

With Intrepid Hearts

A study of the *Formula of Concord* that will help Lutheran Christians firmly believe, clearly teach, and boldly confess the Truth of the Word of God (in the Scriptures and incarnate in Jesus) in an anti-Christian world.

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The texts from Luther's *Small Catechism* used here are from *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: GermanLatin-English*. Published as a memorial of the quadricentenary jubilee of the Reformation anno Domini 1917 by resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). These texts are in the public domain and may be freely copied.

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With Intrepid Hearts

intrepid - characterized by resolute fearlessness, fortitude, and endurance

Intrepid derives from the Latin word *intrepidus*, itself formed by the combination of the prefix *in-* (meaning "not") and *trepidus*, meaning "alarmed." (Merriam Webster Dictionary)

2 Timothy 1:6-ff: For this cause, I remind you that you should stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God didn't give us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self control.

8Therefore don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but endure hardship for the Good News according to the power of God, 9who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace ... 12For this cause I also suffer these things. Yet I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed to him against that day.

13 Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14That good thing which was committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. (WEB)

The Conclusion to the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (XII Other Sects), *Concordia Triglotta*

40) Since now, in the sight of God and of all Christendom [the entire Church of Christ], we wish to testify to those now living and those who shall come after us that this declaration herewith presented concerning all the controverted articles aforementioned and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine, and confession, in which we are also willing, by God's grace, **to appear with intrepid hearts** before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and give an account of it ...

We Believe, Teach and Confess

The Lutheran *Book of Concord*, also known as the *Concordia*, is a collection of documents that clearly define and articulate what the Lutheran Christian Reformers believed, taught from the Scriptures, and boldly confessed.

It was compiled and published in 1580 as a response to the need for unity and clarity among Lutherans during the Protestant Reformation. It was intended to establish a standard of doctrinal agreement among Lutherans and to serve as a guide for pastors, teachers, and believers in understanding and upholding Lutheran theology.

The *Book of Concord* consists of a series of texts and documents, including both historical and 16th century contemporary writings. The documents include:

1. **The Three Ecumenical Creeds:**

- The Apostles' Creed
- The Nicene Creed
- The Athanasian Creed

2. **The Augsburg Confession:**

- The Confession presented by Lutheran princes to Emperor Charles V in 1530, outlining the core teachings of Lutheranism and addressing areas of disagreement with the Roman Catholic Church.

3. **The Apology of the Augsburg Confession:**

- Written by Philipp Melanchthon, this document defends and expands upon the teachings of the Augsburg Confession, offering a detailed defense against objections raised by opponents.

4. **Luther's Small Catechism:**

- Written by Martin Luther, the Small Catechism provides a concise and accessible explanation of the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith, including the Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper.

5. Luther's Large Catechism:

- Also written by Martin Luther, the Large Catechism offers a more extensive and detailed exposition of the teachings covered in the Small Catechism.

6. The Smalcald Articles:

- Authored by Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles were intended for a proposed church council. They address key doctrinal issues, such as the nature of God, justification, the sacraments, and the authority of the Pope.

7. The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope:

- Written by Philipp Melancthon, this document presents a critique of the papacy, challenging claims of universal authority and asserting the authority of Scripture in matters of faith.

8. The Formula of Concord (Epitome and Solid Declaration):

- The Formula of Concord was written in response to internal disputes within Lutheranism after Martin Luther's death. It consists of two parts: the Epitome and the Solid Declaration. The Formula of Concord provides detailed statements on various theological topics, including original sin, free will, predestination, election, justification, the Lord's Supper, and the person of Christ.

These documents within the *Book of Concord* serve as a comprehensive expression of Lutheran theology, providing a clear and consistent understanding of Lutheran beliefs.

They are grounded in Scripture and reflect the teachings of the early Christian Church while addressing the specific challenges and theological controversies of the Reformation era.

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Bente (p. 1 CPH text)**I. The Book of Concord or "The Concordia"****1. General and Particular Symbols.**

Book of Concord, or Concordia, is the title of the Lutheran *corpus doctrinae*, i. e., of the symbols recognized and published under that name by the Lutheran Church. The word symbol, *symbolon*, is derived from the verb *sumballein*, to compare two things for the purpose of perceiving their relation and association. *Symbolon* thus developed the meaning of tessara, or sign, token, badge, banner, watchword, parole, countersign, confession, creed.

A Christian symbol, therefore, is a mark by which Christians are known. And since Christianity is essentially the belief in the truths of the Gospel, its symbol is of necessity a confession of Christian doctrine. The Church, accordingly, has from the beginning defined and regarded its symbols as a rule of faith or a rule of truth.

We Have Symbols, Witnesses, Testimonies

Three Ecumenical Creeds

Apostles Creed

Nicene Creed

The Creed of Athanasius

Augsburg Confession (1530)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531)

The Smalcald Articles (1537)

The Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537)

The Small Catechism (1529)

The Large Catechism (1529)

The Formula of Concord (Epitome and Solid Declaration) (1577)

Modern Day Lessons from the Framing of the Formula of Concord

- Through Conflict, the Triune God Forges a Clear Confession of Faith
- There Are Enemies Without and Within But the Word of the Lord Remains Forever
- We Teach Nothing New and We Stick to the Pattern of Sound Words
- We Have Clear Symbols, Witnesses, and Testimonies
- We Have a Model for Theological Discussion/Disputation
- We Aim to Teach the Devil to Death
- The Confessions Answer the Big Questions

Through Conflict, the Triune God Forges a Clear Confession

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Bente (p. 93 CPH text)

Luther died on the day of Concordia, February 18, 1546. With him peace and concord departed from the Lutheran Church. His death was everywhere the signal for action against true Lutheranism on the part of both its avowed enemies and false brethren. As long as that hero of faith and prayer was still living, the weight of his personal influence and authority proved to be a veritable bulwark of peace and doctrinal purity against the enemies within as well as without the Church.

But no sooner had Luther departed than strife began its distracting work. War, political as well as theological, followed in the wake of his death. From the grave of the fallen hero a double specter began to loom up. Pope and Emperor now joined hands to crush Protestantism by brute force as they had planned long ago. The result was the Smalcald War.

That the final result of this turmoil, political as well as theological, proved a blessing to the Lutheran Church must be regarded and ever gratefully remembered as a special grace and a remarkable favor of Almighty God.

There Are Enemies Without and Within But the Word of the Lord Remains Forever

VDMA = Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum

“the Word of the Lord Remains Forever”

Isaiah 40:6-8: “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the Lord’s breath blows on it. Surely the people are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God stands forever.”

nisi per verbum = “except through the Word”

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. IV (II): Of Justification

67] But God cannot be treated with, God cannot be apprehended, except through the Word. Accordingly, justification occurs through the Word, just as Paul says, Romans 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Likewise Romans 10:17: Faith cometh by hearing. And proof can be derived even from this that faith justifies, because, if justification occurs only through the Word, and the Word is apprehended only by faith, it follows that faith justifies.

We Teach Nothing New We Stick to the Pattern of Sound Words

2 Timothy 1:13-14: Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14That good thing which was committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. (WEB)

Jude 3-4: Beloved, while I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I was constrained to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4For there are certain men who crept in secretly, even those who were long ago written about for this condemnation: ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into indecency, and denying our only Master, God, and Lord, Jesus Christ. (WEB)

Appendix A: The Catalog Testimonies

1] *Since, especially in the article of the Person of Christ, some have without reason asserted that in the Book of Concord there is a **deviation** from ... phrases and modes of speech of [received the and approved by] the ancient pure Church and fathers, and that, on the contrary, **new, strange, self-devised, unusual and unheard-of expressions** are introduced;*

and since the testimonies of the ancient Church and fathers to which this book appeals proved somewhat too extended to be incorporated in it, and having been carefully excerpted, were afterwards delivered to several electors and princes, —

2] *[Therefore] they are printed in goodly number as an appendix at the end of this book, in regard to particular points, for the purpose of furnishing a correct and thorough account to the Christian reader, whereby he may perceive and readily discover that in the aforesaid book **nothing new has been introduced either in rebus (matter) or in phrasibus (expressions)**, that is, neither as regards the doctrine nor the manner of teaching it, but that we have taught and spoken concerning this mystery just as, first of all, the Holy Scriptures and afterwards the ancient pure Church have done.*

A Model for Theological Discussion and Disputation

Articles in Controversy with Respect to the Antithesis, or Opposite Doctrine.

14] Moreover, since for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reproved, 1 Tim. 3 (2 Tim. 3:16); Titus 1:9, — for faithful

shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, namely, feed or nourish the lambs and resist the wolves, so that the sheep may flee from strange voices, John 10:12, and may separate the precious from the vile, Jer. 15:19, —

15] Therefore we have thoroughly and clearly declared ourselves to one another, also regarding these matters, as follows: that a distinction should and must by all means be observed between unnecessary and useless wrangling, on the one hand, whereby the Church ought not to be disturbed, since it destroys more than it builds up, and necessary controversy, on the other hand, 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 reproved.

17] **1. First**, that we reject and condemn all heresies and errors which were rejected and condemned in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church, upon the true, firm ground of the holy divine Scriptures.

18] **2. Secondly**, we reject and condemn all sects and heresies which are rejected in the writings, just mentioned, of the comprehensive summary of the Confession of our churches.

19] **3. Thirdly**, since within thirty years some divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession on account of the *Interim* and otherwise, it has been our purpose to state and declare plainly [categorically], purely, and clearly our faith and confession concerning each and every one of these in thesis and antithesis, i. e., the true doctrine and its opposite, in order that the foundation of divine truth might be manifest in all articles, and that 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, might be exposed [distinctly repudiated],

20] so that every one may be faithfully warned against the errors, which are spread here and there in the writings of some theologians, and no one be misled in this matter by the reputation [authority] of any man.

From this declaration the Christian reader will inform himself in every emergency, and compare it with the writings enumerated above, and he will find out exactly that what was confessed in the beginning concerning each 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 be found loyal to the once-delivered Augsburg Confession and its unanimously accepted Christian sense, and through God's grace to abide thereby firmly and constantly in opposition to all corruptions which have entered.

The Pattern of Theological Discussion and Disputation:

- State the Status of the Controversy: "The chief questions in this controversy are ..."
- Affirmative Statements: "We believe, teach and confess ..."
- Negative Statements: "We reject and condemn ..."

Example: Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I: Original Sin

Affirmative Statements

2] 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 after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after 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.

Negative Statements

11] 1. Therefore **we reject and condemn** the teaching that original sin is only a *reatus* ("charge) or debt on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature.

We Aim to Teach the Devil to Death

Martin Luther, Introduction to the *Large Catechism*

19 Therefore I again implore all Christians, especially pastors and preachers, not to be doctors too soon, and imagine that they know everything ... but that they daily exercise themselves well in these studies and constantly treat them; moreover, that they guard with all care and diligence against the poisonous infection of such security and vain imagination, but steadily keep on reading, teaching, learning, pondering, and meditating, and do not cease until they have made a test and are sure that they have **taught the devil to death**, and have become more learned than God Himself and all His saints.

Big Questions Demand Big Answers

Is there a God? If so, what is He like?

How can He be known?

What is man? Where did he come from? Where is he going?

Is there evil? Where did evil come from?

What is right and wrong? How does one know?

Where is the hope? Where is it all leading?

What is man's purpose in life? How shall he live?

What is truth? What is virtue? What is justice?

The Articles of the Formula of Concord

- The Summary Content, Rule, And Norm
- I. Original Sin
- II. Free Will
- III. The Righteousness Of Faith Before God
- IV. Good Works
- V. The Law And The Gospel
- VI. The Third Use Of God's Law
- VII. The Holy Supper Of Christ
- VIII. The Person Of Christ
- IX. The Descent Of Christ To Hell
- X. Church Practices
- XI. God's Eternal Foreknowledge ‹Predestination› And Election
- XII. Other Factions ‹Heresies› And Sects

Four Steps to Help You Teach and Confess

Explore: “Hmmm ... that’s interesting.”

- What do you want to learn?
- Why do you want to learn about ...?
- How/Where can I learn more about ...?

Explain: “Did you know that ...”

- Share what you’ve learned with someone else.
- Keep it brief and simple.
- Pay attention to their response.

Examine: “Did I explain that clearly?”

- Don’t say ... “did **you** understand”.
- Just humbly ask ... “did **I** explain that clearly”
- If the answer is “yes” ... refine and continue
- If “no” ... identify gaps, learn more, clarify your thoughts, and try again

Expand: “This is how it all fits together.”

- Don’t just teach about something, teach for someone.
- Leverage “information” for “transformation” (this is why and how this will help you)
- Create an orderly and elegant progression of thought.

Helpful Resources and Sources Cited

The Book of Concord (various editions)

Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions—A Readers Edition of the Book of Concord McCain, Paul T, General Editor.

Concordia Triglotta Dau, William.

This edition contains three languages (“tri-glotta”), an english translation, the original 1580 German edition and the first edition of the 1584 Latin edition. The text is in the public domain and is the source of quotations in this study.

The Christian Book of Concord

A free, public-domain, print-ready version of the Book of Concord available at wolfmueeller.co ([here](#))

The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Robert Kolb, Timothy J. Wengert, Charles P. Arand

The Book of Concord, Theodore G. Tappert

Online Resource of the Book of Concord

The Book of Concord Website ... www.bookofconcord.org

Studies of the Book of Concord (all resources are available from Concordia Publishing House at www.cph.org)

Lutheran Confessions: Augsburg Confession and Its Apology Study Guide

Lutheran Confessions: Formula of Concord Study Guide

Klug, Eugene. *Getting into the Formula of Concord*

Preus, Robert. *Getting into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord*

Podcast: Issues Etc (conversations with Host Todd Wilken and Pr. Paul McCain)

Search Results at Issues Etc for episodes on the “Formula of Concord” ([45 episodes here](#))

Historical Background

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente

This book is filled to the full with historical background and provides a thorough context to the events, persons and texts of the *Book of Concord*.

You can read an online version of the book or you can order a print version from Concordia Publishing House ...

- [online version \(here\)](#)
- [print copy form CPH \(here\)](#)

Online Resource - Reformation 2017

For the 500th anniversary of Luther’s Posting of the *Ninety-five Thesis*, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) created a digital resource to help individuals learn more about the history, theology, and relevance of the Lutheran Reformation and Confessions.

Here are some links ...

- [LutheranReformation.org \(main website\)](#)
- [A Reformation Timeline \(here\)](#)
- [Search Results for the “Formula of Concord” \(here\)](#)

Text of the *Book of Concord* Cited in this Study

The text of the *Book of Concord* used throughout the study notes is from the *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: German-Latin-English*.

Published as a memorial of the quadricentenary jubilee of the Reformation anno Domini 1917 by resolution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

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An online version of the *Triglot Concordia* can be found at ...

www.bookofconcord.org

The Backstory: Context, Context, Context

One of my professors at Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne) would begin every class by going to the blackboard and writing in the top right hand corner ...

“context, context, context”

“content, content, content”

It was his way of reminding us that whatever we talked about that day wasn't to be studied in isolation. The “text” always had a bigger “context” from which it came and to which it was later applied.

So also with our study of the Formula of Concord. Each article we will study has a broader “context” that includes ...

... political power plays, cultural upheaval, theological controversies, men that capitulate under pressure, leaders that stand strong in the midst of persecution, and gifted men that diligently search the Scriptures, patiently work through the theological arguments, and faithfully proclaim a clear confession.

Below are some excerpts from Gerhard Friedrich Bente's book *Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions*. They will provide some “context” that will help us understand the “content” of the Formula of Concord.

The articles detail the following ...

- The State of Affairs after Martin Luther's Death
- War Against the Lutheran Faith and Territories
- The Pursuit of “Peace” Through the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims
- The Development of Three Theological Parties
- The Theological Controversies of the Day

The State of Affairs After Luther's Death

119. Bulwark of Peace Removed

Luther died on the day of Concordia, February 18, 1546. With him peace and concord departed from the Lutheran Church. His death was everywhere the signal for action against true Lutheranism on the part of both its avowed enemies and false brethren. As long as that hero of faith and prayer was still living, the weight of his personal influence and authority proved to be a veritable bulwark of peace and doctrinal purity against the enemies within as well as without the Church.

Though enemies seeking to devour had been lurking long ago, the powerful and commanding personality of Luther had checked all forces making for war from without and for dissension from within. The Emperor could not be induced to attack the Lutherans. He knew that they would stand united and strong as long as the Hero of the Reformation was in their midst. Nor were the false brethren able to muster up sufficient courage to come out into the open and publish their errors while the voice of the lion was heard.

But no sooner had Luther departed than strife began its distracting work. War, political as well as theological, followed in the wake of his death. From the grave of the fallen hero a double specter began to loom up. Pope and Emperor now joined hands to crush Protestantism by brute force as they had planned long ago. The result was the Smalcald War.

The secret enemies which Lutheranism harbored within its own bosom began boldly to raise their heads. Revealing their true colors and coming out in the open with their pernicious errors, they caused numerous controversies which spread over all Germany (Saxony, the cradle of the Reformation, becoming the chief battlefield), and threatened to undo completely the blessed work of Luther, to disrupt and disintegrate the Church, or to pervert it into a unionistic or Reformed sect. Especially these discreditable internal dissensions were a cause of deep humiliation and of anxious concern to all loyal Lutherans.

To the Romanists and Reformed; however, who united in predicting the impending collapse of Lutheranism, they were a source of malicious and triumphant scoffing and jeering. A prominent theologian reported that by 1566 matters had come to such a pass in Germany that the old Lutheran doctrine was publicly proclaimed only in relatively few places. In the

Palatinate public thanks were rendered to God in the churches that also Electoral Saxony was now about to join them. The Jesuits insisted that, having abandoned the doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper, the Lutherans were no longer genuine Lutherans and hence no more entitled to the privileges guaranteed by the Peace of Augsburg (1555) .

That the final result of this turmoil, political as well as theological, proved a blessing to the Lutheran Church must be regarded and ever gratefully remembered as a special grace and a remarkable favor of Almighty God.

