's Word.

[566] We abide by the simple, clear and plain meaning of the same that its words convey, and regard it in all respects as a Christian symbol, which at the present time true Christians should receive next to God's Word; just as in former times, when great controversies arose in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were composed, which pure teachers and hearers confessed with heart and mouth. We intend also, by the grace of the Almighty, to faithfully abide until our end by this Christian Confession, as it was delivered in the year 1530 to the Emperor Charles V.; and it is our purpose, neither in this nor in any other writing, to recede in the least from that Confession or to compose another or new confession.

Although the Christian doctrine of this Confession has, in great part, remained unchallenged, save among the Papists, yet it cannot be denied that some theologians have departed from some of its principal and most important articles, and that they either have not learned the true meaning of these articles, or have not continued steadfastly therein, but that some have even undertaken to attach to it an extraneous meaning, while at the same time professing to adhere to the Augsburg Confession, and availing themselves of this boast as a pretext. From this, grievous and injurious dissensions have arisen in the pure evangelical churches; just as during the lives of the holy apostles, among those who wished to be called Christians and boasted of Christ's doctrine, horrible error arose. For some sought to be justified and saved by the Law (Acts 15:1-29); others denied the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:12); and still others did not believe that Christ was true and eternal God. These the holy apostles in their sermons and writings earnestly opposed, although such pernicious errors and severe controversy could not occur without offence, both to believers and to those weak in the faith; just as at present our opponents, the Papists, rejoice at the dissensions among us, in the unchristian and vain hope that these discords will finally cause the suppression of the pure doctrine. Because of them, those that are weak in faith are also greatly offended, and some doubt whether, amid such dissensions, the pure doctrine be with us, while others know not with whom to side with respect to the articles in controversy.

[567] For these controversies are not mere misunderstandings or disputes concerning words, as are apt to occur where one side has not sufficiently understood the meaning of the other, and thus the dispute is confined to a

few words, whereon nothing of much moment depends. But here the subjects of controversy are great and important, and of such a nature that the opinion of the party in error cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused or defended.

Necessity, therefore, requires us to explain these controverted articles according to God's Word and approved writings; so that every one who has Christian understanding can notice what opinion concerning the matters in controversy accords with God's Word, and what disagrees therewith. Thus the errors and corruptions that have arisen may be shunned and avoided by sincere Christians who prize the truth aright.

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[568] Of the Comprehensive Summary, Foundation, Rule and Standard whereby, according to God's Word, all Dogmas should be Judged, and the Controversies that have occurred should, in a Christian manner, be explained and decided.

Because, for thorough, permanent unity in the Church, it is before all things necessary that we have a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form, wherein are brought together from God's Word the common doctrines, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion acknowledge as confessional (just as the ancient Church always had for this use its fixed symbols); and this a authority should not be attached to private writings, but to such books as have been composed, approved and received in the name of the churches which confessional ly bind themselves to one doctrine and religion; we have declared to one another, with heart and mouth, that we will neither make nor receive any separate or new<sup>1</sup> confession of our faith, but acknowledge as confessional the public common writings which always and everywhere were received in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession, as such symbols or public confessions, before the dissensions arose among those who accept the Augsburg Confession, and as long as, in all articles, there was, on all sides, a unanimous adherence to, and maintenance and use of, the pure doctrine of God's Word, as the late Dr. Luther explained it.

1. [569] First, we receive and embrace the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountains of Israel, which are the only true standard whereby to judge all teachers and doctrines.
2. And because, of old, the true Christian doctrine, in pure, sound sense, was collected from God's Word into brief articles or sections against the corruption of heretics, we accept as confessional the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene and the Athanasian, as glorious confessions of the faith, brief, devout and founded upon God's Word, wherein all the heresies which at that time had arisen in the Christian Church are clearly and unanswerably refuted.
3. Thirdly, Because, in these last times, God, out of especial grace, from the darkness of the Papacy has brought his truth again to light, through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther, and against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects has collected the same doctrine, from and according to God's Word, into the articles and sections of the Augsburg Confession; we confessionally accept also the first unaltered Augsburg Confession (not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been derived from God's Word, and is founded firmly and well therein, precisely in the form in which it was committed to writing in the year 1530, and presented to the Emperor Charles V. by some electors, princes and deputies of the Roman Empire as a common confession of the reformed churches at Augsburg) as the symbol of our time, whereby our Reformed churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies, after the custom and usage of the early Church, whereby succeeding councils, Christian bishops and teachers appealed to the Nicene Creed, and confessed it [publicly declared that they embraced it].
4. [570] Fourthly, in order that the proper and true sense of the often-quoted Augsburg Confession might be more fully set forth and guarded against the Papists, and that under the name of the Augsburg Confession condemned errors might not steal into the Church of God after the Confession was delivered, a fuller Apology was composed,

and published in the year 1531. We unanimously accept this also as confessional, because in it the said Augsburg Confession is not only sufficiently elucidated and guarded, but also confirmed by clear, irrefutable testimonies of Holy Scripture.

5. Fifthly, the Articles composed, approved and received at; Smalcald in the large assembly of theologians in the year 1537 we confessionally accept, in the form in which they were first framed and printed in order to be delivered in the council at Mantua, or wherever it would be held, in the name of the electors, princes and deputies, as an explanation of the above mentioned Augsburg Confession, wherein by God's grace they determined to abide. In them the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, and some articles are stated at greater length from God's Word, and besides the cause and foundation why we have abandoned the papistical errors and idolatries, and can have no fellowship with them, and also why we have not determined or even thought of coming to any agreement with the Pope concerning them, are sufficiently indicated.
6. Lastly, because these highly important matters belong also to the common people and laity, who, for their salvation, must distinguish between pure and false doctrine, we accept as confessional also the Large and the Small Catechisms of Dr. Luther,<sup>2</sup> as they were written by him and incorporated in his works, because they have been unanimously approved and received by all churches adhering to the Augsburg Confession, and publicly used in churches, schools and [privately in] families, and because also in them the Christian doctrine from God's Word is comprised in the most correct and simple way, and, in like manner, is sufficiently explained for simple laymen.

[571] These public common writings have been always regarded in the pure churches and schools as the sum and type of the doctrine which the late Dr. Luther has admirably deduced against the Papacy and other sects from God's Word, and firmly established; to whose full explanations in his doctrinal and polemical writings we appeal in the manner and to the extent indicated by Dr. Luther himself in the necessary and Christian admonition concerning his writings, made in the Latin preface to his published works,

wherein he has expressly drawn this distinction, viz. that God's Word alone is and should remain the only standard and rule, to which the writings of no man should be regarded equal, but to it everything should be subordinated.

But hereby other good, useful, pure books, expositions of it the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, explanations of doctrinal articles (which, as far as consistent with the above-mentioned type of doctrine, are regarded as useful expositions and explanations, and can be used with advantage) are not rejected. But by what has thus far been said concerning the summary of our Christian doctrine we have only meant that we have a unanimously received, definite, common form of doctrine, which our Evangelical churches together and in common confess; from and according to which, because it has been derived from God's Word, all other writings should be judged and adjusted as to how far they are to be approved and accepted.

For that we have embodied the above-mentioned writings, viz. the Augsburg Confession, Apology, Smalcald Articles, Luther's Large and Small Catechisms, as the sum of our Christian doctrine, has occurred for the reason that these have been always and everywhere regarded as containing the common, unanimously received understanding of our churches, since the chief and most enlightened theologians of that time subscribed them, and all evangelical churches and schools have cordially received them. As they also, as before mentioned, were all written and sent forth before the divisions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession arose, and then because they were held as impartial, and neither can nor should be rejected by any part of those who have entered into controversy, and no one who is true to the Augsburg Confession will complain of these writings, but will cheerfully accept and tolerate them as witnesses [of the truth]; no one, therefore, can blame us that we derive from them an explanation and decision of the articles in controversy, and that, as we lay God's Word, the eternal truth, as the foundation, so also we introduce and quote these writings as a witness of the truth, and a presentation of the unanimously received correct understanding of our predecessors who have steadfastly held to the pure doctrine.

Of the Articles in Controversy with respect to the Antithesis, or opposite doctrine.

[572] For the maintenance of pure doctrine, and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church, it is necessary not only that pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd (1 Tim. 3 [2 Tim. 3:16]; Tit. 1:9). For faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, viz. feed or nourish the lambs and defend from the wolves, so that they may flee from strange voices (John 10:12) and may separate the precious from the vile (Jer. 15:19).

Therefore concerning this, we have thoroughly and clearly declared to one another as follows: that a distinction in every way should and must be observed between, on the one hand, unnecessary and useless wrangling, whereby, since it scatters more than it builds up, the Church ought not to be disturbed, and, on the other hand, necessary controversy, as when such a controversy occurs as involves the articles of faith or the chief heads of the Christian doctrine, where for the defense of the truth the false opposite doctrine must be reprov'd.

Although the aforesaid writings afford the Christian reader who has pleasure and love for the divine truth, a clear and correct answer concerning each and every controverted article of our Christian religion, as to what, according to God's Word of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, he should regard and receive as right and true, and what he should reject, shun and avoid as false and wrong; yet, in order that the truth may be preserved the more distinctly and clearly, and be separated from all errors, and be not hidden and concealed under rather general words, we have clearly and expressly made a declaration to one another concerning the chief and highly important articles, taken one by one, which at the present time have come into controversy; so that there might be a public, definite testimony, not only for those now living, but also for our posterity, as to what is and should remain the unanimously received understanding and judgment of our churches in reference to the articles in controversy, namely:

1. First, that we reject and condemn all heresies and errors which, in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church, were rejected and condemned, upon the true, firm ground of the holy divine Scriptures.
2. [573] Secondly, we reject and condemn all sects and heresies which are rejected in the writings, just mentioned, of the comprehensive sum-

mary of the Confession of our churches.

3. Thirdly, because within thirty years, on account of the Interim<sup>3</sup> and otherwise, some divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession, we have wished plainly, distinctly and clearly to state and declare our faith and confession concerning each and every one of these taken in thesis and antithesis, i. e. the true doctrine and its opposite, for the purpose in all articles of rendering the foundation of divine truth manifest, and censuring all unlawful, doubtful, suspicious and condemned doctrines (wherever and in whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them or even now may be disposed to defend them); so that every one may be faithfully warned to avoid the errors, diffused on all sides, in the writings of some theologians, and no one be misled herein by the reputation of any man. If the Christian reader will carefully examine this declaration in every emergency, and compare it with the writings enumerated above, he will find that what was in the beginning confessed concerning every article in the comprehensive summary of our religion and faith, and what was afterward restated at various times, and is repeated by us in this document, is in no way contradictory, but the simple, immutable, permanent truth, and that we, therefore, do not change from one doctrine to another, as our adversaries falsely assert, but earnestly desire to retain the once-delivered Augsburg Confession, and its unanimously received Christian sense, and through God's grace to abide thereby firmly and constantly, in opposition to all corruptions which have entered.

## Chapter 1. Of Original Sin

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, Art. ii.; Apology, Art ii.; Smalcald Articles, Part. III., Art. i.; Epitome, I.

[574] First, a controversy concerning Original Sin has occurred i tmM among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession with respect to what it properly is. For one side<sup>4</sup> contended that, because, through the fall of Adam, man's nature and essence are entirely corrupt now since the fall, the nature, substance and essence of the corrupt man, or indeed the principal, highest part of his being, namely, the rational soul in its highest state and principal powers is Original Sin itself. This is called "natural" or "personal sin," for the reason that it is not a thought, word or work, but the nature it-



self, whence, as from a root, all other sins proceed, and on this account there is now since the fall, because the nature is corrupt through sin, no distinction whatever between the nature and essence of man and Original Sin.

But the other side taught, in opposition, that Original Sin is not properly the nature, substance or essence of man, i. e. man's body or soul, which even now since the fall are and remain the creatures and works of God in us, but it is something in the nature, body and soul of man, and in all his powers, namely, a horrible, deep, inexpressible corruption of the same, so that man is destitute of the righteousness wherein he was originally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good and perverted to all evil; and that, because of this corruption and inborn sin, which inheres in the nature, all actual sins flow forth from the heart; and that a distinction must, therefore, be observed between, on the one hand, the nature and essence of the corrupt man, or his body and soul, which as the creatures of God pertain to us even since the fall, and Original Sin, on the other, which is a work of the devil, whereby the nature has become corrupt.

[575] Now this controversy concerning Original Sin is not unnecessary wrangling, but if this doctrine be rightly presented from and according to God's Word, and be separated from all Pelagian and Manichaeian errors, then (as the Apology<sup>5</sup>) says, the benefits of Christ and his precious merit, and the gracious efficacy of the Holy Ghost, will be the better known and the more extolled; the honor which belongs to him will also be ascribed to God, if his work and creation in men be rightly distinguished from the work of the devil, whereby the nature has been corrupted. In order, therefore, to explain this controversy in the Christian way and according to God's Word, and to maintain the correct, pure doctrine, we will collect from the above-mentioned writings the thesis and antithesis, that is, the correct doctrine and its opposite, into brief paragraphs:

1. And first it is true that Christians should not only regard and recognize as sins the actual transgression of God's commands; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady whereby the entire nature is corrupted, should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountain-head of all actual sins. This is called by Luther a "natural" or "personal sin," in order to de-

clare that even though man would think, speak or do nothing evil (which, nevertheless, since the fall of our first parents, is impossible in this life), yet that his nature and person are sinful, i. e. by Original Sin, as a spiritual leprosy, he is thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God; and on account of this corruption, and because of the fall of the first man, the nature or person is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death and damnation, unless delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ.

2. It is also clear and true, as the Nineteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession teaches, that God is not a creator, author or cause of sin, but from the instigation of the devil, through one man, sin (which is a work of the devil) has entered the world (Rom. 6:12; 1 John 3; 7). And even at the present day, in this connection of sin and nature [in this corruption of nature], God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men, Original Sin is propagated from sinful seed,<sup>6</sup> through carnal conception and birth of father and mother.
3. [576] Thirdly, what [and how great] this hereditary evil is, no reason knows and understands, but, as the Smalcald Articles<sup>7</sup> say, it must be learned and believed from the revelation contained in Scripture. And in the Apology this is briefly comprehended in the following paragraphs:
4. That this hereditary evil is the cause of our all being, by reason of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, in God's displeasure, and by nature children of wrath, as the apostle shows (Rom. 5:12 sqq.; Eph. 2:3).
5. Secondly, that there is an entire want or lack of the concreated original righteousness, or of God's image, according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness and righteousness; and likewise an inability and unfitness for all the things of God, or, as the Latin words read: *Descriptio peccati originalis detrahit naturae non renovatae, et dona, et vim, seu facultatem et actus inchoandi et efficiendi spiritualia*. That is: ' The definition of original sin takes away from the unrenewed nature the gifts, the power, and all activity for beginning and effecting anything in spiritual things.<sup>8</sup>

3. That Original Sin (in human nature) is not only such an entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that it is at the same time also, instead of the lost image of God in man, a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in understanding, heart and will; that now, since the fall, man receives by inheritance *an inborn wicked disposition, an inward impurity of heart, wicked lusts and propensities*; that we all is have by nature inherited from Adam such a heart, feeling and thoughts as, according to their highest powers and the light of reason, are naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and his chief commands, yea, they are at enmity with God, especially as to what concerns divine and spiritual things. For, in other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to the reason, man still has, to a certain degree, understanding, power and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, nevertheless, has been so infected and contaminated by Original Sin that before God it is of no use.
4. [577] The penalties of Original Sin, which God has imposed upon the children of Adam and upon Original Sin, are death, eternal damnation, and also other bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal miseries, and the tyranny and dominion of the devil, so that human nature is subject to the kingdom of the devil, and has been surrendered to the power of the devil, and is held captive under his sway, who stupefies [fascinates] and leads astray many great, learned men in the world by means of dreadful error, heresy and other blindness, and otherwise delivers men to all sorts of crime.[^bjF]
5. Fifthly, this hereditary evil is so great and horrible that it can be covered and forgiven before God only for Christ's sake, and in the baptized and believing. Human nature also, which is deranged and corrupted thereby, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which, nevertheless, is only begun in this life, but will at length be fully completed in the life to come.<sup>9</sup>

These points, which have been quoted here only in a summary way, are set forth more fully in the above-mentioned writings of the common confession

of our Christian doctrine.<sup>10</sup>

But this doctrine must now be so maintained and guarded that it may not incline either to the Pelagian or the Manichaeian side. Therefore the contrary doctrine concerning this article, which is censured and rejected in our churches, should also be briefly reported.

1. And first, in opposition to the old and the new Pelagians, the following false opinions and dogmas are censured and rejected, namely, that Original Sin is only a *reatus* or debt, on account of what has been committed by another without any corruption of our nature.
2. Also that sinful, evil lusts are not sins, but conditions, or concreated and essential properties of the nature.<sup>11</sup>
3. Or as though the above-mentioned defect and evil were not before God properly and truly sin, on account of which man without Christ [unless he be grafted into Christ and be delivered through him] must be a child of wrath and damnation, and also be beneath the power and in the kingdom of Satan.
4. [578] The following Pelagian errors and the like are also censured and rejected, namely: that nature, ever since the fall, is incorrupt, and that especially with respect to spiritual things it is entirely good and pure, and *in naturalibus*, i. e., in its natural powers, it is perfect.
5. Or that Original Sin is only external, a slight, insignificant spot sprinkled or stain dashed upon the nature of man, or *corruptio tantum accidentium aut qualitatum*, i. e. a corruption only of some accidental things, along with and beneath which the nature, nevertheless, possesses and retains its integrity and power even in spiritual things.
6. Or that Original Sin is not a despoliation or deficiency, but only an external impediment to these spiritual good powers, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, whereby its natural power is not removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily washed away, as a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.<sup>12</sup>

7. They likewise are rebuked and rejected who teach that the nature has indeed been greatly weakened and corrupted through the fall, but that, nevertheless, it has not entirely lost all good with respect to divine, spiritual things, and that what is sung in our churches,

“Through Adam’s fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human,”

is not true, but from natural birth we still have something good (small, little and inconsiderable though it be), namely: capacity, skill, aptness or ability in spiritual things to begin to work or co-work for something. For concerning external, temporal, worldly things and transactions, which are subject to reason, there will be an explanation in the succeeding article.

These and doctrines of like kind, contrary to the truth, are censured and rejected for the reason that God’s Word teaches that the corrupt nature, of and by itself, has no power for anything good in spiritual things, not even for the least, as good thoughts, but that, of and by itself, it can do nothing but sin. Gen. 6:5; 8:21.

[579] Therefore [But] this doctrine must also be guarded, on the other side, from Manichaeian errors. Accordingly, the following erroneous doctrines and the like are rejected, namely: that now, since the fall, human nature is in the beginning created pure and good, and that afterwards Original Sin from without is infused and mingled by Satan (as something essential) in the nature, as poison is mingled with wine [that in the beginning human nature was created by God pure and good, but that now, since the fall. Original Sin, etc.].<sup>13</sup>

For although in Adam and Eve the nature was originally created pure, good and holy, nevertheless sin has not entered nature through the fall in the way fanatically taught by the Manichaeians, as though Satan had created or made something essentially evil, and mingled it with their nature. But since, from the seduction of Satan, through the fall, according to God’s judgment and sentence, man, as a punishment, has lost his concreated original righteousness, human nature, as has been said above,<sup>14</sup> is perverted and corrupt by this deprivation or deficiency, want and injury, which has been caused by Satan; so that at present the nature of all men, who in a natural way are conceived and born, is transmitted by inheritance with the same want and cor-

ruption. For since the fall human nature is not at first created pure and good, and only afterward corrupted by Original Sin, but in the first moment of our conception the seed whence man is formed is sinful and corrupt. Thus also Original Sin is not something existing of itself in or apart from the nature of the corrupt man, as it is also not the peculiar essence, body or soul of the corrupt man, or the man himself.

Original Sin, and the nature of man corrupted thereby, cannot and should not, therefore, be so distinguished, as though the nature before God were pure, good, holy, but Original Sin alone which dwells therein were evil.

[580] Also, as Augustine writes of the Manichaeans, as though it were not the corrupt man himself who sins by reason of inborn Original Sin, but something different and foreign in man, and therefore that God, by the Law, accuses and condemns not the nature as corrupt by sin, but only the Original Sin therein. For, as stated above in the thesis,<sup>15</sup> i. e. the explanation of the pure doctrine concerning Original Sin, the entire nature of man, which is born in the natural way of father and mother, is entirely and to the farthest extent corrupted and perverted by Original Sin, in body and soul, in all its powers that pertain and belong to the goodness, truth, holiness and righteousness concreated with it in Paradise. Nevertheless, the nature is not entirely exterminated or changed into another substance [diverse in genus or species], which, according to its essence, is not like our nature, and therefore cannot be one essence with us.

Because of this corruption the entire corrupt nature of man would be accused and condemned by the Law, if sin were not, for Christ's sake, forgiven.

But the Law accuses and condemns nature, not because we have been created men by God, but because we are sinful and wicked; not because and so far as nature and its essence, ever since the fall, is a work and creature of God in us, but because and so far as it has been poisoned and corrupted by sin.

But although Original Sin, like a spiritual poison or leprosy (as Luther says), has poisoned and corrupted all human nature, so that we cannot clearly show and point out the nature apart by itself, and Original Sin apart

by itself; nevertheless, the corrupt nature, or essence of the corrupt man, body and soul, or the man himself whom God has created (and within whom dwells the Original Sin that also corrupts the nature, essence or the entire man), and Original Sin, which dwells in man's nature or essence, and corrupts it, are not one thing; as also in external leprosy the body which is leprous, and the leprosy on or in the body, are not, properly speaking, one thing. A distinction must be observed also between our nature, as created and preserved by God, and Original Sin, which dwells in the nature. These two must and also can be considered, taught and believed with their distinctions according to Holy Scripture.

The chief articles also of our Christian faith urge and compel us to preserve this distinction.<sup>16</sup>

[581] For, *first*, in the article of Creation, Scripture shows that not only has God before the fall created human nature, but also that, since the fall, it is a creature and work of God (Deut 32:6; Isa. 45:11; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:25; Rev. 4:11)

“Thine hands,” says Job (10:8-12), “have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me as cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.”

“I will praise thee,” says David (Ps. 139:14-16), “for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

In the Ecclesiastes of Solomon it is written [12:7]:" Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it."

[582] These passages clearly testify that God ever since the fall is the Creator of man, and creates his body and soul. Therefore the corrupt man cannot be, without any distinction, sin itself, for otherwise God would be a creator of sins; as also our Small Catechism, in the explanation of the First Article, confesses: 'I believe that God has created me with all that exists, that he has given and still preserves to me my body and soul, with all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind.'" Likewise in the Large Catechism<sup>17</sup> it is thus written: "I believe and mean to say that I am a creature of God, i. e. that he has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul and life, members great and small, and all my senses." Although the same creature and work of God is lamentably corrupted by sin; for the mass (*massa*), from which God now forms and makes man was in Adam corrupted and perverted, and is thus transmitted by inheritance to us.

And here pious Christian hearts ought to consider the unspeakable goodness of God that God did not immediately cast from himself into hell-fire this corrupt, perverted, sinful mass, but from it forms and makes human nature of the present day, which is lamentably corrupted by sin, in order that by his dear Son he may cleanse it from all sin, sanctify and save it.

From this article now the distinction is indisputable and clear. For Original Sin does not originate with God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Original Sin also is not a creature or work of God, but a work of the devil.

If, now, there would be no difference whatever between the nature or essence of our body and soul, which is corrupted by Original Sin, and Original Sin, by which the nature is corrupted, it would follow either that God, because he is the creator of this our nature, also created and made Original Sin, which would also be his work and creature; or, because sin is a work of the devil, that Satan would be the creator of this our nature, soul and body, which must also be a work or creation of Satan if, without any distinction, our corrupt nature should be regarded as sin itself; both of which are contrary to the article of our Christian faith. Wherefore, in order that God's creation and work in man may be distinguished from the work of the devil, we say that it is God's creation that man has body and soul. Also that it is God's work that man can think, speak, do and work anything; for "in him we live, and move, and have our being." But that the nature is corrupt, that



its thoughts, words and works are wicked, is originally a work of Satan, who, through sin, thus corrupted God's work in Adam, which from him is transmitted by inheritance to us.

[583] *Secondly*, in the article of Redemption, the Scriptures testify forcibly that God's Son assumed our human nature without sin, so that he was, in all things, sin excepted, made like us, his brethren, Heb. 2:14. Hence all the old orthodox teachers have maintained that Christ, according to his assumed humanity, is of one essence with us, his brethren; for he has assumed a human nature, which in all respects (sin alone excepted) is like our human nature in its essence and all essential attributes, and they have condemned the contrary doctrine as manifest heresy.

If, now, there were no distinction between the nature or essence of corrupt man and Original Sin, it must follow that either Christ did not assume our nature, because he did not assume sin; or that because he assumed our nature he also assumed sin; both of which are contrary to the Scriptures. But inasmuch as the Son of God assumed our nature, and not Original Sin, it is hence clear that human nature, ever since the fall, and Original Sin, are not one thing, but must be distinguished.

*Thirdly*, in the article of Sanctification, Scripture testifies that God cleanses, washes and sanctifies men from sin (1 John 1:7), and that Christ saves his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Sin, therefore, cannot be man himself; for God, for Christ's sake, receives man into grace, but he remains hostile to sin to eternity. Wherefore that Original Sin is baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, sanctified and saved,<sup>18</sup> and other such expressions, whereby we will not offend simple-minded people, that are found in the writings of the recent Manichaeans, are unchristian and dreadful to hear.

*Fourthly*, in the article of the Resurrection, Scripture testifies 46 that it is precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, which will rise again, and that in eternal life we will have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin.

[584] If, now, there were no difference whatever between our corrupt body and soul, and Original Sin, it would follow, contrary to this article of the Christian faith, that either this our flesh will not rise again at the last day,

and that in eternal life we will not have body and soul of the present essence, but another substance (or another soul), because then we will be without sin, or that [at the last day] sin also will rise again, and, in eternal life, will be and remain in the elect.

Hence it is clear that we must reject this doctrine [of the Manichaeans] (with all that depends upon it and follows from it), which asserts and teaches that Original Sin is the nature, substance, essence, body or soul itself of corrupt man, so that between our corrupt nature, substance and essence, and Original Sin, there is no distinction whatever. For the chief articles of our Christian faith forcibly and emphatically testify why a distinction should and must be maintained between man's nature or substance, which is corrupted by sin, and sin, whereby man is corrupted. For a simple statement of the doctrine and its opposite, with respect to the main point involved in this controversy, this is sufficient in this place, where the subject is not argued at length, but only the principal points are treated, article by article.

But with respect to terms and expressions, it is best and surest to use and retain the form of sound words employed concerning this article in the Holy Scriptures and the above mentioned books.

Also to avoid strife about words, equivocal terms,<sup>19</sup> i. e, words and expressions, which may be understood and used in several senses, should be carefully and distinctly explained, as when it is said: God creates the nature of men, where by the term "nature" the essence, body and soul of men are understood. But often the disposition or vicious quality is called its nature, as: "It is the nature of the serpent to bite and poison." Thus Luther says<sup>20</sup> that sin and to sin are the disposition and nature of the corrupt man.

[585] Therefore Original Sin properly signifies the deep corruption of our nature, as it is described in the Smalcald Articles.<sup>21</sup> But sometimes we thereby understand the concrete or the subject, i. e, man himself with body and soul, wherein sin is and inheres, on account of which man is corrupted, infected with poison and sinful, as when Luther says:<sup>22</sup> "Thy birth, thy nature, thy entire essence is sin," i, e. sinful and unclean.

Luther himself declares that by “natural sin,” “personal sin,” “essential sin,”<sup>23</sup> he means that not only words, thoughts and works are sin, but that the entire nature, person and essence of man is entirely corrupted [and is altogether depraved] by Original Sin.

Moreover, as to the Latin terms “substance” and “accident,” we are of the opinion that, in sermons to congregations of plain people, they should be avoided, because such terms are unknown to ordinary men. But when learned men, in treating this subject, employ them among themselves or with others to whom this word is not unknown, as Eusebius, Ambrose and especially Augustine, and also still other eminent church-teachers, from the necessity of explaining this doctrine in opposition to the heretics, they regard them as constituting an “immediate division,” i. e. a division between which there is no mean, so that everything which there is must be either “substance,” i. e. an independent essence, or “accident,” i. e. an incidental matter which does not exist by itself essentially, but in another independent essence, and can be distinguished therefrom; which division Cyril and Basil also use.

[586] And because, among others, it is also an indubitable, indisputable axiom in theology that every substance or self-existing essence, so far as it is a substance, is either God himself or a work and creation of God; Augustine, in many writings against the Manichaeans, in common with all true teachers, has, after due consideration and with earnestness, rejected and condemned the expression: *Peccatum originis est substantia vel natura*, i. e. Original Sin is man’s nature or substance. In conformity with him, all the learned and intelligent also have always maintained that what does not exist by itself, neither is a part of another self-existing essence, but exists, subject to change, in another thing, is not a substance, i. e. something self-existing, but an accident, i. e. something incidental. Thus Augustine is accustomed to speak constantly in this way: Original Sin is not the nature itself, but an *accidens vitium in natura*, i. e. an incidental defect and damage in the nature. In this way also, in our schools and churches, previous to this controversy, [learned] men spoke, according to the rules of logic, freely and without any suspicion [of heresy], and, on this account, were never censured either by Dr. Luther or any orthodox teacher of our pure, evangelical Church.

For since it is the indisputable truth that everything that there is, is either a substance or an accident, i. e. either a self-existing essence or something incidental in it, as has been just shown and proved by the testimony of the church teachers, and no truly intelligent man has ever doubted concerning this; if the question be asked whether Original Sin be a substance, i. e. such a thing as exists of itself, and not in another, or an accident, i. e. such a thing as does not exist by itself, but in another, and cannot exist or be by itself, necessity constrains us, and no one can evade it, to confess directly and candidly that Original Sin is no substance, but an accident.

Hence also the permanent peace of the Church of God with respect to this controversy will never be promoted, but the dissension will rather be strengthened and maintained, if the ministers of the Church remain in doubt as to whether Original Sin be a substance or accident, and whether it be thus rightly and properly named.

Hence if the churches and schools are to be relieved of this scandalous and very mischievous controversy, it is necessary that each and every one be properly instructed concerning this matter.

[587] But if it be further asked as to what kind of an accident Original Sin is, it is another question, and one to which no philosopher, no Papist, no sophist, yea, no human reason, however acute it may be, can give the right explanation, but all understanding and every explanation of it must be derived solely from the Holy Scriptures, which testify that Original Sin is an unspeakable evil, and such an entire corruption of human nature that in it and all its internal and external powers nothing pure or good remains, but everything is entirely corrupt, so that, on account of Original Sin, man is in God's sight truly, spiritually dead, and, with all his powers, has died to that which is good.<sup>24</sup>

In this way, then, by the word "accident," Original Sin is not extenuated [namely] when it is explained according to [the analogy of] God's Word, after the manner in which Dr. Luther, in his Latin exposition of the third chapter of Genesis, has written with great earnestness against the extenuation of Original Sin; but this word is employed only to designate the distinction between the work of God (which is our nature, notwithstanding that it is cor-

rupt) and the work of the devil (which is sin), that inheres in God's work, and is a most profound and indescribable corruption of it.

Therefore Luther also has employed in his treatment of this subject the term "accident," as also the term "quality," and has not rejected them; but likewise, with especial earnestness and great zeal, he has taken the greatest pains to explain and to represent to each and every one what a horrible quality and accident it is, whereby human nature is not merely polluted, but is so deeply corrupted that nothing pure or uncorrupt remains in it, as his words on Ps. 90 run: *Sive igitur peccatum originis qualitatem sive morbum vocaverimus, profecto extremum malum est non solum pati seternam iram et mortem, sed ne agnoscere quidem, quae pateris*. That is: Whether we call Original Sin a *quality* or a *disease*, it is indeed the utmost evil not only to suffer the eternal wrath of God and eternal death, but also not to understand what we suffer. And again on Gen. 3: *Qui isto veneno peccati originis a planta pedis usque ad verticem infecti sumus, siquidem in natura adhuc integra accidere*. That is: We are infected by the poison of Original Sin from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, inasmuch as this happened to us in a nature still perfect.

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1. Cf § 20.↩
  2. Cf. Epitome, Introduction, § 5.↩
  3. The Augsburg Interim of 1548.↩
  4. Matthias Flacius Illyricus and his adherents.↩
  5. ii.: e3, 50.↩
  6. Cf. §§ 11, 28, 38.↩
  7. Part III., Art. i.: 68.↩
  8. Cf. Apology, 11.: 3.↩

9. Cf. Apology, ii.: 49.↩
10. Cf. Epitome, i.: 10; Apology, ii.: 35.↩
11. Cf. Apology, ii.: 5.↩
12. Cf. Epitome, i. 15, note.↩
13. Francke (iii.: 89) directs attention to the fact that the translator of the Latin version has here missed the sense of the original. Cf. § 28.↩
14. § 7.↩
15. § 5 sq., 11.↩
16. Cf. Epitome, i.: 3 sqq.↩
17. 450:13.↩
18. Christopher Irenaeus and other followers of Flacius taught thus. See Carpzov's Isagoge, 1170.↩
19. Cf. Epitome, i.: 22.↩
20. Works, Walch's Ed., v.: 776; xi.: 396 sq.↩
21. Part III., Art. i.: 3.↩
22. See above, § 51.↩
23. Works, Walch's Ed., xi.: 396. Cf. v.: 685 sq.↩
24. Cf. §§ 10, 11.↩

## Chapter II. Of the Free Will, or Human Powers

Parallel Passages. Augsburg Confession, xviii., xx.; Apology, xviii; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. i.; Epitome, ii.