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 93 CPH text)

War Against the Lutheran Faith and Territories

121. Unfortunate Issue of Smalcald War.

All too soon the predictions of Luther, and the fears expressed by Melanchthon and others, were realized. June 26, 1546, four months after Luther's death, Pope and Emperor entered into a secret agreement to compel the Protestants by force of arms to acknowledge the decrees of the Council of Trent, and to return to the bosom of the Roman Church.

The covenant provided that, "in the name of God and with the help and assistance of His Papal Holiness, His Imperial Majesty should prepare himself for war, and equip himself with soldiers and everything pertaining to warfare against those who objected to the Council, against the Smalcald League, and against all who were addicted to the false belief and error in Germany, and that he do so with all his power and might in order to bring them back to the old [papal] faith and to the obedience of the Holy See."

The Pope promised to assist the Emperor with 200,000 Krontaler, more than 12,000 Italian soldiers, and quite a number of horsemen. He furthermore permitted the Emperor to appropriate, for the purpose of this war, one half of the total income of the church property in Spain and 500,000 Krontaler from the revenue of the Spanish cloisters. While the Emperor endeavored to veil the real purpose of his preparations, the Pope openly declared in a bull of July 4, 1546:

"From the beginning of our Papacy it has always been our concern how to root out the weeds of godless doctrines which the heretics have sowed throughout Germany.... Now it has come to pass that, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, our dearest son in Christ, Charles, the Roman Emperor, has decided to employ the sword against these enemies of God. And for the protection of religion we intend to promote this pious enterprise with all our own and the Roman Church's possessions. Accordingly, we admonish all Christians to assist in this war with their prayers to God and their alms, in order that the godless heresy may be rooted out and the dissension removed.... To each and all who do these things we grant the most complete indulgence and remission of all their sins." (St. L. 17, 1453ff. Walther, 10.)

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 94 CPH text)

The Pursuit of “Peace” Through the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims

122. The Augsburg Interim.

The first step to reduce the Lutherans to obedience to the Pope was the so-called Augsburg Interim. It was proclaimed by the Emperor at Augsburg on May 15, 1548, as the law of the Empire ... the people were also forbidden to teach, write, or preach against the document.

The document, prepared at the command of the Emperor, was called Interim because its object was to regulate the church affairs until the religious controversy would be finally settled by the Council of Trent, to the resolutions of which the Lutherans were required to submit.

It was, however, essentially papal. For the time being, indeed, it permitted Protestant clergymen to marry, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper in both kinds, but demanded the immediate restoration of the Romish customs and ceremonies, the acknowledgment of papal supremacy *iure divino*, as well as the jurisdiction of the bishops, and the adoption of articles in which the doctrines were all explained in the sense of the Catholic dogmas, and in which truth and falsehood, in general, were badly mingled.

Transubstantiation, the seven sacraments, and other papal errors were reaffirmed, while Lutheran tenets, such as the doctrine of justification by faith alone, were either denied or omitted. And from the fact that this Interim was nevertheless condemned by the Pope and the Romanists, who demanded an unqualified, blind, and unconditional submission, the Lutherans could infer what they were to expect after consenting to these interimistic provisions. The general conviction among Catholics as well as Protestants was that the Interim was but the first step to a complete return to Romanism.

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 95 CPH text)

125. Melanchthon and the Leipzig Interim.

After the victory of the Emperor and the proclamation of the Augsburg Interim, Maurice, the new-fledged Elector, found himself in a dilemma. Charles V urged him to set a good example in obeying and enforcing the Interim. Indebted as he was to the Emperor for his Electorate, he, to some extent, felt bound to obey him also in religious matters. At the same time, Maurice was personally not at all in agreement with the radical Augsburg Interim and afraid of forfeiting the sympathies of both his old and new subjects on account of it. Nor did he fail to realize the difficulties he would encounter in enforcing it. Accordingly, he notified the Emperor on May 18 that he was not able to introduce the Interim at present.

Soon after, he commissioned the Wittenberg and Leipzig theologians to elaborate, as a substitute for the Augsburg Interim, a compromise, more favorable and acceptable to his subjects. At the preliminary discussions, especially at Pegau and Celle, the theologians yielded, declaring their willingness to submit to the will of the Emperor with respect to the reintroduction of Romish ceremonies and to acknowledge the authority of the Pope and bishops if they would tolerate the true doctrine. (Preger 1, 40.)

The final upshot of it all was the new Interim, a compromise document, prepared chiefly by Melanchthon and adopted December 22, 1548, at Leipzig. This "Resolution of the Diet at Leipzig" was designated by its opponents the "Leipzig Interim." Schaff remarks: "It was the mistake of his [Melanchthon's] life, yet not without plausible excuses and incidental advantages. He advocated immovable steadfastness in doctrine [?], but submission in everything else for the sake of peace. He had the satisfaction that the University of Wittenberg,

after temporary suspension, was restored and soon frequented again by two thousand students. [The school was closed May 19 and reopened October 16, 1547.] But outside of Wittenberg and Saxony his conduct appeared treasonable to the cause of the Reformation, and acted as an encouragement to an unscrupulous and uncompromising enemy. Hence the venerable man was fiercely assailed from every quarter by friend and foe." (Creeds 1, 300.)

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 98 CPH text)

Three Theological Parties

- The Philippists
- The Gnesio-Lutherans
- Framers of the Formula of Concord

130. Three Theological Parties.

In the theological conflicts after Luther's death three parties may be distinguished. **The first party** embraced chiefly the Interimists, the Synergists, and the Crypto-Calvinists. They were adherents of Philip Melancthon, hence called Melancthonians or, more commonly, Philippists, and were led by the theologians of Electoral Saxony. Their object was to supplant the authority and theology of Luther by the unionistic and liberal views of Melancthon. Their headquarters were the universities of Wittenberg and Leipzig.

The second party, the so-called Gnesio-Lutherans (genuine Lutherans), was represented chiefly by the theologians of Ducal Saxony and embraced such staunch and loyal men as Amsdorf, Flacius, Wigand, Gallus, Matthias Judex, Moerlin, Tileman Hesshusius, Timann, Westphal, and Simon Musaeus. Though some of these leaders were later discredited by falling into extreme positions themselves, they all proved to be valiant champions of Luther and most determined opponents of the Philippists. The strongholds of this party were Magdeburg and the University of Jena, founded by the sons of John Frederick in 1547. Seeberg says, in substance: The Gnesio-Lutherans were opposed to the philosophy of the Philippists and stood for "the simple Biblical truth as

Luther had understood it." Even when opposed by the government, they defended the truth, and were willing to suffer the consequences. Strict doctrinal discipline was exercised by them.

The third, or center-party, was composed of the loyal Lutherans who took no conspicuous part in the controversies, but came to the front when the work of pacification began. They were of special service in settling the controversies, framing the Formula of Concord, and restoring a true and godly peace to our Church. Prominent among them were Brenz, Andreae, Chemnitz, Selnecker, Chytraeus, Cornerus, Moerlin, and others.

These theologians were, on the one hand, opposed to all unnecessary logomachies i.e., controversies involving no doctrinal differences, and, at the same time, were most careful not to fall into any extreme position themselves.

On the other hand, however, they approved of all controversies really necessary in the interest of truth, rejected and condemned all forms of indifferentism and unionism, and strenuously opposed every effort at sacrificing, veiling, or compromising any doctrine by ambiguous formulas for the sake of external peace or any other policy whatsoever.

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 102 CPH text)

The Theological Controversies

- Adiaphoristic Controversy
- Majoristic Controversy
- Synergistic Controversy
- Flacian Controversy
- Osiandrian and Stancarian Controversy
- Antinomistic Controversy
- Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy
- Controversy on Christ's Descent Into Hell
- On Predestination

131. Various Theological Controversies.

Following is a synopsis and summary of the main controversies within the Lutheran Church after the death of Luther, which were settled in the first eleven articles of the Formula of Concord. The sequence of these articles, however, is not strictly historical and chronological, but dogmatic. In the main, the arrangement of the Augsburg Confession is observed.

The first of these controversies was the so-called Adiaphoristic Controversy, from 1548 to 1555, in which the Wittenberg and Leipzig theologians (Melanchthon, Eber, Pfeffinger, etc.) defended the Leipzig Interim and the reintroduction of Romish ceremonies into the Lutheran Church. They were opposed by the champions of a consistent and determined Lutheranism, led by Flacius, who declared: "Nihil est adiaphoron in statu confessionis et scandali. Nothing is an adiaphoron in case of confession and offense." The controversy was decided by Article X.

The second is the Majoristic Controversy, from 1551 to 1562, in which George Major and Justus Menius defended the phrase of Melanchthon that good works are necessary to salvation. They were opposed by the loyal Lutherans, of whom Amsdorf, however, lapsed into the opposite error: Good works are detrimental to salvation. This controversy was settled by Article IV.

The third is the Synergistic Controversy, from 1555 to 1560, in which Pfeffinger, Eber, Major, Crell, Pezel, Strigel, and Stoessel held with Melanchthon that man by his own natural powers cooperates in his conversion. Their opponents (Amsdorf, Flacius, Hesshusius, Wigand, Gallus, Musaeus, and Judex) taught, as formulated by Flacius: "Solus Deus convertit hominem.... Non excludit voluntatem, sed omnem efficaciam et operationem eius.... God alone converts man.... He does not exclude the will, but all efficaciousness and operation of the same." This controversy was decided and settled by Article II.

The fourth is the Flacian Controversy, from 1560 to 1575, in which Flacius, supported by Cyriacus Spangenberg, Christian Irenaeus, Matthias Wolf, I. F. Coelestinus, Schneider, and others, maintained that original sin is not an accident, but the very substance of fallen man. The Lutherans, including the Philippists, were practically unanimous in opposing this error. It was decided by Article I.

The fifth was the Osiandristic and the Stancarian Controversy, from 1549 to 1566, in which Andrew Osiander denied the forensic character of justification, and taught that Christ is our righteousness only according to His divine nature, while Stancarus contended that Christ is our righteousness according to His human nature only. Both, Osiander as well as Stancarus, were opposed by Melanchthon, Flacius, and practically all other Lutherans, the Philippists included. This controversy was settled by Article III.

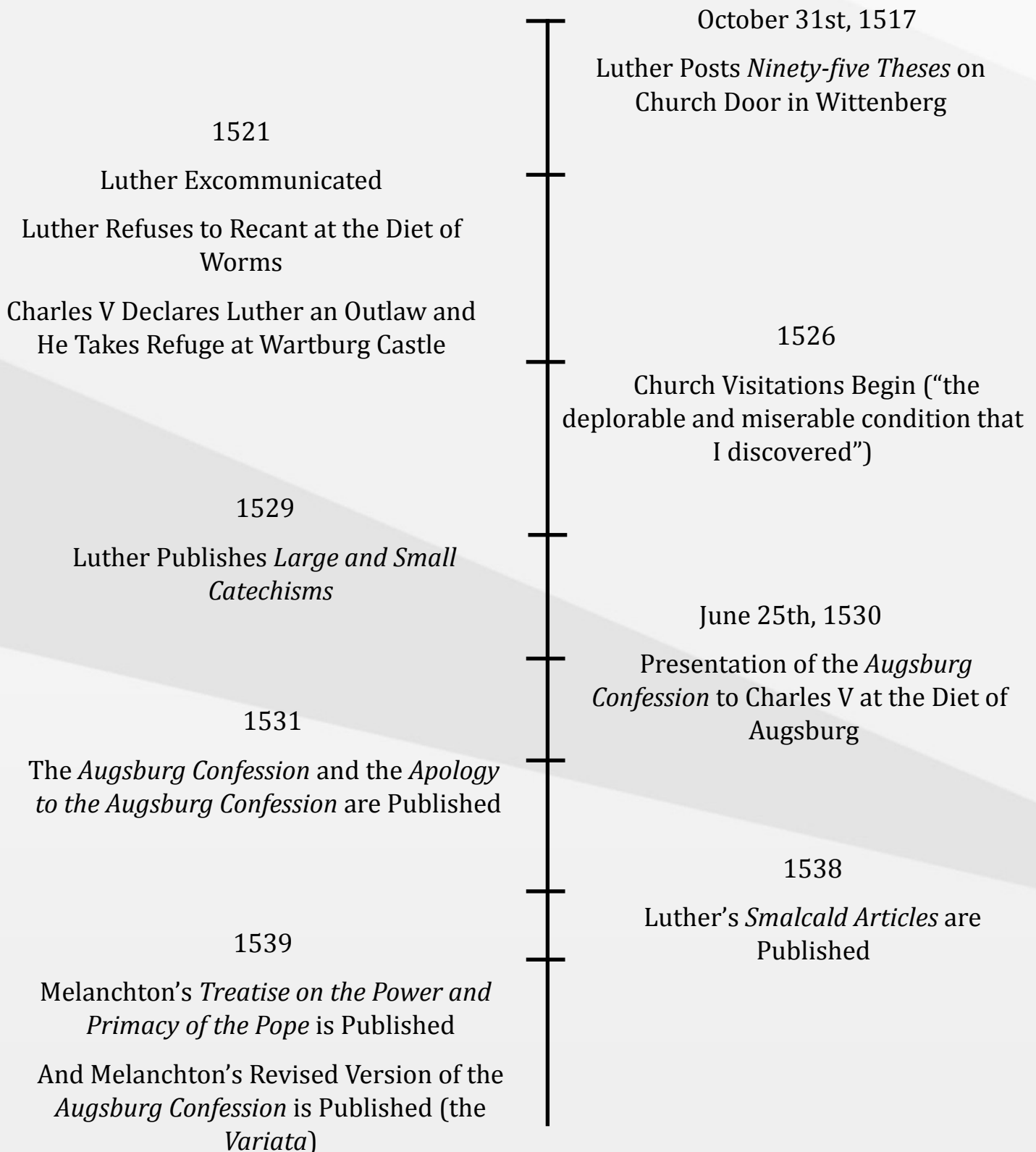
The sixth was the Antinomistic Controversy, from 1527 to 1556, in which various false views concerning the Law and the Gospel were defended, especially by John Agricola who maintained that repentance (contrition) is not wrought by the Law, but by the Gospel (a view which, in a modified form was later on defended also by Wittenberg Philippists), and, after Luther's death, by Poach and Otto, who rejected the so-called Third Use of the Law. The questions involved in these Antinomian controversies were decided by Articles V and VI.

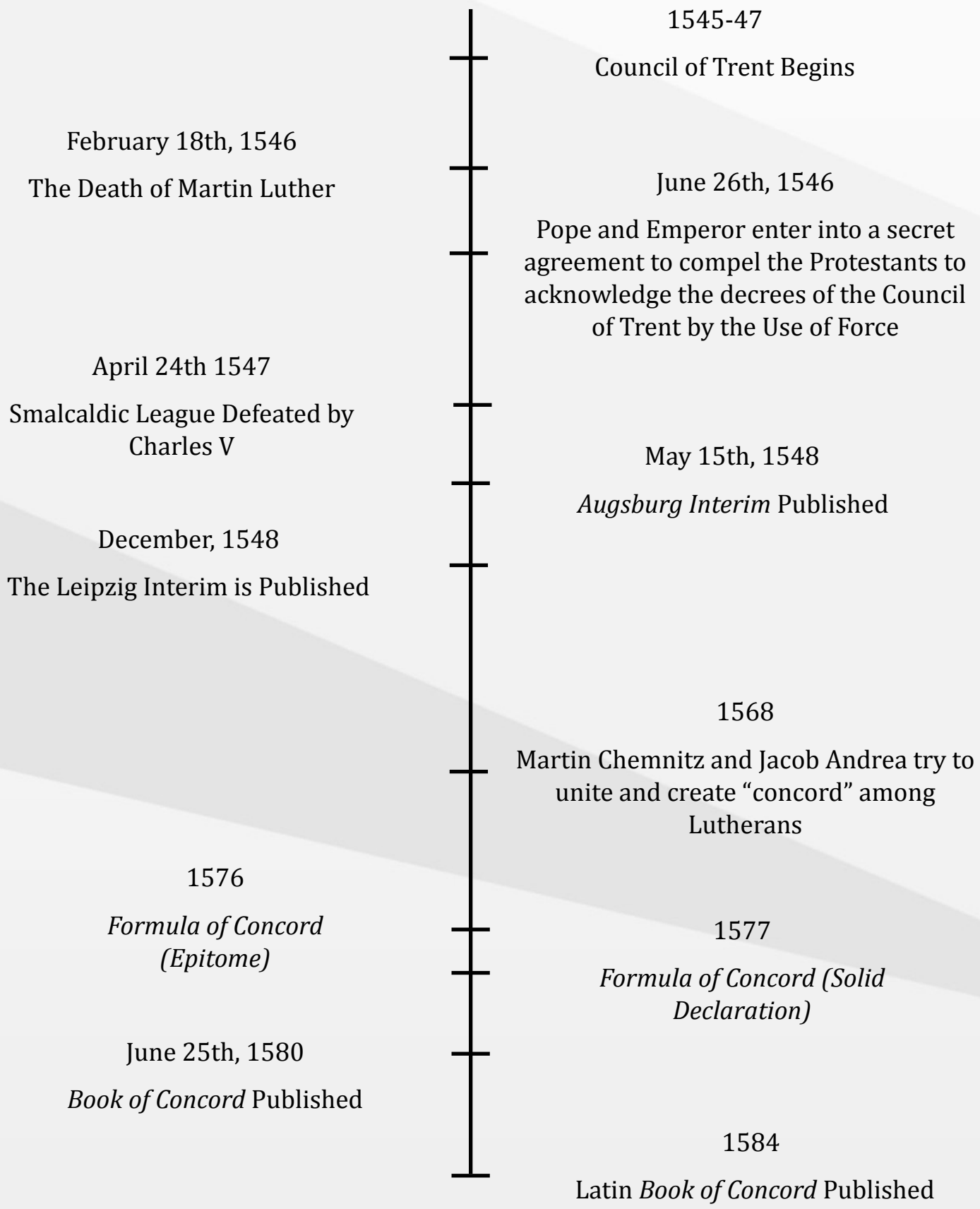
The seventh was the Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy, from 1560 to 1574, in which the Philippists in Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Dresden (Peucer, Cracow, Stoessel, etc.) endeavored gradually to supplant Luther's doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper and the majesty of the human nature of Christ by the Calvinistic teachings on these points. These secret and dishonest enemies of Lutheranism were opposed by true Lutherans everywhere, notably by the theologians of Ducal Saxony. In 1574 they were publicly unmasked as deceivers and Calvinistic schemers. The controversy was settled by Articles VII and VIII.