[588] Since a dissent has occurred not only between the Papists and us, but also even among some theologians of the Augsburg can Confession, concerning the free will, we will first of all exactly show the points of the controversy.

For since man, with respect to his free will, can be found and considered in four distinct, dissimilar states, the question at present is not concerning his condition with regard to the same *before the fall*, or his ability *since the fall*, and before his conversion, *in external things* which pertain to this temporal life; also not concerning his ability in spiritual things after he has been *re-generated* and is controlled by God's Spirit; or the sort of a free will he will have when he rises *from the dead*. But the principal question is only and alone as to the ability of the understanding and will of the *unregenerate* man in his conversion and regeneration from his own *powers surviving* since the fall: Whether when the Word of God is preached, and the grace of God is offered, he can prepare himself for grace, accept the same, and assent thereto? This is the question upon which now for quite a number of years there has been a controversy among some theologians in the churches of the Augsburg Confession.

For the one side<sup>1</sup> has held and taught that although man, from his own powers, cannot fulfill God's command, or truly trust, fear and love God, without the grace of the Holy Ghost; nevertheless, before regeneration sufficient natural powers survive for him to prepare himself to a certain extent for grace, and to assent, although feebly; yet, if the grace of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, he could by this accomplish nothing, but must be vanquished in the struggle.

On the other side, the ancient and modern enthusiasts<sup>2</sup> have taught that God, through his Spirit, converts men and leads them to the saving knowledge of Christ, without any means and instrument of the creature, i. e. without the external preaching and hearing of God's Word.

[589] Against both these parties the pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession have taught and contended that by the fall of our first parents man was so corrupted that, in divine things pertaining to our conversion and the salvation of our souls, he is by nature blind when the Word of God is preached, and neither does nor can understand it, but regards it foolishness, and also does not of himself draw nigh to God, but is and remains an enemy of God, until by the power of the Holy Ghost, through the preached and heard Word, out of pure grace, without any co-operation of his own, he is converted, made believing [presented with faith], regenerated and renewed.

In order to explain this controversy in a Christian manner, according to the guidance of God's Word, and by his grace to decide it, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

Namely, that in spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart and will of the unregenerate man cannot, in any way, by their own natural powers, understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work or concur in working anything, but they are entirely dead to good, and corrupt; so that in man's nature, since the fall, there is, before regeneration, not the least spark of spiritual power remaining still present, by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace, or accept the offered grace, or, for and of himself, be capable of it, or apply or accommodate himself thereto, or, by his own powers, be able of himself, as of himself, to aid, do, work or concur in working anything for his conversion, either entirely, or in half, or in even the least or most inconsiderable part, but he is the servant [and slave] of sin (John 8:34; Eph. 2:2,2 Tim. 2:26). Hence the natural free will, according to its perverted disposition and nature, is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God.

This declaration and general reply to the chief question and statement of the controversy presented in the introduction to thin article, the following arguments from God's Word confirm and strengthen, and although they are contrary to proud reason and philosophy, yet we know that the wisdom of this perverted world is only foolishness before God, and that articles of faith should be judged only from God's Word.

[590] For, first, although man's reason or natural understanding has still indeed a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also (Rom. 1:19



sqq.) of the doctrine of the Law; yet it is so ignorant, blind and perverted that when even the most able and learned men upon earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot, from their own powers, perceive, apprehend, understand or believe and regard it true, but the more diligence and earnestness they employ in order to comprehend, with their reason, these spiritual things, the less they understand or believe, and, before they become enlightened or taught of the Holy Ghost, they regard all this only as foolishness or fictions. (1 Cor. 2:14): “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him.” (1 Cor. 1:21): “For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” (Eph. 4:17 sq.): “They” (i. e. those not born again of God’s Spirit) “walk in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (Matt. 13:11 sqq. [Luke 8:18]): “They seeing, see not, and hearing, they hear not, neither do they understand; but it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” (Rom. 3:11, 12): “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

So, too, the Scriptures expressly call natural men, in spiritual and divine things, darkness. (Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:18; John 1:5): “The light shineth in darkness” (i. e. in the dark, blind world, which does not know or regard God), “and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” Also the Scriptures teach that man in sins is not only weak and sick, but also entirely dead (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13).

As now a man who is physically dead cannot, of his own powers, prepare or adapt himself to obtain again temporal life; so the man who is spiritually dead in sins cannot, of his own strength, adapt or apply himself to the acquisition of spiritual and heavenly righteousness and life, unless he be delivered and quickened by the Son of God from the death of sin.<sup>3</sup>

[591] Therefore the Scriptures deny to the understanding, heart, and will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity and ability in spiritual things, to

think, to understand, begin, will, undertake, do, work or concur in working anything good and right, as of himself. (2 Cor. 3:5): "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (Rom. 3:12): "They are altogether unprofitable." (John 8:37): "My Word hath no place in you." (John 1:5): "The darkness comprehendeth" (or receiveth) "not the light." (1 Cor. 2:14): "The natural man perceiveth not" (or, as the Greek word properly signifies, taketh not, comprehendeth not, receiveth not) "the things of the Spirit," i. e. he is not capable of spiritual things; " for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them." Much less can he truly believe the Gospel, or assent thereto and regard it as truth. (Rom. 8:7): "The carnal mind," or that of the natural man, "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." And, in a word, that remains eternally true which the Son of God says (John 15:5): "Without me ye can do nothing." And Paul (Phil. 2:13): "It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." This precious passage is very comforting to all godly Christians, who feel and experience in their hearts a small spark or earnest longing for divine grace and eternal salvation; for they know that God has kindled in their hearts this beginning of true godliness, and that he will further strengthen and help them in their great weakness to persevere in true faith unto the end.

To this also all the prayers of the saints relate, in which they pray that they may be taught, enlightened and sanctified of God, and thereby declare that those things which they ask of God they cannot have from their own natural powers; as in Ps. 119, alone, David prays more than ten times that God may impart to him understanding, that he may rightly receive and learn the divine doctrine. [Very many] similar prayers are in the writings of Paul (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:9; Phil. 1:9). These prayers and the testimonies concerning our ignorance and inability have been written, not for the purpose of rendering us idle and remiss in reading, hearing and meditating upon God's Word, but first that from the heart we should thank God that, through his Son, he has delivered us from the darkness of ignorance and the captivity of sin and death, and, through baptism and the Holy Ghost, has regenerated and illumined us.

[592] And after God, through the Holy Ghost in baptism, has kindled and made a beginning of the true knowledge of God and faith, we should pray

him without intermission that, through the same Spirit and his grace, by means of the daily exercise of reading, and applying to practice, God's Word, he may preserve in us faith and his heavenly gifts, strengthen us from day to day, and support us to the end. For unless God himself be our school-teacher, we can study and learn nothing that is acceptable to him and that is salutary to ourselves and others.

Secondly, God's Word testifies that the understanding, heart and will of the natural, unregenerate man in divine things are not only turned entirely from God, but also turned and perverted against God to every evil. Also, that he is not only weak, feeble, impotent and dead to good, but also through Original Sin is so lamentably perverted, infected and corrupted that, by his disposition and nature, he is entirely evil, perverse and hostile to God, and that, with respect to everything that is displeasing and contrary to God, he is strong, alive and active. (Gen. 8:22): "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Jer. 17:9): "The heart of man is defiant and despairing," or perverted and full of misery, "so that it is unfathomable." This passage St. Paul explains (Rom. 8): "The carnal mind is enmity against God." (Gal. 5:17): "The flesh lusteth against the spirit; . . . and these are contrary the one to the other." (Rom. 7:14): "We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin." And soon afterward (18,23): "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man," which, through the Holy Ghost, is regenerate; "but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin."

[593] If, now, in St. Paul and in other regenerate men the natural or carnal free will, even after regeneration, strives against God's Law, much more perverse and hostile to God's Law and will, will it be before regeneration. Hence it is manifest (as in the article concerning Original Sin it is further declared, to which, for the sake of brevity, we now refer) that the free will, from its own natural powers, not only cannot work or co-work as to anything for its own conversion, righteousness and salvation, or follow, believe or assent to the Holy Ghost, who through the Gospel offers him grace and salvation, but rather from its innate, wicked, perverse nature it hostilely resists God and his will, unless it be enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit.

On this account, also, the Holy Scriptures compare the heart of the unregenerate man to a hard stone, which does not yield to the one who touches it, but resists, and to a rough block, and to a wild, unmanageable beast; not that man, since the fall, is no longer a rational creature, or is converted to God without hearing and meditating upon God's Word, or in external, worldly things cannot understand, or do or abstain from doing, anything of his free will, good or evil.

[594] For, as Doctor Luther says upon Ps. 90: "In worldly and external affairs, which pertain to the livelihood and maintenance of the body, man is intelligent, reasonable and very active, but in spiritual and divine things, which pertain to the salvation of the soul, man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. For man neither sees nor perceives the fierce and terrible wrath of God on account of sin and death [resulting from it], but he continues even knowingly and willingly in his security, and thereby falls into a thousand dangers, and finally into eternal death and damnation; and no prayers, no supplications, no admonitions, yea, also no threats, no reprimands are of any avail; yea, all teaching and preaching are lost upon him, until he is enlightened, converted and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. For this [renewal of the Holy Ghost] no stone or block, but man alone, was created. And although God, according to his just, strict sentence, eternally casts away the fallen evil spirits, he has nevertheless, out of pure mercy, willed that poor fallen human nature might again become capable and participant of conversion, the grace of God and eternal life; not from its own natural [active or] effective skill, aptness or capacity (for the nature of man is perverse enmity against God), but from pure grace, through the gracious efficacious working of the Holy Ghost." And this Dr. Luther calls capacity (not active, but passive) which he thus explains: *Quando patres liberum arbitrium defendunt, capacitatem libertatis ejus prsedicant, quod scilicet verti potest ad bonum per gratiam Dei et fieri revera liberum, ad quod creatum est.* That is: When the Fathers defend the free will, they say of it that it is capable of freedom in so far that, through God's grace, it can be turned to good, and become truly free, for which it was created. Tom. 1, p. 236.<sup>4</sup>

But before man is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed and led by the Holy Ghost, he can of himself and of his own natural powers begin, work or co-operate as to anything in spiritual things, and in his own conversion or regeneration, as little as a stone or a block or clay.<sup>5</sup> For although he can control the outward members and hear the Gospel, and to a certain extent meditate upon it and discourse concerning it, as is to be seen in the Pharisees and hypocrites; nevertheless he regards it foolishness, and cannot believe it, and also in this case he is worse than a block, in that he is rebellious and hostile to God's will, if the Holy Ghost be not efficacious in him, and do not kindle and work in him faith and other virtues pleasing to God, and obedience.

Thirdly, for the Holy Scriptures, besides, refer conversion, faith in Christ, regeneration, renewal, and all that belongs to their efficacious beginning and completion, not to the human powers of the natural free will, either entirely, or half, or the least or most inconsiderable part; but ascribe them *in solidum*, i. e. entirely, alone to the divine working and the Holy Ghost, as also the Apology teaches.<sup>6</sup>

[595] The reason and free will have the power, to a certain extent, to live an outwardly decent life; but to be born anew, and to obtain inwardly another heart, sense and disposition, this only the Holy Ghost effects. He opens the understanding and heart to understand the Scriptures and to give heed to the Word, as it is written (Luke 24:45): "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Also (Acts 16:14); "Lydia heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." "He worketh in us, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). He gives repentance (Acts 5:31; 2 Tim. 2:25). He works faith (Phil. 1:29): "For unto you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him." (Eph. 2:8): "It is the gift of God." (John 6:29): "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." He gives an understanding heart, seeing eyes, and hearing ears (Deut. 29:4; Matt. 13:15). The Holy Ghost is a spirit of regeneration and renewal (Tit. 3:5, 6). He takes away the hard heart of stone, and gives a new tender heart of flesh, that we may walk in his commands (Ez. 11:19; Deut. 30:6; Ps. 51:10). He creates us in Christ Jesus to good works (Eph 2:10), and makes us new creatures (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15). And, in short, every good gift is

of God (James 1:17), No one can come to Christ unless the Father draw him (John 6:44). No one knoweth the Father, save him to whom the Son will reveal him (Matt. 11:27). No one can call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3). “Without me,” says Christ, “ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). All “our sufficiency is of God” (2 Cor. 3:5). “What hast thou which thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7). And indeed St. Augustine writes particularly of this passage, that by it he was constrained to lay aside the former erroneous opinion which he had held concerning this subject. *De Praedestinatione*, cap. 3: *Gratiam Dei in eo tantum consistere, quod in praeconis veritatis Dei voluntas nobis revelaretur; ut autem praedicato nobis evangelio consentiremus, nostrum esse proprium, et ex nobis esse. Item erravi (inquit), cum dicerem, nostrum esse credere et velle; Dei autem, dare credentibus et volentibus facultatem operandi.* That is: “I erred in this, that I held that the grace of God consists alone in that God, in the preaching of the truth, reveals his will; but that we consent to the preached Gospel is our own work, and stands within our own powers.” For St. Augustine also writes further: “I erred when I said that it stands within our own power to believe the Gospel and to will; but it is God’s work to give to them that believe and will the power of working.”

This doctrine is founded upon God’s Word, and conformable to the Augsburg Confession and other writings above mentioned, as the following testimonies prove.

[596] In Article XX. the Confession says as follows: “Because through faith the Holy Ghost is given, the heart thus becomes qualified for the doing of good works. For before, because it is without the Holy Ghost, it is too weak, and besides is in the devil’s power, who drives poor human nature into many sins.” And a little afterward: “For without faith and Christ human nature and ability is much too weak to do good works.”

These passages clearly testify that the Augsburg Confession pronounces the will of man in spiritual things as anything else than free, but says that he is the devil’s captive; how, then, from his own powers, is he to be able to turn himself to the Gospel or Christ?

The Apology teaches of the free will thus: “We also say that reason has, to a certain extent, a free will; for in the things which are to be comprehended by the reason we have a free will.”<sup>7</sup> And a little after: “For such hearts as are without the Holy Ghost are without the fear of God, without faith, without trust towards God they do not believe that God listens to them, that he forgives their sins, and helps them in necessities; therefore they are godless. Now, ‘a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,’ and ‘without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Therefore, although we concede that it is within our ability to perform such an outward work, nevertheless, we say that, in spiritual things, the free will and reason have no ability,” etc.<sup>8</sup> Here it is clearly seen that the Apology ascribes no ability to the will of man, either for beginning good or for itself co-operating.

In the Smalcald Articles the following errors concerning the free will are also rejected: “That man has a free will to do good and omit evil, etc.”<sup>9</sup> And shortly afterward the error is also rejected: “That it is not founded upon Scripture, that, for a good work, the Holy Ghost, with his grace, is necessary.”<sup>10</sup>

[597] It is further maintained in the Smalcald Articles as follows: “And this repentance, in Christians, continues until death, because through the entire life it contends with sin remaining in the flesh, as Paul (Rom. 7:23) shows that he wars with the Law in his members, etc.; and this, not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost, that follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and purges the remaining sins, and works so as to render man pure and holy.”<sup>11</sup> These words say nothing whatever of our will, or that it also of itself works in regenerate men, but ascribe it to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which cleanses man and makes him daily more godly and holy, and thus our own powers are entirely excluded therefrom.

In the Large Catechism of Dr. Luther it is written thus: “And I also am a part and member of the same, a participant and joint owner of all the good it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost, in that I have heard and continue to hear the Word of God, which is the means of entrance. For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christian people. By means of

this congregation he brings us to Christ and teaches, and preaches to us the Word, whereby he works and promotes sanctification, causing [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces.”

In these words the Catechism mentions not a word concerning our free will or co-operation, but refers everything to the Holy Ghost, viz. that, through the office of the ministry, he brings us into the Church of God, wherein he sanctifies us, and so provides that we daily grow in faith and good works.

And although the regenerate, even in this life, advance so that they will what is good, and love it, and even do good and grow in it, nevertheless this (as above quoted) is not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost, as Paul himself speaks concerning this, works “to will and to do” (Phil. 2:13). As also in Eph. 2:10 he ascribes this work to God alone, when he says: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk therein.”

[598] In the Small Catechism of Dr. Luther it is thus written: “I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith,” etc.

And in the explanation of the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer the following words occur: “When is this effected? When our Heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit, so that by his grace we believe his holy Word and live a Godly life,” etc.

These passages declare that, from our own powers, we cannot come to Christ, but God must give us his Holy Ghost, by whom we are enlightened, sanctified, and thus brought to Christ through faith, and upheld in him; and no mention is made of our will or co-operation.

To this we will add a passage in which Dr. Luther expresses himself, together with a solemn declaration added thereto, that he intends to persevere



in this doctrine unto the end, in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper: “Hereby I reject and condemn, as nothing but error all dogmas which extol our free will; as they directly conflict with this help and grace of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. For since, out of Christ, death and sin are our lords, and the devil our god and prince, there can be no power or might, no wisdom or understanding, in us, whereby we can qualify ourselves for, or strive after righteousness and life; but we are evidently the blinded and imprisoned ones of sin and the devil, to do and to think what pleases him and is contrary to God and his commandments.”

[599] In these words Dr. Luther of godly and holy memory ascribes no power whatever to our free will to qualify itself for righteousness or strive after it, but says that man is blinded and held captive, to do only the devil’s will and that which is contrary to God the Lord. Therefore here there is no co-operation of our will in the conversion of man, and man must be drawn and be born anew of God; otherwise the thought of turning one’s self to the Holy Gospel for the purpose of accepting it cannot arise in our hearts. Of this matter Dr. Luther also wrote in his book *De Servo Arbitrio*, i. e. Of the Captive Will of Man, in opposition to Erasmus, and well and thoroughly elucidated and supported this position, and afterward in his magnificent exposition of the book of Genesis, especially of chapter 26, he repeated and explained it. He has there also in the best and most careful way guarded against all misunderstanding and perversion, his opinion and understanding of some other peculiar disputations introduced incidentally by Erasmus, as Of Absolute Necessity, etc.; to which we also hereby appeal, and we recommend it to others.

On this account the doctrine is incorrect by which it is asserted that the unregenerate man has still sufficient power to desire to receive the Gospel and to be comforted by it, and that thus the natural human will co-operates in a manner in conversion. For such an erroneous opinion is contrary to the holy, divine Scriptures, the Christian Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, the Large and the Small Catechisms of Luther, and other writings of this excellent highly [divinely] illumined theologian.

This doctrine concerning the inability and wickedness of our natural free will, and concerning our conversion and regeneration, viz. that it is a work

of God alone and not of our powers, is impiously abused both by enthusiasts and by Epicureans; and by their speeches many persons have become disorderly and irregular, and in all the Christian exercises of prayer, reading and devout meditation have become idle and indolent, as they say that, because from their own natural powers they are unable to convert themselves to God, they will always strive with all their might against God, or wait until God violently convert them against their will; or because they can do nothing in these spiritual things, but everything is of the operation alone of God the Holy Ghost, they will neither hear nor read the Word nor use the sacrament, but wait until God, without means, infuses from heaven his gifts, so that they can truly, in themselves, feel and perceive that God has converted them.

[600] Other desponding hearts [our godly doctrine concerning the free will not being rightly understood] might perhaps fall into hard thoughts and perilous doubt as whether God have elected them, and through the Holy Ghost will work also in them his gifts, especially when they are sensible of no strong, burning faith and sincere obedience, but only weakness, fear and misery.

For this reason we will now relate still further from God's Word how man is converted to God, how and through what means (namely, through the oral Word and the holy Sacraments) the Holy Ghost is efficacious in us, and is willing to work and bestow, in our hearts, true repentance, faith and new spiritual power and ability for good, and how we should act ourselves towards these means, and [how] use them.

It is not God's will that any one should perish, but that all men should be converted to him and be saved eternally. (Ez. 33:11): "As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." (John 3:16): "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

[601] Therefore God, out of his immense goodness and mercy, causes his divine eternal Law and his wonderful plan concerning our redemption, namely, the holy, only saving Gospel of his dear Son, our only Saviour and Redeemer, to be publicly proclaimed; and by this [preaching] collects for

himself from the human race an eternal Church, and works in the hearts of men true repentance and knowledge of sins, and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. And by this means, and in no other way, namely, through his holy Word, when it is heard as preached or is read, and the holy Sacraments when they are used according to the Word, God desires to call men to eternal salvation, to draw them to himself, and to convert, regenerate and sanctify them.<sup>12</sup> (1 Cor. 1:21): “For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” (Acts 10:5, 6): Peter “shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” (Rom. 10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” (John 17:17, 20): “Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth,” etc. “Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” Therefore the eternal Father calls down from heaven, concerning his dear Son, and concerning all who, in his name, preach repentance and forgiveness of sins: “Hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5).

This preaching [of God’s Word] all who wish to be saved ought to hear. For the preaching and hearing of God’s Word are instruments of the Holy Ghost, by, with and through which he desires to work efficaciously, and to convert men to God, and to work in them both to will and to do.

This Word man can externally hear and read, even though he be not yet converted to God and regenerate; for in these external things, as above said, man, even since the fall, has, to a certain extent, a free will, so that he can go to church and hear or not hear the sermon.

Through this means, namely, the preaching and hearing of his Word, God works, and breaks our hearts, and draws man, so that through the preaching of the Law he sees his sins and God’s wrath, and experiences in his heart true terrors, repentance and sorrow [contrition], and, through the preaching and consideration of the holy Gospel concerning the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ, a spark of faith is kindled in him, which accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ’s sake, and comforts itself with the promise of the Gospel, and thus the Holy Ghost (who works all this) is given to the heart (Gal. 4:6).

[602] Although now both, viz. the planting and watering of the preacher, and the running and willing of the hearer, would be to no purpose, and no conversion would follow, if the power and efficacy of the Holy Ghost were not added thereto, who, through the Word preached and heard, enlightens and converts the hearts, so that men believe this Word, and assent thereto; nevertheless neither preacher nor hearer should doubt this grace and efficacy of the Holy Ghost, but should be certain, if the Word of God is preached purely and clearly, according to the command and will of God, and men listen attentively and earnestly, and meditate upon it, that God is certainly present with his grace, and grants, as has been said, what man can otherwise from his own powers neither accept nor give.

For concerning the presence, operation and gifts of the 56 Holy Ghost we should not and cannot always judge from sense, i. e. as to how and when they are experienced in the heart; but because they are often covered and occur in great weakness, we should be certain, from and according to the promise, that preaching and hearing the Word of God is [truly] an office and work of the Holy Ghost, whereby he is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts (2 Cor. 2:14 sqq.) [3:5 sqq.].

But if a man will not hear preaching or read God's Word, but despises the Word and Church of God, and thus dies and perishes in his sins, he neither can console himself with God's eternal election nor obtain his mercy; for Christ, in whom we are chosen, offers to all men his grace in Word and holy sacraments, and wishes earnestly that the Word be heard, and has promised that where two or three are gathered together in his name, and are occupied with his holy Word, he will be in their midst.

But where such a man despises the instrument of the Holy Ghost, and will not hear, no injustice befalls him if the Holy Ghost do not enlighten him, but he be allowed to remain in the darkness of his unbelief, and to perish; for of this it is written (Matt. 23:37): "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

And in this respect it might well be said that man is not a stone or block. For a stone or block does not resist that which moves it, and does not understand and is not sensible of what is being done with it, as a man, as long as

he is not converted, with his will resists God the Lord. And it is nevertheless true that a man before his conversion is still a rational creature, having an understanding and will, yet not an understanding with respect to divine things, or a will to will something good and salutary. Yet he can do nothing whatever for his conversion (as has also been said [frequently] above), and is in this respect much worse than a stone and block; for he resists the Word and will of God, until God awakens him from the death of sin, enlightens and renews him.

[603] And although God does not force man to become godly (for those who always resist the Holy Ghost and persistently oppose the known truth, as Stephen says of the hardened Jews (Acts 7:51), will not be converted), yet God the Lord draws the man whom he wishes to convert, and draws him, too, in such a way that his understanding, in place of darkened, becomes enlightened, and his will, in place of perverse, becomes obedient. And the Scriptures call this “creating a new heart” (Ps. 51:10).

For this reason it cannot be correctly said that man, before his conversion, has a certain *modus agendi*, namely, a way of working in divine things something good and salutary. For inasmuch as man, before his conversion, is dead in sins (Eph. 2:5), there can be in him no power to work anything good in divine things, and therefore he has also no *modus agendi*, or way of working in divine things. But when a declaration is made concerning this matter as to how God works in man, God has nevertheless a *modus agendi*, or way of working in a man, as in a rational creature, quite different from his way of working in another creature that is irrational, or in a stone and block. Nevertheless to man, before his conversion, a *modus agendi*, or any way of working something good in spiritual things, cannot be ascribed.

But when man is converted, and is thus enlightened, and his will is renewed, man (so far as he is regenerate or is a new man) wills what is good, and “delights in the Law of God after the inward man” (Rom. 7:22), and henceforth does good to such an extent and as long as he is impelled by God’s Spirit, as Paul says (Rom. 8:14): “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” And this impulse of the Holy Ghost is not a *coactio* or coercion, but the converted man does good spontaneously, as David says (Ps. 110:4): “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy

power.” And nevertheless that [the strife of the flesh and spirit] also remains in the regenerate, of which St. Paul wrote (Rom. 7:22 sq.): “For I delight in the Law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Also (v. 25): “So then with my mind I myself serve the Law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” Also (Gal. 5:17): “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

[604] From this, then, it follows that as soon as the Holy Ghost, as has been said, through the Word and holy Sacraments, has begun in us this his work of regeneration and renewal, it is certain that, through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can and should co-operate, although still in great weakness. But this does not occur from our fleshly natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Ghost has begun in us in conversion, as St. Paul expressly and earnestly exhorts that “as workers together” we “receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Cor. 6:1). This, then, is nothing else, and should thus be understood, than that the converted man does good to such an extent and so long as God, by his Holy Spirit, rules, guides and leads him, and that as soon as God would withdraw from him his gracious hand, he could not continue for a moment in obedience to God. But if this would be understood thus [if any one would take the expression of St. Paul in this sense], that the converted man co-works with the Holy Ghost, in the manner that two horses together draw a wagon, this can in no way be conceded without prejudice to the divine truth.

[(2 Cor. 6:1): *Σθνεργουντες παραχαλουμεν*: We who are servants or co-workers with God beseech you who are “God’s husbandry” and “God’s building” (1 Cor. 3:9) to imitate our example, that the grace of God may not be among you in vain (1 Cor. 15:10), but that ye may be the temple of God, living and dwelling in you (2 Cor. 6:16)].

Therefore there is a great difference between baptized and unbaptized men. For since, according to the doctrine of St. Paul (Gal. 3:27), all who have been baptized have put on Christ, and thus are truly regenerate, they have now a liberated will, i. e. as Christ says they have been made free again

(John 8:36); for this reason they afterward not only hear the Word, but also, although in great weakness, are able to assent to it and accept it.

[605] For since we, in this life, receive only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new birth is not complete, but only begun in us, combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate man, in which there is a great difference perceptible not only among Christians, in that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but also every Christian experiences in himself that at one time he is joyful in spirit, and at another fearful and alarmed: at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another cold and weak.

But when the baptized have acted against conscience, allowed sin to prevail in them, and thus have grieved and lost the Holy Ghost in them, they need not be rebaptized, but must again be converted, as has been sufficiently said before.

For it is once for all true that in genuine conversion a change, new emotion [renewal] and movement in understanding will and heart must occur, namely, that the heart perceive sin, dread God's wrath, turn itself from sin, perceive and accept the promise of grace in Christ, have good spiritual thoughts, a Christian purpose and diligence, and strive against the flesh. For where none of these occurs or is present there is also no true conversion. But since the question is concerning the efficient cause, i. e. who works this in us, and whence man has this, and how he attains it, this doctrine is thus stated: Because the natural powers of man cannot act or help thereto (1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:5), God, out of his infinite goodness and mercy, comes first to us, and causes his holy Gospel to be preached, whereby the Holy Ghost desires to work and accomplish in us this conversion and renewal, and through preaching and meditation upon his Word kindles in us faith and other divine virtues, so that they are gifts and operations of the Holy Ghost alone. This doctrine also directs us to the means whereby the Holy Ghost desires to begin and work this [which we have mentioned], instructs us how those gifts are preserved, strengthened and increased, and admonishes us that we should not receive this grace of God in vain, but diligently ponder how grievous a sin it is to hinder and resist such operations of the Holy Ghost.

[606] From this thorough explanation of the entire doctrine concerning the free will we can now judge also with respect to the last of the questions upon which, for quite a number of years, there has been controversy in the churches of the Augsburg Confession: (Whether man before, in or after his conversion resists the Holy Ghost, or does nothing whatever, but only suffers what God works in him [or is purely passive]? Whether in conversion man is like a block? Whether the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him? Whether conversion occur by coercion, so that God coerces men to conversion against their wills?), and the opposite dogmas and errors are seen, exposed, censured and rejected, namely:

1. First, the folly of the Stoics and Manichaeans, [who asserted] that everything that happens must so happen, and that man does everything from coercion, and that even in outward things the will of man has no freedom or ability to afford to a certain extent external righteousness and respectable deportment and to avoid external sins and vices, or that the will of man is coerced to external wicked deeds, in chastity, robbery and murder, etc.
2. Secondly, the gross error of the Pelagians, that the free will, from its own natural powers and without the Holy Ghost, can turn itself to God, believe the Gospel, and be obedient in heart to God's Law, and by this, its voluntary obedience, can merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
3. Thirdly, the error of the Papists and scholastics, who have presented it in a somewhat more subtle form, and have taught that man from his own natural powers can make a beginning of doing good and of his own conversion, and that then the Holy Ghost, because man is too weak to bring it to completion, comes to the aid of the good that has been begun from his own natural powers.
4. [607] Fourthly, the doctrine of the Synergists, who pretend that man is not absolutely dead to good in spiritual things, but is badly wounded and half dead. Therefore, although the free will is too weak to make a beginning, and by its own powers to convert itself to God, and to be obedient in heart to God's Law; nevertheless when the Holy Ghost makes a beginning, and calls us through the Gospel, and offers his



grace, the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation, that then the free will, from its own natural powers, meets God, and to a certain extent, although feebly, can act, help and co-operate thereto, can qualify itself for, and apply itself to grace, and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel, and also, in the progress and support of this work, it can co-operate, by its own powers, with the Holy Ghost.<sup>13</sup>

But, on the contrary, it has above been shown at length that such power, namely, the *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*, i. e. to qualify one's self from nature for grace, does not proceed from our own natural powers, but alone from the operation of the Holy Ghost.

5. Also the following doctrine of the popes and monks, that, since regeneration, man, in this life, can completely fulfill the Law of God, and through the fulfillment of the Law be righteous before God and merit eternal life.
6. On the other hand, the enthusiasts should be rebuked with great severity and zeal, and should in no way be tolerated in the Church of God, who fabricate that God, without any means, without the hearing of the divine Word, and without the use of the holy Sacraments, draws man to himself, and enlightens, justifies and saves him.<sup>14</sup>
7. Also those who fabricate that in conversion and regeneration God so creates a new heart and new man that the substance and essence of the old Adam, and especially the rational soul, are altogether annihilated, and a new essence of the soul is created out of nothing.<sup>15</sup> This error St. Augustine expressly rebukes on Psalm 25, where he quotes the passage from Paul (Eph. 4:22): "Put off the old man," etc., and explains it in the following words: "That no one may think that some substance is to be laid aside, he has explained what it is to lay aside the old man, and to put on the new, when he says in the succeeding words: 'Putting away lying, speak the truth.' So that is to put off the old man and to put on the new."
8. [608] Also if the following expressions be used without being explained, viz. that the will of man, before, in, and after conversion, re-

sists the Holy Ghost, and that the Holy Ghost is given to those who resist him.<sup>16</sup>

For from the preceding explanation it is manifest that where no change whatever occurs through the Holy Ghost to that which is good in understanding, heart and will, and man does not at all believe the promise, and is not rendered fit by God for grace, but entirely resists the Word, there no conversion has occurred or can exist. For conversion is such a change through the operation of the Holy Ghost, in the understanding, will and heart of man, that, by this operation of the Holy Ghost, man can receive the offered grace. And indeed all those who obstinately and persistently resist the operations and movements of the Holy Ghost, which take place through the Word, do not receive, but grieve and lose the Holy Ghost.

There remains, nevertheless, also in the regenerate a refractoriness of which the Scriptures speak, namely, that “the flesh lusteth against the spirit” (Gal. 5:17), that “fleshly lusts war against the soul” (1 Pet. 2:11), and that “the law in the members wars against the law of the mind” (Rom. 7:23).

Therefore the man who is not regenerate wholly resists God, and is altogether a servant of sin (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16). But the regenerate delights in the Law of God after the inward man, but nevertheless sees in his members the law of sin, which wars against the law of the mind; on this account, with his mind, he serves the Law of God, but, with the flesh, the law of sin (Rom. 7:25). In this way the correct opinion can and should be thoroughly, clearly and discreetly explained and taught.