The two last controversies were of a local nature. The first was chiefly confined to Hamburg, the second to Strassburg. In the former city John Aepinus taught that Christ's descent into hell was a part of His suffering and humiliation. He was opposed by his colleagues in Hamburg. In Strassburg John Marbach publicly denounced Zanchi, a Crypto-Calvinist, for teaching that faith, once engendered in a man, cannot be lost. The questions involved in these two articles are dealt with in Articles IX and XI, respectively.

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard Friedrich Bente (p. 103 CPH text)

Timeline of the Lutheran Reformation





Introduction: *We Believe, Teach and Confess*

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, The Summary Content, Rule and Norm*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, The Summary, Rule and Norm*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Editor's Introduction* (helpful historical context) from pp. 441-472
- *The Summary Content, Rule and Norm of the Epitome* ("reader's digest version") from pp. 473-474.
- *The Summary, Rule and Norm of the Solid Declaration* ("longer version") pp. 503 -510.

Everyone has a Confession

Everyone **believes** something.
Everyone **teaches** something.
Everyone **confesses** something.

But not everyone believes, teaches or confesses
true or right things.

The Proverbial Coal Miner's Faith (Luther Story):

"The story is told that a doctor of theology, meeting a charcoal-burner on the bridge at Prague and taking into account that he was but a poor layman, asked him: 'My good man, what do you believe?'

The charcoal-burner answered: 'I believe what the Church believes.'

The doctor: 'And what does the Church believe?'

The charcoal-burner: 'The Church believes what I believe.'

Later, when the doctor came to die, the devil so severely troubled him as to his faith that he knew not where to turn and found no rest until he said: 'I believe what the charcoal-burner believes.' "

Referenced by Francis Pieper in *Christian Dogmatics*,
Volume 1 p. 429, footnote 55)

Everyone has a "god".
Everyone put's their faith in something.
But is their faith in the **true God** or a **false god**?

Example: Large Catechism: Part 1, The Ten Commandments

16] *Lo, here you have the meaning of the **true honor and worship** of God, which pleases God, and which He commands under penalty of eternal wrath, namely, that the heart know no other comfort or confidence than in Him, and do not suffer itself to be torn from Him, but, for Him, risk and disregard everything upon earth.*

17] *On the other hand, you can easily see and judge how the world practices only **false worship and idolatry**. For no people has ever been so reprobate as not to institute and observe some divine worship; every one has set up as his special god whatever he looked to for blessings, help, and comfort.*

18] *Thus, for example, the heathen who put their trust in power and dominion elevated Jupiter as the supreme god; the others, who were bent upon riches, happiness, or pleasure, and a life of ease, Hercules, Mercury, Venus, or others; women with child, Diana or Lucina, and so on; thus every one made that his god to which his heart was inclined, so that even in the mind of the heathen to have a god means to trust and believe.*

19] *But their error is this, that their trust is **false and wrong**; for it is not placed in the only God, besides whom there is truly no God in heaven or upon earth. 20] Therefore the heathen really make their self-invented notions and dreams of God an idol, and put their trust in that which is altogether nothing.*

21] *Thus it is with all idolatry; for it consists not merely in erecting an image and worshiping it, but rather in the heart, which stands gaping at something else, and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils, and neither*

cares for God, nor looks to Him for so much good as to believe that He is willing to help, neither believes that whatever good it experiences comes from God.

Faith's Rule and Norm

**The Scriptures speak first.
A Confession follows.**

2 Timothy 3:15-17: From infancy, you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16Every Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, 17that each person who belongs to God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (WEB)

Psalms 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path. (WEB)

Galatians 1:8: But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any "good news" other than that which we preached to you, let him be cursed. (WEB)

Example: Formula of Concord, Epitome, Summary

1] 1. We **believe, teach, and confess** that the **sole rule and standard** according to which all dogmas together with [all] teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone, as it is written Ps. 119:105: Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. And St. Paul: Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. 1:8.

7] 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 shall and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong.

Example: Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Summary

*3] 1. First, then, we receive and embrace with our whole heart the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the **pure, clear fountain of Israel**, which is the **only true standard** by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged.*

We Teach Nothing New

**the one, universal and “catholic” faith
“always and everywhere”**

the “pattern of sound words”

2 Timothy 1:13-14: Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. 14That good thing which was committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. (WEB)

Jude 3-4: Beloved, while I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I was constrained to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4For there are certain men who crept in secretly, even those who were long ago written about for this condemnation: ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into indecency, and denying our only Master, God, and Lord, Jesus Christ. (WEB)

Appendix A: The Catalog Testimonies

*1] Since, especially in the article of the Person of Christ, some have without reason asserted that in the Book of Concord there is a **deviation** from ... phrases and modes of speech of [received the and approved by] the ancient pure Church and fathers, and that, on the contrary, **new, strange, self-devised, unusual and unheard-of expressions** are introduced; and since the testimonies of the*

ancient Church and fathers to which this book appeals proved somewhat too extended to be incorporated in it, and having been carefully excerpted, were afterwards delivered to several electors and princes, —

*2] [Therefore] they are printed in goodly number as an appendix at the end of this book, in regard to particular points, for the purpose of furnishing a correct and thorough account to the Christian reader, whereby he may perceive and readily discover that in the aforesaid book **nothing new has been introduced either in rebus (matter) or in phrasibus (expressions)**, that is, neither as regards the doctrine nor the manner of teaching it, but that we have taught and spoken concerning this mystery just as, first of all, the Holy Scriptures and afterwards the ancient pure Church have done.*

the Symbols, Witnesses, Testimonies

Three Ecumenical Creeds

Apostles Creed

Nicene Creed

The Creed of Athanasius

Augsburg Confession (1530)

Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531)

The Smalcald Articles (1537)

The Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537)

The Small Catechism (1529)

The Large Catechism (1529)

The Formula of Concord (Epitome and Solid Declaration) (1577)

quia = “because”

quatenus = “in so far as”

Example: Ordination Vows for LCMS pastors (*Lutheran Service Book: Agenda p. 161-ff*)

1. Do you acknowledge that the Lord has called you through His Church into the ministry of Word and Sacrament?

I do.

2. Do you believe and confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

Yes, I believe and confess the canonical Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

3. Do you believe and confess the three ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and do you reject all the errors which they condemn?

*Yes, I believe and confess the three Creeds **because they are in accord** with the Word of God. I also reject all the errors they condemn.*

4. Do you confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church?

And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord — as these are contained in the 1580 Book of Concord — are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith?

*Yes, I make these Confessions my own **because they are in accord** with the Word of God.*

The Concord Way ("with one heart")

The desire for concord (godly unity)

right teaching
right living

The path to concord

pure doctrine rightly presented
false doctrine reproved

The practice of concord

avoid unnecessary and useless wrangling
confront controversy when necessary

"able to teach, not resentful"

2 Timothy 2:22-26: "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (NIV)

“refute and encourage”

Titus 1:9-14: “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group.

They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach-- and that for the sake of dishonest gain. Even one of their own prophets has said, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons."

This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. (NIV)

“watch your life and your doctrine closely”

1 Timothy 4:13-16: “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress.

Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (NIV)

Example: Small Catechism: The Lord’s Prayer, Hallowed Be Thy Name

Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

Answer: God’s name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition that it may become holy among us also.

How is this done?

Answer. When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead holy lives in accordance with it. To this end help us,

dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, Heavenly Father.

Example: Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Summary

*14] Moreover, since for the **preservation of pure doctrine** and for **thorough, permanent, godly unity** in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be **rightly presented**, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be **reproved**, 1 Tim. 3 (2 Tim. 3:16); Titus 1:9, — for faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, namely, feed or nourish the lambs and resist the wolves, so that the sheep may flee from strange voices, John 10:12, and may separate the precious from the vile, Jer. 15:19, —*

*15] Therefore we have thoroughly and clearly declared ourselves to one another, also regarding these matters, as follows: that a distinction should and must by all means be observed between **unnecessary and useless wrangling**, on the one hand, whereby the Church ought not to be disturbed, since it destroys more than it builds up, and **necessary controversy**, on the other hand, 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 reproved.*

Recurring Pattern and Phrases in the Formula

- State the Status of the Controversy: “The chief questions in this controversy are ...”
- Affirmative Statements: “We believe, teach and confess ...”
- Negative Statements: “We reject and condemn ...”

Example: Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I: Original Sin

Affirmative Statements

2] 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 after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after 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.

Negative Statements

11] 1. Therefore **we reject and condemn** the teaching that original sin is only a reatus ("charge) or debt on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature.

Session I: Article I - Original Sin

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I. Original Sin*, pp. 474-477
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I. Original Sin*, pp. 511-519.

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of Original Sin can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Augsburg Confession, Article II, (*The Concordia* pp. 31-32)
- Augsburg Confession, Article XIX, (*The Concordia* pp. 40-41)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article II, (*The Concordia* pp. 76-81))
- Smalcald Articles Part III, Article I, (*The Concordia* pp. 270-271)

Brief Summary of Article I: Original Sin

**Only the Triune God can create.
The Devil can only corrupt.**

Key Words and Phrases

Key Words and Phrases (with a warning)

“original righteousness vs. original sin”

“nature, substance and essence” (Latin: substantia)

“corruption of the nature” and “concupiscence”

“Pelagians” and “Manicheans”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

*23] 13. But as to the Latin terms substantia and accidens, **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 spared them**. 24] 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 attaches to it in an accidental way.*

Key Question

Is original sin part of man’s very nature, substance and essence?

OR

Is it a deep and thorough corruption of the human nature.

Key Thought

Scripture demands that there be a distinction between the human nature and the corruption of the nature.

The Triune God alone creates.

The Devil can only corrupt.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

25] 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, by the providence of God [God permitting], corrupt the substance created by God.

The Status of the Controversy

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

1] Whether original sin is properly and **without any distinction** man's corrupt nature, substance, and essence, or at any rate the principal and best part of his essence [substance], namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers;

or whether, even after the Fall, **there is a distinction between** man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and original sin, so that the nature [itself] is one thing, and original sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, another.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Lack of Original Righteousness and a Loss of the Image of God (deprivation)

Genesis 1:31: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day."

Genesis 3:4-5: "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

1 Corinthians 2:14: The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

2 Corinthians 4:4: “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin

15] *Neither have we said anything new. The ancient definition understood aright expresses precisely the same thing when it says: "**Original sin is the absence of original righteousness**" [a lack of the first purity and righteousness in Paradise].*

But what is righteousness?

*Here the scholastics wrangle about dialectic questions; they do not explain what original righteousness is. 16] Now in the Scriptures, righteousness comprises not only the **second table** of the Decalog [regarding good works in serving our fellow-man], but the **first also**, which teaches concerning 17] the fear of God, concerning faith, concerning the love of God.*

*Therefore **original righteousness** was to embrace not only an even temperament of the bodily qualities [perfect health and, in all respects, pure blood, unimpaired powers of the body, as they contend], but also these gifts, namely, a quite certain knowledge of God, fear of God, confidence in God, or certainly 18] the rectitude and power to yield these affections [but the greatest feature in that noble first creature was a bright light in the heart **to know God** and His work, etc.]. And Scripture testifies to this, when it says, Gen. 1:27, that man was fashioned in the **image and likeness of God**.*

What else is this than that there were embodied in man such wisdom and righteousness as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i.e., to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like?

19] *For thus Irenaeus and Ambrose interpret the likeness to God, the latter of whom not only says many things to this effect, but especially declares: That soul is not, therefore, in the image of God, in which God is not at all times. 20] And Paul shows in the Epistles to the Ephesians 5:9, and Colossians 3:10, that the **image of God** is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth.*

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

**original sin is an ACTIVE desire
and a INCLINATION toward sin
(concupiscence)**

Genesis 6:5: "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Genesis 8:21: "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Psalms 51:5: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Psalms 53:1-3: "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." (see also Romans 3:10-12)

Mark 7:20-23: ""What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "

Romans 8:20-22: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

2 Peter 1:3-4: "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

James 1:13-15: "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin

2] *[It is further taught that since the Fall of Adam all men who are naturally born are conceived and born in sin, i.e., that they all, from their mother's womb, are **full of evil desire and inclination**, and can have by nature no true fear of God, no true faith in God.]*

3] *This passage testifies that we deny to those propagated according to carnal nature not only the acts, but also the power or gifts of producing fear and trust in God. For we say that those thus born have **concupiscence**, and cannot produce true fear and trust in God.*

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

8] 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 has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings:*

*Through Adam's fall is all corrupt,
Nature and essence human.*

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

enemies of God, hostile toward Him, dead to spiritual things

Romans 5:9-19: "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

Ephesians 2:1-10: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

Colossians 1:21-23: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin

24] Of the same import is the definition which occurs in the writings of Augustine, who is accustomed to define original sin as concupiscence [wicked desire]. For he means that when righteousness had been lost, concupiscence came in its place.

"defect and vicious habit"

For inasmuch as diseased nature cannot fear and love God and believe God, it seeks and loves carnal things. God's judgment it either contemns, when at ease, or hates, when thoroughly terrified. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and 25] the vicious habit which has come in its place.

Nor indeed is concupiscence only a corruption of the qualities of the body, but also, in the higher powers, a vicious turning to carnal things. Nor do those persons see what they say who ascribe to man at the same time concupiscence that is not entirely destroyed by the Holy Ghost, and love to God above all things.

26] We, therefore, have been right in expressing, in our description of original sin, both namely, these defects: the not being able to believe God, the not being able to fear and love God; and, likewise: the having concupiscence, which seeks carnal things contrary to God's Word, i.e., seeks not only the pleasure of the body, but also carnal wisdom and righteousness, and, contemning God, trusts in these as good things.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

First Article of the Creed: Creation God's the Creator BEFORE the FALL and AFTER the FALL

Deut. 32:6: "Is this the way you repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"

Job 10:8-12: "Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit."

Ps. 139:14-16: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

Eccl. 12:7

Is. 45:11, 54:5, 64:8

Acts 17:25

Rev. 4:11

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

4] For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after 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; Is. 45:9ff; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Job 10:8; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Eccl. 12:1.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin

*34] Moreover, the chief articles of our Christian faith urge and compel us to preserve this distinction. For instance, in the first place, **in the article of Creation**, Scripture testifies that God has created human nature not only before the Fall, but that it is a creature and work of God also since the Fall, Deut. 32:6; Is. 45:11, 54:5, 64:8; Acts 17:25; Rev. 4:11.*

35] Thine hands, says Job, 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. Job 10:8-12.

36] I will praise Thee, says David, 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, Ps. 139:14-16.

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

38] *These passages clearly testify that God even since the Fall is the Creator of man, and creates his body and soul. Therefore corrupt man cannot, without any distinction, be sin itself; otherwise God would be a creator of sin; as also our Small Catechism confesses in the explanation of the First Article, where it is written: I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them. Likewise in the Large Catechism it is thus written: This is what I believe and mean, that is, that I am a creature of God; that He has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul, and life, members great and small, and all my senses, mind, and reason. Nevertheless, this same creature and work of God is lamentably corrupted by sin; for the mass (massa) from which God now forms and makes man was corrupted and perverted in Adam, and is thus transmitted by inheritance to us.*

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

40] *From this article, now, the distinction is found indisputably and clearly. For original sin does not come from God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Nor is original sin a creature or work of God, but it is a work of the devil.*

41] *Now, if there were to 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, accordingly 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, of our body and soul, which would also have to be a work or creation of Satan if, without any distinction, our corrupt nature should have to be regarded as sin itself; both of which teachings are contrary to the article of our Christian faith.*

42] *Therefore, 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, Acts 17:28. But that the nature is corrupt, that its thoughts, words, and works are wicked, is*

originally a work of Satan, who has thus corrupted God's work in Adam through sin, which from him is transmitted by inheritance to us.

**A distinction must be made between ...
man's nature and the corruption of the nature by original sin**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

2] 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 after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after 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.

3] 2. We believe, teach, and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because this doctrine, 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.

**What does the Bible Say?
We believe, teach and confess!**

Second Article of the Creed: Redemption

**The Incarnation:
Jesus is our Brother, in the flesh**

John 1:1-14: "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."

Hebrews 2:11-18: "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers ...

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is,

the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

5] Moreover, the Son of God has assumed this human nature, however, without sin, and therefore not a foreign, but our own flesh, into the unity of His person, and according to it is 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, 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.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin

43] 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 unto 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 His 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. 44] Now, if there were no distinction between the nature or essence of corrupt man and original sin, it must follow that Christ either 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 ideas are contrary to the Scriptures. But inasmuch as the Son of God assumed our nature, and not original sin, it is clear from this fact that human nature, even since the Fall, and original sin, are not one [and the same] thing, but must be distinguished.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Third Article of the Creed: Sanctification

New Creation

Sanctification and Resurrection

1 John 1:8—2:1: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you, so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-57: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

6] In like manner Christ has also 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; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.

7] 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.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin

45] Thirdly, in the article of Sanctification Scripture testifies that God cleanses, washes, and sanctifies man 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 receives man into grace for Christ's sake, but to sin He remains hostile to eternity.

Therefore it is unchristian and horrible to hear that original sin is baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, sanctified and saved, and other similar expressions found in the writings of the recent Manicheans, with which we will not offend simple-minded people.

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

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

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Corruption discerned not by human reason but only by the revelation of God's Word

1 Corinthians 2:14: The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

9] *This damage is unspeakable, and **cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word.** 10] And [we affirm] that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the [blessed] 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.*

What does the Bible Say? We reject and condemn!