[609] As to the expressions of Chrysostom and Basil: *Trahit Deus, sed volentem trahit; tantum velis, et Deus praeoccurrit*, and also the expression of the scholastics [and Papists], *Hominis voluntas in conversione non est otiosa, sed agit aliquid*, i. e. “God draws, but he draws the willing,” and “In conversion the will of man is not idle, but effects something,” (expressions which have been introduced for confirming the natural free will in man’s conversion, against the doctrine concerning God’s grace), from the explanation heretofore presented it is manifest that they are not in harmony with the form of sound doctrine, but are contrary to it, and therefore when we speak of conversion to God should be avoided.

For the conversion of our corrupt will, which is nothing else than a resuscitation of it from spiritual death, is only and alone a work of God, just as also the resuscitation in the resurrection of the body should be ascribed to God alone, as has been above fully set forth and proved by manifest testimonies of Holy Scripture.

But how in conversion, through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, God changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men, and that after such conversion, in the daily exercise of repentance, the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also co-operates in all the deeds of the Holy Ghost, which he works through us, has already been sufficiently explained above.

So also when Luther says<sup>17</sup> that with respect to his conversion man is purely passive, i. e. does nothing whatever thereto, but only suffers what God works in him, his meaning is not that conversion occurs without the preaching and hearing of God's Word; his meaning also is not that in conversion no new emotion is awakened in us by the Holy Ghost, and no spiritual operation begun; but he means that man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot contribute anything or help to his conversion, and that conversion is not only in part, but altogether an operation, gift and present and work of the Holy Ghost alone, who accomplishes and effects it, by his virtue and power, through the Word, in the understanding, will and heart of man, *tanquam in subjecto patiente*, i. e. where man does or works nothing, but only suffers. Not as a statue is cut in a stone or a seal impressed into wax, which knows nothing of it, and also perceives and wills nothing of it, but in the way which is above narrated and explained.

[610] Because also the youth in the schools have been greatly perplexed by the doctrine of the three efficient causes<sup>18</sup> concurring in the conversion to God of the unregenerate man, as to the manner in which they, namely, the Word of God preached and heard, the Holy Ghost and the will of man concur; it is again manifest from the explanation above presented that conversion to God is a work of God the Holy Ghost alone, who is the true master workman that alone works this in us, for which he uses the preaching and hearing of his Holy Word as his ordinary [and lawful] means and instrument. But the understanding and will of the unregenerate man are nothing else than the *subjectum convertendum*, i. e. that which is to be converted, as

the understanding and will of a spiritually dead man, in whom the Holy Ghost works conversion and renewal, for which work the will of the man who is to be converted does nothing, but only lets God work in him, until he is regenerate; and then also by the Holy Ghost he works [cooperates] in other succeeding good works that which is pleasing to God, in the way and to the extent fully set forth above.

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1. Called Philippists.↵
2. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 13.↵
3. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 3.↵
4. Augustine also has written to like effect, lib. 2. Cbnira Julianum. Dr. Luther on Hosea 6; also in the Church-Postils on the Epistle for Good Friday; also on the Gospel for the third Sunday after Epiphany.↵
5. Cf. § 59.↵
6. Art. xviii.: 75.↵
7. Apology, xviii.: 70.↵
8. Ibid., xviii.: 72. 73.↵
9. Part III., Art. i.: v.↵
10. Ibid., § 10.↵
11. Part III., Art. iii.: 40↵
12. § 52; Apology, vii.: 36; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. viii.: 3 sqq. , Sol. Dec. xi.: 76, 77.↵
13. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 11, 12, notes.↵
14. Ibid.. ii.: 18.↵

15. Epitome, ii.: 14.↩

16. Ibid., ii.: 15.↩

17. Cf. Epitome, ii.: 18.↩

18. Melancthon in *Loci Theologici* (1535), Pfeffinger, Strigel and others  
Cf. Epit., ii.: 19.↩

## Chapter III. Of the Righteousness of Faith before God

**Parallel Passages.** Augsburg Confession, iv., vi., xii., xx.; Apology iv.: Smalcald Articles, Part II., Art. i.; Part III., xiii.; Epitome, iii.

The third dissent has arisen among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerning the righteousness of Christ or of faith, which, out of grace, is imputed by God, through faith, to poor sinners for righteousness.

For one side has contended that the righteousness of faith, which the apostle calls the righteousness of God, is God's essential righteousness, which is Christ himself as the true, natural and essential Son of God, who, by faith, dwells in the elect and impels them to do right, and who thus is their righteousness, compared with which righteousness the sins of all men are as a drop of water compared with the great ocean.

On the contrary, others have held and taught that Christ is our righteousness, alone according to his human nature.

[611] In opposition to both these sides, it is unanimously taught by the other teachers of the Augsburg Confession that Christ is our righteousness, not alone according to his divine nature, nor also alone according to his human nature, but according to both natures, who as God and man has, through his complete obedience, redeemed, justified and saved us from our sins; that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and our acceptance as God's children on account of ihQ obedience only of Christ, which alone through faith, out of pure grace, is imputed for righteousness to all true believers, and on account of it they are absolved from all their unrighteousness.

Besides this [controversy] there are on account of the Interim [by occasion of the formula of the Interim or of Inter-religion], and otherwise, still other disputes caused and excited concerning the article Of Justification, which will hereafter be explained in the antithesis, i. e. in the enumeration of those errors which are contrary to the pure doctrine in this article.

This article concerning Justification by Faith (as the Apology says<sup>1</sup>) is the chief in the entire Christian doctrine, without which no poor conscience has

any firm consolation, or can know aright the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: “If only this article remain in view pure, the Christian Church also remains pure, and is harmonious and without all sects; but if it do not remain pure, it is not possible to resist any error or fanatical spirit” (Tom. 5, Jena Ed., p. 159). And; concerning this article Paul especially says that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Therefore, in this article he emphasizes with so much zeal and earnestness the exclusive particles, or the words whereby the works of men are excluded (namely, “without Law,” “without works,” “out of grace” [“freely,” Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Eph. 2:8, 9]), in order to indicate how highly necessary it is that in this article, by the side of the presentation of the pure doctrine, the antithesis, i. e., all contrary dogmas, by this means be separated, exposed and rejected.

Therefore, in order that this dissent may be explained in a Christian way according to God’s Word, and, by his grace, be settled, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

[612] Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we unanimously believe, teach and confess, according to the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession above presented, viz. that a poor sinful man is justified before God, i. e., absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins, and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and adopted into sonship and heirship of eternal life, without any merit or worth of his own, also without all preceding, present or subsequent works, out of pure grace, alone because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord Christ, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness.

[613] These treasures are offered us by the Holy Ghost in the promise of the holy Gospel; and faith alone is the only means whereby we lay hold upon, accept and apply and appropriate them to ourselves. This faith is a gift of God, whereby we apprehend aright Christ our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in him, that for the sake of his obedience alone, out of grace, we have the forgiveness of sins, and before God the Father are regarded godly and righteous, and are eternally saved. Therefore the expressions of Paul, that we are “justified by faith” (Rom. 3:28), or that “faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5), and that we are “made righteous by

the obedience of one” (Rom. 5:19), or that “by the righteousness of one justification of faith came to all men,” (Rom. 5:18), are regarded and received as equivalents. For faith justifies, not because it is so good a work and so fair a virtue, but because, in the promise of the Gospel, it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ; for if we are to be justified thereby, this must be applied and appropriated by faith. Therefore the righteousness which, out of pure grace, is imputed to faith or the believer, is the obedience, suffering and resurrection of Christ, by which he has made satisfaction for us to the Law, and paid the price of our sins. For since Christ is not alone man, but God and man in one undivided person, he was as little subject to the Law, because he is the Lord of the Law, as, in his own person, to suffering and death. Therefore his obedience not only in suffering and dying, but also that he in our stead was voluntarily subject to the Law, and fulfilled it by his obedience, is imputed to us for righteousness, so that, on account of this complete obedience, which by deed and by suffering, in life and in death, he rendered his heavenly Father for us, God forgives our sins, regards us godly and righteous, and eternally saves us. This righteousness is offered us it by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel and in the sacraments, and is applied, appropriated and received through faith, whence believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, sonship and heirship of eternal life.

Accordingly, the word *justify* here means to declare righteous and free from sins, and, for the sake of Christ’s righteousness, which is imputed by God to faith (Phil. 3:9), to absolve one from their eternal punishment. For this use and understanding of this word is common in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. (Prov. 17:15): “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord.” (Isa. 5:23): “Woe unto them which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!” (Rom. 8:33): “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth,” i. e. absolves from sins, and declares exempt.

But because sometimes the word “regeneration” is employed for the word “justification,” it is necessary that this word be properly explained, in order that the renewal which follows the justification of faith may not be con-



founded with the justification of faith, but they may be properly distinguished from one another.

[614] For, in the first place, the word “regeneration” is employed as to comprise at the same time the forgiveness of sins alone for Christ’s sake, and the succeeding renewal which the Holy Ghost works in those who are justified by faith. Again, it is restricted to the remission of sins and adoption as sons of God. And in this latter sense the word is much and often used in the Apology, where it is written: “Justification is regeneration,”<sup>2</sup> although St. Paul has fixed a distinction between these words (Tit. 3:5): “He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost.” As also the word “vivification” has sometimes been used in a like sense.<sup>3</sup> For if a man is justified through faith (which the Holy Ghost alone works), this is truly a regeneration, because from a child of wrath he becomes a child of God, and thus is transferred from death to life, as it is written (Eph. 2; 5): “When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ.” Also: “The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17 [Hab. 2:4]). In this sense the word is much and often used in the Apology.

But again, it is often taken for sanctification and renewal, which succeed the righteousness of faith, as Dr. Luther has thus used it in his book concerning the Church and the Councils, and elsewhere.

But when we teach that through the operation of the Holy Ghost we are born anew and justified, the sense is not that after regeneration no unrighteousness clings any more, in being and life, to the justified and regenerate, but that Christ, with his complete obedience, covers all their sins, which still in this life inhere in their nature. But without regard to this, through faith and for the sake of Christ’s obedience (which Christ rendered the Father for us from his birth to his most ignominious death upon the cross), they are declared and regarded godly and righteous, although, on account of their corrupt nature, they are still sinners, and so remain to the grave [while they bear about this mortal body]. But, on the other hand, the meaning is not that we dare or should, without repentance, conversion and renewal, obey sins, and remain and continue in them.

[615] For true [and not feigned] contrition must precede; and to those who thus, as has been said, out of pure grace, for the sake of Christ the only Me-

diator, without all works and merit, are righteous before God, i. e. are received into grace, the Holy Ghost is also given, who renews and sanctifies them, and works in them love to God and to their neighbor. But since the incipient renewal is in this life imperfect, and sins still dwell in the flesh, even in the regenerate, the righteousness of faith before God consists in the gracious imputation of the righteousness of Christ, without the addition of our works, so that our sins are forgiven us, and covered and not imputed (Rom. 4:6 sqq.).

But here with especial diligence the greatest attention must afterwards be given, if the article of justification is to remain pure, that not that which precedes faith and that which succeeds it be mingled together or inserted as necessary and belonging to it, because to speak of conversion and to speak of justification are not one and the same thing.

For not everything that belongs to conversion belongs likewise to the article of justification, in and to which only the following belong and are necessary: the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which receives this in the promise of the Gospel, whereby the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, whence we receive and have forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, sonship and heirship of eternal life.

Therefore true, saving faith is not in those who are without contrition and sorrow, and who have a wicked purpose to remain and persevere in sins; but true contrition precedes, and genuine faith is in or with true repentance [justifying faith is in those who repent truly, not feignedly].

Love is also a fruit which surely and necessarily follows true faith. For that one does not love is a sure indication that he is not justified, but is still in death, or has lost again the righteousness of faith, as John says (1 John 3:14). But when Paul says (Rom. 3:28): “We are justified by faith without works,” he indicates thereby that neither the contrition that precedes nor the works that follow belong to the article or transaction of justification by faith. For good works do not precede justification, but follow it, and the person must be justified before he can do a good work.

[616] In like manner also, although the renewal or sanctification is also a benefit of Christ the Mediator and a work of the Holy Ghost, it does not be-

long to the article or transaction of justification before God, but follows the same, since, on account of our corrupt flesh, it is not, in this life, entirely perfect and complete, as Dr. Luther has written well concerning this in his excellent and extended exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he says as follows: " We concede indeed that instruction should be given also concerning love and good works, yet in such a way that this be done where and where it is necessary, as, namely, when we have to do with works over and beyond this matter of justification. But here the chief point with which we have to do is this, that the question is not whether we should also do and love good works, but by what means we may be justified before God, and saved. And here we answer with St. Paul: that we are justified alone by faith in Christ, and not by the deeds of the Law or love. Not that we hereby entirely reject works and love, as the adversaries falsely defame and accuse us, but that we dare not allow ourselves to be led away, as Satan would desire, from the chief point with which we have here to do, to another and foreign transaction which does not belong whatever to this question. Therefore, whereas, and as long as, we have to do with this article of justification we reject and condemn works, since this article can admit of no disputation or treatment whatever of the subject of works; therefore in this matter we absolutely sever all Law and works of the Law." So far Luther.

In order, therefore, that troubled hearts may have a firm, sure consolation, and also that due honor be accorded the merit of Christ and the grace of God, the Scriptures teach that the righteousness of faith before God consists alone in the gracious [gratuitous] reconciliation or the forgiveness of sins, which is presented to us out of pure grace, for the sake of the merit alone of Christ as Mediator, and is received alone through faith in the promise of the Gospel. Therefore, in justification before God, faith relies neither upon contrition nor upon love or other virtues, but alone upon Christ, and in him upon his complete obedience, whereby for us he has fulfilled the Law, which [obedience] is imputed to believers for righteousness.

It is also neither contrition nor love or any other virtue, but faith alone, which is the sole means and instrument whereby we can receive and accept the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins, which are offered us in the promise of the Gospel.

[617] It is also correctly said that believers who through faith in Christ are justified, in this life have first the imputed righteousness of faith, and afterwards also the incipient righteousness of the new obedience or good works. But these two must not be confounded or inserted at the same time into the article of justification by faith before God. For since this incipient righteousness or renewal is incomplete and imperfect in us in this life because of the flesh, the person cannot stand therewith and thereby before God's tribunal, but before God's tribunal only the righteousness of the obedience, suffering and death of Christ, which is imputed to faith, can stand, namely, that only for the sake of this obedience the person (even after his renewal, when he has already many good works and is in the best life) is pleasing and acceptable to God, and is received into adoption and heirship of eternal life.

Here belongs also what St. Paul writes (Rom. 4:3), that Abraham was justified before God alone through faith, for the sake of the Mediator, without the cooperation of his works, not only when he was first converted from idolatry and had no good works, but also when he was afterwards renewed by the Holy Ghost, and adorned with many excellent good works (Gen. 15:6; Heb. 11:8). And Paul puts the following question (Rom. 4:1 sqq.): In what, then, did the righteousness, for everlasting life, of Abraham before God, whereby God was gracious to him, and he was pleasing and acceptable to God, consist?

Thereupon he answers: "To him who worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" as David also (Ps. 32:1) speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works.

Therefore, even though the converted and believing have incipient renewal, sanctification, love, virtue and good works, yet these neither can nor should be introduced into or confounded with the article of justification before God, in order that that honor which belongs to him may remain with Christ the Redeemer, and since our new obedience is incomplete and imperfect, tempted consciences may have sure consolation.

[618] And this is the intention of the apostle Paul when in this article he so diligently and earnestly emphasizes the exclusive particles, i. e. the words

whereby works are excluded from the article of justification: *absque operibus, sine lege, gratis, non ex operibus*, i. e. “of grace,” “without merit,” “without works,” “not of works.” These exclusive particles are all comprised in the expression: “By faith alone in Christ we are justified before God and saved.” For thereby works are excluded, not in the sense that a true faith can exist without contrition, or that good works should, must and dare not follow true faith as sure and indubitable fruits, or that believers neither dare nor must do anything good; but that good works are excluded from the article of justification before God, so that in the transaction of the justification of the poor sinner before God they should not be introduced, inserted, or intermingled as necessary or belonging thereto. The true sense of the exclusive particles in the article of justification is this, which should, with all diligence and earnestness, be urged in this article:

1. That thereby [through these particles] all our own works, merit, worth, glory and confidence in all our works in the article of justification be entirely excluded, so that our works be neither constituted nor regarded, either entirely or in half or in the least part, as the cause or merit of justification, upon which God in this article and transaction looks, or we could or should rely.
2. That this office and property abides with faith alone, that it alone, and nothing else whatever, is the means or instrument by and through which God’s grace and the merit of Christ are, in the promise of the Gospel, received, apprehended, accepted, applied to us, and appropriated; and that from this office and property of such application or appropriation, love and all other virtues or works are excluded.
3. [619] That neither renewal, sanctification, virtues nor good works be constituted and appointed *tanquam forma<sup>4</sup> aut pars aut causa justificationis*, i. e. our righteousness before God, or a part or cause of our righteousness, or should otherwise be intermingled under any pretext, title or name whatever in the article of justification as necessary and belonging thereto; but that the righteousness of faith consists alone in the forgiveness of sins out of pure grace, alone for the sake of Christ’s merit; which blessings are offered us in the promise of the Gospel, and are received, accepted, applied and appropriated alone by faith.

Therefore the true order between faith and good works, and also between justification and renewal or sanctification, must abide and be maintained.

For good works do not precede faith, neither does sanctification precede justification. But in conversion, first faith is kindled in us by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. It lays hold of God's grace in Christ, whereby the person is justified. Then, when the person is justified, he is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follow. This should not be understood as though justification and renewal were sundered from one another, in such a manner that a genuine faith sometimes could exist and continue for a long time, together with a wicked intention, but hereby only the order [of causes and effects, of antecedents and consequents] is indicated, as to how one precedes or succeeds the other. For that nevertheless remains true which Luther has correctly said: "Faith and good works [well] agree and fit [are inseparably connected]; but it is faith alone, without works, which lays hold of the blessing; and yet it is never and at no time alone." This has been set forth above.<sup>5</sup>

[620] Many disputations also are usefully and well explained by means of this true distinction, of which the Apology treats in reference to the passage (James 2:20). For when the subject is concerning how faith justifies, the doctrine of St. Paul is that faith alone, without works, justifies (Rom. 3:28), since, as has been said, it applies and appropriates the merit of Christ. But if the question be: Wherein and whereby a Christian can perceive and distinguish, either in himself or in another, a true living faith from a feigned and dead faith, since many idle, secure Christians imagine for themselves a delusion in place of faith, while they nevertheless have no true faith? the Apology gives this answer: "James calls that dead faith where every kind of good works and fruits of the Spirit do not follow."<sup>6</sup> And to this effect the Latin edition of the Apology says: "James is right in denying that we are justified by such faith as is without works, i. e. which is dead."<sup>7</sup>

But James speaks, as the Apology says,<sup>8</sup> concerning the works of those who, through Christ, have already been justified, reconciled with God, and obtained forgiveness of sins. But if the question be asked. Whereby and whence faith has this, and what appertains to its justifying and saving? it is

false and incorrect to say: that faith cannot justify without works; or that faith justifies or makes righteous, so far as it has love with it, for the sake of which love this is ascribed to faith [it has love with it, by which it is formed]; or that the presence of works with faith is necessary if man is to be justified thereby before God; or that the presence of good works in the article of justification, or for justification, is needful; likewise that the good works are a cause without which man cannot be justified, and that they are not excluded from the article of justification by the exclusive particles, as when St. Paul says: “Without works,” etc. For faith makes righteous alone in that, as a means and instrument, it lays hold of and accepts, in the promise of the Gospel, the grace of God and the merit of Christ.

Let this suffice, according to the plan of this document, as a compendious setting forth of the doctrine of justification by faith, which is treated more at length in the above-mentioned writings. From these, the antitheses also, i. e. the false contrary dogmas, are easily understood, namely, that in addition to the errors recounted above, the following and the like, which conflict with the explanation now published, must be censured, exposed and rejected, as when it is taught:

1. <sup>9</sup> That our love or good works are merit or cause, either entirely or even in part, of justification before God.
2. Or that by good works man must render himself worthy and fit that the merit of Christ be imparted to him.
3. [621] Or that our formal righteousness before God is our inherent newness or love, i. e. that our real righteousness before God is the love or renewal which the Holy Ghost works in us, and is in us.
4. Or that the righteousness of faith before God consists of two parts, namely, the gracious forgiveness of sins, and then, secondly, also renewal or sanctification.
5. That faith justifies only initially, or partially, or primarily, and that our newness or love justifies even before God, either completely or secondarily.

6. Also<sup>10</sup> that believers are justified before God, or are righteous before God, at the same time both by imputation and by beginning, or partly by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and partly by the beginning of new obedience.
7. Also that the application of the promise of grace occurs both by faith of the heart and confession of the mouth, and by other virtues. That is: Faith alone makes righteous, for the reason that righteousness by faith is begun in us, or that in justification faith has the preeminence; nevertheless, the renewal and love belong also to our righteousness before God, yet in such a way that it is not the chief cause of our righteousness, but that our righteousness before God is not entire and complete without such love and renewal. Also that believers are justified and righteous before God, at the same time, by the imputed righteousness of Christ and the incipient new obedience, or in part by the imputation of Christ's righteousness and in part by the incipient new obedience. Also that the promise of grace is appropriated by us, by faith in the heart, and confession which is made with the mouth, and by other virtues.

It is also incorrect to teach that man must be saved in some other way, or through something else, than as he is justified before God; so that while we are justified before God by faith alone, without works, yet without works it is impossible to be saved or obtain salvation.<sup>11</sup>

[622] This is false, for the reason that it is directly contrary to the declaration of Paul (Rom. 4:6); "The blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And the basis of Paul's argument is that we obtain salvation just in the same way as righteousness; yea, that precisely by this means, when we are justified by faith, we receive adoption and heirship of eternal life and salvation; and, on this account, Paul employs and emphasizes the exclusive particles, i. e. those words whereby works and our own merits are entirely excluded, namely, "out of grace," "without works," as forcibly in the article concerning salvation as in the article concerning righteousness.

Likewise also the disputation<sup>12</sup> concerning the indwelling in us of the essential righteousness of God must be correctly explained. For although, by



faith, in the elect, who are justified by Christ and reconciled with God, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who is eternal and essential righteousness, dwells (for all Christians are temples of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, who also impels them to do right); yet this indwelling of God is not the righteousness of faith, of which St. Paul treats and which he calls the righteousness of God, for the sake of which we are declared righteous before God; but it follows the preceding righteousness of faith, which is nothing else than the forgiveness of sins and the gracious acceptance of the poor sinner, alone for the sake of Christ's obedience and merit.

Therefore, since in our churches it is acknowledged [established beyond controversy] among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession that all our righteousness is to be sought outside of ourselves and the merits, works, virtues and worthiness of all men, and rests alone upon Christ the Lord; yet it is well to consider in what respect Christ is called, in this matter of justification, our righteousness, namely, that our righteousness rests not upon one or the other nature, but upon the entire person of Christ, who as God and man is our righteousness in his sole, entire and complete obedience.

For even though Christ had been conceived without sin by the Holy Ghost, and thus been born, and in his human nature alone would have fulfilled all righteousness, and yet would have not been true and eternal God, this obedience and suffering of his human nature could not have been imputed to us for righteousness. As also, if the Son of God had not become man the divine nature alone could not have been our righteousness. Therefore we believe, teach and confess that the entire obedience of the entire person of Christ, which he has rendered the Father for us, even to his most ignominious death upon the cross, is imputed for righteousness. For the human nature alone, without the divine, could neither by obedience nor suffering render satisfaction to eternal almighty God for the sins of all the world; and the divinity alone without the humanity could not mediate between God and us.

[623] But because, as above mentioned, the obedience is [not only of one nature, but] of the entire person, it is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, whereby the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, is satisfied, and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel, and upon which faith before God

relies, which God imputes to faith, as it is written (Rom. 5:19): “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (1 John 1:7): “The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sins.” Also: “The just shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4 [Rom. 1:17]).

Thus neither the divine nor the human nature of Christ is of itself imputed for righteousness, but only the obedience of the person who is at the same time God and man. And faith thus regards the person of Christ, who was made subject to the Law for us, bore our sins, and in his going to the Father offered to his Heavenly Father for us poor sinners his entire, complete obedience, from his holy birth even unto death, and who has thereby covered all our disobedience which inheres in our nature, and its thoughts, words and works, so that it is not imputed to us for condemnation, but out of pure grace, alone for Christ’s sake, is pardoned and forgiven.

Therefore we reject and unanimously condemn, besides the above-mentioned, also the following and all similar errors, as contrary to God’s Word, the doctrine of the prophets and apostles, and our Christian faith:

1. When<sup>13</sup> it is taught that Christ is our righteousness before God, alone according to his divine nature.
2. That Christ is our righteousness, alone according to his human nature.
3. That in the expressions of the prophets and apostles, when the righteousness of faith is spoken of, the words “justify” and “be justified” do not signify to declare free from sins and obtain the forgiveness of sins, but in deed and truth to be made righteous, because of love infused by the Holy Ghost, virtues and the works following thence.
4. [624] That faith looks not only to the obedience of Christ, but to his divine nature, as it dwells and works in us, and that by this indwelling our sins are covered before God.
5. That faith is such a trust in the obedience of Christ as can be and remain in a man who has no genuine repentance, in whom also no love follows, but he persists in sins against conscience.

6. That not God, but only the gifts of God, dwell in the believer.

These errors and the like, one and all, we unanimously reject as contrary to the clear Word of God, and, by God's grace, we abide firmly and constantly in the doctrine of the righteousness of faith before God, as in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology which follows it is presented, developed and proved from God's Word.

Concerning what besides is needful for the real explanation of this sublime and chief article of justification before God, upon which rests the salvation of our souls, we will direct every one to the excellent and magnificent exposition by Dr. Luther of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians, and for the sake of brevity to it we hereby refer.

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1. Ch. ii., art. iv.: 2.↩
  2. Ch. ii., art. iv.: 12.↩
  3. Apology, ch . v., art. xii.: 46 sq.↩
  4. Cf. Apology, ch. iii.: 100.↩
  5. See above, 1 25 sqq.↩
  6. Apology, ch. iii.; 127↩
  7. Apology, ch. iii.: 129.↩
  8. Ibid., §§ 126, 130.↩
  9. Errors 2-5 charged both against the Papists and the subscribers to the Augsburg and Leipsic Interims.↩
  10. For Errors 6, 7, see Epitome, iii.: 21, 22.↩
  11. Cf. Epitome, iv.: 7.↩

12. Of Osiander.↩

13. For Errors 1-6, see notes on Epitome, iii.: 13 sqq.↩

## Chapter IV. Of Good Works

Parallel Passages. Augsburg Confession, vi., xx.; Apology (iii.), xx. Smalcald Articles, Part, III., Art. xiii.; Epitome, vi.

A disagreement has occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession also concerning good works. For a part are accustomed to speak in the following words and manner: “Good works are necessary for salvation;” “It is impossible to be saved without good works;” “No one can be saved without good works;” because by the rightly believing good works are required as fruits of faith, and faith without love is dead, although such love is no cause of salvation.

[625] But the other side, on the contrary, have contended that good works are indeed necessary; not for salvation, but for other reasons; and that, on this account, the preceding propositions or expressions used (as they are not in accord with the form of sound doctrine and with the Word, and have been always and are still set over against our Christian faith by the Papists, in which we confess “that faith alone justifies and saves” ) are not to be tolerated in the Church, in order that the merit of Christ our Saviour be not diminished, and the promise of salvation may be and remain firm and certain to believers.

In this controversy also the following controverted proposition or expression was introduced by some few,<sup>1</sup> viz. “that good works are injurious to salvation.” It has also been disputed by some that good works are not “necessary,” but are “voluntary” [free and spontaneous], because they are not extorted by fear and the penalty of the Law, but are to be done from a voluntary spirit and a joyful heart. On the contrary, the other side<sup>2</sup> contend “that good works are necessary.”

This latter controversy was originally introduced with respect to the words “necessity” and “liberty,” because especially the word “necessity” signifies not only the eternal, immutable order according to which all men are indebted and obliged to obey God, but also sometimes a coercion, whereby the Law forces men to good works.

But afterwards there was a disputation not alone concerning the words, but, in the most violent manner, the doctrine itself was called into question, and it was contended that the new obedience in the regenerate, in accordance with the above-mentioned divine order, is not necessary.<sup>3</sup>

In order to explain this disagreement in a Christian way and according to the guidance of God's Word, our doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

First, there is no controversy among our theologians concerning the following points in this article, namely: that it is God's will, regulation and command that believers should walk in good works; and that truly good works are not those which every one, with a good intention, himself contrives, or which are done according to human ordinances, but those which God himself has prescribed and commanded in his Word. Also, that truly good works are done, not from our own natural powers, but when by faith the person is reconciled with God and renewed by the Holy Ghost, or (as Paul says) "created anew in Christ Jesus to good works" (Eph. 2:10).

[626] There is also no controversy as to how and for what reason the good works of believers, although, in this flesh, they are impure and incomplete, please God and are acceptable, namely, for the sake of the Lord Christ, by faith, because the person is acceptable to God. For the works which pertain to the maintenance of external discipline, which are done also by the unbelieving and unconverted, and required of them, although commendable before the world, and besides rewarded by God in this world with temporal possessions; yet, because they do not proceed from true faith, are in God's sight sins, i. e. stained with sin, and are regarded by God as sins and impure on account of the corrupt nature and because the person is not reconciled with God. For "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:18), as also it is written (Rom. 14:23): "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." For the person must first be accepted of God, and that alone for the sake of Christ, if the works of that person are to please him.

[627] Therefore, of works that are truly good and well pleasing to God, which God will reward in this world and the world to come, faith must be the mother and source; and on this account they are correctly called by St. Paul "fruits of faith," as also "of the Spirit." For, as Luther writes in the

introduction of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: "Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us, of God regenerates us, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind and all powers, and confers the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, efficacious, active thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without intermission. It also does not ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked it has wrought them, and is always busy. But he who does not produce such works is a faithless man, and gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith nor what good works are, yet meanwhile babbles and prates, in many words, concerning faith and good works. Justifying faith is a living, firm trust in God's grace, so certain that a man would die a thousand times for it [rather than suffer this trust to be wrested from him]. And this trust and knowledge of divine grace renders him joyful, fearless and cheerful with respect to God and all creatures, which joy and cheerfulness the Holy Ghost works through faith; and on account of this, man becomes ready and cheerful to do good to every one and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace. Therefore it is impossible to separate works from faith, yea, just as impossible as for heat and light to be separated from fire."

But since there is no controversy on this point<sup>4</sup> among our theologians, we will not treat it here at greater length, but only make a simple and plain statement of the controverted points.

And first as to the necessity or voluntariness of good works, it is manifest that in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology the following expressions are often used and repeated: that good works are necessary, which also should necessarily follow faith and reconciliation, also, that we necessarily should do and must do the good works which God has commanded.<sup>5</sup> Thus also in the Holy Scriptures themselves the words "necessity," "needful" and "necessary," also "should" and "must," are used concerning what we are bound to do, because of God's arrangement, command and will, as Rom. 13:5; 1 Cor. 9:9; Acts 5:29; John 15:12; 1 John 4:21.

Therefore it is wrong to censure and reject the expressions or propositions mentioned in this Christian and proper sense, as has been done by some.<sup>6</sup> For it is right to employ them for the purpose of censuring and rejecting the

secure, Epicurean delusion, by which many fabricate for themselves a dead faith or vain persuasion which is without repentance and without good works, as though there could be at the same time in a heart true faith and the wicked intention to persevere and continue in sins — an impossibility; or, as though any one, indeed, could have and retain true faith, righteousness and salvation, even though he be and remain a corrupt and unfruitful tree, whence no good fruits whatever come; yea, even though he persist in sins against conscience, or willfully relapse into these sins — all of which is incorrect and false.

[628] But here also mention must be made of the following distinction, viz. that necessity of Christ's arrangement, command and will, and of our debt, be understood; but not necessity of coercion. That is: When the word "needful" is employed, it should be understood not of coercion, but alone of the arrangement made by God's immutable will, to which we are debtor; for his commandment also shows that the creature should be obedient to its Creator. For in other places, as 2 Cor. 17, 9:7, and in the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon (v. 14), also 1 Pet. 5:2, the term "of necessity" is used for that to which any one is forced against his will or otherwise, so that he acts externally for appearance, but nevertheless without and against his will. For such hypocritical works God will not have [does not approve], but wishes the people of the New Testament to be a "willing people" (Ps. 110:3), and "sacrifice freely" (Ps. 54:7), "not grudgingly or of necessity, but to be obedient from the heart" (2 Cor. 9:7; Rom. 6:17). "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). In this understanding, and in such sense, it is correctly said and taught that truly good works should be done freely or from a voluntary spirit by those whom the Son of God has liberated; as the disputation concerning the voluntariness of good works has been introduced especially with this intention.

But here, again, it is also well to note the distinction of which St. Paul says (Rom. 7:22 sq.) "I delight in the Law of God" [I am ready to do good] "after the inward man. But I see another law in my members," that is not only unwilling or disinclined, but also "warring against the law of my mind." And concerning the unwilling and rebellious flesh Paul says (1 Cor. 9:27): "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," and (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13): "They that are Christ's have crucified," yea, slain, "the flesh with its



affections and lusts.” But the opinion is false, and must be censured, when it is asserted and taught that good works are so free to believers that it is optional with them to do or to omit them, or that they can act contrary thereto, and none the less are able to retain faith and God’s favor and grace.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, when it is taught that good works are needful, the statement must also be made wherefore and for what reasons they are needful, as these causes are enumerated in the Augsburg Confession and Apology.<sup>8</sup>

[629] But here we must be well on our guard lest into the article of Justification and Salvation works may be introduced, and confused with it. Therefore the propositions are justly rejected,<sup>9</sup> “that to believers good works are needful for salvation, so that it is impossible without good works to be saved.” For they are directly contrary to the doctrine concerning the exclusive particles in the article of Justification and Salvation, i. e, they directly conflict with the words by which St. Paul entirely excludes our works and merit from the article of Justification and Salvation, and ascribes everything alone to the grace of God and merit of Christ, as explained in the preceding article. Again they [these propositions concerning the necessity of good works for salvation] take from tempted, troubled consciences the comfort of the Gospel, give occasion for doubt, are in many ways dangerous, strengthen presumption in one’s own righteousness and confidence in one’s own works; besides are accepted by the Papists, and quoted in their interest, against the pure doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Thus they are contrary also to the form of sound words, where it is written that blessedness is only “of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works” (Rom. 4:6). Also in the sixth article of the Augsburg Confession it is written that “we are saved without works, by faith alone.” Thus Luther also has rejected and condemned these propositions:

1. In the false prophets among the Galatians [who led the Galatians into error].
2. In the Papists, in very many places.
3. In the Anabaptists, when they presented this interpretation: “We should not indeed rest faith upon the merit of works, but we should nevertheless regard them as things needful to salvation.”

4. Also in some among his contemporaries, who wished to interpret the proposition thus: “Although we require works as needful to salvation, yet we do not teach to place trust in works.” On Gen. 22.

[630] Accordingly, and for the reasons now enumerated, it should, in accordance with what is right, be settled in our churches that the aforesaid modes of speech should not be taught, defended or excused, but be rejected from our churches and repudiated as false and incorrect, and as expressions which, being renewed by the Interim, originated in times of persecution, when there was especial need of a clear, correct confession against all sorts of corruptions and adulterations of the article of Justification, and were drawn [again] into disputation.

Thirdly, since also it is disputed whether good works preserve salvation, or whether they be needful for preserving faith, righteousness and salvation, and upon this much that is of great importance depends; for “he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matt. 24:13); also (Heb. 3:6, 14): “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;” we must declare precisely how righteousness and salvation are to be maintained in us, lest it be again lost.

And therefore the false Epicurean delusion is to be earnestly censured and rejected, by which some imagine that faith and the righteousness and salvation received can be lost through no sins or wicked deeds, even though willful and intentional, but that even if a Christian without fear and shame indulge his wicked lusts, resist the Holy Ghost, and intentionally acquiesce in sins against conscience, yet that he none the less retains faith, God’s grace, righteousness and salvation.<sup>10</sup>

Against this pernicious delusion the following true, immutable, divine threats and severe punishments and admonitions to Christians who are justified by faith should be often repeated and impressed. (1 Cor. 6:9): “Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, etc., shall inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5): “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Rom. 8:13): “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.” (Col. 3:6): “For which thing’s sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience.”

[631] But when and in what way, from this foundation, the exhortations to good works can be earnestly urged without an obscuration of the doctrine of faith and of the article of Justification, the Apology affords an excellent model, where in Article XX., on the passage (2 Pet. 1:10): “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,” it says as follows: “Peter teaches why good works should be done, viz. that we may make our calling sure, i. e. that we may not fall from our calling if we again sin. ‘Do good works,’ he says, ‘that you may persevere in your heavenly calling, that you may not fall away again, and lose the Spirit and the gifts, which have fallen to you, not on account of works that follow, but of grace, through Christ, and are now retained by faith. But faith does not remain in those who lead a sinful life, lose the Holy Ghost and reject repentance.’”<sup>11</sup> Thus far the Apology.

But, on the other hand, the sense is not that faith only in the beginning lays hold of righteousness and salvation, and afterwards resigns its office to works that they may in the future sustain faith, the righteousness received and salvation; but in order that the promise, not only of receiving, but also of retaining righteousness and salvation, may be firm and sure to us; St. Paul (Rom. 5:2) ascribes to faith not only the entrance to grace, but also that we stand in grace and boast of future glory, i. e. he ascribes the beginning, middle and end, all to faith alone. Also (Rom. 11:20): “Because of unbelief, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith.” (Col. 1:22): “He will present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith.” (1 Pet. 1:5, 9): “By the power of God we are kept through faith, unto salvation.” “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

Since, therefore, from God’s Word it is manifest that faith is the proper and only means whereby righteousness and salvation are not only received, but also preserved by God, the decree of the Council of Trent,<sup>12</sup> and whatever elsewhere<sup>13</sup> is set forth in the same sense, should by right be rejected, viz. that our good works support salvation, or that the righteousness of faith received, or even faith itself, is either entirely or in part supported and preserved by our works.

[632] For although before this controversy some few pure teachers employed such expressions and the like, in the exposition of the Holy Scrip-

tures, yet thereby it was in no way intended to establish the above-mentioned error of the Papists; nevertheless, because afterwards controversy arose concerning such expressions, from which all sorts of offensive amplifications [debates, offenses and dissensions] followed, it is safest of all, according to the admonition of St. Paul (2 Tim. 1:13), to hold non fast to the form of sound words, as the pure doctrine itself, whereby much unnecessary wrangling may be avoided and the Church be preserved from many scandals.

Fourthly, as to the proposition that good works are injurious to salvation, we explain ourselves clearly, as follows: If any one should wish to introduce good works into the article of Justification, or rest his righteousness or trust for salvation thereon, in order to merit God's grace and thereby be saved, to this we say nothing, but St. Paul himself declares, and repeats it three times (Phil. 3:7 sqq.), that to such a man his works are not only useless and a hindrance, but also "injurious." But the fault is not in the good works themselves, but in the false confidence placed upon the works, contrary to the express Word of God.

Nevertheless, it by no means follows thence that we should say simply and barely: "Good works are injurious to believers or to their salvation;" for in believers good works are indications of salvation when they occur from proper causes and for true ends, i. e. as God requires them of the regenerate (Phil. 1:20). Since it is God's will and express command that believers should do good works, which the Holy Ghost works in believers, and with which, for Christ's sake, God is pleased, and to which he promises a glorious reward in this life and the life to come.

For this reason, also, this proposition is censured and rejected in our churches, viz. because it is stated in so absolutely false and offensive a manner, whereby discipline and decency are impaired, and a barbarous, savage, secure, Epicurean life is introduced and strengthened. For what is injurious to his salvation a person should with the greatest diligence avoid.

Since, however. Christians should not be deterred from good works, but should be admonished and urged thereto most diligently, this bare proposition cannot and should not be tolerated, borne or defended in the churches.

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1. Amsdorf, especially.↩
  2. John Agricola. Cf. notes on Epitome, in loco.↩
  3. Thus, the Antinomians.↩
  4. §§ 7, 8.↩
  5. Augsburg Confession, vi.: 1; xx.: 27; Apology, chap. iii.: 68; xx.: 92.↩
  6. See note above, 2 8.↩
  7. Cf. Epitome, iv.: 11.↩
  8. See parallel passages above, § 14.↩
  9. Epit., iv.; 16.↩
  10. Epitome, iv.: 19.↩
  11. Apology, xx.: 90.↩
  12. Sess. vi., Can. xxiv.↩
  13. Melancthon's *Loci Theolgici*, Ed. of 1543, and books of Major and Menius.↩

## Chapter V. Of the Law and the Gospel

Parallel Passages. Apology, iv.: 1 sqq.; 61 sqq. (iii.); 65 sqq., xii.: 59 sqq.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Arts, ii., iv.; Epitome, v.

[633] As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a very brilliant light, which is of service in rightly dividing<sup>1</sup> God's Word, and properly explaining and understanding the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, we must with especial care observe it, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or out of the Gospel a law be made whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached in its purity, and by which also they can support themselves in their most grievous temptations against the terrors of the Law.

But here, likewise, there has occurred a dissent among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession. For the one side<sup>2</sup> asserted that the Gospel is properly not only a preaching of grace, but also that it is at the same time a preaching of repentance, which rebukes the greatest sin, viz. unbelief. But the other side held and contended that the Gospel is not properly a preaching of repentance or of reproof [preaching of repentance, convicting sin], as it properly belongs to God's Law to reprove all sins, and therefore unbelief also; but that the Gospel is properly a preaching of the grace and favor of God for Christ's sake, through which the unbelief of the converted, which previously inhered in them and which the Law of God reprov'd, is pardoned and forgiven.

[634] When we now consider aright this dissent, it is especially caused by this, viz. that the terra "Gospel" is not always employed and understood in one and the same sense, but in two ways, in the Holy Scriptures, as also by ancient and modern church-teachers. For sometimes it is employed so that thereby is understood the entire doctrine of Christ our Lord, which he inculcated in his ministry upon earth, and commanded to be inculcated in the New Testament, and thus comprised the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God, his heavenly Father, as it is written (Mark 1:1): "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." And shortly afterwards the chief heads are stated: "Repentance

and forgiveness of sins.” Therefore when Christ, after his resurrection, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world” (Mark 16:15), he compressed the sum of this doctrine into a few words, when he said (Luke 24:46, 47):”Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.” So, too, Paul (Acts 20:21) calls his entire doctrine the Gospel, but he embraces the sum of this doctrine under the two heads: “Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” And in this sense the general definition, i. e. the description of the word “Gospel,” when employed in a wide sense, and without the peculiar distinction between the Law and the Gospel, is correct, when it is said that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and remission of sins. For John, Christ and the apostles began their preaching with repentance, and explained and urged not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins, but also the Law of God. Afterwards the term “Gospel” is employed in any other, namely, in its peculiar sense, by which it comprises not the preaching of repentance, but only the preaching of the grace of God, as follows directly afterwards (Mark 1:15), where Christ says: “Repent and believe the Gospel.”

[635] But also the term “repentance” is not employed in the Holy Scriptures in one and the same sense. For in some passages of Holy Scripture it is employed and understood with reference to the entire conversion of man, as Luke 13:5: “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” And in chap. 15:7: “Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” But in Mark 1:15, as also elsewhere, where a distinction is made between repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:21) or between repentance and remission of sins (Luke 24:46, 47), repentance means to do nothing else than to truly acknowledge sins, from the heart to regret them, and to abstain therefrom. This knowledge proceeds from the Law, but does not suffice for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the consolatory preaching of the holy Gospel offers to all penitent sinners who are terrified by the preaching of the Law. For the Gospel proclaims the forgiveness of sins, not to coarse and secure hearts, but to the bruised or penitent (Luke 4:18). And that from repentance or the terrors of the Law despair may not result, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be repentance to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10).

For since the mere preaching of the Law, without Christ, either makes men presumptuous,<sup>3</sup> who imagine that by outward works they can fulfill the Law, or forces them utterly to despair, Christ takes the Law into his hands, and explains it spiritually, from Matt. 5:21 sqq.; Rom. 7:14 and 1:18, and thus reveals his wrath from heaven upon all sinners, and shows how great it is; whereby they are instructed in the Law, and from it first learn aright to know their sins — a knowledge to which Moses never could coerce them. For as the apostle testifies (2 Cor. 3:14 sq.), even though Moses be read, yet nevertheless the veil which hangs before the face always remains unre- moved, so that they cannot perceive that the Law is spiritual and how great things it requires of us, and how severely it curses and condemns us be- cause we cannot observe or fulfill it. “Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away” (2 Cor. 3:16).

Therefore the Spirit of Christ must not only comfort, but also, through the office of the Law, reprove the world of sin,<sup>4</sup> and thus do in the New Testa- ment what the prophet calls “a strange work”<sup>5</sup> (viz. reprove), in order that he may do his own work, which is to comfort and preach of grace. For on this account, through Christ, he was obtained [from the Father] and sent to us, and for this reason also is called the Comforter, as Dr. Luther has ex- plained in his exposition of the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, in the following words:

[636] “That is all a preaching of the Law which holds forth our sins and God’s wrath, let it be done how or when it will. Again, the Gospel is such a preaching as shows and gives nothing else than grace and forgiveness in Christ, although it is true and right that the apostles and preachers of the Gospel (as Christ himself also did) sanction the preaching of the Law, and begin it with those who do not yet acknowledge their sins nor are terrified before [by the sense of] God’s wrath; as he says (John 16:8): ‘The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me.’ Yea, what more forcible and more terrible declaration and preaching of God’s wrath against sin is there than the suffering and death of Christ his Son? But as long as this all preaches God’s wrath and terrifies men, it is still properly the preaching neither of the Gospel nor of Christ, but of Moses and the Law, against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never provided and given to us in order to terrify and condemn, but to comfort and cheer



those who are terrified and timid.” And again, “Christ says (John 16:8): ‘The Holy Ghost will reprove the world of sin;’ which cannot happen except through the explanation of the Law” (Jena Ed., vol. ii., p. 455).

So, too, the Smalcald Articles say: “The New Testament maintains and urges the office of the Law, which reveals sins and God’s wrath; but to this office it immediately adds the promise of grace through the Gospel.”<sup>6</sup>

And the Apology says: “To a true and salutary repentance the preaching of the Law is not sufficient, *but the Gospel should be added thereto.*”<sup>7</sup> Therefore the two doctrines belong together, and should also be urged by the side of each other, but in a definite order and with a proper distinction; and the Antinomians or assailants of the Law are justly condemned, who abolish the preaching of the Law from the Church, and wish sins to be reproved, and repentance and sorrow to be taught, not from the Law, but from the Gospel.

But in order that every one may see that in the dissent of which we are treating we conceal nothing, but present the matter to the eyes of the Christian reader plainly and clearly:

[637] We unanimously believe, teach and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, wherein the true, immutable will of God is revealed as to how man ought to be, in his nature, thoughts, words and works, in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God; and it threatens its transgressors with God’s wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. For as Luther writes against the Antinomians: “Everything that reproves sin is and belongs to the Law, whose peculiar office it is to reprove sin and to lead to the knowledge of sins (Rom. 3:20; 7:7);” and as unbelief is the root and spring of all reprehensible sins, the Law reproves unbelief also.

But it is likewise true that the Law with its doctrine is illustrated and explained by the Gospel; and nevertheless it remains the peculiar office of the Law to reprove sins and teach concerning good works.

In this manner the Law reproves unbelief if the Word of God be not believed. Since now the Gospel, which alone peculiarly teaches and commands to believe in Christ, is God’s Word, the Holy Ghost, through the of-

fice of the Law, also reproveth unbelief, i. e., that sinners do not believe in Christ, although it is the Gospel alone which peculiarly teaches concerning saving faith in Christ.

But the Gospel is properly a doctrine which teaches (as man does not observe the Law of God, but transgresses it, and his corrupt nature, thoughts, words and works conflict therewith, and for this reason he is subject to God's wrath, death, all temporal calamities and the punishment of hell-fire) what man should *believe*, that with God he may obtain forgiveness of sins, viz. that the Son of God, our Lord Christ, has taken upon himself and borne the curse of the Law, has expiated and settled for all our sins, through whom alone we again enter into favor with God, obtain by faith forgiveness of sins, are exempted from death and all the punishments of sins, and are eternally saved.

For everything that comforts, that offers the favor and grace of God to transgressors of the Law, is and is properly said to be the Gospel, a good and joyful message that God does not will to punish sins, but, for Christ's sake, to forgive them.

[638] Therefore every penitent sinner ought to believe, i. e. place his confidence alone, in the Lord Christ, that "he was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), who was "made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21), "who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30), whose obedience is reckoned for us before God's strict tribunal as righteousness, so that the *Law*, as above set forth, is a ministration that kills through the letter and preaches condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7), but the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), that preaches righteousness and gives the Spirit (1 Cor. 1:18; Gal. 3:2). Dr. Luther has urged this distinction with especial diligence in nearly all his writings, and has properly shown that the knowledge of God derived from the Gospel is far different from that which is taught and learned from the Law, because even the heathen had to a certain extent, from the natural law, a knowledge of God, although they neither knew him aright nor glorified him (Rom. 1:20 sq.).

These two proclamations [kinds of doctrines] from the beginning of the world have been always inculcated alongside of each other in the Church of God, with a proper distinction. For the successors of the venerated patriarchs, as also the patriarchs themselves, not only constantly called to mind how man was in the beginning created by God righteous and holy, and through the fraud of the serpent transgressed God's command, became a sinner, and corrupted and precipitated himself, with all his posterity, into death and eternal condemnation; but also, on the other hand, encouraged and comforted themselves by the preaching concerning the Seed of the woman, who would bruise the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). Also, concerning the Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (Gen. 22:18). Also, concerning David's Son, who should restore again the kingdom of Israel and be a light to the heathen (Ps. 110:1; Isa. 49:6; Luke 2:32), who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," by whose "stripes we are healed." Isa. 53:5.

[639] These two doctrines we believe and confess, viz. that even to the end of the world they should be diligently inculcated in the Church of God, although with proper distinction, in order that, through the preaching of the Law and its threats in the ministry of the New Testament, the hearts of impenitent men may be terrified, and be brought to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance; but not in such a way that they inwardly despair and doubt, but that (since "the Law is a schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24), and thus points and leads us not from Christ, but to Christ, who "is the end of the Law," Rom. 10:4), they be on the other hand comforted and strengthened by the preaching of the holy *Gospel* concerning Christ our Lord, viz. that to those who believe the Gospel, God, through Christ, forgives all their sins, adopts them for his sake as children, and out of pure grace, without any merit on their part, justifies and saves them, but nevertheless not in such a way that they abuse and sin against the grace of God. Paul (2 Cor. 3:7 sqq.) thoroughly and forcibly shows this distinction between the Law and the Gospel.

Therefore, in order that the two doctrines, viz. that of the Law and that of the Gospel, be not mingled and confounded with one another, and to the one that be ascribed which belongs to the other, whereby the merit and benefits of Christ are obscured and the Gospel made again a doctrine of the Law, as

has occurred in the Papacy, and thus Christians be deprived of the true comfort which in the Gospel they have against the terrors of the Law, and the door be again opened in the Church of God to the Papacy; the true and proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel must with all diligence be inculcated and preserved, and whatever gives occasion for confusion between the Law and the Gospel, i. e. whereby the two doctrines, Law and Gospel, may be confounded and mingled into one doctrine, should be diligently avoided. It is on this account dangerous and wrong to convert the Gospel, properly called as distinguished from the Law, into a preaching of repentance or reproof [a preaching of repentance, reproving sin].<sup>8</sup> For otherwise, if understood in a general sense of the whole doctrine, as the Apology also sometimes says, the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins.<sup>9</sup> But close by the Apology also shows that the Gospel is properly the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and of justification through Christ; but that the Law is a doctrine which reproves sins and condemns.

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1. Apology, chap. iii.: 66.↩
  2. Epitome, iv.: 19.↩
  3. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. ii.: 3.↩
  4. John 16:8.↩
  5. Isa. 28:21. Cf. Apology, xii.: 61.↩
  6. Part III.. Art. ill.: 1, 4.↩
  7. Ibid., chap, (iii.): 139.↩
  8. Cf. Formula of Concord, Epitome, v.: 11.↩
  9. Ibid., § 1.↩

## Chapter VI. Of the Third Use of the Divine Law

Parallel Passages. Epit., vi.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. iii.: 36, Sol. Dec, ii: 63 sqq.

[640] Since the Law of God is useful, not only that thereby, external discipline and decency be maintained against wild, disobedient men; likewise, that through it men be brought to a knowledge of their sins; but even when they have been born anew by the Spirit of God and converted to the Lord, and thus the veil of Moses has been removed from them, they live and walk in the Law; a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning this last use of the Law. For the one side<sup>1</sup> taught and maintained that the regenerate should not learn the new obedience, or in what good works they ought to walk, from the Law; neither is this doctrine to be urged thence, because they have been liberated by the Son of God, have become the temples of his Spirit, and therefore are free, so that, just as the sun of itself without any constraint fulfils its course, so also they of themselves, by the prompting and impulse of the Holy Ghost, do what God requires of them. The other side taught, on the contrary: Although the truly believing are really moved by God's Spirit, and thus, according to the inner man, do God's will from a free spirit; yet the Holy Ghost uses with them the written law for instruction, whereby even the truly believing may learn to serve God, not according to their own thoughts, but according to his written Law and Word, which are a sure rule and standard of a godly life and walk, directed according to the eternal and immutable will of God.

For the explanation and final settlement of this dissent we unanimously believe, teach and confess that although the truly believing and truly converted to God and justified Christians are liberated and made free from the curse of the Law; yet that they should daily exercise themselves in the Law of the Lord, as it is written (Ps. 1:2; 119:1): "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in his Law doth he meditate day and night." For the Law is a mirror, in which the will of God and what pleases him are exactly represented, so that it should be constantly held forth to believers and be diligently urged upon them without intermission.

[641] For although "the Law is not made for a righteous man," as the apostle testifies (1 Tim. 1:9), "but for the unrighteous," yet this is not to be un-

derstood so absolutely as that the justified should live without law. For the Law of God is written in their heart, and to the first man immediately after his creation a law also was given, according to which he should have acted. But the meaning of St. Paul is that the Law cannot burden with its curse those who through Christ are reconciled to God, and need not vex with its coercion the regenerate, because, after the inner man, they have pleasure in God's Law.<sup>2</sup>

And indeed, if the believing and elect children of God would be completely renewed by the indwelling Spirit in this life, so that in their nature and all its powers they would be entirely free from sin, they would need no law, and so also no impeller, but what they are in duty bound to do according to God's will they would do of themselves, and altogether voluntarily, without any instruction, admonition, solicitation or urging of the Law; just as the sun, the moon and all the constellations of heaven have of themselves, unobstructed, their regular course, without admonition, solicitation, urging, force or necessity, according to the arrangement of God which God once gave them, yea, just as the holy angels render an entirely voluntary obedience.

But since in this life believers have not been renewed perfectly or completely, *completive vel consummative* [as the ancients say], (for although their sins are covered by the perfect obedience of Christ, so that they are not imputed to believers for condemnation, and also, through the Holy Ghost, the mortification of the old Adam and the renewal in the spirit of their mind is begun), nevertheless the old Adam always clings to them in their nature and all its internal and external powers. Of this the apostle has written (Rom. 7:18sq.): "I know that in me [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing." And again: "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Again: "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Also (Gal. 5:17): "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

[642] Therefore, because of these lusts of the flesh, the truly believing, elect and regenerate children of God require not only the daily instruction and

admonition, warning and threatening of the Law, but also frequently re-proofs, whereby they are roused [the old man is shaken from them] and follow the Spirit of God, as it is written (Ps. 119:71): “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.” And again (1 Cor. 9:27): “I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” And again (Heb. 12:8): “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons;” as Dr. Luther in more words has fully explained in the summer part of the Church Postils, on the Epistle for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

But we must also separately explain what with respect to the new obedience of believers the Gospel does, affords and works, and what herein, so far as concerns the good works of believers, is the office of the Law.

For the Law says indeed that it is God’s will and command that we should walk in a new life, but it does not give the power and faculty so that we can begin and do it; but the Holy Ghost, who is given and received, not through the Law, but through the preaching of the Gospel (Gal. 3:14), renews the heart. Afterwards the Holy Ghost employs the Law, so that from it he teaches the regenerate, and in the Ten Commandments points out and shows them “what is the good and acceptable will of God” (Rom. 12:2), in what good works “God hath before ordained that they should walk” (Eph. 2:10). He exhorts them thereto, and when, because of the flesh in them, they are idle, negligent and rebellious, he reproveth them on that account through the Law, so that he carries on both offices together; he slays and makes alive, he leads to hell and brings up again. For his office is not only to console, but also to *reprove* as it is written: “When the Holy Ghost is come, he will reprove the world” (under which also is the old Adam) “of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment.” But sin is everything that is contrary to God’s Law. And St. Paul says: “All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,” etc., and to reprove is the peculiar office of the Law. Therefore as often as believers stumble they are reproveth by the Holy Ghost from the Law, and by the same Spirit are again comforted and consoled with the preaching of the Holy Gospel.

[643] But in order that, so far as possible, all misunderstanding may be avoided, and the distinction between the works of the Law and those of the Spirit be properly taught and preserved, it is to be noted with especial diligence that when the subject of good works which are in accordance with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works) is treated, the word "Law" has only one sense, viz. the immutable will of God, according to which men should conduct themselves in their lives.

But there is a distinction in the works, because of the distinction with respect to the men who strive to live according to this Law and will of God. For as long as man is not regenerate, and conducts himself according to the Law, and does the works because they are thus commanded, from fear of punishment or desire for reward, he is still under the Law, and his works are properly called by St. Paul works of the Law, for they are extorted by the Law, as those of slaves; and they are saints after the order of Cain [that is, hypocrites].

But when man is born anew by the Spirit of God, and liberated from the Law, i. e. made exempt from this coercion, and is led by the Spirit of Christ, he lives according to the immutable will of God, comprised in the Law, and does everything, so far as he is born anew, out of a free, cheerful spirit; and this is called not properly a work of the Law, but a work and fruit of the Spirit, or as St. Paul names it "the law of the mind" and "the Law of Christ." For such men are no more under the Law, but under grace, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8 [Rom. 7:23; 8:2; 1 Cor. 9:21]).

But since believers are not, in this world, completely renewed, but the old Adam clings to them even to the grave, there also remains in them a struggle between the spirit and the flesh. Therefore they have indeed pleasure in God's Law according to the inner man, but the law in their members struggles against the law in their mind to such an extent that they are never without law, and nevertheless are not under, but in the Law, and live and walk in the Law of the Lord, and yet do nothing from *constraint* of the Law.

But so far as concerns the old Adam, which still clings to them, it must be urged on not only with the Law, but also with punishments; nevertheless it does everything against its will and under coercion, no less than the godless



are urged and held in obedience by the threats of the Law (1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 7:18, 19).

[644] So, too, this doctrine of the Law is needful for believers, in order that they may not depend upon their own holiness and devotion, and under the pretext of the Spirit of God establish a self-chosen form of divine worship, without God's Word and command, as it is written (Deut. 12:8, 28, 32): "Ye shall not do . . . every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes ' etc., but"observe and hear all these words which I command thee." "Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish therefrom."

So, too, the doctrine of the Law, in and with good works of believers, is needful for this reason, for otherwise man can easily imagine that his work and life are entirely pure and perfect. But the Law of God prescribes to believers good works in this way, that, at the same time, it shows and indicates, as in a mirror, that in this life they are still imperfect and impure in us, so that we must say with the apostle (1 Cor. 4:4): "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified." Therefore, when Paul exhorts the regenerate to good works, he presents to them expressly the Ten Commandments (Rom. 13:9), and that his good works are imperfect and impure he recognizes from the Law (Rom. 7:7 sqq.); and David declares (Ps. 119:35): "I have run the way of thy commandments," but "enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143:2).

But how and why the good works of believers, although in this life, because of sin in the flesh, they are imperfect and impure, nevertheless are acceptable and well pleasing to God, the Law does not teach, as it requires an entire, perfect, pure obedience if it is to please God. But the Gospel teaches that our spiritual offerings are acceptable to God, through faith, for Christ's sake (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 11:4 sqq.). In this way Christians are not under the Law, but under grace, because by faith in Christ the persons [of the godly] are freed from the curse and condemnation of the Law; and because their good works, although they are still imperfect and impure, are acceptable, through Christ, to God, because they do, not by coercion of the Law, but by renewing of the Holy Ghost, voluntarily and spontaneously from their hearts, what is pleasing to God, so far as they have been born anew accord-

ing to the inner man; although nevertheless they maintain a constant struggle against the old Adam.

[645] For the old Adam, as an intractable, pugnacious ass, is still a part of them, which is to be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the doctrine, admonition, force and threatening of the Law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles, until the sinful flesh is entirely put off, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection, where he needs no longer either the preaching of the Law or its threatenings and reproofs, as also no longer the Gospel; as these belong to this [mortal and] imperfect life. But as they will behold God face to face, so, through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, will they do the will of God [the heavenly Father] with unmingled joy, voluntarily, unconstrained, without any hindrance, with entire purity and perfection, and will eternally rejoice in him.

Accordingly, we reject and condemn as an error pernicious and prejudicial to Christian discipline, as also to true piety, the teaching that the Law, in the above-mentioned way and degree, should not be urged upon Christians and those truly believing, but only upon the unbelieving, not Christian, and impenitent.

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1. See Epitome, vi.: 1.↩

2. Rom. 7:22.↩

## Chapter VII. Of the Holy Supper

Parallel Passages. Augsburg Confession, x.; Apology, x.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. vi.; Small Catechism, Part V.; Large Catechism, Part V., 499; Epitome, vii.

[646] Although perhaps, according to the opinion of some, the exposition of this article should not be inserted into this document, wherein it has been our intention to explain the articles which have been drawn into controversy among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession (from which the Sacramentarians almost in the beginning, when the Confession was first composed and presented to the Emperor at Augsburg in 1530, entirely withdrew and separated, and presented their own Confession<sup>1</sup>), yet, alas! as we have still some theologians and others who glory in the Augsburg Confession, who in the last few years no longer secretly, but partly publicly, have given their assent in this article to the Sacramentarians, and against their own conscience have wished violently to cite and pervert the Augsburg Confession as in entire harmony in this article with the doctrine of the Sacramentarians; we neither can nor should forbear in this document to give testimony in accordance with our confession of divine truth, and to repeat the true sense and proper understanding, with reference to this article, of the Word of Christ and of the Augsburg Confession, and [for we recognize it to be our duty] so far as in us lies, by God's help, to preserve it [this pure doctrine] also to posterity, and to faithfully warn our hearers, together with other godly Christians, against this pernicious error, which is entirely contrary to the divine Word and the Augsburg Confession, and has been frequently condemned.

### *Statement of the Controversy.*

The Chief Conflict between our Doctrine and that of the Sacramentarians in this Article,

Although some Sacramentarians strive to speak and to employ words the very nearest the Augsburg Confession and the form and mode of these churches, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly re-

ceived by believers,<sup>2</sup> yet if they be forced to declare their meaning properly, sincerely and clearly, they all unanimously explain themselves thus, viz. that the true essential body and blood of Christ is as far from the consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Supper as the highest heaven is distant from the earth. For their own words run thus: *Abesse Christi corpus et sanguinem a signis tan to intervallo dicimus, quanto abest terra ab altissimis coelis*. That is: “We say that the body and blood of Christ are as far from the signs as the earth is distant from the highest heaven.” Therefore, they understand this presence of the body of Christ not as here upon earth, but only with respect to faith [when they speak of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, they do not mean that they are present upon earth, except with respect to faith], i. e. that our faith, reminded and excited by the visible signs, as by the preached Word, elevates itself and rises up above all heavens, and there receives and enjoys the body of Christ, which is present there in heaven, yea, Christ himself, together with all his benefits, in a true and essential, but nevertheless *only spiritual*, manner. For [they think that] as the bread and wine are here upon earth and not in heaven, so the body of Christ is now in heaven and not upon earth, and on this account nothing else is received by the mouth in the Holy Supper but bread and wine.

[647] In the first place, they<sup>3</sup> have alleged that the Lord’s Supper is only an external sign, whereby Christians may be known, and that therein nothing else is offered but mere bread and wine (which are bare signs [symbols] of the absent body of Christ). Since this would not stand the test, they have confessed that the Lord Christ is truly present in his Supper, namely by the *communicatio idiomatum*,<sup>4</sup> i. e. alone according to his divine nature, but not with his body and blood.

Afterwards, when they were forced by Christ’s words to confess that the body of Christ is present in the Supper, they still understood and declared it in no other way than spiritually, that is, through faith to partake of his power, efficacy and benefits [than that they believed the presence only spiritual, i. e. that Christ only makes us partakers of his power, efficacy and benefits], because [they say] through the Spirit of Christ, who is everywhere, our bodies, in which the Spirit of Christ dwells here upon earth, are united with the body of Christ; which is in heaven.

Thus through these grand, plausible words many great men were deceived when they proclaimed and boasted that they were of no other opinion than that the Lord Christ is present in his Holy Supper truly, essentially, and as one alive; but they understand this alone according to his divine nature, and not of his body and blood, which are now in heaven, and m>\* where else [for they think concerning these that they are only in heaven, etc.], and that he gives us with the bread and wine his true body and blood to eat, that we may partake of them spiritually through faith, but not bodily with the mouth.

[648] For they understand the words of the Supper: “Eat, this is my body,” not properly, as they sound, according to the letter, but as figurative expressions; thus, that “eating” the body of Christ means nothing else than “believing,” and that “body” is equivalent to “symbol,” i. e. a sign or figure of the body of Christ, which is not in the Supper on earth, but alone in heaven. The word is they interpret sacramentally, or in a significative manner, in order that no one may regard the thing so joined with the signs, that the flesh also of Christ is now present on earth in an invisible and incomprehensible manner. That is: “The body of Christ is united with the bread sacramentally, or significatively, so that believing, godly Christians as surely partake spiritually of the body of Christ, which is above in heaven, as with the mouth they eat the bread.” But that the body of Christ is present here upon earth in the Supper essentially although invisibly and incomprehensibly, and is received orally, with the consecrated bread, even by hypocrites or those who are Christians only in appearance [by name], this they are accustomed to execrate and condemn as a horrible blasphemy.