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

That ... original sin is only a debt and not a corruption

11] 1. *Therefore we reject and condemn the teaching 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.*

That ... lusts are not sin

12] 2. *Also, that evil lusts are not sin, but con-created, essential properties of the nature, or, as though the above-mentioned defect and damage were not truly sin, because of which man without Christ [not ingrafted into Christ] would be a child of wrath.*

That ... we're all good by nature (Pelagian)

13] 3. *We likewise reject the **Pelagian error**, by which it is alleged that man's nature even after the Fall is incorrupt, and especially with respect to spiritual things has remained entirely good and pure in naturalibus, i. e., in its natural powers.*

That ... “it’s just a flesh wound” (semi-Pelagian)

14] 4. Also, that original sin is only a slight, insignificant spot on the outside, dashed upon the nature, or a blemish that has been blown upon it, beneath which [nevertheless] the nature has retained its good powers even in spiritual things.

15] 5. Also, that original sin is only an external impediment to the good 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 wiped away like a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.

16] 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, capacity, skill, aptness, or ability in spiritual things to begin, to work, or to help working for something [good].

That ... the flesh is “infused” with evil. (Manichean error)

17] 7. On the other hand, we also reject the false dogma of the **Manicheans**, 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.

18] 8. Also, that not the natural man, but something else and extraneous to man, sins, on account of which not the nature, but only original sin in the nature, is accused.

19] 9. We reject and condemn also as a **Manichean error** the doctrine that original sin is properly and without any distinction the substance, nature, and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that a distinction between the corrupt nature, as such, after the Fall and original sin should not even be conceived of, nor that they could be distinguished from one another [even] in thought.

Session 2: Article II - Free Will

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will*, pp. 477-479
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will*, pp. 520-536.

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *Free Will* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII, (*The Concordia* pp. 40-41)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article XVIII, (*The Concordia* pp. 197-198)

Brief Summary of Article II: Free Will

After the fall into sin and before spiritual regeneration the will of man is unable, by its own natural powers, to ...

understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, cooperate, or work toward its spiritual rebirth and renewal.

The Status of the Controversy and the Chief Question

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

1] *Since the will of man is found in **four unlike states**, namely:*

1. *before the Fall;*
2. *since the Fall;*
3. *after regeneration;*
4. *after the 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 of himself after the fall of our first parents and before regeneration, and **whether he is able by his own powers**, prior to and before his regeneration by God's Spirit, 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.*

The Four States of the Will

- before the Fall into sin
- since the Fall into sin and before regeneration
- after regeneration
- after the resurrection

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

2] *For since man with [respect to] his free will is found and can be considered in **four distinct, dissimilar states**,*

***the question at present** is not what was the condition of the same before the Fall, or what he is able to do since the Fall and before his conversion in external things which pertain to this temporal life; also not what sort of a free will he will*

have in spiritual things after he has been regenerated and is controlled by God's Spirit, or when he rises from the dead.

*But the **principal question is only and alone**, what the intellect and will of the unregenerate man is able to do in his conversion and regeneration from his own powers remaining after the Fall; whether he is able, when the Word of God is preached, and the grace of God is offered us, to prepare himself for grace, accept the same, and assent thereto.*

This is the question upon which, for quite a number of years now, there has been a controversy among some theologians in the churches of the Augsburg Confession.

(after the Fall and before regeneration)

What is the intellect and will of man able to do in spiritual and divine matters?

The Third Article of the Creed

*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 by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith;*

even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life.

This is most certainly true.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

we are spiritually blind and foolish

Ephesians 4:18-19: "They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

1 Corinthians 2:12-16: "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

Romans 1:18-23: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Psalm 19: The Natural and Revealed Knowledge of God

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

2] 1. Concerning this subject, our doctrine, faith, and confession is, that in spiritual things the understanding and reason of man are [altogether] blind, and by 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 when he is examined concerning spiritual things.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

the “foolishness” of human reason

natural knowledge of God and the revealed knowledge of God

9] For, first, although man's reason or natural intellect indeed has still a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also of the doctrine of the Law, Rom. 1:19ff, yet it is so ignorant, blind, and perverted that when even the most ingenious 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 as true, but the more diligence and earnestness they employ, wishing to comprehend these spiritual things with their reason, the less they understand or believe, and before they become enlightened and are taught by the Holy Ghost, they regard all this only as foolishness or fictions.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

list of Bible verses

(paragraph 10)

1 Corinthians 2:14: “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

1 Corinthians 1:21: “... but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles ...”

Ephesians 4:17-19: "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

Romans 3:11-12: "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Matthew 13: The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

we are spiritually dead

Ephesians 2:1-3: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Colossians 2:13: "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*Likewise, the Scriptures teach that man in sins is not only weak and sick, but defunct and **entirely dead**, Eph. 2:1. 5; Col. 2:13.*

11] Now, just as a man who is physically dead cannot of his own powers prepare or adapt himself to obtain temporal life again, 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 is delivered and quickened by the Son of God from the death of sin.

12] Therefore the Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will, to undertake, to act, to work or to concur in working anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself.

Psalm 119 and the Receptive Life

vita passiva

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*15] Here belong also all the prayers of the saints in which they pray that they may be taught, enlightened, and sanctified by God, and by this very act declare that they **cannot obtain** those things which they ask of God from their own natural powers; as, **in Ps. 119 alone** David prays more than ten times that God would impart to him understanding, that he might rightly comprehend 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 passages concerning our ignorance and inability have been written for us, not for the purpose of rendering us idle and remiss in reading, hearing, and meditating upon God's Word, but, first, that we should thank God from the heart that by 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 regenerated and illumined us.

*16] And after God through the Holy Ghost in Baptism has kindled and effected a beginning of the true knowledge of God and faith, we should pray Him without ceasing that through the same spirit and His grace, **by means of the daily exercise of reading and practising God's Word**, He would preserve in us faith and His heavenly gifts, strengthen us from day to day, and keep us to the end. For unless God Himself be our schoolmaster, we can study and learn nothing that is acceptable to Him and salutary to ourselves and others.*

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

we not only are turned away from God

BUT ALSO

turned against God (enemy)

Genesis 6:5: “The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.”

Genesis 8:21: “The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.”

Jeremiah 17:9: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”

Ezekiel 36:25-28: “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Romans 5:9-10: “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 7:18-23: “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Romans 8:6-8: "The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Galatians 5:17: "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want."

Ephesians 2:1-10: Dead in sin but made alive in Jesus Christ

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

*3] 2. Likewise we believe, teach, and confess that the unregenerate will of man is not only **turned away from God**, but also has **become an enemy of God**, so that it only has an 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 little as a dead body can quicken itself to bodily, earthly life, so little can man, who by sin is spiritually dead, 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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*25] Thirdly, in this manner, too, the Holy Scriptures ascribe 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, neither entirely nor half, nor in any, even the least or most inconsiderable part, but in solidum, that is, entirely, solely, to the divine working and the Holy Ghost, as also the Apology teaches.*

26] Reason and free will are able to a certain extent to live an **outwardly decent life**; but to be born anew, and to obtain inwardly another heart, mind, 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

**List of Bible Verses
(paragraph 26)**

**Reference to the Confessions
(paragraph 29-43)**

AC, Art. XX (29-32,36)

Apology, Art. XVIII (70-73)

Smalcald Articles, Sin, III, I 5, 10,

Smalcald Articles, Redemption, III, III, 40

Large Catechism, II, (52-53)

Small Catechism, Third Article of the Creed

Small Catechism, Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer

Luther's Bondage of the Will

**What does the Bible Say?
We believe, teach and confess!**

**we are a servant and slave to sin
captives of the Devil**

John 8:34: "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

Ephesians 2:1-3: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

2 Timothy 2:25-26: ²"Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Titus 3:3: "At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another."

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*7] Namely, that in spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart, and will of the unregenerate man are **utterly unable, by their own natural powers**, to understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work, or concur in working anything, but they are entirely dead to what is good, and corrupt, so that in man's nature since the Fall, before regeneration, there is **not the least spark of spiritual power** remaining, nor present, by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace, or accept the offered grace, nor be capable of it for and of himself, 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 towards his conversion, either wholly, or half, or in any, even the least or most inconsiderable part; but that he is the servant [and slave] of sin, John 8:34, and a captive of the devil, by whom he is moved, 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.*

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

the Triune God works through means (against the teaching of the “Enthusiasts”)

Romans 1:16_17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith.

Romans 10:13-17: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Psalm 95:8: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert ..."

Acts 16:14: "One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

1 Corinthians 1:27-31: "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 12:5: "I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses."

Jeremiah 9:23-24: "This is what the Lord says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord , who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the Lord .

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

*4] 3. God the Holy Ghost, however, **does not effect conversion without means**, but uses for this purpose the preaching and hearing of God's Word, as it is written Rom. 1:16: The Gospel is the power of God 5] 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. Ps. 95:8. With this Word the Holy Ghost is present, and opens hearts, so that they, as Lydia in Acts 16:14, are attentive to it, and are thus converted alone through the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, whose 6] 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.

*With these brief words He **denies to the free will its powers**, 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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*48] For this reason we shall now relate, furthermore, 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 wants to be efficacious in us, and*

to work and bestow in our hearts true repentance, faith, and new spiritual power and ability for good, and how we should conduct ourselves towards these means, and [how we should] use them.

**after conversion we cooperate with the Holy Spirit
but only in great weakness**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*65] 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 cooperate, although still in great weakness.***

But this [that we cooperate] does not occur from our carnal natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Ghost has begun in us in conversion, 66] as St. Paul expressly and earnestly exhorts that as workers together with Him we receive not the grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. 6:1.

But this is to be understood in no other way 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 His gracious hand from him, he could not for a moment persevere in obedience to God.

the difference between baptized and unbaptized

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

*67] 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 arbitrium liberatum (**a liberated will**), that is, as Christ says, they have been made free again, John 8:36; whence they are able not only to hear the Word, but also to assent to it and accept it, although in great weakness.*

68] *For since we receive in this life only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new birth is not complete, **but only begun in us**, the combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate men;*

for there is a great difference perceptible among Christians not only in this, that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but each Christian, moreover, 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.

not rebaptized but converted again

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article II, Free Will

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

What Does the Bible Say? We reject and condemn!

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

7] *Accordingly, we reject and condemn all the following errors as contrary to the standard of God's Word:*

the Stoics and Manicheans the spiritual life determined by coercion (by “force” or “fatalism”)

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

8] 1. *The delirium [insane dogma] of philosophers who are called Stoics, as also of the Manicheans, who taught that everything that happens must so happen,*

and cannot happen otherwise, and that everything that man does, even in outward things, he does by compulsion, and that he is coerced to evil works and deeds, as in chastity, robbery, murder, theft, and the like.

the “gross” Pelagians

“man has the power to turn himself toward God”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

9] 2. We reject also the error of the gross 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 from the heart to God's Law, and thus merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

the “semi” Pelagians

“man begins the work and God completes it”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

10] 3. We reject also the error of the Semi-Pelagians, 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.

the Synergist

“God begins the work and man completes it”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

11] 4. Also, when it is taught 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 from the heart to be obedient to God, yet, if the Holy Ghost by the preaching of the Word has made a beginning, and therein offered His grace, then the will of man from its own natural powers can add something, though little and feebly, to this end, can help and cooperate, qualify and prepare itself for grace, and embrace and accept it, and believe the Gospel.

Perfectionism or Holiness Movement
“after the spiritual rebirth man is made righteous
by his perfect obedience”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

12] 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.

the “Enthusiasts”
“God works regeneration apart from means”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

13] 6. Also, we reject and 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. (Enthusiasts we call those who expect the heavenly illumination of the Spirit [celestial revelations] without the preaching of God's Word.)

The substance and essence of the Old Adam is destroyed
and a new substance and essence is created

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

14] 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 conversion and regeneration creates a new essence of the soul out of nothing.

false and misleading phrases

“the Holy Spirit is given to those who resist Him intentionally”
“God draws, but He draws the willing”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

15] 8. Also, when the following expressions are employed without explanation, namely, 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 makes willing persons out of the unwilling and dwells in the willing.

16] As to the expressions of ancient and modern teachers of the Church, when it is said: *Deus trahit, sed volentem trahit, i. e., God draws, but He draws the willing; likewise, Hominis voluntas in conversione non est otiosa, sed agit aliquid, i. e., In conversion the will of man is not idle, but also effects something*, 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 of God's grace, they do not conform to the form of sound doctrine, and therefore, when we speak of conversion to God, justly ought to be avoided.

correct and helpful phrases

“God makes out of unwilling men, willing ones”

“the regenerate will of man is not idle, but cooperates with the Spirit”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

17] But, on the other hand, it is correctly said that in conversion God, through the drawing of the Holy Ghost, makes out of stubborn and unwilling men willing ones, and that after such conversion in the daily exercise of repentance the regenerate will of man is not idle, but also cooperates in all the works of the Holy Ghost, which He performs through us.

18] 9. Also what Dr. Luther has written, namely, that man's will in his conversion is pure passive, that is, that it does nothing whatever, is to be understood *respectu divinae gratiae in accendendis novis motibus*, that is, when God's Spirit, through the Word heard or the use of the holy Sacraments, lays hold upon man's will, and works [in man] the new birth and conversion. For when [after] the Holy Ghost has wrought and accomplished this, and man's will has been changed and

renewed by His divine power and working alone, 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 cooperates with the Holy Ghost in the works which follow.

the two “efficient causes” of conversion

the Holy Spirit and the Word of God

NOT the will of man

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article II, Free Will

*19] Therefore, before the conversion of man there are **only two efficient causes**, namely, the Holy Ghost and the Word of God, as the instrument of the Holy Ghost, by which He works conversion. This Word man is [indeed] to hear; however, it is not by his own powers, but only through the grace and working of the Holy Ghost that he can yield faith to it and accept it.*

The Third Article of the Creed

*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 by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith;*

even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in which Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.

Session 3: Article III - Righteousness Before God

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, Righteousness Before God*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, Righteousness Before God*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness Before God*, pp. 479-482
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness Before God*, pp. 536-546

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *The Righteousness Before God* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Augsburg Confession, Article IV, *Justification*, (*The Concordia* pp. 32-33)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, *Justification*, (*The Concordia*, pp. 82-ff)
- Smalcald Articles II, I: *The Chief Article*, pp. 262-263
- Smalcald Articles XIII: *How One is Justified*, pp. 283

Brief Summary of Article III: The Righteousness of Faith Before God One God, Three Persons

We cannot obtain forgiveness of sins by our own works or merits. We are justified (declared righteous) by grace, freely for Christ's sake, through faith in Him. This is the "chief article".

One Salvation Plan

*"So that our readers may the better perceive our teaching I shall clearly and broadly describe it. We treat of the forgiveness of sins in **two ways**.*

***First**, how it is achieved and won.*

***Second**, how it is distributed and given to us.*

Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross.

But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world. For inasmuch as he had determined once to achieve it, it made no difference to him whether he distributed it before or after, through his Word, as can easily be proved from Scripture."

(Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets)

The Father: "authored"

Ephesians 1

John 3:16
1 Peter 1:1-3
2 Thess. 2:13-14

The Son = “accomplished”

The Holy Spirit = “applies”

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

6] *This article concerning justification by faith (as the Apology says) is the **chief article in the entire Christian doctrine**, without which no poor conscience can have any firm consolation, or can truly know the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written:*

If this only article remains pure on the battlefield, the Christian Church also remains pure, and in goodly harmony and without any sects; but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted. (Tom. 5, Jena, p. 159.) 7]

*And concerning this article especially Paul says that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Therefore, in this article he urges with so much zeal and earnestness the **particulars exclusivas**, that is, the words whereby the works of men are excluded (namely, without Law, without works, by grace [freely], Rom. 3:28; 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9), in order to indicate how highly necessary it is that in this article, aside from [the presentation of] the pure doctrine, the antithesis, that is, all contrary dogmas, be stated separately, exposed, and rejected by this means.*

8] *Therefore, in order to explain this controversy in a Christian way by means of God's Word, and, by His grace, to settle it, our doctrine, faith, and confession are as follows:*

9] *Concerning the righteousness of faith before God **we believe, teach, and confess unanimously**, in accordance with the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession presented above, that poor sinful man is justified before God, that is, **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 our own,*

***also without any** preceding, present, or any subsequent works, out of pure grace, **because of** the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness.*

*10] These treasures are **offered us by the Holy Ghost** in the promise of the holy Gospel; and **faith alone is the only means** by which we lay hold upon, accept, and apply, and appropriate them to ourselves.*

11] This faith is a gift of God, by which we truly learn to know Christ, our Redeemer, in the Word of the Gospel, and trust in Him, that for the sake of His obedience alone we have the forgiveness of sins by grace, are regarded as godly and righteous by God the father, and are eternally saved.

*16] This righteousness is **offered us** 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.*

Smalcald Articles, Part II, Article I, The First and Chief Article

1] That Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25.

2] And He alone is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, John 1:29; and God has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, Is. 53:6.

3] Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merit [freely, and without their own works or merits] by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood, Rom. 3:23f

*4] Now, since it is necessary to believe this, and it cannot be otherwise acquired or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that **this faith alone justifies** us as St. Paul says, Rom. 3:28: For we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law. Likewise 3:26: That He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Christ.*

5] Of this article **nothing can be yielded or surrendered** [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same], even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. For there is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved, says Peter, Acts 4:12. And with His stripes we are healed, Is. 53:5.

And **upon this article all things depend** which we teach and practice in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the [whole] world. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for **otherwise all is lost**, and the Pope and devil and all things gain the victory and suit over us.

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article XIII. How One is Justified before God, and of Good Works.

1] What I have hitherto and constantly taught concerning this I know not how to change in the least, namely, that **by faith**, as St. Peter says, we acquire a new and clean heart, and **God will and does** account us entirely righteous and holy for the sake of Christ, our Mediator. And although sin in the flesh has not yet been altogether removed or become dead, yet He will not punish or remember it.

2] And such faith, renewal, and forgiveness of sins is followed by good works. And what there is still sinful or imperfect also in them shall not be accounted as sin or defect, even [and that, too] for Christ's sake;

but the entire man, both as to his person and his works, is to be called and to be righteous and holy from pure grace and mercy, shed upon us [unfolded] and spread over us in Christ.