On the other hand, it is taught in the Augsburg Confession from God’s Word concerning the Lord’s Supper, thus: “That the true body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Holy Supper under the form of bread and wine, and are there communicated and received, and the contrary doctrine is rejected” (namely, that of the Sacramentarians, who at the same time at Augsburg presented their own Confession,<sup>5</sup> that the body of Christ, because he has ascended to heaven, is not truly and essentially present here upon earth in the sacrament [which denied the true and substantial presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper administered on earth, on this account, viz. because Christ had ascended into heaven].

For this opinion is clearly expressed in Luther's Small Catechism in the following words: "The sacrament of the altar is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself." Still more clearly in the Apology is this not only declared, but also established by the passage from Paul (1 Cor. 10:16), and by the testimony of Cyril, in the following words: "The tenth article has been received [approved], in which we confess that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and are truly offered with the visible elements, bread and wine, to those who receive the sacrament. For since Paul says: 'The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ,' etc., it would follow, if the body of Christ were not, but only the Holy Ghost were truly present, that the bread is not a communion of the body, but of the Spirit of Christ. Thus we know that not only the Romish, but also the Greek Church, has taught the bodily presence of Christ in the Holy Supper."<sup>6</sup> And testimony is also produced from Cyril that Christ also dwells bodily in us in the Holy Supper by the communication of his flesh.<sup>7</sup>

[649] Afterwards, when those who at Augsburg delivered their Confession concerning this article seemed to be willing to approve the Confession of our churches, the following *Formula Concordiae*,<sup>8</sup> i. e. articles of Christian agreement between the Saxon theologians and those of Upper Germany, was composed and signed at Wittenberg in the year 1536, by Dr. Martin Luther and other theologians on both sides:

"We have heard how Mr. Martin Bucer explained his own opinion, and that of other preachers who came with him from the cities, concerning the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, viz. as follows:<sup>9</sup>

"They confess, according to the words of Irenaeus, that in this sacrament there are two things, a heavenly and an earthly. Therefore they hold and teach that, with the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, offered and received. And although they believe in no transubstantiation, i. e. an essential transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, and also do not hold that the body and blood of Christ are included locally, i. e. with respect to space, in the bread, or are otherwise permanently united therewith apart from the use of the

sacrament; yet they concede that through the sacramental union the bread is the body of Christ, etc. [that when the bread is offered the body of Christ is at the same time present, and is truly tendered]. For apart from use, if the bread be laid by and preserved in a pyx, or be carried about and exhibited in processions, as occurs in the Papacy, they do not hold that the body of Christ is present.

“Secondly, they hold that the institution of this sacrament made by Christ is efficacious in Christendom [the Church], and that it does not depend upon the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister who offers the sacrament or of the one who receives it. Therefore, as St. Paul says, that even the unworthy partake of the sacrament,<sup>10</sup> they hold that also to the unworthy the body and blood of Christ are truly offered, and the unworthy truly receive them, where the institution and command of the Lord Christ are observed. But such persons receive them to condemnation,<sup>11</sup> as St. Paul says; for they abuse the holy sacrament, because they receive it without true repentance and without faith. For it was instituted for this purpose, viz. that it might testify that to them the grace and benefits of Christ are there applied, and that they are incorporated into Christ and are washed by his blood, who there truly repent and comfort themselves by faith in Christ.”

[650] In the following year, when the chief theologians of the Augsburg Confession assembled from all Germany at Smalcald, and deliberated as to what to present in the Council concerning this doctrine of the Church, by common consent the Smalcald Articles were composed by Dr. Luther, and were signed by all the theologians, collectively and individually, in which the true and proper opinion is clearly expressed in short, plain words, which agree most accurately with the words of Christ, and every door and mode of escape for the Sacramentarians was closed. For they had interpreted to their advantage [perverted] the Formula of Concord, i. e. the above-mentioned articles of union, framed the preceding year, so that it should be understood that the body of Christ is offered with the bread in no other way than as it is offered, together with all his benefits, by the Word of the Gospel, and that by the sacramental union nothing else than the spiritual presence of the Lord Christ by faith is meant. These articles, therefore, declare: “The bread and wine in the Holy Supper are the true body and blood of Jesus Christ,

which are tendered and received, not only by the godly, but also by godless Christians”<sup>12</sup> [those who have nothing Christian except the name].

Dr. Luther has also more amply expounded and confirmed this opinion from God’s Word in the Large Catechism,<sup>13</sup> where it is written:

[651] “What is therefore the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer: It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in and under the bread and wine, which we Christians are commanded by the Word of Christ to eat and to drink.” And shortly after: “It is the Word, I say, which makes and distinguishes this sacrament, so that it is not mere bread and wine, but is, and is properly called the body and blood of Christ.[^bli] Again:”With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, raise the objection, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in his little finger. For here stands the Word of Christ: ‘Take, eat; this is my body. Drink ye all of this; this is the new testament in my blood,’ etc. Here we abide, and would like to see those who will constitute themselves his masters, and make it different from what he has spoken. It is true, indeed, that if you take away the Word, or regard it without the Word, you have nothing but mere bread and wine. But if the Word be added thereto, as it must be, then in virtue of the same it is truly the body and blood of Christ. For as the lips of Christ have spoken, so it is, as he can never lie or deceive.

"Hence it is easy to reply to all manner of questions about which at the present time men are anxious, as, for instance: Whether a wicked priest can administer and distribute the sacrament? and such like other points. For here conclude and reply: Even though a knave take or distribute the sacrament, he receives the true sacrament, i. e. the true body and blood of Christ, just as truly as he who receives or administers it in the most worthy manner. For it is not founded upon the holiness of men, but upon the Word of God. And as no saint upon earth, yea, no angel in heaven, can change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, so also can no one change or alter it, even though it be abused.

“For the Word, by which it became a sacrament and was instituted, does not become false because of the person or his unbelief. For he does not say: If



you believe or are worthy you will receive my body and blood, but: ‘Take, eat and drink; this is my body and blood.’ Likewise: ‘Do this’ (viz. what I now do, institute, give and bid you take). That is as much as to say, No matter whether you be worthy or unworthy, you have here his body and blood, by virtue of these words which are aided to the bread and wine. This mark and observe well; for upon these words rest all our foundation, protection and defense against all error and temptation that have ever come or may yet come.”

[652] Thus far the Large Catechism, in which the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is established from God’s Word; and the same is understood not only of the believing and worthy, but also of the unbelieving and unworthy.

But inasmuch as this highly-illuminated man [Dr. Luther, the hero illumined with unparalleled and most excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost] foresaw that after his death some would suspect that he had receded from the above-mentioned doctrine and other Christian articles, he has appended the following protest to his Large Confession:

“Because I see the longer the time the greater the number of sects and errors, and that there is no end to the rage and fury of Satan, in order that henceforth during my life, and after my death, some of them may not, in future, support themselves by me, and in order to strengthen their error falsely quote my writings, as the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists begin to do; I will in this writing, before God and all the world, confess my faith, point by point [concerning all the articles of our religion]. In this I intend to abide until my death, and therein (and may God help me as to this!) to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; and if after my death any one will say: If Dr. Luther were now living he would teach and hold this or that article differently, for he did not sufficiently consider it, against this I say now as then, and then as now, that, by God’s grace, I have most diligently considered all these articles by means of the Scriptures [have examined them, not once, but very often, according to the standard of Holy Scripture], and often have gone over them, and will contend as confidently for them as I am now contending for the Sacrament of the Altar. I am not drunk or inconsiderate; I know what I say; I also am sen-

sible of the account which I will render at the coming of the Lord Christ at the final judgment. Therefore no one should interpret this as jest or mere idle talk; to me it is serious; for by God's grace I know Satan in great part; if he can pervert or confuse God's Word, what will he not do with my words or those of another?"

[653] After this protest. Dr. Luther, of holy memory, presents among other articles this also: "In the same manner I also speak and confess" (he says) "concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, that there the body and blood of Christ are in truth orally eaten and drunken in the bread and wine, even though the priests [ministers] who administer it [the Lord's Supper], or those who receive it, do not believe or otherwise abuse it. For it does not depend upon the faith or unbelief of men, but upon God's Word and ordinance, unless they first change God's Word and ordinance and interpret it otherwise, as the enemies of the sacrament do at the present day, who, of course, have nothing but bread and wine; for they also do not have the Word and appointed ordinance of God, but have perverted and changed it according to their own caprice."

Dr. Luther (who certainly, above others, understood the true and proper meaning of the Augsburg Confession, and who constantly, even to his end, remained steadfast thereto, and defended it) shortly before his death, with great zeal, repeated in his last Confession his faith concerning this article, where he writes thus: "I reckon all in one mass as Sacramentarians and fanatics, as they also are who will not believe that the bread in the Lord's Supper is his true natural body, which the godless as Judas himself received with the mouth, as well as did St. Peter, and all [other] saints; he who will not believe this (I say) should let me alone, and not hope for any fellowship with me; there is no alternative [thus my opinion stands, which I am not going to change]."

From these explanations, and especially from that of Dr. Luther as the chief teacher of the Augsburg Confession, every intelligent man, if he be desirous of the truth and of peace, can undoubtedly perceive what has always been the proper sense and understanding of the Augsburg Confession in regard to this article. For the reason that in addition to the expressions of Christ and St. Paul (viz. that the bread in the Supper "is the body of Christ" or "the

communion of the body of Christ”), also the forms: “under the bread,” “with the bread,” “in the bread” [“the body of Christ is present and offered”], are employed, is that hereby the Papistical transubstantiation may be rejected, and the sacramental union of the unchanged essence of the bread and of the body of Christ may be indicated; just as the expression, “the Word was made flesh” (John 1; 14), is repeated and explained by the equivalent expressions: “The Word dwelt among us;” (Col. 2:9): “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” also (Acts 10:38): “God was with him;” also (2 Cor. 5:19): “God was in Christ,” and the like; namely, that the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but the two natures unchanged are personally united. [These phrases repeat the expression of John above-mentioned, and declare that, by the incarnation, the divine essence is not changed into the human nature, but that the two natures without confusion are personally united.]

[655] And indeed many eminent ancient teachers, Justin, Cyprian, Augustine, Leo, Gelasius, Chrysostom and others, use this simile concerning the words of Christ’s testament: “This is my body,” viz. that just as in Christ two distinct, unchanged natures are inseparably united, so in the Holy Supper the two substances, the natural bread and the true natural body of Christ, are present here together upon earth in the appointed administration of the sacrament. Although this union of the body and blood of Christ with the bread and wine is not a personal union, as that of the two natures in Christ, but a sacramental union, as Dr. Luther and our theologians, in the frequently-mentioned Articles of Agreement [Formula of Concord] in the year 1536 and in other places, call it; in order to declare that although they also employ the forms, “in the bread,” “under the bread,” “with the bread,” yet the words of Christ they receive properly and as they sound, and understand the proposition, i. e. the words of Christ’s testament: “This is my body,” not as a figurative, but as an unusual expression. For Justin says: “This we receive not as common bread and common drink, but as Jesus Christ, our Saviour, through the Word of God became flesh, and on account of our salvation also had flesh and blood, so we believe that, by the Word and prayer, the food blessed by him is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Dr. Luther also in his Large and especially in his last Confession, concerning the Lord’s Supper, with great earnestness and zeal defends the very form of expression which Christ used at the first Supper.

For since Dr. Luther is to be regarded the most distinguished teacher of the churches which confess the Augsburg Confession, whose entire doctrine as to sum and substance was comprised in the articles of the frequently-mentioned Augsburg Confession, and was presented to the Emperor Charles V.; the proper understanding and sense of the said Augsburg Confession can and should be derived from no other source more properly and correctly than from the doctrinal and polemical writings of Dr. Luther.

And indeed this very opinion, just cited, is founded upon the only firm, immovable and indubitable rock of truth, from the words of institution in the holy, divine Word, and was thus understood, taught and propagated by the holy evangelists and apostles and their disciples.

For since our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, concerning whom, as our only Teacher, this solemn command: "Hear ye him," has been given from heaven to all men, who is not a mere man or angel, and also not only true, wise and mighty, but the eternal truth and wisdom itself and Almighty God, who knows very well what and how he should speak, and who also can powerfully effect and execute everything that he speaks and promises, as he says (Luke 21:33): "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away;" also (Matt. 28:18): "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," —

[656] Since now this true, almighty Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, after the Last Supper, when he is just beginning his bitter suffering and death for our sins, on that last sad time, with great consideration and solemnity, in the institution of this most venerable sacrament (which was to be used until the end of the world with great reverence and obedience [and humility], and was to be an abiding memorial of his bitter suffering and death and all his benefits, a sealing [and confirmation] of the New Testament, a consolation of all distressed hearts and a firm bond and means of union of Christians with Christ their head and with one another), in the founding and institution of the Holy Supper spake these words concerning the bread which he blessed and gave [to his disciples]: "Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you," and concerning the cup or wine: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" —

We are in duty bound not to interpret and explain these words of the eternal, true and almighty Son of God, our Lord, Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, as allegorical, metaphorical, tropical expressions, as may appear to be in conformity with our reason, but with simple faith and due obedience to receive the words as they sound,<sup>14</sup> in their proper and plain sense, and allow ourselves to be diverted therefrom [from this express testament of Christ] by no objections or human contradictions spun from human reason, however charming they may appear to the reason.

As when Abraham heard God's Word concerning offering his son, although indeed he had cause enough for disputing as to whether the words should be understood according to the letter or with a moderate or mild interpretation, since they conflicted not only with all reason and with divine and natural law, but also with the chief article of faith concerning the promised Seed, Christ, who was to be born of Isaac; and yet, as before, when the promise of the blessed Seed from Isaac was given him (although it appeared to his reason impossible), he gave God the honor of truth, and most confidently concluded and believed that God could do what he promised; so also here faith understands and believes God's Word and command plainly and simply, as they sound, according to the letter, and resigns the entire matter to the divine omnipotence and wisdom, which it knows has many more modes and ways to fulfill the promise of the Seed from Isaac than man with his blind reason can comprehend.

[657] Thus, with all humility and obedience we too should simply believe the plain, firm, clear and solemn word and command of our Creator and Redeemer, without any doubt and disputation as to how it may agree with our reason or be possible. For these words the Lord, who is infinite wisdom and truth itself, has spoken, and everything which he promises he also can execute and accomplish.

Now, all the circumstances of the institution of the Holy Supper testify that these words of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which in themselves are simple, plain, clear, firm and indubitable, cannot and should not be understood otherwise than in their usual, proper and common signification. For since Christ gave this command [concerning eating his body, etc.] at his table and at the Supper, there is indeed no doubt that he speaks of real, natural

bread and of natural wine, also of oral eating and drinking, so that there can be no metaphor, i. e. an alteration of meaning, in the word “bread,” as though the body of Christ were a spiritual bread or a spiritual food of souls. So also Christ himself carefully shows that there is no metonymy, i. e. that there is no alteration of meaning in the same way, in the word “body,” and that he does not speak concerning a sign of his body, or concerning a symbol or figurative body, or concerning the virtue of his body and the benefits which he has earned by the sacrifice of his body [for us], but of his true, essential body, which he delivered for us to death, and of his true, essential blood, which he shed for us on the tree [altar] of the cross, for the remission of sins.

[658] Now, indeed, there is no interpreter of the Word of Jesus Christ so faithful and sure as the Lord Christ himself, who understands best his words and his heart and opinion, and who is the wisest and most knowing in expounding them; who here, as in the making of his last will and testament and of his ever-abiding covenant and union, as elsewhere in [presenting and confirming] all articles of faith, and in the institution of all other signs of the covenant and of grace or sacraments, as [for example] circumcision, the various offerings in the Old Testament and holy baptism, has employed not allegorical, but entirely proper, simple, indubitable and clear words; and in order that no misunderstanding could occur with the words: “given for you,” “shed for you,” he has made a clear explanation. He also allowed his disciples to rest in the simple, proper sense, and commanded them that they should teach all nations to observe what he had commanded them, the apostles.

Therefore, also, all three evangelists (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19) and St. Paul, who received it [the institution of the Lord’s Supper] after the ascension of Christ [from Christ himself], (1 Cor. 11:24), unanimously and with one and the same words and syllables, concerning the consecrated and distributed bread repeat these distinct, clear, firm and true words of Christ: “This is my body,” altogether in one way, without any explanation [trope, figure] and variation.

Therefore there is no doubt that also concerning the other part of the sacrament these words of Luke and Paul: “This cup Is the new testament in my

blood,” can have no other meaning than that which St. Matthew and St. Mark give: “This” (namely, that which you orally drink out of the cup) “is my blood of the new testament,” whereby I establish, seal and confirm with you men my testament and the new” covenant, viz. the forgiveness of sins.

[659] So also that repetition, confirmation and explanation of the Word of Christ which St. Paul makes (1 Cor. 10:16), as an especially clear testimony of the true, essential presence and distribution of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, is to be considered with all diligence and solemnity [accurately], where he writes as follows: “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” From this we clearly learn that not only the cup which Christ consecrated at the first Supper, and not only the bread which Christ broke and distributed, but also that which we break and bless, is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, so that all who eat this bread and drink of this cup truly receive and are partakers of the true body and blood of Christ. For if the body of Christ were present and partaken of, not truly and essentially, but only according to its power and efficacy, the bread would not be a communion of the body, but must be called a communion of the Spirit, power and benefits of Christ, as the Apology argues and concludes.<sup>15</sup> And if Paul speaks only of the spiritual communion of the body of Christ through faith, as the Sacramentarians pervert this passage, he would not say that the bread, but that the spirit or faith, was the communion of the body of Christ. But as he says that the bread is the communion of the body of Christ, viz. that all who partake of the consecrated bread also become participants of the body of Christ, he must speak indeed not of a spiritual, but of a sacramental or oral participation of the body of Christ, which is common to godly and godless Christians [Christians only in name].

As also the causes and circumstances of this entire declaration of St. Paul show that he deters and warns those who ate of offerings to idols and had fellowship with heathen demonolatry, and nevertheless went also to the table of the Lord and became partakers of the body and blood of Christ, that they should not receive the body and blood of Christ for judgment and condemnation to themselves. For since all those who were partakers of the con-

secrated and broken bread in the Supper have communion also with the body of Christ, St. Paul cannot speak indeed of spiritual communion with Christ, which no man can abuse, and from which also no one should be warned.

Therefore, also, our dear fathers and predecessors, as Luther and other pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession, explain this expression of Paul with such words that it accords most fully with the words of Christ when they write thus: The bread which we break is the distributed body of *Christ*, or the common [communicated] body of Christ, distributed to those who receive the broken bread.

[660] By this simple, well-founded exposition of this glorious testimony (1 Cor. 10) we unanimously abide, and we justly are astonished that some are so bold as to venture to cite this passage, which they themselves had previously opposed to the Sacramentarians, as now a foundation for their error, that in the Supper the body of Christ is only spiritually partaken of. [For thus they speak]: “The bread is the communion of the body of Christ, i. e., that by which there is fellowship with the body of Christ (which is the Church), or is the means by which we believers are united with Christ, just as the Word of the Gospel is the means, apprehended by faith, through which we are spiritually united to Christ and inserted into the body of Christ, which is the Church.”

For that not only the godly, pious and believing Christians, but also unworthy, godless hypocrites, as Judas and his companions, who have no spiritual communion with Christ, and go to the table of the Lord without true repentance and conversion to God, also receive orally in the sacrament the true body and [true] blood of Christ, and by their unworthy eating and drinking grievously sin against the body and blood of Christ, St. Paul teaches expressly. For he says (1 Cor. 11:27): “Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily,” sins not merely against the bread and wine, not merely against the signs or symbols and representation of the body and blood, but “shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” which, present there [in the Holy Supper], he dishonors, abuses and disgraces, as the Jews who in very deed violated the body of Christ and killed



him; just as the ancient Christian Fathers and church-teachers unanimously have understood and explained this passage.

There is, therefore, a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ, one “spiritual,” of which Christ especially treats (John 6:54), which occurs in no other way than with the Spirit and faith, in the preaching and consideration of the Gospel, as well as in the Lord’s Supper, and by itself is useful and salutary, and necessary at all times for salvation to all Christians; without which spiritual participation also the sacramental or oral eating in the Sapper is not only not salutary, but even injurious and a cause of condemnation.

[661] But this spiritual eating is nothing else than *faith*, namely, to hearken to God’s Word (wherein Christ, true God and man, is presented, together with all his benefits which he has purchased for us by his flesh given for us to death, and by his blood shed for us, namely, God’s grace, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness and eternal life), to receive it with faith and appropriate it to ourselves, and in the consolation that we have a gracious God, and eternal salvation on account of the Lord Jesus Christ, with sure confidence and trust, to firmly rely and abide in all troubles and temptations. [He who hears these things related from the Word of God, and in faith receives and applies them to himself, and relies entirely upon this consolation (that we have God reconciled and life eternal on account of the Mediator, Jesus Christ), — he, I say, who with true confidence rests in the Word of the Gospel in all troubles and temptations, spiritually eats the body of Christ and drinks his blood.]

The other eating of the body of Christ is *oral* or *sacramental*, where, in the Holy Supper, the true, essential body and blood of Christ are received and partaken of by all who eat and drink in the Supper the consecrated bread and wine — by the believing as an infallible pledge and assurance that their sins are surely forgiven them, and Christ dwells and is efficacious in them, but by the unbelieving for their judgment and condemnation. This the words of the institution by Christ expressly teach, when at the table and during the Supper he offers his disciples natural bread and natural wine, which he calls his true body and true blood, and in addition says: “Eat and drink.” Such a command, in view of the circumstances, cannot indeed be understood otherwise than of oral eating and drinking, not in a gross, carnal,

Capernaitic, yet in a supernatural, incomprehensible way; to which the other command adds still another and spiritual eating, when the Lord Christ says further: “This do in remembrance of me,” where he requires faith (which is the spiritual partaking of Christ’s body).

Therefore all the ancient Christian teachers expressly, and in full accord with the entire holy Christian Church, teach, according to these words of the institution of Christ and the explanation of St. Paul, that the body of Christ is not only received spiritually by faith, which occurs also without the use of the sacrament, but also orally, not only by believing and godly, but also by unworthy, unbelieving, false and wicked Christians. As this is too long to be narrated here, we will have to refer the Christian reader, for the sake of brevity, to the more ample writings of our theologians.

[662] Hence it is manifest how unjustly and maliciously the Sacramentarian fanatics<sup>16</sup> deride the Lord Christ, St. Paul and the entire Church in calling this oral partaking, and that of the unworthy, *duos pilos caudae equinae et commentum, cujus vel ipsum Satanam pudeat*, as also the doctrine concerning the majesty of Christ, *excrementum Satanae quo diabolus sibi ipsi et hominibus illudat*, i. e. they speak so dreadfully thereof that a godly Christian man should be ashamed to translate it.

But it must also be carefully stated who are the unworthy guests of this Supper — namely, those who go to this sacrament without true repentance and sorrow for their sins, and without true faith and the good intention to improve their lives, and by their unworthy eating of the body of Christ incur temporal and eternal punishments and are guilty of the body and blood of Christ.

For Christians of weak faith, diffident and troubled, who, because of the greatness and number of their sins, are terrified, and think that, in this their great impurity, they are not worthy of this precious treasure and the benefits of Christ, and who feel and lament their weakness of faith, and from their hearts desire that they may serve God with stronger, more joyful faith and pure obedience, are the truly worthy guests for whom this highly venerable sacrament [and sacred feast] has been especially instituted and appointed; as Christ says (Matt. 11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Also (Matt. 9:12): “They that be whole

need not a physician, but they that be sick.” Also (2 Cor. 12:9): “God’s strength is made perfect in weakness.” Also (Rom. 14:1): “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye” (v. 3), “for God hath received him.” “For whosoever believeth in the Son of God,” be it with a strong or with a weak faith, “has eternal life” (John 3:15 sq.).

And the worthiness does not depend upon great or small weakness or strength of faith, but upon the merit of Christ, which the distressed father of little faith (Mark 9:24) enjoyed as well as Abraham, Paul and others, who had a joyful and strong faith.

[663] Thus far we have spoken of the true presence and two-fold participation of the body and blood of Christ, which occurs either by faith spiritually or also orally, both by worthy and unworthy [which latter is common to worthy and unworthy].

Since also concerning the consecration and the common rule, that “nothing is a sacrament without the appointed use” [or divinely-instituted act], a misunderstanding and dissension has occurred between some teachers of the Augsburg Confession, we have also, concerning this matter, made a fraternal and unanimous declaration to one another to the following purport, viz. that not the word or work of any man produces the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper, whether it be the merit or declaration of the minister, or the eating and drinking or faith of the communicants; but all this should be ascribed alone to the power of Almighty God and the institution and ordination of our Lord Jesus Christ. [But all that which we have present in the Supper of Christ is to be ascribed absolutely and altogether to the power and Word of Almighty God and the institution, etc.]

[664] For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ, which he spake at the first institution, were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but they endure, have authority, operate and are still efficacious [their force, power and efficacy endure and avail even to the present]; so that in all places where the Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Christ, and his words are used, from the power and efficacy of the words which Christ spake at the first Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed and received. For where his institution is observed and his words concerning the bread and cup [wine] are spoken, and the consecrated bread and cup

[wine] are distributed, Christ himself, through the spoken words, is still efficacious *by virtue of the first institution*, through his Word which he wishes to be there repeated. As Chrysostom says in his sermon concerning the passion: “Christ himself prepares this table and blesses it; for no man makes the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified for us. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but, by God’s power and grace, the elements presented are consecrated in the Supper by the Word, where he speaks: ‘This is my body.’ And just as the declaration (Gen. 1:28): ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,’ was spoken only once, but is ever efficacious in nature, so that it is fruitful and multiplies; so also this declaration [This is my body; this is my blood] was once spoken, but even to this day and to his advent it is efficacious, and works so that in the Supper of the churches his true body and blood are present.”

Luther also [writes concerning this very subject in the same manner], (vol. vi., Jena Ed., p. 99): “This his command and institution are able and effect it that we administer and receive not mere bread and wine, but his body and blood, as his words run: ‘This is my body,’ etc.; ‘This is my blood,’ etc. It is not our work or declaration, but the command and ordination of Christ, that makes the bread the body, and the wine the blood, from the beginning of the first Supper even to the end of the world, and that through our service and office they are daily distributed.”

Also (vol. iii., Jena, p. 446): “Thus here also, even though I should pronounce over all bread the words: ‘This is Christ’s body,’ it would of course not follow thence, but if we say, according to his institution and command, in the administration of the Holy Supper: ‘This is my body,’ it is his body, not on account of our declaration or demonstration [because these words when uttered have this efficacy], but because of his command — that he has commanded us thus to speak and to do, and has united his command and act with our declaration.”

[665] And indeed, in the administration of the Holy Supper the words of institution should be publicly [before the church] spoken or sung, distinctly and clearly, and should in no way be omitted [and this for very many and the most important reasons. First,] in order that obedience may be rendered

to the command of Christ: “This do” [that therefore should not be omitted which Christ himself did in the Holy Supper], and [Secondly] that the faith of the hearers concerning the nature and fruit of this sacrament (concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ, concerning the forgiveness of sins and all benefits which have been purchased by the death and shedding of blood of Christ, and are bestowed upon us in Christ’s testament) may be excited, strengthened and confirmed by Christ’s Word, and [besides that the elements of bread and wine may be consecrated or blessed for this holy use], in order that the body and blood of Christ may therewith be administered to be eaten and to be drunk [that with them the body of Christ may be offered us to be eaten and his blood to be drunk], as Paul declares (1 Cor. 10:16): “The cup of blessing which we bless,” which indeed occurs in no other way than through the repetition and recitation of the words of institution.

Nevertheless, this blessing, or the narration of the words of institution of Christ, does not alone make a sacrament if the entire action of the Supper, as it was instituted by Christ, be not observed, as [for example] when the consecrated bread is not distributed, received and partaken of, but is enclosed, sacrificed or carried about. But the command of Christ, “This do,” which embraces the entire action or transaction in this sacrament, viz. that in an assembly of Christians bread and wine are taken, consecrated, distributed, received, i. e. eaten and drunk, and the Lord’s death is thereby shown forth, should be observed unseparated and inviolate, as also St. Paul presents before our eyes the entire action of the breaking of bread or of distribution and reception (1 Cor. 10:16).

[666] [Let us now come also to the second point, of which mention was made a little before.] To preserve the true Christian doctrine concerning the Holy Supper, and to avoid and obliterate various idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, the following useful rule and standard has been derived from the words of institution: “Nothing has the nature of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ,” or “apart from the action divinely instituted.” That is: “If the institution of Christ be not observed as he appointed it, there is no sacrament.” This is by no means to be rejected, but with profit can and should be urged and maintained in the churches of God. And the use or action here is not chiefly the faith, also not only the oral par-

icipation, but the entire, external, visible action of the Lord's Supper instituted by Christ. [To this indeed is required], the *consecration*, or words of institution, and the *distribution* and *reception*, or oral partaking [manducation] of the consecrated bread and wine, likewise the partaking of the body and blood of Christ. And apart from this use, when, in the Papistic mass, the bread is not distributed, but offered up or enclosed and borne about, and presented for adoration, it is to be regarded as no sacrament; just as the water of baptism, if used to consecrate bells or to cure leprosy, or otherwise presented for worship, would be no sacrament or baptism. For from the beginning [of the reviving Gospel] this rule has been opposed to these Papistic abuses, and is explained by Dr. Luther himself (vol. iv., Jena Edition).

But we must besides observe also this, viz. that the Sacramentarians artfully and wickedly pervert this useful and necessary rule, in order to deny the true, essential presence and oral partaking of the body of Christ, which occurs here upon earth alike by the worthy and the unworthy; and who interpret it as referring to the use by faith, i. e. the spiritual and inner use of faith, as though with the unworthy there were no sacrament, and the partaking of the body occurred only spiritually through faith, or as though faith made the body of Christ present in the Holy Supper, and therefore unworthy, unbelieving hypocrites do not actually receive the body of Christ.<sup>17</sup>

Now, it is not our faith that makes the sacrament, but only the true word and institution of our Almighty God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, which always is and remains efficacious in the Christian Church, and neither by the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister nor the unbelief of the one who receives it is as anything invalidated or rendered inefficacious. Just as the Gospel, even though godless hearers do not believe it, yet is and remains none the less the true Gospel, but does not work in the unbelieving to salvation; so, whether those who receive the sacrament believe or do not believe, Christ remains none the less true in his words when he says: "Take, eat: this is my body," and effects this [his presence] not by our faith, but by his omnipotence.

But it is a pernicious, shameless error that some from cunning perversion of this familiar rule ascribe more to our faith, which [in their opinion] alone

renders present and partakes of the body of Christ, than to the omnipotence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

[667] Concerning what pertains to the various imaginary reasons and futile counter-arguments of the Sacramentarians with respect to the essential and natural attributes of a human body, the ascension of Christ, his departure from this world, etc., inasmuch as these have one and all been considered thoroughly and in detail, from God's Word, by Dr. Luther in his controversial writings: "Against the Heavenly Prophets,"<sup>18</sup> "That these words, 'This is my body,' still stand firm;"<sup>19</sup> likewise in his "Large"<sup>20</sup> and his "Small Confession concerning the Holy Supper,"<sup>21</sup> [published some years afterwards], and other of his writings, and inasmuch as since his death nothing new has been advanced by the factious spirits, for the sake of brevity we will refer and appeal thereto.

For that we neither will, nor can, nor should allow ourselves to be led away by thoughts of human wisdom, whatever authority or outward appearance they may have, from the simple, distinct and clear sense of the Word and testament of Christ to a strange opinion, other than the words sound, but that, in accordance with what is above stated, we understand and believe them simply; our reasons upon which we rest in this matter, ever since the controversy concerning this article arose, are those which Dr. Luther himself,<sup>22</sup> in the very beginning, presented against the Sacramentarians in the following words:

"The reasons upon which I rest in this matter are the following:

"1. The first is this article of our faith: Jesus Christ is essential, natural, true, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

"2. The second, that God's right hand is everywhere.

"3. The third, that God's Word is not false and does not deceive.

"4. The fourth, that God has and knows of many modes of being in any place, and not only the single one concerning which fanatics talk flippantly and which philosophers call local."

Also: "The one body of Christ [says Luther] has a threefold mode or three modes of being anywhere.

[668] "First, the comprehensible, bodily mode, as he went about in the body upon earth, when, according to his size, he made and occupied room [was circumscribed by fixed places]. This mode he can still use whenever he will, as he did after the resurrection, and will use at the last day, as Paul says (1 Tim. 6:15):"Which in his times He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords." And to the Colossians (3:4) he says: "When Christ who is our life shall appear." In this manner he is not in God or with the Father, neither in heaven, as the wild spirits dream; for God is not a bodily space or place. And to this effect are the passages of Scripture which the fanatical spirits cite, how Christ left the world and went to the Father.

"Secondly, the incomprehensible, spiritual mode, according to which he neither occupies nor makes room, but penetrates all creatures according to his [most free] will, as, to make an imperfect comparison, my sight penetrates air, light or water, and does not occupy or make room; as a sound or tone penetrates air or water or board and wall, and is in them, and also does not occupy or make room; likewise, as light and heat penetrate air, water, glass, crystal, and the like, and is in them, and also does not make or occupy room; and much more of the like [many comparisons of this matter could be adduced]. This mode he used when he rose from the closed [and sealed] sepulchre, and passed through the closed door [to his disciples], and in the bread and wine in the Holy Supper, and, as it is believed, when he was born of his mother [the most holy Virgin Mary].