3] Therefore we cannot boast of many merits and works, if they are viewed apart from grace and mercy, but as it is written, 1 Cor. 1:31: He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, namely, that he has a gracious God. For thus all is well. 4] We say, besides, that if good works do not follow, faith is false and not true.

The Status of the Controversy

1 Corinthians 1:30-31: "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:21: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

*1] Since it is **unanimously confessed** in our churches, in accordance with God's Word and 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.*

2] For the one side has held that Christ according to His divinity alone is our Righteousness, if He dwell in us by faith; contrasted with this divinity, dwelling in us by faith, the sins of all men must be regarded as a drop of water compared to the great ocean. Others, on the contrary, have held that Christ is our Righteousness before God according to the human nature alone.

The Entire Person of Christ

The Active Obedience of Christ

(Jesus kept the Law perfectly for us)

AND

The Passive Obedience of Christ

(Jesus took the penalty of the Law for us)

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

55] Accordingly, 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** the merits, works, virtues, and worthiness of ourselves and of all men, and rests alone upon Christ the Lord, it must be carefully considered in what respect Christ is called our Righteousness in this affair of justification, 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 only, entire, and complete obedience.

56] For even though Christ had been conceived and born without sin by the Holy Ghost, and had fulfilled all righteousness in His human nature alone, and yet had not been true and eternal God, this obedience and suffering of His human nature could not be imputed to us for righteousness. As also, if the Son of God had not become man, the divine nature alone could not be 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 to us 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; however, the divinity alone, without the humanity, could not mediate between God and us.

57] But, since it is the obedience as above mentioned [**not only of one nature, but] of the entire person**, it is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, by which the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied, and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel, and upon which faith relies before God, 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; and 1 John 1:7: The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin. Likewise: The just shall live by his faith, Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17.

58] Thus neither the divine nor the human nature of Christ by itself is imputed to us 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 as it was made under 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 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 is pardoned and forgiven out of pure grace, alone for Christ's sake.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

- What does “righteousness” look like?
- Who is “righteous”?
- How can one be “right” with God?

Original Righteousness Love God and Love for Neighbor

Exodus 20

Matthew 5 – I have come NOT to abolish the Law but to fulfill it.

**We are justified before God ...
by grace alone not by works
for Christ's sake
through faith**

Matt. 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

You have heard it said ...

But I tell you ...

Matt. 5:21-24: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.

Matt. 5:27-28: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The "MAN" - the "Righteous One"

Psalm 1:1: "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night."

Psalm 15:1-2: "Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous"

Psalm 31:1: "In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame; deliver me in your righteousness."

Jesus ...

Acts 3:14: "You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead."

Hebrews 2:11: “Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” (Psalm 22:22)

1 John 2:1: “But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

Romans 1, 3, 6

**“no one righteousness”
“the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus”
“crucified with Christ, raised with Christ”**

Romans 1:16-17: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel ***a righteousness from God is revealed***, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Romans 3:19-22: Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore ***no one will be declared righteous*** in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

But now ***a righteousness from God, apart from law***, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

Romans 6:1-6: What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

Augsburg Confession, Article IV: Of Justification

1] Also they teach that men **cannot be justified** before God **by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for 2]Christ's sake, through faith**, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins.

3] This faith God **imputes** for righteousness in His sight. Rom. 3 and 4.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

4] 2. Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess that **our righteousness before God is (this very thing)**, that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit, or worthiness of ours preceding, present, or following, that 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 as righteous.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Faith Alone is the Means and Instrument

Romans 4:4-8 (Psalm 32): "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

*5] 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 whose sake this faith is imputed to us for righteousness, Rom. 4:5.*

Not a Bare Knowledge of Jesus Christ but a Trust that Lays Hold of Him

*6] 4. We believe, teach, and confess that this faith is **not a bare knowledge** of the history of Christ, but such a gift of God by which we come to the right knowledge of Christ as our Redeemer in the Word of the Gospel, and **trust in Him** that for the sake of His obedience alone we have, by grace, the forgiveness of sins, are regarded as holy and righteous before God the Father, and eternally saved.*

The Meaning of the Word “Justify”

“to absolve”

“to declare free from sins”

Romans 8:31-33: “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.”

Revelations 12:10-12: “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.’ ”

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

7] 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.

8] And when, in place of this, the words *regeneratio* and *vivificatio*, that is, **regeneration and vivification**, are employed, as in the Apology, this is done in the same sense. By these terms, in other places, the renewal of man is understood, and distinguished from justification by faith.

9] 6. We believe, teach, and confess also that notwithstanding the fact that **many weaknesses and defects cling** to the true believers and truly regenerate, even to the grave, still they must not on that account doubt either their righteousness which has been imputed to them by faith, or the salvation of their souls, but must **regard it as certain that for Christ's sake, according to the promise and [immovable] Word of the holy Gospel, they have a gracious God.**

The “Wide” and “Narrow” use of Words

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

17] Accordingly, the word *justify* here **means to declare righteous and free from sins**, and **to absolve** one from eternal punishment for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which is imputed by God to faith, Phil. 3:9. 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. Is. 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, that is, absolves from sins and acquits.

18] However, since the word *regeneratio*, regeneration, is sometimes employed for the word *iustificatio*, justification, it is **necessary that this word be properly explained**, in order that the renewal which follows justification of faith may not be confounded with the justification of faith, but that they may be properly distinguished from one another.

Wide Sense

19] **For, in the first place**, the word *regeneratio*, that is, regeneration, is used so as to comprise at the same time the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake alone, and the succeeding renewal which the Holy Ghost works in those who are justified by faith.

Narrow Sense

Then, again, it is [sometimes] used *pro remissione peccatorum et adoptione in filios Dei*, that is, so as to **mean only** the remission of sins, and that we are adopted as sons of God. And in this **latter sense the word is much and often used** in the Apology, where it is written: *Iustificatio est regeneratio*, that is, Justification before God is regeneration. St. Paul, too, has employed these words as distinct from one another, Titus 3:5: He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost.

20] As **also the word vivificatio**, that is, making alive, has sometimes been used in a like sense. For when 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: When we were dead in sins, He hath quickened us together with Christ, Eph. 2:5. Likewise: 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.

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

We Dare Not Mix Justification with Sanctification

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

24] But here very good attention must be given with especial diligence, if the article of justification is to remain pure, lest that which **precedes faith**, and that which **follows after it**, be mingled together or inserted into the article of justification as necessary and belonging to it, because it is not one or the same thing to speak of conversion and of justification.

25] For not everything that belongs to conversion belongs likewise to the article of justification, in and to which belong and are necessary only 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.

28] In like manner also renewal and sanctification, although it is also a benefit of the Mediator, Christ, and a work of the Holy Ghost, **does not belong** in the article or affair of justification before God, **but follows** the same since, on account of our corrupt flesh, it is not entirely perfect and complete in this life.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

The Exclusive Particles Give Honor Solely to Christ

“without”
“apart from”
“not by ...”

Ephesians 2:8-9: “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Romans 1:17: For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written:

"The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 3:24: This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 4:3-ff: What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

Galatians 3:1-ff: You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

Hebrews 11: "... by faith ..."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

*10] 7. We believe, teach, and confess that for the preservation of the pure doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith before God it is necessary to urge with special diligence **the *particulae exclusivae*, that is, the exclusive particles**, i. e., the following words of the holy Apostle Paul, by which the merit of Christ is **entirely separated from our works**, and the **honor given to Christ alone**, when the holy Apostle Paul writes:*

Of grace, without merit, without Law, without works, not of works. All these words together mean as much as that we are justified and saved alone by faith in Christ. Eph. 2:8; Rom. 1:17; 3:24; 4:3ff.; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 11.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

*37] 1. That thereby [through these particles] all our own works, merit, worthiness, glory, and confidence in all our works are **entirely excluded** in the article of justification so that our works shall not be constituted or regarded as **either the cause or the merit** of justification, neither entirely, nor half, nor in the least part, upon which God could or ought to look, or we to rely in this article and action.*

*38] 2. That this remain the office and property of 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 in the promise of the Gospel are*

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.

**We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone
for the sake of Christ alone**

BUT

**grace and faith are never alone
good works always follow**

Galatians 5:16-ff: So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious ...

But the fruit of the Spirit is ...

James 2:14-17: "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ... In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

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 one is **not to imagine a faith** of such a kind as can exist and abide with, and alongside of, a wicked intention to sin and to act against the conscience.*

*But **after man has been justified** by faith, then a true living faith worketh by love, Gal. 5:6, so that 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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

40] *In the same manner **the order** also between faith and good works must abide and be maintained, and likewise between justification and renewal, or sanctification.*

41] *For good works **do not precede** faith, neither does sanctification **precede** justification. But **first faith is kindled** in us in conversion by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. This lays hold of God's grace in Christ, by which the person is justified. **Then**, when the person is justified, he is also renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follow.*

Discussion of James 2 and Romans 3

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

42] *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 we speak of faith, how it justifies, the doctrine of St. Paul is that faith alone, without works, justifies, Rom. 3:28, inasmuch as it applies and appropriates to us the merit of Christ, as has been said. But if the question is, wherein and whereby a Christian can perceive and distinguish, either in himself*

or in others, 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 good works and fruits of the Spirit of every kind do not follow. St. James teaches correctly when he denies that we are justified by such a faith as is without works, which is dead faith.*

*43] But James speaks, as the Apology says, concerning the works of those who have **already been justified** through Christ, reconciled with God, and obtained forgiveness of sins through Christ.*

*But if the question is, whereby and whence faith has this, and what appertains to this that it justifies and saves, it is **false and incorrect** to say that ...*

faith cannot justify without works;

or that faith justifies or makes righteous, inasmuch 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 otherwise 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, so that good works are a cause without which man cannot be justified, and that they are not excluded from the article of justification by the *particulae exclusivae*.*

*For faith makes righteous only inasmuch as and because, as a **means and instrument**, it lays hold of, and accepts, the grace of God and the merit of Christ in the promise of the Gospel.*

What Does the Bible Say? We reject and condemn!

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

12] Therefore we reject and condemn all the following errors:

WE REJECT ... Christ our Righteousness Only According to the Divine Nature or Only According to the Human Nature

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

13] 1. *That Christ is our Righteousness according to His divine nature alone.*

14] 2. *That Christ is our Righteousness according to His human nature alone.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

56] *For even though Christ had been conceived and born without sin by the Holy Ghost, and had fulfilled all righteousness in His human nature alone, and yet had not been true and eternal God, this obedience and suffering of His human nature could not be imputed to us for righteousness.*

*As also, if the Son of God had not become man, the divine nature alone could not be 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 to us 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; however, the divinity alone, without the humanity, could not mediate between God and us.*

57] *But, since it is the obedience as above mentioned [not only of one nature, but] **of the entire person**, it is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, by which the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied, and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel, and upon which faith relies before God, 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; and 1 John 1:7: The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin. Likewise: The just shall live by his faith, Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17.

**WE REJECT ... Not Declared Righteous (imputed)
BUT
Made Righteous (infused)**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

15] 3. *That in the sayings of the prophets and apostles where the righteousness of faith is spoken of the words justify and to be justified are **not to signify declaring or being declared free from sins**, and obtaining the forgiveness of sins, but actually **being made righteous before God**, because of love **infused** by the Holy Ghost, virtues, and the works following them.*

**WE REJECT ... Not just the Christ FOR us
BUT
also the Christ dwelling IN us**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

16] 4. *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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

54] *Likewise also the disputation concerning the indwelling in us of the essential righteousness of God must be correctly explained. For although in the elect, who are justified by Christ and reconciled with God, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who is the eternal and essential righteousness, dwells by faith (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 *iustitiam Dei*, that is, 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 adoption of the poor sinner, for the sake of Christ's obedience and merit alone.

WE REJECT ... Persistent Sin, Lack of Repentance and No Love

**the word “Gospel” is not always used in
ONE and the same sense
but
in TWO different ways**

Additional Controversy:

**Good works are harmful to salvation.
Good works are not necessary, but are
voluntary.**

**What is the Gospel?
 (“properly speaking”)**

**Is it a preaching of repentance AND
grace? OR solely grace?**

Can Coexist with Faith in Christ

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

17] 5. *That faith is such a trust in the obedience of Christ as can exist and remain in a man even when he has **no genuine repentance**, in whom also no love follows, but who persists in sins against his conscience.*

WE REJECT ... Not the Triune God Himself but only His Gifts Dwell in the Believers

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

18] 6. *That not God Himself, but only the gifts of God, dwell in believers.*

WE REJECT ... Faith saves on Account of the Renewal that is Begun In Us

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

19] 7. *That faith saves on this account, because by faith **the renewal**, which consists in love to God and one's neighbor, is begun in us.*

20] 8. *That faith has the **first place in justification**, nevertheless also renewal and love belong to our righteousness before God in such a manner that they [renewal and love] are indeed **not the chief cause** of our righteousness, but that nevertheless our righteousness before God is **not entire or perfect without** this love and renewal.*

21] 9. That believers are justified before God and **saved jointly** by the imputed righteousness of Christ and by the new obedience begun in them, or in part by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but in part also by the new obedience begun in them.

22] 10. That the promise of grace is made our own by faith in the heart, and by the confession which is made with the mouth, **and by other virtues**.

23] 11. That faith does not justify without good works; so that **good works are necessarily required for righteousness**, and without their presence man cannot be justified.

We Unanimously Reject

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God

66] These and like errors, one and all, we **unanimously reject as contrary** to the clear Word of God, and by God's grace abide firmly and constantly in the doctrine of the righteousness of faith before God, as it is embodied, expounded, and proved from God's Word in the Augsburg Confession, and the Apology issued after it.

Luther's Letter to the Galatians

67] Concerning what is needful furthermore for the proper explanation of this profound and chief article of justification before God, upon which depends the salvation of our souls, we direct, and for the sake of brevity herewith refer, every one to Dr. Luther's beautiful and **glorious exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians**.

Session 4: Article IV - Good Works

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works*, pp. 482-484
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works*, pp. 546-552

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *Good Works* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Augsburg Confession, Article VI, *New Obedience* (*The Concordia* pp. 33-34)
- Augsburg Confession, Article XX, *Good Works*, (*The Concordia*, pp. 41-44)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, *Love and the Fulfilling of the Law*, (*The Concordia*, pp. 102-143)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, *Good Works*, (*The Concordia*, pp. 199-201)
- Smalcald Articles III, XIII: *How One is Justified Before God and Does Good Works*, pp. 283

The Status of the Controversy

Ephesians 2:8-10: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.

For we are God's workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Titus 3:4-8: But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.

He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying.

And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God **may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good**. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Are good works “necessary”? YES!

**Are good works “necessary” for
salvation? NO!**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

1] *A disagreement has also occurred among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession concerning good works, one part employing the following words and manner in speaking of them:*

Good works are necessary for salvation;

it is impossible to be saved without good works;

likewise, no one has been saved without good works;

*because, they say, good works **are required** of true believers as fruits of faith, and faith without love is dead, although such love is no cause of salvation.*

2] *The other part, however, contended, on the contrary, **that good works are indeed necessary; however, not for salvation, but for other reasons;** and that on this account the aforesaid propositiones, or expressions, which have been 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 by the Papists in opposition to the doctrine of our Christian faith, 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 Savior, be not diminished, and the promise of salvation may be and remain **firm and certain** to believers.*

Additional Controversy:

**Good works are harmful to salvation.
Good works are not necessary, but are
voluntary.**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

3] In this controversy also the following controverted proposition, or expression, was employed by some few, **that good works are injurious to salvation.**

It has also been argued 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. Over against this the other side contended that good works are necessary.

4] This [latter] controversy was originally occasioned by the words *necessitas* and *libertas*, that is, necessary and free, because especially the word *necessitas*, necessary, signifies not only the eternal, immutable order according to which all men are obliged and in duty bound to obey God, but sometimes also a coercion, by which the Law forces men to good works.

5] But afterwards there was a **disputation not only concerning the words, but the doctrine itself** was attacked in the most violent manner, and it was contended that the new obedience in the regenerate is not necessary because of the above-mentioned divine order.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

**Good Works = the fruit of faith
Faith = the mother and source**

Matthew 7:16-18: By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

Ephesians 2:8-10: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 14:23: But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Hebrews 11:6: And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Romans 13:8-14: Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

James 2:14-26: "Faith without works is dead"

Revelations 2:2, 19, 23; 3:8 "I know your deeds ..."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

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

6] 1. That good works certainly and without doubt follow true faith, if it is not a dead, but a living faith, as fruits of a good tree.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

*7] First, there is no controversy among our theologians concerning the following points in this article, namely: **that it is God's will, order, and command** that believers should walk in good works; and that truly good works are not those which every one contrives himself from a good intention, or which are done according to traditions of men, **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 in this way: when the person by faith is reconciled with God and renewed by the Holy Ghost, or, as Paul says, is created anew in Christ Jesus to good works, Eph. 2:10.*

8] Nor is there a controversy as to how and why the good works of believers, although in this flesh they are impure and incomplete, are pleasing and acceptable to God, 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 also done by, and required of, the unbelieving and unconverted, although commendable before the world, and besides rewarded by God in this world with temporal blessings, are nevertheless, **because they do not proceed from true faith, in God's sight sins**, that is, **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 it is also written Rom. 14:23: Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. For the person must first be accepted of God, and that for the sake of Christ alone, if also the works of that person are to please Him.

9] Therefore, of works that are truly good and well-pleasing to God, which God will reward in this world and in the world to come, **faith must be the mother and source**; and on this account they are called by St. Paul true fruits of faith, as also of the Spirit.

Luther's Preface to the Romans

10] For, as Dr. Luther writes in the Preface to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: Thus faith is a divine work in us, that changes us and regenerates us of God, and puts to death the old Adam, makes us entirely different men in heart, spirit, mind, and all powers, and brings with it [confers] the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a **living, busy, active, powerful thing** that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing.

11] Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, it has wrought them, and is always engaged in doing them. But he who does not do such works is void of faith, and gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith nor what good works are, yet babbles and prates with many words concerning faith and good works.

12] [Justifying] faith is a **living, bold [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 joyful, fearless, and cheerful towards God and all creatures, which [joy and cheerfulness] the Holy Ghost works through faith; and on account of this, man becomes ready and cheerful, without coercion, to do good to every one, to serve every one, and to suffer everything for love and praise to God, who has conferred this grace on him, so that **it is impossible to separate works from faith**, yea, just as impossible as it is for heat and light to be separated from fire.

The Ten Commandments Curb, Mirror and Rule

**Do and Don't
Yes and No
Start and Stop**

The First Commandment.

Thou shalt have no other gods.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment.

Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.

The Fourth Commandment.

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother [that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long upon the earth].

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not despise nor anger our parents and masters, but give them honor, serve, obey, and hold them in love and esteem.

The Fifth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need [in every need and danger of life and body].

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in words and deeds, and each love and honor his spouse.

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not take our neighbor's money or property, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business [that his means are preserved and his condition is improved].

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, or defame our neighbor, but defend him, [think and] speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

The Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not craftily seek to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, and obtain it by a show of [justice and] right, etc., but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is his.

What does this mean?--Answer.

We should fear and love God that we may not estrange, force, or entice away our neighbor's wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and [diligently] do their duty.

What Does God Say of All These Commandments?

Answer.

He says thus (Exod. 20:5f): I the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

What does this mean?--Answer.

God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments. But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments. Therefore we should also love and trust in Him, and gladly do [zealously and diligently order our whole life] according to His commandments

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Good Works ARE EXCLUDED from the Article of Justification

Ephesians 2:8-10: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this **not** from yourselves, it is the gift of God--**not by works**, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Romans 4:6-8: David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

*7] 2. We believe, teach, and confess also that good works should be **entirely excluded**, just as well in the question concerning salvation as in the article of justification before God, as the apostle testifies with clear words, when he writes as follows:*

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, Rom. 4:6ff And again: 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.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Good Works ARE Necessary

Romans 13:8-14: Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.

John 15:12-14: My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command.

1 John 4:19-21: We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

*8] 3. 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.***

9] 4. In this sense the **words necessary**, shall, 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 of sound words and speech.

10] 5. Nevertheless, by the words mentioned, *necessitas*, *necessarium*, *necessity* and *necessary*, if they be employed concerning the regenerate, **not coercion, but only due obedience is to be understood**, which the truly believing, so far as they are regenerate, render not from coercion or the driving of the Law, but from a voluntary spirit; because they are no more under the Law, but under grace, Rom. 6:14; 7:6; 8:14.

Meaning to the First Article of the Creed (Small Catechism)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

What does this mean?--Answer.

I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my limbs, my reason, and all my senses, and still preserves them; in addition thereto, clothing and shoes, meat and drink, house and homestead, wife and children, fields, cattle, and all my goods; t

hat He provides me richly and daily with all that I need to support this body and life, protects me from all danger, and guards me and preserves me from all evil;

*and all this out of pure, fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; **for all which I owe it to Him** to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him.*

This is most certainly true.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

14] *And first, as regards the necessity or voluntariness of good works, it is manifest that in the Augsburg Confession and its Apology these expressions are often used and repeated **that good works are necessary**. Likewise, that it is necessary to do good works, which also are necessarily **to follow faith** and reconciliation.*

*Likewise, that we necessarily are to do and must do such good works as God has commanded. Thus also in the Holy Scriptures themselves the words necessity, needful, and necessary, likewise, ought and must, are used concerning what we are **bound to do because of God's ordinance, command, and will**, as Rom. 13:5; 1 Cor. 9:9; Acts 5:29; John 15:12; 1 John 4:21.*

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Warning Against the "Epicurean" Life

Galatians 5:13-23: You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Romans 7:14-25: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

*11] 6. Accordingly, we also believe, teach, and confess that when it is said: The regenerate do good works from a free spirit, this is not to be understood as though it is **at the option** of the regenerate man to do or to forbear doing good when he wishes, and that he can **nevertheless retain faith if he intentionally perseveres in sins**.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

*15] Therefore the expressions or propositions mentioned [that good works are necessary, and that it is necessary to do good] are unjustly censured and rejected in this Christian and proper sense, as has been done by some; for they are employed and used with propriety to rebuke and reject the **secure, Epicurean delusion**, by which many fabricate for themselves a **dead faith or delusion** which is **without repentance and without good works**, as though there could be in a heart true faith and at the same time the wicked intention to persevere and continue in sins, which is impossible;*

or, as though one could, indeed, 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 purposely engages again in these sins, all of which is incorrect and false.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Necessary BUT NOT Forced

Psalm 54:6: I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you; I will praise your name, O Lord , for it is good.

2 Corinthians 9:7: Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Philemon 14: But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced.

Romans 8:1-15: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to

Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation--but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

12] 7. *Yet this is not to be understood otherwise than as the Lord Christ and His apostles themselves declare, namely, regarding the liberated spirit, that it does not do this from fear of punishment, like a servant, but from love of righteousness, like children, Rom. 8:15.*

13] 8. *Although this voluntariness [liberty of spirit] in the elect children of God is not perfect, but burdened with great weakness, as St. Paul complains concerning himself, Rom. 7:14-25; Gal. 5:17;*

14] 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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

16] *But in this connection the following distinction must also be noted, namely, that the meaning must be: *necessitas ordinis, mandati et voluntatis Christi ac debiti nostri, non autem necessitas coactionis* (a necessity of Christ's ordinance, command, and will, and of our obligation, but not a necessity of coercion). That is: When this word necessary is employed, it **should be understood not of coercion, but only of the ordinance of the immutable will of God, whose debtors we are; thither also***

17] *His commandment points that the creature should be obedient to its Creator. For in other places, as 2 Cor. 9:7, and in the Epistle of St. Paul to Philemon 14,*

also 1 Pet. 5:2, that is termed of necessity which is wrung from one against his will, by force or otherwise, so that he acts externally for appearance, but nevertheless without and against his will. For such specious [hypocritical] works God does not want [does not approve], but the people of the New Testament are **to be a willing people**, Ps. 110:3, and sacrifice freely, Ps. 54:6, not grudgingly or of necessity, but are to be obedient from the heart, 2 Cor. 9:7; Rom. 6:17. 18] 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 willingly or from a voluntary spirit by those whom the Son of God has made free, even as it was especially for [confirming] this opinion that the disputation concerning the voluntariness of good works was engaged in by some.

19] But here, again, it is well to note also the distinction of which St. Paul says, Rom. 7:22f.: [I am willing] and delight in the Law of God 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 as regards 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. 20] But it is false, and must be censured, when it is asserted and taught as though good works were free to believers in the sense that it **were optional with them to do or to omit them**, or that they might or could act contrary thereto [to the Law of God], and none the less could retain faith and God's favor and grace.

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

Good works don't preserve our faith but they are evidences of the Holy Spirit's work

Philippians 12-6: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

15] 10. We believe, teach, and confess also that **not works** maintain faith and salvation in us, but the Spirit of God alone, through faith, of whose presence and indwelling good works are evidences.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article IV, Good Works

22] But here we must be well on our guard lest works are **drawn and mingled into the article of justification and salvation**. Therefore the propositions are justly rejected, that to believers good works are necessary for salvation, so that it is impossible to be saved without good works. For they are directly contrary to the doctrine *de particulis exclusivis in articulo iustificationis et salvationis* (concerning the exclusive particles in the article of justification and salvation), that is, they conflict with the words by which St. Paul has entirely excluded our works and merits from the article of justification and salvation, and ascribed everything to the grace of God and the merit of Christ alone, as explained in the preceding article.

the troubled conscience

23] Again, they [these propositions concerning the necessity of good works for salvation] **take from afflicted, 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, they are accepted by the Papists, and in their interest adduced against the pure doctrine of the alone-saving faith.

24] Moreover, they are contrary to the form of sound words, as it is written that blessedness is only of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Rom. 4:6. Likewise, in the Sixth Article of the Augsburg Confession it is written that we are saved without works, by faith alone.

**What does the Bible Say?
We reject and condemn!**

**WE REJECT ... ways of speaking about
the necessity of good works**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

16] 1. Accordingly, we reject and condemn the following modes of speaking: 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 to be saved without good works.

**What does the Bible Say?
We reject and condemn!**

**WE REJECT ... when it is said that
good works are injurious to salvation**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

17] 2. We reject and condemn as offensive and detrimental to Christian discipline the bare expression, when it is said: Good works are injurious to salvation.

18] 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 remind 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, as well as by papistic and Pharisaic confidence in their own works and merits.

**What does the Bible Say?
We reject and condemn!**

**WE REJECT ... the teaching that the Holy Spirit
cannot be lost by willful sin**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article IV, Good Works

19] 3. We also reject and condemn the dogma that faith and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost are not lost by wilful sin, but that the saints and elect retain the Holy Ghost even though they fall into adultery and other sins and persist therein.

Session 5: Article V - Law and Gospel

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel*, pp. 484-485
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel*, pp. 552-557

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *Law and Gospel* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Smalcald Articles III, II: *The Law* pp. 271-272
- Smalcald Articles III, IV: *The Gospel* pp. 278

The Distinction Between the Law and the Gospel

A Brilliant Light ...

- God's Word can be "rightly divided"
- Scriptures properly explained and understood
- It must be guarded so that the works of Christ may not be obscured and troubled consciences robbed of comfort

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

1] As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a special brilliant light, which serves to the end that God's Word may be rightly divided, and the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles may be properly explained and understood,

we must guard it with especial care, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with one another, or a law be made out of the Gospel, whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences are robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached genuinely and in its purity, and by which they can support themselves in their most grievous trials against the terrors of the Law.

The Status of the Controversy

**What is the Gospel?
("properly speaking")**

**Is it a preaching of repentance AND
grace? OR solely grace?**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

The Principal Question In This Controversy.

1] *Whether the preaching of the Holy Gospel is properly **not only** a preaching of grace, which announces the forgiveness of sins, **but also** a preaching of repentance and reproof, rebuking unbelief, which, they say, is rebuked not in the Law, but alone through the Gospel.*

The Chief Cause of the Controversy

**the word “Gospel” is not always used in
ONE and the same sense
but
in TWO different ways**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

2] *Now, here likewise there has occurred a dissent among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession; for the **one side asserted** that the Gospel is **properly** not only a preaching of grace, but at the same time also a preaching of repentance, which rebukes the greatest sin, namely, 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 that **properly** belongs to God's Law, which reproveth 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 reproveth, is pardoned and forgiven.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

3] *Now, when we consider this dissent aright, it has been **caused chiefly by this**, that the term 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.

The Wide and Narrow Sense of the word

The Wide Sense of the “Gospel”

the entire doctrine of Christ
(the Law AND the Gospel)

The Narrow Sense of the “Gospel” (the “proper” sense)

A distinction is made between the Law and the Gospel.

NOT the preaching of the Law
BUT ONLY the preaching of Grace

What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

The Entire Doctrine of Christ
(repentance AND the forgiveness of sins)

Mark 1:1: "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Mark 16:15: He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation."

Luke 24:46-47: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance **and** forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 20:21: I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance **and** have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

4] *For sometimes it is employed so that there is understood by it the **entire doctrine of Christ**, our Lord, which He proclaimed in His ministry upon earth, and commanded to be proclaimed in the New Testament, and hence comprised in it 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.*

*Thus, 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 Paul, too, calls his **entire doctrine the Gospel**, Acts 20:21; but he embraces the sum of this doctrine under the **two heads**: Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

5] *And in this sense the generalis definitio, that is, the description of the word Gospel, when employed in a **wide sense and without the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel** is correct, when it is said that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance **and** the 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.

The Narrow Sense of the word “Gospel” (the “proper” sense)

A distinction is made between the Law and the Gospel.

NOT the preaching of the Law
BUT ONLY the preaching of Grace

Mark 1:15: "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe the good news!**"

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

6] Furthermore the term Gospel is employed in another, namely, in its **proper 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.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

8] But in this passage, Mark 1:15, as also elsewhere, where repentance and faith in Christ, Acts 20:21, or repentance and remission of sins, Luke 24:46-47, are mentioned as distinct, to **repent means** nothing else than truly to acknowledge sins, to be heartily sorry for them, and to desist from them. 9] This knowledge comes from the Law ...

Repent Means ...

- acknowledge sins
- heartily sorry for them
- desist from them (stop the action and amend the life)

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

9] This knowledge comes from the Law, but is not sufficient for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the comforting 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 lest repentance or the terrors of

the Law turn into despair, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be a repentance unto salvation, 2 Cor. 7:10.

*10] For since the mere preaching of the Law, without Christ, either makes **presumptuous men**, who imagine that they can fulfill the Law by outward works, or forces them **utterly to despair ...***

The Gospel Proclaims ...

- the merits and works of Christ
- the forgiveness of sins
- not for coarse or secure hearts but the bruised and penitent

**We are to preach the Law with all of its severity.
We are to preach the Gospel with all of its sweetness.**

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

14] So, too, the Smalcald Articles say: The New Testament retains 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.

15] And the Apology says: To a true and salutary repentance the preaching of the Law alone is not sufficient, but the Gospel should be added thereto. 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 reprov'd, and repentance and sorrow to be taught, not from the Law, but from the Gospel.

Likewise the term “repentance”

**The Wide Sense of the Word “Repentance”
(the entire conversion of man)**

Luke 13:5: "I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

Luke 15:7: "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety- nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

7] Likewise the term repentance also is not employed in the Holy Scriptures in one and the same sense. For in some passages of Holy Scripture it is employed and taken for the entire conversion of man, as Luke 13:5: Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. And in 15:7: Likewise joy shalt be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

The Narrow Sense of the Word "Repentance" (Law and Gospel are distinct)

Mark 1:15: "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent **and** believe the good news!"

Luke 24:46-47: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them,

"This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance **and** forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 20:21: I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance **and** have faith in our Lord Jesus.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

8] But in this passage, Mark 1:15, as also elsewhere, where repentance and faith in Christ, Acts 20:21, or repentance and remission of sins, Luke 24:46-47, are

mentioned as distinct, to repent means nothing else than truly to acknowledge sins, to be heartily sorry for them, and to desist from them.

9] This knowledge comes from the Law, but is not sufficient for saving conversion to God, if faith in Christ be not added, whose merits the comforting 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 lest repentance or the terrors of the Law turn into despair, the preaching of the Gospel must be added, that it may be a repentance unto salvation, 2 Cor. 7:10.

We believe, teach and confess!

The Distinction Between the Law AND the Gospel

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

*2] 1. We believe, teach, and confess that **the distinction between the Law and the Gospel** is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided.*

2 Timothy 2:15: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles (“divides”) the word of truth.

**The Law is ...
(properly speaking and rightly divided)**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

3] 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. 4] 3. For this reason, then, everything that reprove sin is, and belongs to, the preaching of the Law.

The Law ...

- a divine doctrine
- teaches what is right and pleasing to God
- reprove everything that is sin and contrary to God's will

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

17] Therefore [we shall set forth our meaning:] we unanimously believe, teach, and confess that **the Law** is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words, and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God;

and it threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. For as Luther writes against the law-stormers [Antinomians]: **Everything that reprove 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 well-spring of all reprehensible sins [all sins that must be censured and reprove], the Law reprove unbelief also.

18] However, this is true likewise 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.

19] Thus, the Law reprove unbelief, [namely,] when men do not believe the Word of God. Now, since the Gospel, which alone properly teaches and commands to believe in Christ, is God's Word, the Holy Ghost, through the office of the Law, also reprove unbelief, that men do not believe in Christ, although it is properly the Gospel alone which teaches concerning saving faith in Christ.

**The Gospel is ...
(properly speaking and rightly divided)**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

5] 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, is to believe, namely, that Christ has expiated and made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his [no merit of the sinner intervening], forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before God, and eternal life.

Small Catechism, Meaning to the Second Article of the Apostle's Creed

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

The Gospel ...

- what a man condemned by the Law is to believe
- Jesus Christ is my Lord
- Jesus Christ has redeemed me
- Jesus Christ has purchased and won me
- Jesus Christ gives to me His righteousness in order that I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in ...

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

20] However, now that man has not kept the Law of God, but transgressed it, his corrupt nature, thoughts, words, and works fighting against it, for which reason

he is under God's wrath, death, all temporal calamities, and the punishment of hell-fire,

*the Gospel is **properly** a doctrine which teaches what man **should believe**, that he may obtain forgiveness of sins with God, namely, that the Son of God, our Lord Christ, has taken upon Himself and borne the curse of the Law, has expiated and paid for all our sins, through whom alone we again enter into favor with God, obtain forgiveness of sins by faith, are delivered from death and all the punishments of sins, and eternally saved.*

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

The Wide and Narrow Sense

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

6] 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 is understood the entire doctrine of Christ 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.

*7] 6. But if the Law and the Gospel, likewise also Moses himself [as] a teacher of the Law and Christ as a preacher of the Gospel are **contrasted with one another**, 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 comforts consciences against the terrors of the Law, points alone to the merit of Christ, and raises them up again by the lovely preaching of the grace and favor of God, obtained through Christ's merit.*

8] 7. 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 like Judas, Christ takes the Law into His hands, and explains it spiritually, Matt. 5:21ff ; 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 they are directed [sent back] to the Law, and then first learn from it to know aright their sins-a knowledge which Moses never could have forced out of them.

9] Accordingly, although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are first led into the Law aright, 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, none of which we can observe, and therefore are to seek all our righteousness in Christ:

*10] 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 **foreign work** of Christ, by which He arrives at His **proper office**, that is, to preach grace, console, and quicken, which is **properly** the preaching of the Gospel.*

From the Beginning of the World (the Patriarchs and the Prophets and the Apostles)

Genesis 3:15

Genesis 22:18

Psalms 110:1

Isaiah 49:6

Luke 2:32

Isaiah 53

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

*23] From the **beginning of the world** these two proclamations [kinds of doctrines] have been ever and ever inculcated alongside of each other in the Church of God, with a proper distinction.*

For the descendants of the venerated patriarchs, as also the patriarchs themselves, not only called to mind constantly how in the beginning man had been created righteous and holy by God, and through the fraud of the Serpent had transgressed God's command, had become a sinner, and had corrupted and precipitated himself with all his posterity into death and eternal condemnation, but also encouraged and comforted themselves again by the preaching concerning the Seed of the Woman, who would bruise the Serpent's head, Gen. 3:15; likewise, concerning the Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, Gen. 22:18; likewise, concerning David's Son, who should restore again the kingdom of Israel and be a light to the heathen, Ps. 110:1; Is. 49:6; Luke 2:32, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, by whose stripes we are healed, Is. 53:5.