[669] "Thirdly, the divine, heavenly mode, since he is one person with God, according to which, of course, all creatures must be far more penetrable and present to him than they are according to the second mode. For if, according to that second mode, he can be so in and with creatures that they do not feel, touch, circumscribe or comprehend him, how much more wonderfully is he in all creatures according to this sublime third mode, so that they neither circumscribe nor comprehend him, but rather that he has them present before himself, and circumscribes and comprehends them! For you must place this mode of the presence of Christ, as he is one person with God, as



far beyond creatures as God is beyond them; and again as deep and near to all creatures as God is in, and near them. For he is one inseparable person with God; where God is there must he also be, or our faith is false. But who will say or think how this occurs? We know indeed that it is so, that he is in God beyond all creatures, and is one person with God, but how it occurs we do not know; this [mystery] is above nature and reason, even above the reason of all the angels in heaven; it is understood only by God. Because, therefore, it is unknown to us, and yet is true, we should not deny his words before we know how to prove to a certainty that the body of Christ can by no means be where God is, and that this mode of being [presence] is false. This the fanatics ought to prove; but we challenge them to do so.

“That God indeed has and knows still more modes in which Christ’s body is anywhere, I will not herewith deny; but I would indicate what awkward and stupid men our fanatics are, that they concede to the body of Christ no more than the first, comprehensible way; although they cannot even prove the same, that it conflicts with our meaning. For I in no way will deny that the power of God is able to effect so much as that a body should at the same time be in a number of places, even in a bodily, comprehensible way. For who will prove that this is impossible with God? Who has seen an end to his power? The fanatics think indeed that God cannot effect it,<sup>23</sup> but who will believe their thoughts? Whereby will they confirm such thoughts?”

From these words of Dr. Luther it is also clear in what sense the word *spiritual* is employed in our churches with reference to this matter. For to the Sacramentarians this word (*spiritual*) means nothing else than the spiritual communion, when through faith those truly believing are in the spirit incorporated into Christ, the Lord, and become true spiritual members of his body.

[670] But when this word *spiritual* is employed in regard to this matter by Dr. Luther or us, we understand thereby the spiritual, supernatural, heavenly mode, according to which Christ is present in the Holy Supper, and not only works trust and life in the believing, but also condemnation in the unbelieving; whereby we reject the Capernaitic thoughts of the gross [and] carnal presence which is ascribed to and forced upon our churches, against our manifold public testimonies, by the Sacramentarians.<sup>24</sup> In this sense we also

say [wish the word spiritually to be understood when we say] that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are spiritually received, eaten and drunken; although this participation occurs with the mouth, yet the mode is spiritual.

Therefore our faith in this article, concerning the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, is based upon the *truth* and *omnipotence* of the true, almighty God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These foundations are sufficiently strong and firm to strengthen and establish our faith in all temptations concerning this article, and to subvert and refute all the counter-arguments and objections of the Sacramentarians, however agreeable and plausible they may always be to the reason; and upon them a Christian heart also can firmly and securely rest and rely.

Accordingly, with heart and mouth we reject and condemn as false, erroneous and misleading, all errors which are discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrines above mentioned and founded upon God's Word, as,

1. The Papistic transubstantiation, where it is taught that the consecrated or blessed bread and wine in the Holy Supper lose entirely their substance and essence, and are changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, in such a way that only the mere form of bread and wine is left, or the accidents without the object; under which form of the bread, which is no more bread, but according to their assertion has lost its natural essence, the body of Christ is present, even apart from the administration of the Holy Supper, when the bread is enclosed in the pyx or is presented for display and adoration.<sup>25</sup> For nothing can be a sacrament without God's command and the appointed use for which it is instituted in God's Word, as is shown above.<sup>26</sup>
2. [671] We likewise reject and condemn all other Papistic abuses of this sacrament, as the abomination of the sacrifice of the mass for the living and dead.
3. Also, that contrary to the public command and institution of Christ, to the laity only one form of the sacrament is administered; as the same Papistic abuses are thoroughly refuted by means of God's Word and the testimonies of the ancient churches, in the common confession of

our churches, and the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and other writings of our theologians.

But because in this document we have undertaken especially to present our Confession and explanation only concerning the true presence of the body and blood of Christ against the Sacramentarians, some of whom, under the name of the Augsburg Confession, have shamelessly insinuated themselves into our churches;<sup>27</sup> we will also present and enumerate especially here the errors of the Sacramentarians, in order to warn our hearers to [detect and] be on their guard against them.

Accordingly, with heart and mouth we reject and condemn as false, erroneous and misleading all Sacramentarian opinions and doctrines which are discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrines above presented and founded upon God's Word:

1. As when they assert that the words of institution are not to be understood simply in their proper signification, as they sound, of the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but should be wrested, by means of tropes or figurative interpretations, to another new, strange sense. We hereby reject all such Sacramentarian opinions and self-contradictory notions [of which some even conflict with each other], however various and manifold they may be.
2. Also, that the oral participation of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is denied [by the Sacramentarians], and it is taught, on the contrary, that the body of Christ in the Holy Supper is partaken of only spiritually by faith, so that in the Holy Supper our mouth receives only bread and wine.
3. Likewise, also, when it is taught that bread and wine in the Lord's Supper should be regarded as nothing more than tokens, whereby Christians are to recognize one another; or,
4. That they are only figures, similitudes and representations [symbols, types] of the far-absent body of Christ, in such a manner that just as bread and wine are the outward food of our body, so also the absent body of Christ, with its merit, is the spiritual food of our souls.

5. [672] Or that they are no more than tokens and memorials of the absent body of Christ, by which signs, as an external pledge, we should be assured that the faith which turns from the Holy Supper and ascends above all heavens becomes there as truly participant of the body and blood of Christ as in the Supper we truly receive with the mouth the external signs; and that thus the assurance and confirmation of our faith occur in the Holy Supper only through the external signs, and not through the true, present body and blood of Christ offered to us.<sup>28</sup>
6. Or that in the Lord's Supper the power, efficacy and merit of the far-*absent* body of Christ are distributed only to *faith*, and we thus become partakers of his absent body; and that, in this just-mentioned way, the sacramental union is to be understood, viz. with respect to the analogy of the sign and that which is signified, i. e. as the bread and wine have a resemblance to the body and blood of Christ.
7. Or that the body and blood of Christ cannot be received and partaken otherwise than only spiritually by faith.
8. Likewise, when it is taught that, because of his ascension into heaven with his body, Christ is so enclosed and circumscribed in a definite place in heaven that with the same [his body] he cannot or will not be truly present with us in the Holy Supper, which is celebrated according to the institution of Christ upon earth, but that he is as remote therefrom as heaven and earth are from one another,<sup>29</sup> as some Sacramentarians have willfully and wickedly falsified the text (Acts 3:21): "Who must occupy heaven," for the confirmation of their error, and instead thereof have rendered it: "Who must be received by heaven" or "in heaven," or be circumscribed and contained, so that in his human nature he could or would be in no way with us upon earth.<sup>30</sup>
9. [673] Likewise, that Christ has not promised the true, essential presence of his body and blood in his Supper, and that he neither can nor will afford it, because the nature and property of his assumed human nature cannot suffer or permit it.
10. Likewise, when it is taught that not only the Word and omnipotence of Christ, but faith, renders the body of Christ present in the Holy Supper;

on this account the words of institution in the administration of the Holy Supper are omitted by some. For although the Papistic consecration, in which efficacy is ascribed to the speaking as the work of the priest, as though it constitutes a sacrament, is justly rebuked and rejected, yet the words of institution can or should in no way be omitted, as is shown in the preceding declaration.<sup>31</sup>

11. Likewise, that believers do not seek the body of Christ, according to the words of Christ's institution, with the bread and wine of the Supper, but are sent with their faith from the bread of the Holy Supper to heaven, the place where the Lord Christ is with his body, that they should become partakers of it there.
12. We reject also the doctrine that unbelieving and impenitent, godless Christians, who only bear the name of Christ, but do not have right, true, living and saving faith, receive in the Lord's Supper not the body and blood of Christ, but only bread and wine. And since there are only two kinds of guests found at this heavenly meal, the worthy and the unworthy, we reject also the distinction made [by some] among the unworthy, viz. that the godless Epicureans and deriders of God's Word, who are in the external fellowship of the Church in the use of the Holy Supper, do not receive the body and blood of Christ for condemnation, but only bread and wine.
13. So too the doctrine that worthiness consists not only in true faith, but in man's own preparation.<sup>32</sup>
14. Likewise, the doctrine that even the truly believing, who have and retain a right, true, living faith, and yet are without the above-mentioned sufficient preparation of their own, can, just as the unworthy guests, receive this sacrament to condemnation.
15. [674] Likewise, when it is taught that the elements or the visible form of the consecrated bread and wine ought to be adored. But no one unless he be an Arian heretic can deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper in the true use of the same, should be adored in spirit and in truth, as also in all other places, especially where his congregation is assembled.

16. We reject and condemn also all presumptuous, derisive, blasphemous questions and expressions which are presented with respect to the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this Supper in a gross, carnal, Capernaïtic way.

Other and additional antitheses, or rejected contrary doctrines, are reproved and rejected in the preceding declaration, which, for the sake of brevity, we will not repeat here. The condemnable or erroneous opinions that still remain, can be easily understood and named from the preceding declaration; for we reject and condemn everything that is discordant, contrary and opposed to the doctrine which is above mentioned and is thoroughly grounded in God's Word.

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1. See Epitome, vii.: 1.↵
  2. The words of Calvin and Beza.↵
  3. Zwingli and his adherents.↵
  4. By which to the entire person that which belongs to one nature ascribed. Cf. Sol. Dec, viii.: 36.↵
  5. The Tetrapolitan.↵
  6. Apology, X.: 54 sq.↵
  7. Ibid., x.: 66,↵
  8. The Wittenberg Concordia, written by Melanchthon.↵
  9. See Corpus Reformatorum. iii.: 75.↵
  10. 1 Cor. 11:27.↵
  11. Ibid., 11:29.↵

12. Smalcald Articles, Part III.. Art. vi↩
13. Part v., 6, 8 10-14; 499 sqq.↩
14. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 7.↩
15. Art.x.:64.↩
16. Theodore Beza and others.↩
17. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 35, 37.↩
18. A. D. 1525.↩
191527.  
↩
201528.  
↩
211544.  
↩
22. In his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper.↩
23. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 32, 34.↩
24. Ibid., vii.: 42↩
25. Cf. Council of Trent, sess. xiii., caps. 4-6, Cans. 2, 4, 6, 7.↩
26. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 1.↩
27. § 85.↩
28. Cf. Epitome, vii.: 30.↩
29. Calvin and Beza.↩
30. Calvin and the Wittenberg Crypto-Calvinists.↩

31. Above, § 79 sq.↩

32. Beza. See Mentzer's Exegesis, Aug. Conf., p. 488. See also Epitome vii.: 38.↩



## Chapter VIII. Of the Person of Christ

Parallel Passages. (Ecumenical Creeds; Augsburg Confession, III.; Apology, Art. iii.; Smalcald Articles, Part I.; Small Catechism, Creed, Art. ii. Large Catechism, ib., 453 sqq.; Epitome, viii.)

A controversy has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerning *the Person of Christ*, which nevertheless did not first arise among them, but was originally introduced by the Sacramentarians.

For since Dr. Luther, in opposition to the Sacramentarians, maintained, with firm foundations from the words of institution, the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper; the objection was urged against him by the Zwinglians that, if the body of Christ were present at the same time in heaven and on earth in the Holy Supper, it could be no real, true human body; for of such majesty as is peculiar to God, the body of Christ is not capable.

[675] But as Dr. Luther contradicted and effectually refuted this, as his doctrinal and polemical writings<sup>1</sup> concerning the Holy Supper show, which, as well as his doctrinal writings, we hereby publicly confess [approve and wish it to be publicly attested]; some theologians of the Augsburg Confession, since his death, although they have not yet been willing publicly and expressly to confess themselves with the Sacramentarians concerning the Lord's Supper, have introduced and employed precisely the same foundations concerning the person of Christ whereby the Sacramentarians attempted to remove the true, essential presence of the body and blood of Christ from his Supper, viz. that nothing should be ascribed to the human nature in the person of Christ which is above or contrary to its natural, essential property; and in regard to this have burdened the doctrine of Dr. Luther, and all those who have embraced it as in conformity with God's Word, with the charge of almost all the ancient monstrous heresies.<sup>2</sup>

To explain this controversy in a Christian way, in conformity with God's Word, according to the guidance [analogy] of our simple Christian faith, and by God's grace entirely settle it, our unanimous doctrine, faith and confession are as follows:

We believe, teach and confess, although the Son of God has been from eternity a particular, distinct, entire divine person, and thus, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, true, essential, perfect God, nevertheless that, in the fulness of time, he also assumed human nature into the unity of his person, not in such a way that there now are two persons or two Christs, but that Christ Jesus is now in one person, at the same time true, eternal God, born of the Father from eternity, and a true man, born of the blessed Virgin Mary, as it is written (Rom. 9:5): “Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.”

We believe, teach and confess, that now, in this one undivided person, there are two distinct natures, the divine, which is from eternity, and the human, which in time was assumed into the unity of the person of the Son of God; which two natures in the person of Christ are never either mingled or separated from one another or changed the one into the other, but each abides in its nature and essence in the person of Christ to all eternity.

[676] We believe, teach and confess also, that, as both natures mentioned abide unmingled and destroyed, each retains also its natural, essential properties, and for all eternity does not lay them aside, neither do the essential properties of the one nature ever become the essential properties of the other nature.

Accordingly we believe, teach and confess, that to be almighty, eternal, infinite, to be of itself everywhere present at the same time naturally, that is, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, and to know all things, are essential attributes of the divine nature, which never to eternity become essential properties of the human nature.

On the other hand, to be a corporeal creature, to be flesh and blood, to be finite and circumscribed, to suffer, to die, to ascend and descend, to move from one place to another, to suffer hunger, cold, thirst, heat and the like, are properties of the human nature, which never become properties of the divine nature.

We believe, teach and confess also, that now, since the incarnation, each nature in Christ does not so subsist of itself that each is or constitutes a separate person, but that they are so united that they constitute only one person,

in which, at the same time, both the divine and the assumed human nature are and subsist, so that now, since the incarnation, to the entire person of Christ belongs not only his divine nature, but also his assumed human nature; and that, as without his divinity, so also without his humanity, the person of Christ or of the incarnate Son of God, i. e. the Son of God who has assumed flesh and become man, is not entire. Hence Christ is not two distinct persons, but is only one person, notwithstanding that two distinct natures are found in him, unconfused in their natural essence and properties.

[677] We believe, teach and confess also, that the assumed human nature in Christ not only has and retains its natural, essential properties, but that, besides, through the personal union with divinity, and afterwards through glorification, it has been exalted to the right hand of majesty, power and might, over everything that can be named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1:21).<sup>3</sup>

With respect now to this majesty, to which Christ has been exalted according to his humanity, he did not first receive it when he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, but when, in his mother's womb, he was conceived and became man and the divine and human natures were personally united with one another. Nevertheless, this personal union is not to be understood, as some incorrectly explain it, as though the two natures, the divine and the human, were united with one another, as two boards are glued together, so that they really, i. e. in deed and truth, have no communication whatever with one another. For this was the error and heresy of Nestorius and Samosatenus, who, as Suidas and Theodore, presbyter of Raithu, testify, taught and held: *δυο φύσεις αχραινωνητους προς εαυτας πανταπασι*, i. e. the two natures have no communication whatever with one another. Thereby the two natures are separated from one another, and thus two Christs are constituted, so that the one is Christ, and the other God the Word, who dwells in Christ.

For thus Theodore the Presbyter wrote: "At the same time in which the heretic Manes lived, one by the name of Paul, who by birth was indeed of Samosata, but was a bishop<sup>4</sup> at Antioch in Syria, wickedly taught that the Lord Christ was nothing but a man in whom God the Word dwelt, just as in each of the prophets; therefore he also held that the divine and human na-

tures are apart and separate, and that in Christ they have no communion whatever with one another, as though the one were Christ, and the other God the Word, who dwells in him.”

[678] Against this condemned heresy the Christian Church has always and everywhere simply believed and held that the divine and human natures in the person of Christ are so united that they have a true communion with one another; whereby the natures [do not meet and] are not mingled in one essence, but, as Dr. Luther writes, in one person. Accordingly, on account of this personal union and communion, the ancient teachers of the Church, before and after the Council of Chalcedon, frequently employed the word mixture in a good sense and with [true] discrimination. For this purpose [the sake of confirming this matter] many testimonies of the Fathers<sup>5</sup> (if needful) could be adduced, which also are to be found frequently in the writings of our divines, and explain the personal union and communion by the illustration of the soul and body, and of glowing iron. For the body and soul, as also fire and iron, have communion with each other, not by a phrase or mode of speaking, or in mere words, but truly and really, i. e. in deed and truth; and, nevertheless, no confusion or equalizing of the natures is thereby introduced, as when from honey and water hydromel is made, which is no more pure water or pure honey, but is a mixed drink. For in the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ it is far different. For it is a far different, more sublime, and [altogether] ineffable communion and union between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ, on account of which union and communion God is man and man is God. Nevertheless, thereby neither the natures nor their properties are intermingled, but each nature retains its own essence and properties.

On account of this personal union (without which such a true communion of the natures would not be thought of, neither could exist) not the mere human nature, whose property it is to suffer and die, has suffered for the sins of the world, but the Son of God himself truly suffered (nevertheless, according to the assumed human nature), and in accordance with our simple Christian faith [as our Apostles' Creed testifies] truly died, although the divine nature can neither suffer nor die. This Dr. Luther has fully explained in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper in opposition to the blasphemous *allaeosis* of Zwingli, as he taught that one nature should be taken

and understood for the other, which Dr. Luther committed, as a mark of the devil, to the abyss of hell.<sup>6</sup>

For this reason the ancient teachers of the Church combined both words, *κοινωνία* and *ενωσις*, i. e. *communion* and *union*, in the explanation of this mystery, and have explained the one by the other. (Irenaeus, Book iv., ch. 37; Athanasius, in the Letter to Epictetus; Hilary, concerning the Trinity, Book 9; Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, in Theodoret: Damascenus, Book 3, ch. 19.<sup>7</sup>)

[679] On account of this personal union and communion of the divine and human natures in Christ we believe, teach and confess also, according to our simple Christian faith, all that is said concerning the majesty of Christ according to his humanity, [by which he sits] at the right hand of the almighty power of God, and what follows therefrom; all of which would not be, and could not occur, if this personal union and communion of the natures in the person of Christ did not exist really, i. e. in deed and truth.

On account of this personal union and communion of the natures, Mary, the blessed Virgin, bore not a mere man, but such a man as is truly the Son of the Most High God, as the angel [Gabriel] testifies; who showed his divine majesty even in his mother's womb, that he was born of a virgin, with her virginity uninjured. Therefore she is truly the mother of God, and nevertheless truly remained a virgin.

Because of this he also wrought all his miracles, and manifested this his divine Majesty, according to his pleasure, when and as he willed, and therefore not only after his resurrection and ascension, but also in his state of humiliation. For example, at the wedding at Cana of Galilee; also when he was twelve years old among the learned; also, in the garden, where with a word he cast his enemies to the ground; likewise in death, where he died not merely as any other man, but in and with his death conquered sin, death, hell, and eternal damnation; which his human nature alone would not have been able to do if it had not been thus personally united and did not have communion with the divine nature.

[680] Hence also the human nature had, after the resurrection from the dead, its exaltation above all creatures in heaven and on earth; which is

nothing else than that he entirely laid aside the form of a servant, and nevertheless did not lay aside his human nature, but retains it to eternity, and according to his assumed human nature is put in the full possession and use of the divine majesty. This majesty he nevertheless had already in his conception, even in his mother's womb; but as the apostle testifies (Phil. 2:7): "He humbled himself," and, as Dr. Luther explains, in the state of his humiliation he concealed it, and did not employ it except when he wished.

But now, since not merely as any other saint he has ascended to heaven, but, as the apostle testifies (Eph. 4:10), "above all heavens," and also truly fills all things, and is everywhere present not only as God, but also as man [has dominion and] rules from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth; as the prophets predict (Ps. 8:1,6; 93:1 sq.; Zach. 9:10) and the apostles testify (Mark 16:20) that he everywhere wrought with them and confirmed the word with signs following. Yet this occurred not in an earthly way, but, as Dr. Luther explains, according to the manner of the right hand of God, which is no fixed place in heaven, as the Sacramentarians assert without any ground in the Holy Scriptures, but is nothing else than the almighty power of God, which fills heaven and earth, in [possession of] which Christ is placed according to his humanity, really, i e, in deed and truth, without confusion and equalizing of the two natures in their essence and essential properties. From this communicated [divine] power, according to the words of his testament, he can be and is truly present with his body and blood in the Holy Supper, to which he directs us by his Word. This is possible to no man besides, because no man is in such a way united with the divine nature, and placed in this divine almighty majesty and power through and in the personal union of the two natures in Christ, as Jesus, the Son of Mary. For in him the divine and human natures are personally united with one another, so that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9), and in this personal union have such a sublime, inner, ineffable communion that even the angels are astonished at it, and, as St. Peter testifies, look into these things with delight and joy (1 Pet. 1:12); all of which will shortly be explained in order and more fully.

[681] From this foundation, of which mention has now been made, and which the personal union declares, i. e. from the manner in which the divine and human natures in the person of Christ are united with one another, so

that they have not only the names in common, but have communion with one another, without any commingling or equalizing of the same in their essence, proceeds also the doctrine concerning the *Communicatio Idiomatum*, i. e. concerning the true communion of the properties of the natures, of which more will be said hereafter.

For since this is true, viz. that “properties do not leave their subjects,” i. e. that each nature retains its essential properties, and these are not separated from one nature and transferred to another, as water is poured from one vessel into another; so also no communion of properties could be or subsist if the above-mentioned personal union or communion of the natures in the person of Christ were not true. This, next to the article of the Holy Trinity, is the greatest mystery in heaven and on earth, as Paul says (1 Tim. 3:16): “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, that God was manifest in the flesh.” For since the apostle Peter in clear words testifies (2 Ep. 1:4) that we also in whom Christ dwells only by grace, on account of that sublime mystery, are in Christ, “partakers of the divine nature,” what then must be the nature of the communion of the divine nature, of which the apostle says that “in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” so that God and man are one person?

But since it is highly important that this doctrine of the *Communicatio Idiomatum*, i. e. of the communion of the properties of both natures, be treated and explained with proper discrimination (for the propositions or assertions, i. e. expressions, concerning the person of Christ, and his natures and properties, are not all of one kind and mode, and when they are employed without proper discrimination the doctrine becomes erroneous and the simple reader is readily led astray), the following statement should be carefully noted, which, for the purpose of making it plainer and simple, may be presented under three heads:

First, since in Christ two distinct natures exist and remain unchanged and unconfused in their natural essence and properties, and moreover there is only one person of both natures, that which is an attribute of only one nature is ascribed not to that nature apart, as though separate, but to the entire person, which is at the same time God and man, whether called God or man.

[682] But in this genus, i. e. this mode of speaking, it does not follow that what is ascribed to the person is at the same time a property of both natures, but a discriminative declaration is made as to what nature it is according to which anything is ascribed to the entire person. Thus the Son of God was “born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3). Also: Christ was put to death according to the flesh, and hath suffered according to the flesh (1 Pet. 3:18; 4:1).

But since, when it is said that that is ascribed to the entire person which is peculiar to one nature, beneath the words secret and open Sacramentarians conceal their pernicious error, by naming indeed the entire person, but nevertheless understanding thereby only the one nature, and entirely excluding the other nature<sup>8</sup> — as though merely the human nature had suffered for us — inasmuch as Dr. Luther has written concerning the *alloeosis* of Zwingli in his Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper, we will here present Luther’s own words, in order that the Church of God may be guarded in the best way against this error. His words are as follows:

“Zwingli calls that an *allaeosis* when anything is ascribed to the divinity of Christ which nevertheless belongs to the humanity or the reverse. As Luke 24:26: ‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?’ Here Zwingli triflingly declares that [the word] Christ is understood with respect to the human nature. Beware, beware, I say, of the *alloeosis*; for it is a mask of the devil, as it at last forms such a Christ after which I certainly would not be a Christian. For its design is that henceforth Christ should be no more, and do no more with his sufferings and life, than another mere saint. For if I believe [permit myself to be persuaded] that only the human nature has suffered for me, Christ is to me a Saviour of little worth, since he indeed himself stands in need of a Saviour. In a word, what the devil seeks by the *alloeosis* is inexpressible.”

[683] And shortly afterwards: “If the old sorceress. Dame Reason, the grandmother of the *alloeosis*, should say, Yea, divinity can neither suffer nor die; you should reply. That is true; yet, because in Christ divinity and humanity are one person, Scripture, on account of this personal union, ascribes also to divinity everything that occurs to the humanity, and the reverse. And thus, indeed, it is in truth. For this must certainly be said [ac-



knowledged], viz. the person (he refers to Christ) suffers and dies. Now the person is true God; therefore, it is rightly said: The Son of God suffers. For although the one part (so to say), viz. the divinity, does not suffer, yet the person, which is God, suffers in the other part, viz. in his humanity; for in truth God's Son has been crucified for us, i. e. the person which is God. For the person, the person, I say, was crucified according to the humanity."

And again shortly afterwards: "If the allaeosis exist, as Zwingli proposes, it will be necessary for Christ to have two persons, one divine and one human, because Zwingli applies the passages concerning suffering, alone to the human nature, and of course diverts them from the divinity. For if the works be parted and disunited, the person must also be divided, since all the works or sufferings, are ascribed not to the natures, but to the person. For it is the person that does and suffers everything, one thing according to one nature, and another according to the other nature, all of which the learned know well. Therefore we consider our Lord Christ as God and man in one person, so that we neither confound the natures nor divide the person."

[684] Dr. Luther says also in his book, "Of the Councils and the Church:" "We Christians must know that if God were not in the [one] balance, and gave it weight, we would sink to the ground with our scale of the balance. By this I mean: If it were not said [if these things were not true], 'God has died for us,' but only a man, we are lost. But if the death of God, and that God died, lie in the scale of the balance, he sinks down, and we rise up as a light, empty scale. But he also can indeed rise again or spring from the scale; yet he could not have descended into the scale unless he had first become a man like us, so that it could be said: 'God died,' 'God's passion,' 'God's blood,' 'God's death.' For in his nature God cannot die; but now God and man are united in one person, so that the expression 'God's death' is correct, when the man dies who is one thing or one person with God." Thus far Luther.

Hence it is manifest that it is incorrect to say or write<sup>9</sup> that the above-mentioned expressions ("God suffered," "God died") are only verbal assertions, that is, mere words, and that it is not so in fact. For our simple Christian faith proves that the Son of God, who became man, suffered for us, died for us, and redeemed us with his blood.

Secondly, as to the execution of the office of Christ, the person does not act and work in, with, through, or according to only one nature, but in, according to, with and through both natures, or, as the Council of Chalcedon declares, one nature operates, with the communion of the other, in that which is a property of either. Therefore Christ is our Mediator, Redeemer, King, High Priest, Head, Shepherd, etc., not only according to one nature, whether it be the divine or the human, but according to both natures, as this doctrine is in other places more fully treated.<sup>10</sup>

Thirdly, but it is still a much different thing when the subject of the question, or declaration, or discussion concerning this is, whether then the natures in the personal union in Christ have nothing else or nothing more than only their natural, essential properties; for that they have and retain these, is mentioned above.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, as to the divine nature in Christ, since in God there is no change (James 1:17) by the incarnation, his divine nature, in its essence and properties, is not abated or advanced; is thereby, in or by itself, neither diminished nor increased.

But as to the assumed human nature in the person of Christ, there have indeed been some who have wished to contend that this also, in the personal union with divinity, has nothing more than only the natural, essential properties according to which it is in all things like its brethren; and that, on this account, nothing should or could be ascribed to the human nature in Christ which is beyond or contrary to its natural properties, even though the testimony of Scripture is to this effect.<sup>12</sup> But that this opinion is false and incorrect is so clear from God's Word that even their own comrades censure and reject such an error. For the Holy Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers from the Scriptures, very plainly testify that the human nature in Christ, inasmuch as it has been personally united with the divine nature in Christ (because, since the form of a servant and humiliation has been laid aside, it is glorified and exalted to the right hand of the majesty and power of God), has received, over and beyond its natural, essential, permanent properties, also special, high, great, supernatural, inscrutable, ineffable, heavenly prerogatives and excellences in majesty, glory, power and might above everything that can be named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to

come (Eph. 1:21). So that the human nature in Christ, in its measure and mode, is employed at the same time in the execution of the office of Christ, and has also its efficacy, i. e. power and force, not only from, and according to, its natural, essential attributes, or only so far as its ability extends, but chiefly from and according to the majesty, glory, power and might which it has received through the personal union, glorification and exaltation. And even now the adversaries can or dare scarcely deny this, except that they dispute and contend that those are only created gifts or finite qualities, as in the saints, with which the human nature is endowed and furnished; and that, according to their [artful] thoughts or from their own [silly] argumentations or [fictitious] proofs, they wish to measure and calculate of what the human nature in Christ, without annihilation, is capable or incapable.

But the best, most certain and sure way in this controversy is this, viz. that what Christ has received, according to his assumed nature, through the personal union, glorification or exaltation, and of what his assumed human nature is capable beyond the natural properties, without annihilation, no one can know better or more thoroughly than the Lord Christ himself; and he has revealed in his Word as much thereof as it is needful for us to know. Of this, so far as pertains to the present matter, we have in the Scriptures clear, certain testimonies that we should simply believe, and in no way dispute to the contrary, as though the human nature in Christ were not capable of the same.

[686] Now that is indeed correct and true which has been said concerning the created gifts which have been given and imparted to the human nature in Christ, viz. that it possesses them in or of itself. But these do not sufficiently explain the majesty which the Scriptures, and the ancient Fathers from Scripture, ascribe to the assumed human nature in Christ.

For to quicken, to have all judgment and power in heaven and on earth, to have all things in his hands, to have all things in subjection beneath his feet, to cleanse from sin, etc., are not created gifts, but divine, infinite properties, which, nevertheless, according to the declaration of Scripture, are given and communicated to the man Christ (John 5:27; 6:39; Matt. 28:18; Dan. 7; 14; John 3:35; 13:3; Matt. 11:27; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:27; John 1:3).

And that this communication is to be understood, not as a phrase or mode of speaking, i. e. only in words with respect to the person, and only according to the divine nature, but according to the assumed human nature, the three following strong, irrefutable arguments and reasons show:

1. First, there is a unanimously-received rule of the entire ancient orthodox Church that what Holy Scripture testifies that Christ received in time he received not according to the divine nature (according to which he has everything from eternity), but the person has received it in time, by reason of, and with respect to, the assumed human nature.
2. Secondly, the Scriptures testify clearly (John 5:21 sq.; 6:39 sq.) that the power to quicken and to exercise judgment has been given to Christ because he is the Son of man and as he has flesh and blood.
3. [687] Thirdly, the Scriptures speak not merely in general of the Son of man, but also expressly indicate his assumed human nature (1 John 1:7): “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,” not only according to the merit [of the blood of Christ] which was once attained on the cross; but in this place John speaks thereof, that in the work or act of justification not only the divine nature in Christ, but also his blood, by mode of efficacy, i. e. actually, cleanses us from all concerning this article many other glorious testimonies of the ancient orthodox Church are elsewhere cited.

That Christ, therefore, according to his human nature, has received this, and that it has been given and communicated to the assumed human nature in Christ, we should and must believe according to the Scriptures. But, as above said,<sup>13</sup> because the two natures in Christ are so united that they are not mingled with one another or changed one into the other, and each retains its natural, essential property, so that the properties of one nature never become properties of the other nature; this doctrine must also be rightly explained and be diligently preserved against all heresies.

While we, then, invent nothing new from ourselves, but receive and repeat the explanations which the ancient orthodox Church has given hereof from the good foundation of Holy Scripture, viz. that this divine power, light, might, majesty and glory was not given the assumed human nature in Christ

such a way as the Father, from eternity, has communicated to the Son, according to the divine nature, his essence and all divine attributes, whence he is of one nature with the Father and is equal to God. For Christ is only according to the divine nature equal to the Father, but according to the assumed human nature he is beneath God; hence it is manifest that we make no confusion, equalization or abolition of natures in Christ. So, too, the power to quicken is not in the flesh of Christ as in his divine nature, viz. as an essential property.

[688] Moreover, this communication or impartation has not occurred through an essential or natural infusion of the properties of the divine nature into the human, as though the humanity of Christ had these by itself and apart from the divine essence, or as though the human nature in Christ had thereby [by this communication] entirely laid aside its natural, essential properties, and were now either transformed into divinity, in and by itself, with such communicated properties, had become equal to the same, or that now the natural, essential properties of both natures are of one kind, or indeed equal. For these and similar erroneous doctrines were justly rejected and condemned in ancient approved councils from the foundation of Holy Scripture. “For in no way is either conversion, confusion or equalization of the natures in Christ, or the essential properties, to be either made or admitted.”