Rightly Divided Until the End of Time

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

24] These two doctrines, we believe and confess, should ever and ever be diligently inculcated in the Church of God even to the end of the world, although with the proper distinction of which we have heard,

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 brought to a knowledge of their sins and to repentance;

but not in such a way that they lose heart and despair in this process, 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) 25] they be comforted and strengthened again by the preaching of the holy Gospel concerning Christ, our Lord, namely, that to those who believe the Gospel, God forgives all their sins through Christ, adopts them as children for His sake, and out of pure grace, without any merit on their part, justifies and saves them, however, not in such a way that they may abuse the grace of God, 26] and sin hoping for grace, as Paul, 2 Cor. 3:7ff, thoroughly and forcibly shows the distinction between the Law and the Gospel.

What does the Bible Say?

We reject and condemn!

WE REJECT ...

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article V, Law and Gospel

11] Accordingly we reject and regard as incorrect and injurious the dogma that the Gospel is **properly** a preaching of repentance or reproof, and not alone a preaching of grace; for thereby the Gospel is again converted into a doctrine of the Law, the merit of Christ and **Holy Scripture are obscured, Christians robbed of true consolation**, and the door is opened again to [the errors and superstitions of] the Papacy.

Holy Scriptures Obscured Christians Robbed of True Consolation

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, Law and Gospel

27] Now, in order that both doctrines, that of the Law and that of the Gospel, be not **mingled and confounded** with one another, and what belongs to the one may not be ascribed to the other, whereby the merit and benefits of Christ are easily obscured and the Gospel is again turned into a doctrine of the Law, as has occurred in the Papacy, and thus Christians are **deprived of the true comfort** which they have in the Gospel against the terrors of the Law, and the door is again opened in the Church of God to the Papacy,

therefore 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 *inter legem et evangelium* (between the Law and the Gospel), that is, whereby the two doctrines, Law and Gospel, may be confounded and mingled into one doctrine, should be **diligently prevented**.

It is, therefore, **dangerous and wrong** to convert the Gospel, properly so called, as distinguished from the Law, into a preaching of repentance or reproof [a preaching of repentance, reproofing sin]. For otherwise, if understood in a general sense of the entire doctrine, also the Apology says several times that the Gospel is a preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Meanwhile, however, 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

Session 6: Article VI - Third Use of the Law

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of Law*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law*, pp. 485-486
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law*, pp. 557-561

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *Third Use of the Law* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- *Small Catechism, Morning Prayer*, p. 344
- *Small Catechism, Table of Duties*, pp. 346-348

The Status of the Controversy

Do the regenerate still need the preaching, urging, exhortation and instruction of the Law? or not? (the Spirit's Third Use of the Law)

The Holy Spirit's Three Uses of the Law ...

1. curb
2. mirror
3. rule or norm

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

1] 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 might on this account have a fixed rule according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life,

a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning the third use of the Law, namely, whether it is to be urged or not upon regenerate Christians. The one side has said, Yea; the other, Nay.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

1] Since the Law of God is **useful**,

1. not only to the end that external discipline and decency are maintained by it against wild, disobedient men;
2. likewise, that through it men are brought to a knowledge of their sins;
3. but also that, when they have been born anew by the Spirit of God, converted to the Lord, and thus the veil of Moses has been lifted from them, they live and walk in the law,

a dissension has occurred between some few theologians concerning this third and last use of the Law.

2] For the **one side taught** and maintained that the regenerate do not learn the new obedience, or in what good works they ought to walk, from the Law, and that this teaching [concerning good works] is not to be urged thence [from the law], because they have been made free by the Son of God, have become the temples of His Spirit, and therefore **do freely of themselves** what God requires of them, by the prompting and impulse of the Holy Ghost, just as the sun of itself, without any [foreign] impulse, completes its ordinary course.

3] Over against this **the other side taught**: Although the truly believing are verily moved by God's Spirit, and thus, according to the inner man, do God's will from a free spirit, **yet** it is just the Holy Ghost who uses the written law for instruction with them, by which the truly believing also learn to serve God, **not according to** their own thoughts, **but according to** His written Law and Word, which is a sure rule and standard of a godly life and walk, **how to order it in accordance** with the eternal and immutable will of God.

How do we come to know, learn and even love ...

God's "NO" and "YES"?
God's "STOP" and "START"?

Small Catechism, Ten Commandments

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.

What does this mean?--Answer.

*We should fear and love God that we may **not** curse, swear, use witchcraft, lie, or deceive by His name, **but** call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.*

The Third Commandment.

Thou shalt sanctify the holy-day.

What does this mean?--Answer.

*We should fear and love God that we may **not** despise preaching and His Word, **but** hold it sacred, and gladly hear and learn it.*

The Fourth Commandment.

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother [that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long upon the earth].

What does this mean?--Answer.

*We should fear and love God that we may **not** despise nor anger our parents and masters, **but** give them honor, serve, obey, and hold them in love and esteem.*

The Fifth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean?--Answer.

*We should fear and love God that we may **not** hurt **nor** harm our neighbor in his body, **but** help and befriend him in every bodily need [in every need and danger of life and body].*

Small Catechism, Luther's Morning Prayer

In the morning, when you rise, you shall bless yourself with the holy cross and say:

In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then, kneeling or standing, repeat the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. If you choose, you may, in addition, say this little prayer:

I thank Thee, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that Thou hast kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray Thee to keep me this day also from sin and all evil, that all my doings and life may please Thee. For into Thy hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Thy holy angel be with me, that the Wicked Foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Then go to your work with joy, singing a hymn, as the Ten Commandments, or what your devotion may suggest.

Small Catechism, Table of Duties

Certain passages of scripture for various holy orders and positions, admonishing them about their duties and responsibilities

For Bishops, Pastors, and Preachers.

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a

novice; holding fast the faithful Word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 1 Tim. 3:2ff; Titus 1:6.

What the Hearers Owe to Their Pastors.

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel. 1 Cor. 9:14. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Gal. 6:6. Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the Word and doctrine.

For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the laborer is worthy of his reward. 1 Tim. 5:17-18. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Heb. 13:17.]

Concerning Civil Government.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For the power which exists anywhere is ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Rom. 13:1-4.

What Subjects Owe to the Magistrates.

Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Matt. 22:21. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, etc. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honor, to whom honor. Rom. 13:1,5ff. I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 1 Tim. 2:1f Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, etc. Titus 3:1. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him, etc. 1 Pet. 2:13f]

For Husbands.

Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. 1 Pet. 3:7. And be not bitter against them. Col. 3:9.

For Wives.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 1 Pet. 3:6; Eph. 5:22.

For Parents.

Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph. 6:4.

For Children.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Eph. 6:1-3.

For Male and Female Servants, Hired Men, and Laborers.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph. 6:5ff; Col. 3:22.

For Masters and Mistresses.

Ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him. Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1.

For Young Persons in General.

Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time. 1 Pet. 5:5-6.

For Widows.

She that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. 1 Tim. 5:5-6.

For All in Common.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Herein are comprehended all the commandments. Rom. 13:8ff And persevere in prayer for all men. 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

*Let each his lesson learn with care,
And all the household well shall fare.*

**What does the Bible Say?
We believe, teach and confess!**

**We are freed and exempt from the curse of the Law
in order that
we might exercise ourselves in the Law day and night**

Psalm 1: Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 119: oratio, meditatio, tentatio

Genesis 1:26-ff: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the

livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground- everything that has the breath of life in it-I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

Genesis 2:16-ff: And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:1-5: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

Affirmative Theses.

The True Christian Doctrine concerning This Controversy.

2] 1. We believe, teach, and confess that, although men truly 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, who had the Law of God written also into their hearts, because they were created in the image of God, Gen. 1:26f.; 2:16ff; 3:3.

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 true believers, who are truly converted, regenerate, and justified by faith.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

4] 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 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 portrayed, and which should [therefore] be **constantly held up** to the believers and be **diligently urged** upon them without ceasing.

5] 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 understood in the bare meaning, that the justified are to live without law. For the Law of God has been written in their heart, and also to the first man immediately after his creation a law was given according to which he was to conduct himself. But the meaning of St. Paul is that the Law cannot burden with its curse those who have been reconciled to God through Christ; nor must it vex the regenerate with its coercion, because they have pleasure in God's Law after the inner man.

**Regeneration not complete
but only begun**

1 Cor. 9:27: Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Rom. 6:12-14: In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Gal. 6:14: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Ps. 119:1ff: oratio, meditatio, tentatio

Heb. 12:1-4: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Heb. 13:21: “May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

4] 3. For although they are regenerate and renewed in the spirit of their mind, **yet in the present life this regeneration and renewal is not complete, but only begun,**

and believers are, by the spirit of their mind, in a **constant struggle** against the flesh, that is, against the corrupt nature and disposition which cleaves to us unto death. On account of this old Adam, which still inheres in the understanding, the will, and all the powers of man, it is needful that the Law of the Lord always shine before them, in order that they may not from human devotion institute wanton and self-elected cults [that they 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. 119:1ff ; Heb. 13:21 (Heb. 12:1).

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

6] And, **indeed, if** the believing and elect children of God were **completely renewed** in this life by the indwelling Spirit, so that in their nature and all its powers they were entirely free from sin, they would need no law, and hence no one to drive them either, but they would do of themselves, and altogether voluntarily, without any instruction, admonition, urging or driving of the Law, what they are in duty bound to do according to God's will; just as the sun, the moon, and all the constellations of heaven have their regular course of themselves, unobstructed, without admonition, urging, driving, force, or compulsion, according to the order of God which God once appointed for them, yea, just as the holy angels render an entirely voluntary obedience.

7] **However, believers are not renewed in this life perfectly or completely,** complete vel consummative [as the ancients say]; for although their sin is covered by the perfect obedience of Christ, so that it is not imputed to believers for condemnation, and also the mortification of the old Adam and the renewal in the spirit of their mind is **begun** through the Holy Ghost, nevertheless the old Adam clings to them still in their nature and all its internal and external powers. 8] Of this the apostle has written Rom. 7:18ff.: 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 I do; Likewise: I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin. Likewise, 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.

*9] Therefore, because of these lusts of the flesh the truly believing, elect, and regenerate children of God **need in this life not only** the daily instruction and admonition, warning, and threatening of the Law, **but also** frequently punishments, that they may be roused [the old man is driven out of 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 has fully explained this at greater length in the Summer Part of the Church Postil, on the Epistle for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.*

What does the Gospel do? What is the office of the Law?

Galatians 3:14: ¹“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Ephesians 2:8-10: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

10] *But we must also explain distinctively **what the Gospel** does, produces, and works towards the new obedience of believers, and **what is the office of the Law in this matter**, as regards the good works of believers.*

11] *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 ability to 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.

12] *Thereafter the Holy Ghost **employs the Law** so as to teach the regenerate from it, and to point out and show them in the Ten Commandments 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 they are idle, negligent, and rebellious in this matter because of the flesh, He reproveth them on that account through the Law, so that **He carries on both offices together:***

He slays and makes alive;

He leads into hell and brings up again.

For His office is not only to comfort, but also to reprove, as it is written: When the Holy Ghost is come, He will reprove the world (which includes also the old Adam) of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.

13] *But sin is everything that is contrary to God's Law.*

14] *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 reprov'd by the Holy Spirit from the Law, and by the same Spirit are raised up and comforted again with the preaching of the Holy Gospel.

The struggle between the New Man (“inner”) and the Old Man

1 Cor. 9:27: Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Romans 7:14-25: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.

For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?

Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

*18] But since believers are not completely renewed in this world, but the old Adam clings to them even to the grave, there also remains in them the struggle between the spirit and the flesh. Therefore they delight indeed in God's Law according to the **inner man**, but the law in their members struggles against the law in their mind; hence they are never without the 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.*

19] But as far as the old Adam is concerned, which still clings to them, he must be driven not only with the Law, but also with punishments; nevertheless he does everything against his will and under coercion, no less than the godless are driven and held in obedience by the threats of the Law, 1 Cor. 9:27; Rom. 7:18. 19.

good works declared by God not inventions of one's own choosing

Deuteronomy 12:8, 28, 32: "You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit ..."

Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the Lord your God.

The Lord your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same."

You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Psalm 119:32-ff: "I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free. Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end. Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all

my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

20] So, too, this doctrine of the Law is needful for believers, in order that they may not hit upon a holiness and devotion of their own, and under the pretext of the Spirit of God set up a self-chosen 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.

*21] So, too, the doctrine of the Law, in and with [the exercise of] the good works of believers, is necessary for the reason that 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 it shows and indicates at the same time, **as in a mirror**, that in this life they are still imperfect and impure in us, so that we must say with the beloved Paul, 1 Cor. 4:4: I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified. Thus Paul, when exhorting the regenerate to good works, 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. 7:7ff ; and David declares Ps. 119:32: Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, I will 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.*

works are not acceptable because they are perfect but through faith for Christ's sake

1 Peter 2:4:5 As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 11:4-ff: "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

22] *But **how and why** the good works of believers, although in this life they are imperfect and impure because of sin in the flesh, are nevertheless acceptable and well-pleasing to God, is not taught by the Law, which requires an altogether 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. 11:4ff.*

23] *In this way Christians are not under the Law, but under grace, because by faith in Christ the persons are freed from the curse and condemnation of the Law; and because their good works, **although they are still imperfect and impure, are acceptable to God through Christ**; moreover, because so far as they have been born anew according to the inner man, they do what is pleasing to God, not by coercion of the Law, but by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, voluntarily and spontaneously from their hearts; however, they maintain nevertheless a constant struggle against the old Adam.*

24] *For the old Adam, as an **intractable, refractory ass**, is still a part of them, which must be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the teaching, admonition, force and threatening of the Law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles, until the body of sin is entirely put off, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection, when he will need neither the preaching of the Law nor its threatenings and punishments, as also the Gospel any longer; for these belong to this [mortal and] imperfect life.*

25] *But as they will behold God face to face, so they will, through the power of the indwelling Spirit of God, do the will of God [the heavenly Father] with unmingled joy, voluntarily, unconstrained, without any hindrance, with entire purity and perfection, and will rejoice in it eternally.*

A distinction between the “works of the Law” and the “fruits of the Spirit”

Rom. 7:25: Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Romans 8:1-7: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Gal. 6:2: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Corinthians 9:21: To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

*5] 4. Now, as regards 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 are and are called works of the Law as long as they are*

only extorted from man by urging the punishment and threatening of God's wrath.

6] 5. **Fruits of the Spirit**, however, are the works which the Spirit of God who dwells in believers works through the regenerate, and which 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, which [mode of living] 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.

7] 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 difference, so far as concerns obedience, is alone in man, inasmuch as one who is not yet regenerate does for the Law out of constraint and unwillingly what it requires of him (as also the regenerate do according to the flesh); but the believer, so far as he is regenerate, does without constraint and with a willing spirit that which no threatenings [however severe] of the Law could ever extort from him.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

15] But in order that, as far as possible, all misunderstanding may be prevented, 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 we speak of good works which are in accordance with God's Law (for otherwise they are not good works), then the word Law has only one sense, namely, the immutable will of God, according to which men are to conduct themselves in their lives.

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

17] But when man is born anew by the Spirit of God, and liberated from the Law, that is, freed from this driver, and is led by the Spirit of Christ, he lives according

to the immutable will of God comprised in the Law, and so far as he is born anew, does everything from a free, cheerful spirit; and these are called not properly works of the Law, but works and fruits 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. 8:2 [Rom. 7:23; 1 Cor. 9:21].

We reject and condemn!

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

Negative Theses.

False Contrary Doctrine.

*8] Accordingly, we reject as a dogma and error **injurious to, and conflicting with**, Christian discipline and true godliness the teaching that the Law in the above-mentioned way and degree is not to be urged upon Christians and true believers, but only upon unbelievers, non-Christians, and the impenitent.*

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VI, Third Use of the Law

26] Accordingly, we reject and condemn as an error pernicious and detrimental to Christian discipline, as also to true godliness, the teaching that the Law, in the above-mentioned way and degree, should not be urged upon Christians and the true believers, but only upon the unbelieving, unchristians, and impenitent.

Session 7: Article VII - The Holy Supper of Christ

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Holy Supper of Christ*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper of Christ*

If you are using the ***Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord***, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Holy Supper of Christ*, pp. 487-491
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper of Christ* pp. 561-581

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *The Holy Supper of Christ* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- *Augsburg Confession, Article X, The Lord's Supper*, p. 35
- *Augsburg Confession, Article XXII, Both Kinds in the Sacrament*, pp. 45-46
- *Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article X, The Holy Supper*, p. 153
- *Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article XXII, Both Kinds in the Lord's Supper*, pp. 208-210
- *Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article VI, The Sacrament of the Altar*, p. 279
- *Small Catechism, Part VI, the Sacrament of the Altar*, p. 343
- *Large Catechism, Part V, The Sacrament of the Altar*, pp. 431-440

The Status of the Controversy

In the Holy Supper, are the TRUE body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ...

- truly and essentially present
- distributed with the bread and the wine
- received with the mouth by all those who use the Sacrament (whether worthy or unworthy, godly or ungodly, believing or unbelieving)
- received by the believing for life and consolation BUT by the unbelieving for judgment.

**The “Sacramentarians” say ... “NO”
We say ... “YES”**

Who are the “Sacramentarians”?