We indeed never understand the words “*real communication*” or “*communio really*” (i. e. the impartation or communion which occurs in deed and truth) of any physical communication or essential transfusion, i. e. of any essential, natural communion or effusion, whereby the natures would be confused in their essence, and their essential properties (as, against their own conscience, some<sup>14</sup> have craftily and wickedly made perversions, in order to make the pure doctrine suspected); but only have opposed them to “*verbal communication*” i. e. the doctrine when such persons assert that it is only a phrase and mode of speaking, or nothing more than mere words, titles and names, upon which they have also laid so much stress that they are not willing to know of any other communion. Therefore, for the true explanation of the majesty of Christ we have used the terms, “Of the Real Communion,” and wish thereby to show that this communion has occurred in

deed and truth, nevertheless without any confusion of natures and their essential properties.

[689] Therefore we hold and teach, with the ancient orthodox Church, as it explained this doctrine from the Scriptures, that the human nature in Christ has received this majesty according to the manner of the personal union, viz. because the entire fulness of the divinity dwells in Christ, not as in other holy men or angels, but bodily, as *in its own body*, so that with all its majesty, power, glory and efficacy in the assumed human nature, voluntarily when and as he [Christ] wills, it shines forth, and in, with, and through the same manifests, exercises, and executes its divine power, glory and efficacy, as the soul does in the body and fire in glowing iron. For by this illustration,<sup>15</sup> as is also mentioned above, the entire ancient Church explained this doctrine. At the time of the humiliation this majesty was concealed and withheld [for the greater part]; but now since the form of a servant [or *exinanitio*] has been laid aside, it fully, powerfully and publicly is exercised in heaven and on earth before all saints, and in the life to come we will also behold this his glory face to face (John 17:24).

Therefore in Christ there is and remains only one divine omnipotence, power, majesty and glory, which is peculiar alone to the divine nature; but it shines, manifests and exercises itself fully, yet voluntarily, in, with and through the assumed, exalted human nature in Christ. Just as in glowing iron there are not two kinds of power to shine and burn [(as though the fire had a peculiar, and the iron also a peculiar and separate power of shining and burning)], but the power to shine and to burn is a property of the fire; yet because the fire is united with the iron it manifests and exercises this its power to shine and to burn in, with and through the glowing iron, so that the glowing iron has thence from this union the power to shine and to burn without conversion of the essence and of the natural properties of fire and iron.

[690] On this account we understand such testimonies of Scripture as speak of the majesty to which the human nature in Christ is exalted, not so that the divine majesty which is peculiar to the divine nature of the Son of God should be ascribed in the person of the Son of man [to Christ] only according to his divine nature, or that this majesty in the human nature of Christ

should be only of such a kind that his human nature should have only the mere title and name by a phrase and mode of speaking, i. e., only in words, but in deed and truth should have no communion whatever with it. For, since God is a spiritual, undivided essence, and therefore is present everywhere and in all creatures, and in whom he is (but he dwells especially in believers and saints), there he has with him his majesty, it might also with truth be said that in all creatures in whom God is, but especially in believers and saints, in whom he dwells, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, all power in heaven and earth is given, because the Holy Ghost, who has all power, is given them. For in this way there is no distinction made between Christ according to his human nature and other holy men, and thus Christ is deprived of his majesty, which he has received above all creatures, as a man or according to his human nature. For no other creature, neither man nor angel, can or should say: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," since although God is in the saints with all the fulness of his Godhead, which he has everywhere with himself; yet in them he does not dwell bodily, or with them is not personally united, as in Christ. For from such personal union it follows that Christ says, even according to his human nature (Matt. 28:18): "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Also (John 13:3): "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands." Also (Col. 2:9): "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Also: "Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him" (Heb. 2:7 sq.; Ps. 8:6). "He is excepted which did put all things under him" (1 Cor. 15:27).

Moreover we believe, teach and confess that there is in no way such an infusion of the majesty of God, and of all his properties, into the human nature of Christ, whereby the divine nature is weakened [anything of the divine nature departs], or anything of its own is surrendered to another, that [in this manner] it does not retain for itself, or that the human nature has received in its substance and essence, equal majesty separate or diverse from the nature and essence of the Son of God, as when water, wine or oil is poured from one vessel into another. For the human nature, as also no other creature, either in heaven or on earth, is capable of the omnipotence of God

in such a manner that it would be in itself an almighty essence, or have in and by itself almighty properties; for thereby the human nature in Christ would be denied, and would be entirely converted into divinity, which is contrary to our Christian faith, as also to the doctrine of all the apostles and prophets.

[691] But we believe, teach and confess that God the Father has so given his Spirit to Christ his beloved Son, according to the assumed humanity (for on this account he is called also *Messias*, i. e. the Anointed), that he has received the gifts of the Spirit, not, as other saints, in measure. For upon Christ the Lord, according to his assumed human nature (since according to his divinity he is of one essence with the Holy Ghost), there rests “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord” (Col. 2:3; Isa. 11:2; .61:1). This occurs not in such a way that, on this account, as a man he knew and had ability only with regard to some things, as other saints know and are able by the grace of God, which works in them only created gifts. But since Christ, according to his divinity, is the second person in the Holy Trinity, and from him, as also from the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds, and is and remains his Spirit and that of the Father for all eternity, not separated from the Son of God; the entire fulness of the Spirit (as the Fathers say) has been communicated by the personal union to Christ according to the flesh, which is personally united with the Son of God. This voluntarily manifests and exercises itself, with all its power therein, therewith and thereby [in, with and through the human nature of Christ], not so that he [Christ according to his human nature] not only knows some things and is ignorant of others, has ability with respect to some and is without ability with respect to others, but [according to the assumed human nature] knows and has ability with respect to all things. For upon him the Father poured without measure the Spirit of wisdom and power, so that, as man in deed and truth, he has received through this personal union all knowledge and all power. And thus all the treasures of wisdom are hidden in him, thus all power is given to him, and he is seated at the right hand of the majesty and power of God. From history it is also manifest that at the time of the Emperor Valens there was among the Arians a peculiar sect which was called the Agnoetae, because they imagined that the Son, the Word of the Father, knew indeed all



things, but that his assumed human nature is ignorant of many things; against whom Gregory the Great also wrote.

[692] On account of this personal union, and the communion following therefrom, which the divine and human natures have with one another in deed and truth in the person of Christ, there is ascribed to Christ, according to the flesh, that which his flesh, according to its nature and essence, cannot be of itself, and, apart from this union, cannot have, viz. that his flesh is a true quickening food, and his blood a true quickening blood; as the two hundred Fathers of the Council of Ephesus<sup>16</sup> have testified, that “the flesh of Christ is quickening or a quickener.” Hence also this man only, and no man besides, either in heaven or on earth, can say with truth (Matt. 18:20): “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Also (Matt. 28:20): “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

These testimonies we also do not understand, as though with us in the Christian Church and congregation only the divinity of Christ were present, and such presence in no way whatever pertained to Christ according to his humanity; for in like manner Peter, Paul and all the saints in heaven would also be with us on earth, since divinity, which is everywhere present, dwells in them. This the Holy Scriptures testify only of Christ, and of no other man besides. But we hold that by these words [the passages of Scripture above] the majesty of the man Christ is declared, which Christ has received, according to his humanity, at the right hand of the majesty and power of God, viz. that he also, according to his assumed human nature and with the same, can be and is present where he will, and especially that in his Church and congregation on earth, as Mediator, Head, King and High Priest, he is not half present or there is only the half [one part of him] present, but the entire person of Christ is present, to which two natures belong, the divine and the human; not only according to his divinity, but also according to and with his assumed human nature, by which he is our brother and we are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. For the certain assurance and confirmation of this he has instituted his Holy Supper, that also according to our nature, by which he has flesh and blood, he will be with us, and in us dwell, work and be efficacious.

Upon this firm foundation Dr. Luther, of holy memory, has also written [faithfully and clearly] concerning the majesty of Christ according to his human nature.

[693] In the Large Confession concerning the Lord's Supper he writes thus concerning the person of Christ: "Since Christ is such a man as is supernaturally one person with God, and apart from this man there is no God, it must follow that also, according to the third supernatural mode, he is and can be everywhere that God is, and all things are entirely full of Christ, even according to humanity, not according to the first corporeal, comprehensible mode, but according to the supernatural, divine mode."<sup>17</sup>

"For here you must stand [confess] and say: 'Wherever Christ is according to the divinity, there he is a natural, divine person, and he is also there naturally and personally, as his conception in his mother's womb well shows. For if he were God's Son, he must naturally and personally be in his mother's womb and become man. But if, wherever he is, he is naturally and personally, he must also be in the same place as man. For there are not [in Christ] two separate persons, but only one person. Wherever it is, there the person is only one and undivided; and wherever you can say: 'Here is God,' there you must also say: 'Therefore Christ the man is also there.' And if you would show a place where God would be, and not the man, the person would be already divided, because I could then say with truth: 'Here is God who is not man, and who never as yet has become man.'

"Far be it from me that I should acknowledge or worship such a God. For it would follow hence that space and place separated the two natures from one another, and divided the person, which, nevertheless, death and all devils could not divide or rend from one another. And there would remain to me a poor sort of Christ [a Christ of how much value, pray?], who would be no more than a divine and human person at the same time in only one place, and in all other places he must be only a mere separate God and divine person without humanity. No, friend, wherever you place God for me, there you must also place with him for me humanity; they do not allow themselves to be separated or divided from one another. They became one person, which [as Son of God] does not separate from itself [the assumed humanity]."

[694] In the little book concerning the Last Words of David, which Dr. Luther wrote shortly before his death, he says as follows: "According to the other, the temporal, human birth, the eternal power of God has also been given him, yet in time, and not from eternity. For the humanity of Christ has not been from eternity, as the divinity; but as we reckon and write Jesus, the Son of Mary, is this year 1543 years old. But from the instant when divinity and humanity were united in one person, the man, the Son of Mary, is and is called almighty, eternal God, has eternal might, and has created and sustains, by the *communicatio idiomatum*, all things, because he is one person with divinity, and is also true God. Of this he speaks (Matt. 11:27): 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father;' and Matt. 28:18: 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' To what me? To me, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, and born man. From eternity I had it of the Father, before I became man. But when I became man I received it in time, according to humanity, and kept it concealed until my resurrection and ascension; then it was to be manifested and declared, as St. Paul says (Rom. 1:4): 'He is declared and proved to be a Son of God with power.' John (17:10) calls it 'glorified.'"

Similar testimonies are found in Dr. Luther's writings, but especially in the book: "That these Words still stand Firm," and in the "Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper;" to which writings, as well-grounded explanations of the majesty of Christ at the right hand of God, and of his testament, we refer, for the sake of brevity, in this article, as well as in the Holy Supper, as has been heretofore mentioned.

[695] Therefore we regard it a pernicious error when to Christ, according to his humanity, such majesty is denied. For thereby there is removed from Christians the very great consolation which they have from the presence and dwelling with them of their Head, King and High Priest, who has promised them that not only his mere divinity should be with them, which to us poor sinners is as a consuming fire to dry stubble, but that very man who has spoken with us, who has experienced all troubles in his assumed human nature, who can therefore have with us, as with men and brethren, sympathy,<sup>18</sup> will be with us in all our troubles also according to the nature in which he is our brother and we are flesh of his flesh.

Therefore we unanimously reject and condemn, with mouth and heart, all errors not in accordance with the doctrine presented, as contrary to the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, the pure [received and approved] symbols, and our Christian Augsburg Confession:

1. As when it is believed or taught by any one that, on account of the personal union, the human nature is mingled with the divine or is changed into it.
2. Also, that the human nature in Christ, in the same mode as the divinity, is everywhere present, as an infinite essence, from essential power, likewise from a property of its nature.<sup>19</sup>
3. Also, that the human nature in Christ has become equal to and like the divine nature in its substance and essence or in its essential properties.
4. Also, that the humanity of Christ is locally extended in all places of heaven and earth; which should not be ascribed even to the divinity.<sup>20</sup> But that Christ, by his divine omnipotence, can be present with his body, which he has placed at the right hand of the majesty and power of God, wherever he will; especially where, as in the Holy Supper, he has, in his Word, promised this his presence, this his omnipotence and wisdom can well accomplish without change or abolition of his true human nature.
5. Also, that merely the human nature of Christ has suffered for us and redeemed us, with which the Son of God had no communion whatever in suffering.<sup>21</sup>
6. Also, that Christ is present with us on earth, only according to his divinity, in the preached Word and right use of the sacraments; and this presence of Christ does not in any way pertain to his assumed human nature.<sup>22</sup>
7. [696] Also, that the assumed human nature in Christ has in deed and truth no communion whatever with the divine power, might, wisdom, majesty and glory, but has in common only the mere title and name.<sup>23</sup>

These errors, and all that are contrary and opposed to the [godly and pure] doctrine presented above, we reject and condemn, as contrary to the pure Word of God, the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, and our Christian faith and confession. And we admonish all Christians, since in the Holy Scriptures Christ is called a mystery,<sup>24</sup> upon which all heretics dash their heads, not in a presumptuous manner to indulge in subtle inquiries with their reason concerning such mysteries, but with the venerated apostles simply to believe, to close the eyes of their reason, and bring into captivity their understanding to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and thence console themselves [seek most delightful and sure consolation]; and thus rejoice without ceasing that our flesh and blood are placed so high at the right hand of the majesty and almighty power of God. Thus will we assuredly find constant consolation in every adversity, and remain well guarded from pernicious error.

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1. Especially “*Das die Wort— nach fest stehen*,” A. D. 1527.↩
  2. They were called Marcionites, Samosatensians, Monothelites, etc↩
  3. Cf. § 60.↩
  4. Latin: *Antistes*; Germ.: *Vorsteher*,↩
  5. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 9.↩
  6. See below, § 38 sqq.↩
  7. For passage in full see Catalogus Testimoniorum.↩
  8. Cf. Sol. Dec, vii.: 4.↩
  9. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 26.↩
  10. Against Osiander and Stancar. See Epitome, iii.:1 sqq.; Sol. Dec. iii.: 57 sqq.↩

11. See above, § 19.↵
12. Mentzer in his Exegesis, Aug. Conf., p. 138, 142 sqq., has collected such expressions of the Sacramentarians.↵
13. See above, § 31 sqq.↵
14. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 27.↵
15. See above, § 18↵
16. Cf. above, § 59.↵
17. Cf. above, vii.: 99 sq.↵
18. Heb. 4:15↵
19. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 27.; xii.: 21.↵
20. See above, § 40, Epitome, viii.: 31.↵
21. Ibid., viii.: 24. 26.↵
22. Cf. Epitome, viii.: 29.↵
23. Cf. Epitome, viii.; 32↵
24. 1 Tim. 3:16.↵

## Chapter IX. Of the Descent of Christ to Hell

Parallel Passages. (Ecumenical Creeds; Small Catechism, Creed, Art ii.; Large Catechism, *ib.*, 452; Formula of Concord, Epitome, ix.

[697] And because, even in the ancient Christian teachers of the Church, as well as in some among us, dissimilar explanations of the article concerning the Descent to Hell are found, we, in like manner, abide by the simplicity of our Christian faith [comprised in the Creed], to which Dr. Luther in his sermon in the castle at Torgau in 1533, “Concerning the Descent to Hell,” has referred, where we confess: “I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, .... dead and buried. He descended into hell.” For in this Confession the burial and descent of Christ to hell are distinguished as different articles; and we simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might. We should not, however, trouble ourselves with sublime and acute thoughts as to how this occurred; for this article can be comprehended by the reason and the five senses as little as the preceding, as to how Christ is placed at the right hand of the almighty power and majesty of God; but [in such mysteries of faith] we have only to believe and adhere to the Word. Thus we retain the substance [sound doctrine] and [true] consolation that neither hell nor devil can take, captive or injure us and all who believe in Christ.

## Chapter X. Of Church Rites which are [commonly] called Adiaphora, or Matters of Indifference

Parallel Passages. Augsburg Confession, xv., xxvi.; Apology, vii.: 30 Sqq.; xv.; Smalcald Articles, Part III., Art. xv.; Epitome, x.

Concerning Ceremonies and Church Rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been introduced into the Church with a good intention, for the sake of good order and propriety, or otherwise to maintain Christian discipline, a dissension has in like manner arisen among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession. Since the one side held that also in time of persecution and in case of confession [when confession of faith is to be made], even though the enemies of the Gospel do not agree with us in doctrine, yet some [long-since] abrogated ceremonies, which in themselves are adiaphora, and neither commanded nor forbidden by God, may, without violence to conscience, be re-established in compliance with the pressure and demand of the adversaries, and thus in such [things of themselves] adiaphora, or matters of indifference, we may indeed have conformity with them. But the other side contended that in case of confession in time of persecution, especially when thereby the adversaries design through force and compulsion, or in an insidious manner, to suppress the pure doctrine, and gradually to introduce again into our churches their false doctrine, this which has been said can in no way occur without violence to conscience and prejudice to the divine truth.

[698] To explain this controversy, and by God's grace at last to settle it, we present to the Christian reader the following simple statement [in conformity with the Word of God]: Namely, when, under the title and pretext of external adiaphora, such things are proposed as (although painted another color) are in fact contrary to God's Word, these are not to be regarded adiaphora, but should be avoided as things prohibited by God. In like manner, also, among the genuine adiaphora such ceremonies should not be reckoned which have the appearance, or to avoid thereby persecution, feign the appearance, as though our religion and that of the Papists were not far apart, or as though the latter were not highly offensive to us; or when such ceremonies are designed for the purpose, and therefore are required and received, as though by and through them two contrary religions were recon-



ciled and became one body; or, again, when an advance towards the Papacy and a departure from the pure doctrine of the Gospel and true religion should occur or gradually follow therefrom [when there is danger lest we seem to have advanced towards the Papacy, and to have departed, or to be on the point of departing gradually, from the pure doctrine of the Gospel].

For in this case what Paul writes (2 Cor. 6:14, 17) must( have weight: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; what communion hath light with darkness? Wherefore, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.”

Likewise, when there are useless, foolish spectacles, that are profitable neither for good order, nor Christian discipline, nor evangelical propriety in the Church, these also are not genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference.

But concerning those things which are genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference (as before explained), we believe, teach and confess that such ceremonies, in and of themselves, are no worship of God, also no part of the worship of God, but should be properly distinguished from this, as it stands written: “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9).

[699] Therefore we believe, teach and confess that the Church of God of every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the authority, power and right [in matters truly adiaphora] to change, to diminish and to increase them, without thoughtlessness and offence, in an orderly and becoming way, as at any time it may be regarded most profitable, most beneficial and the best for [preserving] good order [maintaining]. Christian discipline [and for εὐταξία worthy of the profession of the Gospel], and the edification of the Church. How even to the weak in faith we can yield and give way with a good conscience in such external adiaphora Paul teaches (Rom. 14), and proves it by his example (Acts 16:3; 21:26; 1 Cor. 9:19).

We believe, teach and confess also that at the time [in which a confession of the heavenly truth is required] of confession, when the enemies of God’s Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire Church of God, yea, every Christian, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the presidents of the congregation of God [as those whom God has

appointed to rule his Church], are bound, according to God's Word, to confess the [godly] doctrine, and what belongs to the whole of [pure] religion, freely and openly, not only in words, but also in works and with deeds; and that then, in this case, even in such [things truly and of themselves] adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries, or permit these adiaphora to be forced upon them by their enemies, whether by violence or cunning, to the detriment of the true worship of God and the introduction and sanction of idolatry. For it is written (Gal. 5:1): "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage." Also (Gal. 2:4 sq.): "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage; to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."

And [it is manifest that] Paul speaks in the same place concerning circumcision, which at the time was an adiaphoron (1 Cor. 7:18 sq.), and was used by Paul at other places [nevertheless] with [Christian and] spiritual freedom (Acts 16:3). But when the false apostles demanded and abused circumcision for confirming their false doctrine, as though the works of the Law were needful for righteousness and salvation, Paul says that he would yield not for an hour, in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue [unimpaired].

[700] Thus Paul yields and gives way to the weak in [the observance of] food and times or days (Rom. 14:6). But to the false apostles who wished to impose these upon the conscience as necessary things he will yield not even in those things which in themselves are adiaphora (Col. 2:16): "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day." And when Peter and Barnabas yielded to a certain extent [more than they ought], Paul openly reproveth them as those who have not walked aright, according to the truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2:11 sqq.)

For here it is no longer a question concerning adiaphora, which, in their nature and essence are and remain of themselves free, and accordingly can admit of no command or prohibition that they be employed or be intermitted; but it is a question, in the first place, concerning the sacred article of our

Christian faith, as the apostle testifies, “in order that the truth of the Gospel might continue,” which is obscured and perverted by such compulsion and command, because such adiaphora are either publicly required for the sanction of false doctrine, superstition and idolatry, and for the suppression of pure doctrine and Christian liberty, or at least are abused for this purpose by the adversaries, and are thus received [or certainly are thus received by them, and are believed to be restored for this abuse and wicked end].

Likewise, the article concerning Christian liberty is also here at stake, to preserve which the Holy Ghost so earnestly charged his Church through the mouth of the holy apostle, as heard above. For as soon as this is weakened and the ordinances of men [human traditions] are urged with compulsion upon the Church, as though they were necessary and their omission were wrong and sinful, the way is already prepared for idolatry, whereby the ordinances of men [human traditions] are gradually multiplied and regarded as a service of God, not only equal to the ordinances of God, but are even placed above them.

[701] So also by such [untimely] yielding and conformity in external things, where there has not been previously Christian union in doctrine, idolaters are confirmed in their idolatry; on the other hand, the truly believing are distressed, offended and weakened in their faith [their faith is grievously shaken, and made to totter as though by a battering-ram]; both of which every Christian for the sake of his soul’s welfare and salvation is bound to avoid, as it is written: “Woe unto the world because of offenses!” Also: “Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6, 7.)

But especially is that to be remembered which Christ says: 17

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.”

Moreover, that this has been always and everywhere the faith and confession concerning such adiaphora, of the chief teachers of the Augsburg Confession, into whose footsteps we have entered, and intend by God’s grace to persevere, in this their Confession, the following testimonies drawn from

the Smalcald Articles, which was composed and subscribed in the year 1537 [most clearly], show:

*Testimonies derived from the Smalcald Articles<sup>1</sup>  
written in the year 1537.*

The Smalcald Articles say concerning this as follows: “We do not acknowledge them as the Church, and also they are not; we also will not listen to those things which, under the name of Church, they either enjoin or forbid. For, thank God, today a child seven years old knows what the Church is, namely, saints, believers and lambs, who hear the voice of their Shepherd.”

And shortly before<sup>2</sup>: “If the bishops were true bishops, and would devote themselves to the Church and the Gospel, they might be allowed, for the sake of love and unity, and not from necessity, to ordain and confirm us and our preachers; nevertheless, under the condition that all masks and phantoms of an unchristian nature and display be laid aside. Yet because they neither are nor wish to be true bishops, but worldly lords and princes, who will neither preach, nor teach, nor baptize, nor administer the Lord’s Supper, nor perform any work or office of the Church, but persecute and condemn those who, being called, discharge their duty; for their sake, the Church ought not to remain without ministers.”

[702] And in the article, “Of the Primacy of the Pope,” the Smalcald Articles say:<sup>3</sup> “Wherefore, just as we cannot adore the devil himself as Lord and God, so we cannot endure his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill and to destroy body and soul eternally is a prerogative of the Papal government.”

And in the treatise “Concerning the Power and Primacy of the Pope,” which is appended to the Smalcald Articles, and was also subscribed by the theologians then present with their own hands, stand these words:<sup>4</sup> “No one should burden the Church with his own traditions, but here it should be enjoined that the power or influence of no one should avail more than the Word of God.”

And shortly afterwards<sup>5</sup>: "This being the case, all Christians ought most diligently to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies and unjust cruelties of the Pope; but ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his members as the kingdom of Antichrist, just as Christ has commanded (Matt. 7:15): 'Beware of false prophets.' And Paul commands us to avoid false teachers and execrate them as an abomination. And in (2 Cor. 6:14), he says: 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what communion hath light with darkness?'"

"It is difficult to separate one's self from so many lands and nations, and to be willing to maintain this doctrine; but here stands God's command, that every one should beware and not agree with those who maintain false doctrine or who think of supporting it by means of cruelty."

So, too, Dr. Luther has amply instructed the Church of God in an especial treatise concerning what should be thought of ceremonies in general, and especially of adiaphora, vol. iii., Jena ed., p. 523; likewise also in 1530, in German, vol. v., Jena ed.

[703] From this explanation every one can understand what it is proper for every Christian congregation and every Christian man, especially in time of confession [when a confession of faith should be made], and most of all preachers, to do or to leave undone, without injury to conscience, with respect to adiaphora, in order that God may not be incensed [provoked to just indignation], love may not be injured, the enemies of God's Word be not strengthened, and the weak in the faith be not offended.

1. Therefore,<sup>6</sup> we reject and condemn as wrong when the ordinances of men in themselves are regarded as a service or part of the service of God.
2. We reject and condemn also as wrong when these ordinances are urged by force upon the congregation of God as necessary.
3. We reject and condemn also as wrong the opinion of those who hold that at a time of persecution we may comply with the enemies of the holy Gospel in [restoring] such adiaphora, or may come to an agreement with them, which causes injury to the truth.

4. We likewise regard it a sin worthy of punishment when, in the time of persecution, on account of the enemies of the Gospel, anything either in adiaphora or in doctrine, and what otherwise pertains to religion, is done in word and act contrary and opposed to the Christian confession.
5. We reject and condemn also when these adiaphora are abrogated [the madness of those who abrogate] in such a manner as though it were not free to the Church of God at any time and place to employ one or more in Christian liberty, according to its circumstances, as may be most useful to the Church.

According to this doctrine the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they otherwise are in unity with one another in doctrine and all its articles, and also in the right use of the holy sacraments, according to the well-known saying; “Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith.”<sup>7</sup>

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1. Part III., Art. xii.↩
  2. Part III., Art. x.↩
  3. Part. II., Art. iv. § 14.↩
  4. § 11.↩
  5. § 41.↩
  6. For 1, 2, 3 and 6, see also Epitome, x.: 8 sq.↩
  7. Epitome, x.: 7.↩

## Chapter XI. Of God's Eternal Foreknowledge [Predestination] and Election

Parallel Passages. Epitome, xi. Cf. Augsburg Confession.

[704] Although among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession no public dissension whatever, causing offence, and that is widespread, has as yet occurred concerning the eternal election of the children of God; yet since in other places this article has been brought into very painful controversy,<sup>1</sup> and even among our theologians there was some agitation concerning it, and similar expressions were not always employed concerning it by the theologians; in order by the aid of divine grace to prevent disagreement and separation in the future among our successors, as well as among us, we have desired here also to present an explanation of the same, so that every one may know what is our unanimous doctrine, faith and confession concerning this article also. For the doctrine concerning this article, if presented from and according to the pattern of the divine Word [and analogy of God's Word and of faith], neither can nor should be regarded as useless or unnecessary, much less as causing offence or injury, because the Holy Scriptures not only in but one place and incidentally, but in many places, thoroughly discuss and urge [explain] the same. Therefore, on account of abuse or misunderstanding we should not neglect or reject the doctrine of the divine Word, but precisely on that account, in order to avert all abuse and misunderstanding, the true meaning should and must be explained from the foundation of the Scriptures. According to this the plain sum and substance [of the heavenly doctrine] concerning this article consists in the following points:

[705] First, the distinction between the *eternal foreknowledge of God*, and the *eternal election of his children to eternal salvation* [^bmc] is to be accurately observed. For foreknowledge or prevision, i. e. that God sees and knows everything before it happens, which is called *God's foreknowledge* [*prescience*] extends to all creatures, good and bad; namely, that he foresees and foreknows everything that is or will be, that is occurring or will occur, whether it be good or bad, since before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present. Thus it is written (Matt. 10:29): "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the

ground without your Father.” And (Ps. 139:16): “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them.” Also (Isa. 37:28): “I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.”

But the *eternal election of God*, or predestination, i. e., *God’s appointment to salvation*, pertains not at the same time to the godly and the wicked, but only to the children of God, who were elected and appointed to eternal life before the foundation of the world was laid, as Paul says (Eph. 1:4, 5): “He hath chosen us in him, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.”

The foreknowledge of God (prescience) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil, but not in such a manner as though it were God’s gracious will that evil should happen. But all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men purposes and desires to do, and will do, God sees and knows before; and his prescience, i. e. foreknowledge, so observes its order also, even in wicked acts or works, that to the evil which God does not will its limit and measure are fixed by God, how far it should go and how long it should last, when and how he would hinder and punish it; yet all this God the Lord so rules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of his elect; and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion.

Moreover, the beginning and cause of the evil is not God’s foreknowledge (for God does not procure and effect or work that which is evil, neither does he help or promote it); but the wicked, perverse will of the devil and of men [is the cause of the evil], as it is written (Hos. 13; 9); “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.” Also (Ps. 5:4) “Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.”

[706] But the eternal election of God not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is also, from the gracious will and pleasure of God in Christ Jesus, a cause which procures, works, helps and promotes what pertains thereto; upon this [divine predestination] also our salvation is so founded that “the gates of hell cannot prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). For it is written (John 10:28): “Neither shall any man pluck my sheep out of



my hand.” And again (Acts 13:48): “And as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.”

This eternal election or appointment of God to eternal life is also not to be considered merely in God’s secret, inscrutable counsel in such a manner as though it comprised in itself nothing further, or nothing more belonged thereto, and nothing more were to be considered therein, than that God fore-saw who and how many would be saved, and who and how many would be damned, or that he only held a review, and would say thus: “This one shall be saved, that one shall be damned; this one shall remain steadfast [in faith to the end], that one shall not remain steadfast.”

For from this many derive and adopt strange, dangerous and pernicious thoughts, which occasion and strengthen either security and impenitence or despondency and despair, so that they fall into troublesome thoughts and [for thus some think, with peril to themselves, nay, even sometimes] speak thus: Since “before the foundation of the world was laid” (Eph. 1:4) “God has foreknown [predestinated] his elect for salvation, and God’s foreknowledge cannot err or be injured or changed by any one” (Isa. 14:27; Rom. 9:19), “if I, then, am foreknown [elected] for salvation, nothing can injure me with respect to it, even though, without repentance, I practice all sorts of sin and shame, do not regard the Word and sacraments, concern myself neither with repentance, faith, prayer nor godliness. But I nevertheless will and must be saved; because God’s foreknowledge [election] must come to pass. If, however, I am not foreknown [predestinated], it nevertheless helps me nothing, even though I would observe the Word, repent, believe, etc.; for I cannot hinder or change God’s foreknowledge [predestination].”

And such thoughts occur indeed even to godly hearts, although, by God’s grace, they have repentance, faith and a good purpose [of living in a godly manner], so that they think: “If you are not foreknown [predestinated or elected] from eternity for salvation, everything [your every effort and entire labor] is of no avail.” This especially occurs when they regard their weakness and the examples of those who have not persevered [in faith to the end], but have fallen away again [from true godliness to ungodliness, and have become apostates].

[707] Against this false delusion and such dangerous thoughts we should establish the following firm foundation, which is sure and cannot fail, namely: Since all Scripture has been given by God, not for [cherishing] security and impenitence, but should serve “for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16); also, since everything in God’s Word has been prescribed to us, not that we should thereby be driven to despair, but “that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope” (Rom. 15:4); it is without doubt in no way the sound sense or right use of the doctrine concerning the eternal foreknowledge of God that thereby either impenitence or despair should be occasioned or strengthened. Therefore the Scriptures present to us this doctrine in no other way than to direct us thereby to the [revealed] Word (Eph. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:7), exhort to repentance (2 Tim. 3:16), urge to godliness (Eph. 1:14; John 15:3), strengthen faith and assure us of our salvation (Eph. 1:13; John 10:27 sq.; 2 Thess. 2:13 sq.).

Therefore, if we wish to think or speak correctly and profitably concerning eternal election, or the predestination and foreordination of the children of God to eternal life, we should accustom ourselves not to speculate concerning the mere, secret, concealed, inscrutable foreknowledge of God, but how the counsel, purpose and ordination of God in Christ Jesus, who is the true book of life, has been revealed to us through the Word, viz. that the entire doctrine concerning the purpose, counsel, will and ordination of God pertaining to our redemption, call, righteousness and salvation should be taken together; as Paul has treated and explained this article (Rom. 8:29 sq.; Eph. 1:4 sq.), as also Christ in the parable (Matt. 22: I sqq.), namely, that God in his purpose and counsel decreed:

1. That the human race should be truly redeemed and reconciled with God through Christ, who, by his faultless [innocency] obedience, suffering and death, has merited for us righteousness which avails before God, and eternal life.
2. [708] That such merit and benefits of Christ should be offered, presented and distributed to us through his Word and sacraments.
3. That he would be efficacious and active in us by his Holy Ghost, through the Word, when it is preached, heard and pondered, to convert

hearts to true repentance and preserve them in the true faith.

4. That all those who, in true repentance, receive Christ by a true faith he would justify and receive into grace, adoption and inheritance of eternal life.
5. That those also who are thus justified he would sanctify in love, as St. Paul (Eph. 1:4) says.
6. That, in their great weakness, he also would defend them against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and would rule and lead them in his ways, and when they stumble would raise them again [place his hand beneath them], and under the cross and in temptation would comfort and preserve them [for life].
7. That the good work which he has begun in them he would strengthen, increase and support to the end, if they observe God's Word, pray diligently, abide in God's goodness [grace] and faithfully use the gifts received.
8. That those whom he has elected, called and justified, he would eternally save and glorify in life eternal.

And that in his counsel, purpose and ordination he prepared salvation not only in general, but in grace considered and chose to salvation each and every person of the elect, who shall be saved through Christ, and ordained that in the way just mentioned he would by his grace, gifts and efficacy bring them thereto [make them participants of eternal salvation], and aid, promote, strengthen and preserve them.

[709] All this, according to the Scriptures, is comprised in the doctrine concerning the eternal election of God to adoption and eternal salvation, and should be comprised with it, and not omitted, when we speak of God's purpose, predestination, election and ordination to salvation. And when, according to the Scriptures, thoughts concerning this article are thus formed, we can, by God's grace, simply [and correctly] adapt ourselves to it [and advantageously treat of it].

This also belongs to the further explanation and salutary use of the doctrine concerning God's predestination to salvation, viz.: Since only the elect, whose names are written in the book of life, are saved, how can we know whence, and whereby can we decide, who are the elect and those by whom this doctrine can and should be received for comfort?

And of this we should not judge according to our reason, also not according to the Law or from any external appearance. Neither should we attempt to investigate the secret, concealed abyss of divine predestination, but should give heed to the revealed will of God. For he has "made known unto us the mystery of his will," and made it manifest through Christ that it might be preached (Eph. 1:9 sqq; 2 Tim. 1:9 sq.).

But this is revealed to us thus, as St. Paul says (Rom. 8:2; 29 sq.): "Whom God predestinated, elected and foreordained, he also called." Now, God calls not without means, but through the Word, as he has commanded "repentance and remission of sins to be preached in his name" (Luke 24:47). St. Paul also testifies to like effect when he writes (2 Cor. 5:20): "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." And the guests whom the King will have at the wedding of his Son he calls through his ministers sent forth (Matt. 22:2 sqq.) — some at the first and some at the second, third, sixth, ninth, and even at the eleventh hour (Matt. 20:3 sqq.).

[710] Therefore, if we wish with profit to consider our eternal election to salvation, we must in every way hold rigidly and firmly to this, viz. that as the preaching of repentance so also the promise of the Gospel is universal, i. e. it pertains to all men (Luke 24). Therefore Christ has commanded "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." For God loved the world and gave his Son (John 3:16). Christ bore the sins of the world (John 1:29), gave his flesh for the life of the world (John 6:51); his blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 1:7; 2:2). Christ says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will you rest" (Matt. 11:28). "God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all" (Rom. 11:32). "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon

him” (Rom. 10:12). “The righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22). “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life.” Therefore it is Christ’s command that to all in common to whom repentance is preached this promise of the Gospel also should be offered (Luke 24:47; Mark 16:15).

And this call of God, which is made through the preaching of the Word, we should regard as no delusion, but know that thereby God reveals his will, viz. that in those whom he thus calls he will work through the Word, that they may be enlightened, converted and saved. For the Word, whereby we are called, is “a ministration of the Spirit,” that gives the Spirit, or whereby the Spirit is given (2 Cor. 3:8), and “a power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16). And since the Holy Ghost wishes to be efficacious through the Word, and to strengthen and give power and ability, it is God’s will that we should receive the Word, believe and obey it.

For this reason the elect are described thus: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life” (John 10:27 sq.) And (Eph. 1:11, 13): Who according to the purpose are predestinated to an inheritance, who hear the Gospel, believe in Christ, pray and give thanks, are sanctified in love, have hope, patience and comfort under the cross (Rom. 8:25); and although in them all this is very weak, yet they hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

[711] Thus the Spirit of God gives to the elect the testimony that they are children of God, and when they do not know for what they should pray as they ought, he intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:16, 26).

Thus, also. Holy Scripture shows that God, who has called us, is so faithful when he has begun a good work in us that he also will preserve and continue it to the end, if we do not turn ourselves from him, but retain firmly to the end the work begun, for retaining which he has promised his grace (1 Cor. 1:9; Phil. 1:6; [1 Pet. 5:10]; 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 3:2).

With this revealed will of God we should concern ourselves, and should follow and study it, because the Holy Ghost, through the Word whereby he

calls us, bestows, to this end, grace, power and ability, and we should not attempt to scrutinize the abyss of God's hidden predestination, as it is written in Luke 13:24, where to one who asks: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Christ answers: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Accordingly, Luther says [in the Preface to the Epistle to the Romans]: "Follow the Epistle to the Romans in its order, concern yourself first with Christ and his Gospel, that you may recognize your sins and his grace. Afterwards contend with sin, as Paul teaches from the first to the eighth chapter. Then when in the eighth chapter you will come into temptation under the cross and afflictions, the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters will teach you how consolatory is predestination."

[712] But that many are called and few are chosen is not owing to the fact that the meaning of the call of God, made through the Word, is as though God were to say: "Outwardly, through the Word, I indeed call to my kingdom all of you to whom I give my Word, yet in my heart I intend it not for all, but only for a few; for it is my will that the greatest part of those whom I call through the Word should not be enlightened or converted, but be and remain lost, although, through the Word in the call, I declare myself to them otherwise." For this would be to assign to God contradictory wills. That is, in such a manner it would be taught that God, who is, however, eternal truth, would be contrary to himself; and yet God also punishes the fault when one thing is declared, and another is thought and meant in the heart (Ps. 5:9 and 12:2 sq.). Thereby, also, the necessary consolatory foundation is rendered altogether uncertain and of no value, as we are daily reminded and admonished, that only from God's Word, whereby he treats with us and calls us, should we learn and conclude what his will to us is, and that that, to which he gives his Word and which he promises, we should certainly believe and not doubt.

Therefore Christ causes the promise of the Gospel to be offered not only in general, but through the sacraments, which he attaches as seals of the promise, he seals and thereby especially confirms it [the certainty of the promise of the Gospel] to every believer.

For that reason we also retain, as the Augsburg Confession, Art. xi.<sup>2</sup> says, Private Absolution, and teach that it is God's command that we believe such

absolution, and regard it as sure, when we believe the word of absolution, that we are as truly reconciled to God as though we had heard a voice from heaven; as the Apology<sup>3</sup> explains this article. This consolation would be entirely taken from us if we were not to infer the will of God towards us from the call which is made through the Word and through the sacraments.

[713] There would also be overthrown and taken from us the foundation that the Holy Ghost wills to be certainly present with the Word preached, heard, considered, and thereby to be efficacious and to work. Therefore the opinion should in no way be entertained of which mention has heretofore been made, that these would be the elect, even though they despise the Word of God, reject, calumniate and persecute it (Matt. 22:6; Acts 13:46), or, when they hear it, harden their hearts (Heb. 4:2, 7), resist the Holy Ghost (Acts 7:51), without repentance persevere in sins (Luke 14:18), do not truly believe in Christ (Mark 16:16), only present [godliness in] an outward appearance (Matt. 7:22; 22:12), or seek other ways for righteousness and holiness apart from Christ (Rom. 9:31). But as God has ordained in his [eternal] counsel that the Holy Ghost should call, enlighten and convert the elect through the Word, and that all those who, through true faith, receive Christ he will justify and save; he has also determined in his counsel that he will harden, reprobate and condemn those who are called through the Word if they reject the Word and resist the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious and to work in them through the Word. And for this reason “many are called, but few are chosen.”

For few receive the Word and follow it; the greatest number despise the Word, and will not come to the wedding (Matt. 22:3 sqq). The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God’s knowledge [or predestination], but the perverse will of man, who rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Ghost, which God offers him through the call, and resists the Holy Ghost, who wishes to be efficacious, and works through the Word, as Christ says (Matt. 23:37): “How often would I have gathered thee together, and ye would not.”

Therefore many receive the Word with joy, but afterwards fall away again (Luke 8:13). But the cause is not as though God were unwilling to grant grace for perseverance to those in whom he has begun the good work, for

this is contrary to St. Paul (Phil. 1:6); but the cause is that they willfully turn away again from the holy commandment [of God], grieve and exasperate the Holy Ghost, implicate themselves again in the filth of the world and garnish again the habitation of the heart for the devil; with them the last state is worse than the first (2 Pet. 2:10, 20; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:26; Luke 11:25).

[714] Thus far is the mystery of predestination revealed to us in God's Word, and if we abide thereby and cleave thereto, it is a very useful, salutary, consolatory doctrine; for it establishes very effectually the article that we are justified and saved without all works and merits of ours, purely out of grace, alone for Christ's sake. For before the ages of the world, before we were born, yea, before the foundation of the world was laid, when we indeed could do nothing good, we were according to God's purpose chosen out of grace in Christ to salvation (Rom. 9:11; 2 Tim. 1:9). All opinions and erroneous doctrines concerning the powers of our natural will are thereby overthrown, because God in his counsel, before the ages of the world, decided and ordained that he himself, by the power of his Holy Ghost, would produce and work in us, through the Word, everything that pertains to our conversion.

Therefore this doctrine affords also the excellent, glorious consolation that God was so solicitous concerning the conversion, righteousness and salvation of every Christian, and so faithfully provided therefor, that before the foundation of the world was laid he deliberated concerning it, and in his [secret] purpose ordained how he would bring me thereto [call and lead me to salvation] and preserve me therein. Also, that he wished to secure my salvation so well and certainly that since, through the weakness and wickedness of our flesh, it could easily be lost from our hands, or through craft and might of the devil and the world be torn or removed therefrom, in his eternal purpose, which cannot fail or be overthrown, he ordained it, and placed it for preservation in the almighty hand of our Saviour Jesus Christ, from which no one can pluck us (John 10:28). Hence Paul also says (Rom. 8:28,39): "Because we have been called according to the purpose of God, who will separate us from the love of God in Christ?" [Paul builds the certainty of our blessedness upon the foundation of the divine purpose, when,



from our being called according to the purpose of God, he infers that no one can separate us, etc.]

Under the cross also and amid temptations this doctrine affords glorious consolation, namely, that God in his counsel, before the time of the world, determined and decreed that he would assist us in all distresses [anxieties and perplexities], grant patience [under the cross], give consolation, excite [nourish and encourage] hope, and produce such a result as would contribute to our salvation. Also, as Paul in a very consolatory way treats this (Rom. 8:28, 29, 35, 38, 39), that God in his purpose has ordained before the time of the world by what crosses and sufferings he will conform his elect to the image of his Son, and that to every one his cross should and must serve for the best, because called according to the purpose, whence Paul concludes that it is certain and indubitable that “neither tribulation nor distress,” “nor death nor life,” etc., “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

[715] This article also affords a glorious testimony that the Church of God will abide against all the gates of hell, and likewise teaches what is the true Church of God, so that we may not be offended by the great authority [and majestic appearance] of the false Church (Rom. 9:24, 25).

From this article also powerful admonitions and warnings are derived, as (Luke 7:30): “They rejected the counsel of God against themselves.” Luke 14:24: “I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” Also (Matt. 20:16): “Many be called, but few chosen.” Also (Luke 8:8, 18): “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” and: “Take heed how ye hear.” Thus the doctrine concerning this article can be employed with profit for consolation, and so as to contribute to salvation [and can be transferred in many ways to our use].

But with especial care the distinction must be observed between that which is expressly revealed concerning this in God’s Word and what is not revealed. For, in addition to that hitherto mentioned which has been revealed in Christ concerning this, God has still kept secret and concealed much concerning this mystery, and reserved it alone for his wisdom and knowledge. Concerning this we should not investigate, nor indulge our thoughts, nor

reach conclusions, nor inquire curiously, but should adhere [entirely] to the revealed Word of God. This admonition is in the highest degree necessary.

For our curiosity has always much more pleasure in concerning itself there-with [with investigating those things which are hidden and abstruse] than with what God has revealed to us concerning this in his Word, since we cannot harmonize them, which we also have not been commanded to do [since certain things occur in this mystery so intricate and involved that we are not able by the penetration of our natural ability to harmonize them, but this has not been demanded of us by God].

[716] Thus there is no doubt that God most exactly and certainly saw before the time of the world, and still knows, who of those who are called will believe or will not believe; also who of the converted will persevere [in faith] and who will not; who after a fall [into grievous sins] will return, and who will fall into obduracy [will perish in their sins]. So, too, the number, how many there are of these on both sides, is beyond all doubt perfectly known to God. Yet since God has reserved this mystery for his wisdom, and in his Word revealed nothing to us concerning it, much less commanded us to investigate it with our thoughts, but has earnestly discouraged us therefrom (Rom. 11:33 sqq.), we should not indulge our thoughts, reach conclusions nor inquire curiously therein, but should adhere to his revealed Word, to which he points us.

Thus without any doubt God also knows and has determined for every one the time and hour of his call and conversion [and when he will raise again one who has lapsed]. Yet since this is not revealed, we have the command always to adhere to the Word, but to entrust the time and hour [of conversion] to God (Acts 1:7).

Likewise, when we see that God gives his Word at one place [to one kingdom or realm], but not at another [to another nation]; removes it from one place [people], and allows it to remain at another; also, that one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is again converted, etc.; in these and similar questions Paul (Rom. 11:22 sqq.) fixes before us a certain limit as to how far we should go, viz. that, in the one part we should recognize God's judgment [for he commands us to consider in those who perish the just judgment of God and the

penalties of sins]. For they are richly-deserved penalties of sins when God so punishes a land or nation for despising his Word that the punishment extends also to their posterity, as is to be seen in the Jews. Thereby God shows to those that are his, his severity in some lands and persons, in order to indicate what we all have richly deserved, since we have acted wickedly in opposition to God's Word [are ungrateful for the revealed Word, and live unworthily of the Gospel] and often have sorely grieved the Holy Ghost; so that we may live in God's fear, and acknowledge and praise God's goodness, in and with us, without and contrary to our merit, to whom he gives and grants his Word, and whom he does not harden and reject.

[717] For inasmuch as our nature has been corrupted by sin, and is worthy of, and under obligation to, God's wrath and condemnation, God owes to us neither Word, Spirit, nor grace, and when, out of grace, he bestows these gifts, we often repel them from us, and judge ourselves unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46). Therefore this his righteous, richly deserved judgment he displays in some countries, nations and persons, in order that when we are considered with respect to them, and compared with them, we may learn the more attentively to recognize and praise God's pure [immense], unmerited grace in the vessels of mercy.

For no injustice is done those who are punished and receive the wages of their sins; but in the rest, to whom God gives and preserves his Word, and thereby enlightens, converts and preserves men, God commends his pure [immense] grace and mercy, without their merit.

When we proceed thus far in this article we remain upon the right [safe and royal] way, as it is written (Hos. 13:9): "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help."

But with respect to that in this disputation which will proceed too high and beyond these limits, we should, with Paul, place the finger upon our lips, and remember and say (Rom. 9:20): "O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"

For that in this article we neither can nor should inquire after and investigate everything, the great apostle Paul declares [by his own example]. For when, after having argued much concerning this article from the revealed

Word of God, he comes to where he points out what, concerning this mystery, God has reserved for his hidden wisdom, he suppresses and cuts off the discussion with the following words (Rom. 11:33 sq.): “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord?” i. e. in addition to and beyond that which he has revealed in his Word.

[718] Therefore this eternal election of God is to be considered in Christ, and not beyond or without Christ. For “in Christ,” testifies the apostle Paul (Eph. 1:4 sq.), “he hath chosen us before the foundation of the world;” as it is written: “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” But this election is revealed from heaven through the preached Word when the Father says (Matt. 17:5): “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” And Christ says (Matt. 11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” And concerning the Holy Ghost Christ says (John 16:14): “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Therefore the entire Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, direct all men to Christ, as to the Book of Life, in which they should seek the eternal election of the Father. For it has been decided by the Father from eternity that whom he would save he would save through Christ (John 14:6): “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” And again (John 10:9): “I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.”

But Christ as the only-begotten Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has published to us the will of the Father, and thus also our eternal election to eternal life, viz. when he says (Mark 1:15): “Repent ye, and believe the Gospel; the kingdom of God is at hand.” He also says (John 6:40): “This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life.” And again (John 3:16): “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This proclamation the Father wishes that all men should hear, and that they should come to Christ. Those who come Christ does not repel from himself,

as it is written (John 6:37): “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

And in order that we may come to Christ, the Holy Ghost works, through the hearing of the Word, true faith, as the apostle testifies when he says (Rom. 10:17): “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,” viz. when it is preached in its purity and without adulteration.

[719] Therefore no one who would be saved should trouble or harass himself with thoughts concerning the secret counsel of God, as to whether he also is elected and ordained to eternal life; for with these miserable Satan is accustomed to attack and annoy godly hearts. But they should hear Christ [and in him look upon the Book of Life in which is written the eternal election], who is the Book of Life and of God’s eternal election of all God’s children to eternal life; who testifies to all men without distinction that it is God’s will that all men who labor and are heavy laden with sin should come to him, in order that he may give them rest and save them (Matt. 11:28).

According to this doctrine of Christ, they should abstain from their sins, repent, believe his promise, and entirely entrust themselves to him; and since this we cannot do by ourselves of our own powers, the Holy Ghost desires to work repentance and faith in us through the Word and sacraments. And in order that we may attain this, and persevere and remain steadfast, we should implore God for his grace, which he promised us in holy baptism, and not doubt he will impart it to us according to his promise, as he has said (Luke 11:11 sq.): “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

[720] And since the Holy Ghost dwells in the elect, who become believing, as in his temple, and is not inactive in them, but impels the children of God to obedience to God’s commands; believers, in like manner, should not be inactive, and much less resist the impulse of God’s Spirit, but should exercise themselves in all Christian virtue, in all godliness, modesty, temperance, patience, brotherly love, and give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, in order that the more they experience the power and

strength of the Spirit within them they may doubt the less concerning it. For the Spirit 74 bears witness to the elect that they are God's children (Rom. 8:16). And although they sometimes fall into temptation so grievous that they think that they perceive no more power of the indwelling Spirit of God, and say with David (Ps. 31:22): "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes," yet they should again [be encouraged and] say with David, without regard to what they experience in themselves: "Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee."

And since our election to eternal life is founded not upon our godliness or virtue, but alone upon the merit of Christ and the gracious will of his Father, who, because he is unchangeable in will and essence, cannot deny himself; on this account, when his children depart from obedience and stumble, he calls them again through the Word to repentance, and the Holy Ghost wills thereby to be efficacious in them for conversion; and when in true repentance by a right faith they turn again to him, he will always manifest his old paternal heart to all those who tremble at his Word and from their heart turn again to him, as it is written (Jer. 3:1): "If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord."

Moreover, the declaration (John 6:44) that no one can come to Christ except the Father draw him is right and true. But the Father will not do this without means, and has ordained for this purpose his Word and sacraments as ordinary means and instruments; and it is the will neither of the Father nor of the Son that a man should not hear or should despise the preaching of his Word, and without the Word and sacraments should expect the drawing of the Father. For the Father draws indeed by the power of his Holy Ghost, but, nevertheless, according to his usual order [the order decreed and instituted by himself], by the hearing of his holy, divine Word, as with a net, whereby the elect are delivered from the jaws of the devil. Every poor sinner should therefore repair thereto [to holy preaching], hear it attentively, and should not doubt the drawing of the Father. For the Holy Ghost will be with his Word in his power, and thereby work; and this is the drawing of the Father.

[721] But the reason that not all who hear it believe, and some are therefore condemned the more deeply [eternally to severer punishments], is not that God has not desired their salvation; but it is their own fault, as they have heard the Word in such a manner as not to learn, but only to despise, traduce and disgrace it, and have resisted the Holy Ghost, who through the Word wishes to work in them. There was one form of this at the time of Christ in the Pharisees and their adherents. Therefore the apostle distinguishes with especial care the work of God, who alone makes vessels of honor, and the work of the devil and of man, who by the instigation of the devil, and not of God, has made himself a vessel of dishonor. For thus it is written (Rom. 9:22 sq.): “God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.”

For here the apostle clearly says: “God endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath,” but does not say that he made them vessels of wrath; for if this had been his will, he would not have required for it any great long-suffering. The fault, however, that they are fitted for destruction belongs to the devil and to men themselves, and not to God.

[722] For all preparation for condemnation is by the devil and man, through sin, and in no respect by God, who does not wish that any man be damned; how then should he prepare any man for condemnation? For as God is not a cause of sins, so too he is no cause of the punishment, i. e. the condemnation; but the only cause of the condemnation is sin, for “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). And as God does not wish sin, and has no pleasure in sin, he also does not wish the death of the sinner (Ez. 33:11), and has no pleasure in his condemnation. For he is not “willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). So too it is written (in Ez. 18:23; 33:11): “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.” And St. Paul testifies in clear words that from vessels of dishonor vessels of honor may be made by God’s power and working, as he writes (2 Tim. 2:21) thus: “If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.” For he who is to purge himself must first have been unclean, and therefore a vessel of dishonor. But concerning the vessels of

mercy he says clearly that the Lord himself has prepared them for glory, which he does not say concerning the condemned, who themselves, and not God, have prepared themselves as vessels of condemnation.

It is also to be attentively considered, when God punishes sin with sins, i. e. afterwards punishes those who have been converted with obduracy and blindness, because of their subsequent security, impenitence and willful sins, that it should not be inferred hence that it never was God's good pleasure that such persons should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. For it is God's revealed will, both:

First, that God will receive into grace all who repent and believe in Christ.

Secondly, that those who willfully turn away from the holy commandment, and are again entangled in the pollutions of the world (2 Pet. 2:20), and garnish their hearts for Satan (Luke 11:25 sq.), and do despite unto the Spirit of God (Heb. 10:29), he will punish, and when they persist therein they shall be hardened, blinded and eternally condemned.

Therefore, even Pharaoh (of whom it is written (Ex. 9:16; 84 Rom. 9:17): "In very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth") was lost, not because God did not desire his salvation, or because it was his good pleasure that Pharaoh should be condemned and lost. For God "is not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3:9); he also has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ez. 33:11).

[723] But that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, viz. that Pharaoh still continued to sin, and the more he was admonished the more obdurate he became, were punishments of his preceding sins and horrible tyranny, which, in many and manifold ways, he exercised towards the children of Israel inhumanly and against the accusations of his conscience. And since God caused his Word to be preached and his will to be proclaimed, and Pharaoh willfully resisted it in direct contradiction of all admonitions and warnings, God withdrew his hand from him, and thus his heart was hardened, and God executed his judgment upon him; for he deserved nothing else than hellfire. And indeed the holy apostle introduces the example of Pharaoh for no other



reason than hereby to prove the justice of God, which he exercises towards the impenitent and despisers of his Word. Yet in no way is it there to be thought or understood that God did not desire his salvation, or that there is any man whose salvation he did not desire, but that he was so ordained to eternal damnation in God's secret counsel that he neither should, could, nor might be saved.

Through this doctrine and explanation of the eternal and saving choice of the elect children of God his own glory is entirely and fully given to God, that in Christ he saves us out of pure [and free] mercy, without any merits or good works of ours, according to the purpose of his will, as it is written (Eph. 1:5 sq.): "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Therefore it is false and wrong<sup>4</sup> [conflicts with the Word of God] when it is taught that not alone the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ, but also that there is in us a cause of God's election, on account of which God has chosen us to eternal life. For not only before we did anything good, but also before we were born, yea, even before the foundations of the world were laid, he elected us in Christ; and "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her. The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:11 sqq.; Gen. 25:23; Mai. 1:2 sq.).

[724] Moreover, no occasion is afforded either for despondency or for a shameless, dissolute life by this doctrine, viz. when men are taught that they should seek eternal election in Christ and his holy Gospel, as in the Book of Life, which excludes no penitent sinner, but allures and calls all the poor, heavy laden, and troubled [with the sense of God's wrath], and promises the Holy Ghost for purification and renewal. This article correctly explained thus gives the most permanent consolation to all troubled, tempted men, viz. that they know that their salvation is not placed in their own hands (for otherwise it would be much more easily lost, as was the case with Adam and Eve in Paradise — ay, it would be lost every hour and moment), but in the gracious election of God, which he has revealed to us in Christ, from whose hand no man shall pluck us (John 10:28; 2 Tim. 2:19).

Wherefore, if any one should so present the doctrine concerning the gracious election of God in such a manner that troubled Christians cannot console themselves therewith, but thereby occasion is afforded for despair, or the impenitent are confirmed in their wickedness; it is undoubtedly sure and true that such a doctrine is put forth, not according to the Word and will of God, but according to [the blind judgment of human] reason and the instigation of the devil.

For, as the apostle testifies (Rom. 15:4): “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” But when by the Scriptures this consolation and hope are weakened or entirely removed, it is certain that they are understood and explained contrary to the will and meaning of the Holy Ghost.

By this simple, correct [clear], useful explanation, which has firm ground in God’s revealed will, we abide; we flee from and shun all lofty, acute questions and disputations [useless for edifying]; and reject and condemn that which is contrary to this simple, useful explanation.

So much concerning the controverted articles which have been discussed among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession for many years already, since in reference to them some have erred and severe controversies have arisen.

[725] From this our explanation, friends and enemies, and therefore every one, will clearly infer that we have not thought of yielding aught of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporary peace, tranquility and unity (as to do this is also not in our power). Such peace and unity, since devised against the truth and for its suppression, would have no permanency. Much less are we inclined to adorn and conceal a corruption of the pure doctrine and manifest, condemned errors. But for that unity we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love, and this, on our part, we are sincerely inclined and anxious to advance according to our utmost power, by which his glory remains to God uninjured, nothing of the divine truth of the Holy Gospel is surrendered, no place is admitted for the least error, poor sinners are brought to true, genuine repentance, encouraged by faith, confirmed in new

obedience, and thus justified and eternally saved alone through the sole merit of Christ.

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1. Cf. Epitome, xi.: 1, note.↩

2. Cf. Aug. Conf., XXV.↩

3. Art. xi.: 69.↩

4. Cf. Epitome, xi.: 20.↩

## Chapter XII. Of Other Factions [Heretics] and Sects, which Never Embraced the Augsburg Confession

Parallel Passage. Epitome, xii.

The sects and factions [sectarists and heretics] which never embraced the Augsburg Confession, and of which, in this our explanation, express mention has not been made, such as are the Anabaptists, Schwenckfeldians, New Arians and Anti-trinitarians, whose errors are unanimously condemned by all churches of the Augsburg Confession, we have not wished to notice particularly and especially in this explanation; for the reason that at the present time only this has been sought [that we might above all refute the charges of our adversaries the Papists].

[726] Since our opponents, with shameless mouths, alleged and proclaimed, throughout all the world, of our churches and their teachers, that not two preachers are found who in each and every article of the Augsburg Confession agree, but that they are rent asunder and separated from one another to such an extent that not even they themselves any longer know what is the Augsburg Confession and its proper [true, genuine and germane] sense; we have wished to make a common confession, not only in mere brief words or names, but to make a clear, luminous, distinct declaration concerning all the articles which have been discussed and controverted only among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession, in order that every one may see that we do not wish in a cunning manner to screen or cover up all this, or to come to an agreement only in appearance; but to remedy the matter thoroughly, and so to set forth our opinion, that even our adversaries themselves must confess that in all this we abide by the true, simple, natural and only sense of the Augsburg Confession, in which we desire, through God's grace, to persevere constantly even to our end, and, so far as it is placed at our service, we will not connive at or be silent, so that anything contrary to the same [the genuine and sacred sense of the Augsburg Confession] be introduced into our churches and schools, in which the Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has appointed us teachers and pastors.

But in order that the condemned errors of the above enumerated factions and sects may not be silently ascribed to us — since for the most part they

have secretly stolen into localities, and especially, as is the nature of such spirits, at the time when no place or space was allowed to the pure Word of the holy Gospel, but all its orthodox teachers and confessors were persecuted, and the deep darkness of the Papacy still prevailed, and poor simple men who were compelled to feel the manifest idolatry and false faith of the Papacy embraced, alas! in their simplicity, whatever was said to be according to the Gospel, and was not Papistic<sup>1</sup> — we cannot forbear testifying also against them publicly, before all Christendom, that we have neither part nor fellowship with these errors, but reject and condemn them, one and all, as wrong and heretical, and contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, as well as to our well-grounded Augsburg Confession.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Anabaptists**

[727] Namely, the erroneous, heretical doctrines of the Anabaptists, which are to be tolerated and allowed neither in the Church, nor in the commonwealth, nor in domestic life, since they teach:

1. That our righteousness before God consists not only in the sole obedience and merit of Christ, but in our renewal and our own piety, in which we walk before God; which they, for the most part, base upon their own peculiar observances and self-chosen spirituality, as upon a new sort of monkery.<sup>2</sup>
2. That children who are not baptized are not sinners before God, but are righteous and innocent, and thus are saved in their innocency without baptism, which they do not need. And in this way they deny and reject the entire doctrine concerning Original Sin and what belongs to it.<sup>3</sup>
3. That children should not be baptized until they have attained the use of reason and can themselves confess their faith.
4. That the children of Christians, because they have been born of Christian and believing parents, are holy and the children of God even without and before baptism. For this reason also they neither attach much importance to the baptism of children nor encourage it, contrary to the express words of the promise, which pertains only to those who keep God's covenant and do not despise it (Gen. 17:9).

5. That that is no true Christian assembly or congregation [church] in which sinners are still found.
6. That no sermon should be heard or attended in those churches in which the Papal masses have previously been said.
7. That no one should have anything to do with those ministers of the Church who preach the holy Gospel according to the Augsburg Confession, and censure the errors of the Anabaptists; also that no one should serve or in any way labor for them, but should flee from and shun them as perverters of God's Word.
8. That under the New Testament the magistracy is not a godly estate.
9. That a Christian cannot, with a good, inviolate conscience, hold the office of magistrate.
10. That a Christian cannot, without injury to conscience, use the office of the magistracy in carnal matters against the wicked, neither can subjects appeal to the power of magistrates.
11. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, take an oath before a court, neither can he by an oath do homage to his prince or sovereign.
12. That without injury to conscience magistrates cannot inflict upon evil-doers capital punishment.
13. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, hold or possess any property, but that he is in duty bound to devote it to the community.
14. That a Christian cannot, with a good conscience, be a landlord, merchant or cutler.<sup>4</sup>
15. That on account of faith [diversity of religion] married persons may be divorced, abandon one another, and be married to another of the same faith.
16. That Christ did not assume his flesh and blood of the Virgin Mary, but brought them with him from heaven.

17. That he also is not true, essential God, but only has more and higher gifts than other men.

And still more articles of like kind; for they are divided<sup>5</sup> into many bands [sects], and one has more and another fewer errors, and thus their entire sect is in reality nothing but a new kind of monkery.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Schwenckfeldians**

As, when the Schwenckfeldians assert:

1. [729] That all those have no knowledge of Christ as the reigning King of heaven who regard Christ, according to the flesh or his assumed humanity, as a creature; that the flesh of Christ has by exaltation so assumed all divine properties that in might, power, majesty and glory he is everywhere, in degree and place of essence equal to the Father and the eternal Word, so that there is the same essence, properties, will and glory of both natures in Christ, and that the flesh of Christ belongs to the essence of the Holy Trinity.
2. That church service, i. e. the Word preached and heard, is not a means whereby God the Holy Ghost teaches men, and works in them saving knowledge of Christ, conversion, repentance, faith and new obedience.
3. That the water of baptism is not a means whereby God the Lord seals adoption and works regeneration.
4. That bread and wine in the Holy Supper are not means whereby Christ distributes his body and blood.
5. That a Christian man who is truly regenerated by God's Spirit can in this life observe and fulfill the Law of God perfectly.
6. That that is no true Christian congregation [church] in which no public excommunication nor regular process of the ban is observed.
7. That the minister of the Church who is not on his part truly renewed, righteous and godly cannot teach other men with profit or administer

true sacraments.

### **Erroneous Articles of the New Arians.<sup>6</sup>**

Also, when the New Arians teach that Christ is not a true, essential, natural God, of one eternal divine essence with God the Father, but is only adorned with divine majesty beneath and beside God the Father.

### **Erroneous Articles of the Anti-Trinitarians**

1. [730] Also, when some Anti-trinitarians reject and condemn the ancient approved creeds, the Nicene and Athanasian, both as to their sense and words, and teach that there is not only one eternal divine essence of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but as there are three distinct persons, God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, so each person has also its essence distinct and separate from the other persons; yet that all three, as three men otherwise distinct and separate in their essence, are either [some imagine] of the same power, wisdom, majesty and glory, or [others think] in essence and properties are not equal.
2. That the Father alone is true God.

*These and like articles*, one and all, with what pertains to them and follows from them, we reject and condemn as wrong, false, heretical, and contrary to the Word of God, the three Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles and the Catechisms of Luther. Of these articles all godly Christians will and should beware, as the welfare and salvation of their souls is dear to them.

Therefore in the sight of God and of all Christendom [the entire Church of Christ], to those now living and those who shall come after us, we wish to testify that the above declaration, concerning all the controverted articles presented and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine and confession, in which we also will appear, by God's grace, with un-terrified hearts before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and for it will give an account. We also will neither speak nor write, privately or publicly, anything contrary to this declaration, but, by the help of God's grace, intend to abide thereby. After



mature deliberation we have, in God's fear and with the invocation of his name, attached our signatures with our own hands.

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1. Latin: "Of which evil the Papistic tyranny which persecutes the pure doctrine is the very chief cause."↵
2. See Epitome, xii.: 5.↵
3. See Epitome, xii.: 6.↵
4. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 18.↵
5. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 2.↵
6. Cf. Epitome, xii.: 28.↵

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