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord’s Supper

the Zwinglian Teachers

1] Although **the Zwinglian teachers** are not to be reckoned among the theologians who affiliate with [acknowledge and profess] the Augsburg Confession, as they separated from them at the very time when this Confession was presented, nevertheless, since they are intruding themselves [into their assembly], and are attempting, under the name of this Christian Confession, to spread their error, we intend also to make a needful statement [we have judged that the Church of Christ should be instructed also] concerning this controversy.

“gross” Sacramentarians

(plain and clear words)

3] 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 plain (deutschen), clear words as they believe in their hearts, that in the Holy Supper nothing but bread and wine is present, and distributed and received with the mouth.

“subtle” Sacramentarians

(crafty and unclear words ... the most dangerous of all)

4] Others, however, are **subtle Sacramentarians**, and the **most injurious of all**, who partly speak very speciously in our own words, and pretend that they also believe a true presence of the true, essential, living body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, however, that 5] this occurs spiritually through faith.

Nevertheless **they retain under these specious words precisely the former gross opinion**, namely, 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 is present; but the body of Christ is in no mode or way present, except only above in the highest heaven, to which we should elevate ourselves into heaven by the thoughts of our faith, and there, not at all, however, in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, should seek this body and blood [of Christ].

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

1] Although, **in the opinion of some**, the exposition of this article perhaps should not be inserted into this document, in which we intend to explain the articles which have been drawn into controversy among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession (from which the Sacramentarians soon 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**),

still, since some theologians, and others who boast [their adherence to] the Augsburg Confession, have, alas! during the last years, **given their assent in this article to the Sacramentarians** no longer secretly, but partly publicly and against their own conscience have endeavored to wrest forcibly and to **pervert the Augsburg Confession** as being in this article in entire harmony with the doctrine of the Sacramentarians,

we neither can nor should omit our testimony by our confession of the divine truth also in this document, and **must repeat the true sense and proper understanding of the words of Christ and of the Augsburg Confession** with reference to this article,

and [for we recognize it **to be our duty**], so far as in us lies, by God's help, **preserve it [this pure doctrine] also for posterity, and 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.

2] Although some Sacramentarians strive to **employ words that come as close as possible** to the Augsburg Confession and the form and mode of speech in its [our] churches, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly received by believers,

still, when we insist that they state their meaning properly, sincerely, and clearly, they all **declare themselves unanimously thus:**

**the Sacramentarians believe in the “real absence”
of Christ in the Supper**

that the true essential body and blood of Christ **is absent** from the consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Supper as far as the highest heaven is from the earth. For thus their own words run: Absesse Christi corpus et

sanguinem a signis tanto 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."

3] Therefore they understand this presence of the body of Christ **not as a presence here upon earth, but only respectu fidei (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], that is, that our faith, reminded and excited by the visible signs, just as by the Word preached, elevates itself and ascends above all heavens, and receives and enjoys the body of Christ, which is there in heaven present, yea, Christ Himself, together with all His benefits, in a manner true and essential, but nevertheless spiritual only.

For [they hold 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 consequently **nothing else is received by the mouth in the Holy Supper than bread and wine.**

The Witness of the Confessions

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

9] Over against this it is **taught in the Augsburg Confession from God's Word** concerning the Lord's Supper: 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 dispensed and received;

and the contrary doctrine is rejected (namely, that of the Sacramentarians, who presented their own Confession at the same time at Augsburg, 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, namely, for the reason that Christ had ascended into heaven]);

10] even as 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, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself;

11] and in the **Apology (Article X)** this is not only explained still more clearly, 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 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 tendered 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.

Besides, we know that not only the **Romish, but also the Greek Church** has taught the bodily presence of Christ in the Holy Supper. And testimony is produced from Cyril that Christ dwells also bodily in us in the Holy Supper by the communication of His flesh.

Luther's Small Catechism

VI. The Sacrament of the Altar

What is the Sacrament of the Altar?

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

Where is this written?

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it. This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me.

What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?

That is shown us in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words which stand here, namely: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. Which words are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: *Given, and shed for you, for the remission of sins*. But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unfit; for the words *For you* require altogether believing hearts.

The Smalcald Articles

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

17] 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 signed by all the theologians, jointly and severally, in which the **proper and true meaning** is clearly expressed in short, plain words, which agree most accurately with the words of Christ, and every subterfuge and loophole is barred to 18] the Sacramentarians (who had interpreted [perverted] the Formula of Concord, that is, the above-mentioned articles of union, framed the preceding year, to their advantage, as saying 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);

19] **for they [the Smalcald Articles] declare:** The bread and wine in the Holy Supper are the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, which are offered and received, not only by the godly, but also by godless Christians [those who have nothing Christian except the name].

The Large Catechism

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

20] Dr. Luther has also more amply expounded and confirmed this opinion from God's Word in the **Large Catechism**, where it is written:

What, then, is 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.

21] 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 called. the body and blood of Christ.

22] Again: With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, should rush forward, crying, 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.

Now, 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.

23] 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 words remain with them, as they shall and must, then, in virtue of the same, it is truly the body and blood of Christ. **For as the lips of Christ say and speak, so it is, as He can never lie or deceive.**

The Sacrament is not dependent on the holiness of men but upon the Word of God

24] Hence it is easy to reply to all manner of questions about which at the present time men are disturbed, 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, that is, 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.

25] 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";

26] likewise: "Do this" (namely, 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 added 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.

Other Writings of Dr. Luther

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

28] But inasmuch as this highly illumined man [Dr. Luther, the hero illumined with unparalleled and most excellent gifts of the Holy Ghost] foresaw in the

Spirit that after his death some would endeavor to make him suspected of having receded from the above-mentioned doctrine and other Christian articles, he has appended the following protestation to his large Confession (*Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*)

29] Since I see that as time wears on, sects and errors increase, and that there is **no end to the rage and fury of Satan**, in order that henceforth during my life or after my death some of them may not, in future, support themselves by me, and **falsely quote my writings** to strengthen their error as the Sacramentarians and Anabaptists begin to do,

I mean by this writing to confess my faith, point by point [concerning all the articles of our religion], before God and all the world, in which I intend to abide until my death, and therein (so help me God!) to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.

30] And if after my death any one should say: If Dr. Luther were living now, 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, **compared all these articles with the Scriptures** time and again [have examined them, not once, but very often, according to the standard of Holy Scripture], and often have gone over them, and would defend them as confidently as I have now defended the Sacrament of the Altar.

31] I am not drunk nor thoughtless; I know what I say; I also am sensible of what it means for me at the coming of the Lord Christ at the final judgment. Therefore I want no one to regard this as a jest or mere idle talk; it is a serious matter to me; for by God's grace **I know Satan a good deal; if he can pervert or confuse God's Word, what will he not do with my words or those of another?** Tom. 2, Wittenb., German, fol. 243.

What does the Bible Say?

the “verba”
(Christ's words of institution)

Matthew 26:26-28: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:22-24: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

Luke 22:19-20: And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

1 Corinthians 10:16: Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

1 Corinthians 11:23-30: For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

43] For since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, concerning whom, **as our only Teacher**, this solemn command has been given from heaven to all men: Hunc audite, Hear ye Him, who is not a mere man or angel, neither true, wise, and mighty only, but the eternal Truth and Wisdom itself and Almighty God,

who knows very well **what and how He is to speak**, and who also **can powerfully effect and execute everything that He speaks and promises**, as He says Luke 21:33: Heaven and earth shalt pass away, but My words shall not pass away; also Matt. 28:18: All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,-

44] 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, in those sad last moments, 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 of union of Christians with Christ, their Head, and with one another, in the ordaining 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;

**not human reason but
divine revelation**

45] [Now, since this is so,] We are certainly 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, differently, as allegorical, figurative, tropical expressions, according as it seems **agreeable to our reason,**

simple faith in the proper and plain sense of the words

but with simple faith and due obedience to receive the words as they read, 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 reason.

**Jesus Christ can execute and accomplish
all that He promises**

46] Even as Abraham, when he hears 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 tolerable or mild interpretation, since they conflicted openly not only with all reason and with the divine and natural law, but also with the chief article of faith concerning the promised Seed, Christ, who was to be born of Isaac, nevertheless, just as previously, when the promise of the blessed Seed from Isaac was given him, he gave God the honor of truth, and most confidently concluded and believed that **what God promised He could also do, although it appeared impossible to his reason;**

so also here he understands and believes God's Word and command plainly and simply, as they read according to the letter, and commits the matter to God's omnipotence and wisdom, which, he knows, has many more modes and ways to fulfill the promise of the Seed from Isaac than he can comprehend with his **blind reason;**-

47] Thus we, too, are simply to believe with all humility and obedience the plain, firm, clear, and solemn words and command of our Creator and Redeemer, without any doubt and disputation as to how it agrees with our reason or is possible. For these words were spoken by that Lord who is infinite Wisdom and Truth itself, and also **can execute and accomplish everything which He promises.**

48] Now, all the circumstances of the institution of the Holy Supper testify that these words of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which in themselves are **simple, plain, clear, firm, and indubitable, cannot and must not be understood otherwise than in their usual, proper, and common signification.**

For since Christ gives this command [concerning eating His body, etc.] at the table and at 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, that is, a change of meaning, in the word bread, as though the body of Christ were a spiritual bread or a spiritual food of souls.

49] Likewise, also Christ Himself takes care that there be no metonymy either, that is, that in the same manner there be no change of meaning in the word body, and that He does not speak concerning a sign of His body, or concerning an emblem [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 into death for us, and of His **true, essential blood**, which He shed for us on the tree [altar] of the cross for the remission of sins.

Jesus is the faithful and sure interpreter of His own words

50] Now, surely there is **no interpreter of the words of Jesus Christ as 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 for expounding them;

and 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, He uses not allegorical, but entirely proper, simple, indubitable, and clear words; and in order that no misunderstanding can occur, He explains them more clearly with the words: Given for you, shed for you. 51] He also allows His disciples to rest in the simple, proper sense,

and commands them that they should thus teach all nations to observe what He had commanded them, the apostles.

all three evangelists and St. Paul agree

52] For this reason, too, **all three evangelists**, Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19, and **St. Paul**, who received the same [the institution of the Lord's Supper] after the ascension of Christ [from Christ Himself], 1 Cor. 11:24, unanimously and with the same words and syllables repeat concerning the consecrated and distributed bread these distinct, clear, firm, and true words of Christ: This is My body, altogether in one way, without any interpretation [trope, figure] and change.

We believe, teach and confess!

the body and blood of Jesus Christ is ...

**truly and essentially present
truly distributed and received**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

6] 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.

We believe, teach and confess!

**the words of the last will and testament of Christ
are to be taken in their ...**

clear, plain and simple meaning

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

7] 2. We believe, teach, and confess that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood otherwise than as they read, according to the letter, 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.

We believe, teach and confess!

in the consecration ...

**no work of man produces the presence
of the body and blood of Christ**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

8] 3. Now, as to the consecration, we believe, teach, and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister [of the church] produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this is to be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

in the consecration ...

**the words of institution should in no way be omitted
but publicly recited**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

9] 4. But at the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unanimously 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, etc. This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ.

reference to the words and confession

of Martin Luther

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

10] 5. The grounds, however, on 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.

Jesus Christ is ...

ONE person, TWO natures

The **first** is this article 11] of our Christian faith: Jesus Christ is true, essential, natural, perfect God and man in one person, undivided and inseparable.

God's "right hand" is everywhere

12] The **second**: That God's right hand is everywhere; at which Christ is placed in deed and in truth 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], where no man else, nor angel, but only the Son of Mary is placed; hence He can do this [those things which we have said].

God and His Word do not lie

13] **The third**: That God's Word is not false, and does not deceive.

God has and knows various modes of presence

14] The **fourth**: That God has and knows of various modes of being in any place, and not only the one [is not bound to the one] which philosophers call localis [local] for circumscribed].

We believe, teach and confess!

**two types of eating ...
spiritually and
orally**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

15] 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 Capernaite, but in a supernatural, heavenly mode**, because of the sacramental union; as the words of Christ clearly show, when Christ gives direction to take, eat, and drink, as was also 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? that is: 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.

We believe, teach and confess!

**both the "worthy" and the "unworthy"
receive the true body and blood of Christ**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

16] 7. We believe, teach, and confess that not only the true believers [in Christ] and the worthy, but also the unworthy and unbelievers, receive the true body and blood of Christ; however, not for life and consolation, but for judgment and condemnation, if they are not converted and do not repent, 1 Cor. 11:27-29.

17] For although they thrust Christ from themselves as a Savior, yet they must admit Him even against their will as a strict Judge, who is just as present also to exercise and render judgment upon impenitent guests as He is present to work life and consolation in the hearts of the true believers and worthy guests.

18] 8. We believe, teach, and confess also that there is only one kind of unworthy guests, namely, those who do not believe, concerning whom it is written John 3:18: He that believeth not is condemned already. And this judgment becomes greater and more grievous, being aggravated, by the unworthy use of the Holy Supper, 1 Cor. 11:29.

19] 9. We believe, teach, and confess that no true believer, as long as he retains living faith, however weak he may be, receives the Holy Supper to his judgment, which was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, yet penitent, for the consolation and strengthening of their weak faith [Matt. 9:12; 11:5. 28].

20] 10. We believe, teach, and confess that all the worthiness of the guests of this heavenly feast is and consists in the most holy obedience and perfect merit of Christ alone, which we appropriate to ourselves by true faith, and whereof [of the application of this merit] we are assured by the Sacrament, and not at all in [but in nowise does this worthiness depend upon] our virtues or inward and outward preparations.

We reject and condemn! Against the Papists

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VII, The Lord's Supper

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

22] 1. The **papistic transubstantiation**, when 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.

23] 2. The **papistic sacrifice of the Mass** for the sins of the living and the dead.

24] 3. That [the sacrilege whereby] to laymen **one form only** of the Sacrament is given, and, contrary to the plain words of the testament of Christ, the cup is withheld from them, and they are [thus] deprived of His blood.

**We reject and condemn!
Against the Sacramentarians**

We reject the teaching that ...

**the verba (words of Christ) are
not to be understood simply and plainly**

25] 4. When it is taught that the words of the testament of Christ **must not be understood or believed simply as they read**, but that they are obscure expressions, whose meaning must be sought first in other passages of Scripture.

We reject the teaching that ...

the body of Christ is not orally received

26] 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, the body of Christ, however, only spiritually by faith.

We reject the teaching that ...

**the bread and the wine are only symbols of the
far absent Christ**

27] 6. That the bread and wine in the Holy Supper are **nothing more than [symbols or] tokens** by which Christians recognize one another.

28] 7. That the bread and wine are **only figures, similitudes, and representations** of the far absent body and blood of Christ.

29] 8. That the bread and wine are **no more than a memorial, seal, and pledge**, through which we are assured that when faith elevates itself to heaven, it there becomes partaker of the body and blood of Christ as truly as we eat bread and drink wine in the Supper.

We reject the teaching that ...

the assurance of salvation occur through the external signs and symbols of the bread and wine and not the real and true presence of Christ

30] 9. That the **assurance and confirmation** of our faith [concerning salvation] in the Holy Supper **occur through the external signs of bread and wine alone**, and not through the true, [verily] present body and blood of Christ.

We reject the teaching that ...

the body and blood of Christ are absent and that the body of Christ is enclosed in heaven and that His body cannot be essentially present in more than one place at one time

31] 10. That in the Holy Supper only the power, efficacy, and merit of the **absent body** and blood of Christ are distributed.

32] 11. That the body of Christ is **so enclosed in heaven** that it **can in no way be at once and at one time in many or all places upon earth** where His Holy Supper is celebrated.

33] 12. That **Christ has not promised, neither could have effected**, the essential presence of His body and blood in the Holy Supper, because the nature and property of His assumed human nature cannot suffer nor permit it.

34] 13. That God, according to [even by] all His omnipotence (which is dreadful to hear), is **not able to cause His body to be essentially present** in more than one place at one time.

We reject the teaching that ...

believers not seek the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper but that they must raise their eyes in faith to heaven

35] 14. That **not the omnipotent words** 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.

36] 15. That believers **must not seek** the body [and blood] of Christ in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, **but raise their eyes** from the bread to heaven and there seek the body of Christ.

We reject the teaching that ...

not all (both worthy and unworthy) receive the body and blood of Christ

37] 16. That **unbelieving, impenitent Christians do not receive** the true body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but only bread and wine.

38] 17. That the **worthiness of the guests** at this heavenly meal consists not alone in true faith in Christ, but also in the **external preparation of men**.

39] 18. That **even the true believers**, 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.

40] 19. That the **external visible elements** of the bread and wine **should be adored in the Holy Sacrament**.

We reject the teaching that ...

we eat of Christ's body and blood in a Capernaitic way

41] 20. Likewise, we consign also to the just judgment of God all presumptuous, frivolous, blasphemous questions (which decency forbids to mention) and [other] expressions, which most blasphemously and with great offense [to the Church] are proposed by the Sacramentarians in a gross, carnal,

Capernaite way concerning the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this Sacrament.

42] 21. Hence we hereby utterly [reject and] **condemn the Capernaite eating** of the body of Christ, as though [we taught that] His flesh were rent with the teeth, and digested like other food, which the Sacramentarians, against the testimony of their conscience, after all our frequent protests, wilfully force upon us, and in this way make our doctrine odious to their hearers; and on the other hand, we maintain and believe, according to the simple words of the testament of Christ, the true, yet supernatural eating of the body of Christ, as also the drinking of His blood, which human senses and reason do 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 apprehended otherwise than by faith alone, and revealed in the Word alone.

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VII, The Holy Supper

Nothing has the nature of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Jesus Christ.

85] [Let us now come also to the second point, of which mention was made a little before.]

To preserve this true Christian doctrine concerning the Holy Supper, and to avoid and abolish manifold idolatrous abuses and perversions of this testament, the following **useful rule and standard** has been derived from the words of institution:

Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum ("**Nothing has the nature of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ**") or

extra actionem divinitus institutam ("**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 can and should be urged and maintained with profit in the Church of God.

86] And the use or action here does not mean chiefly faith, neither the oral participation only, 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, the distribution and reception, or oral partaking [manducation] of the consecrated bread and wine, [likewise the partaking] of the body and blood of Christ.

87] And apart from this use, when in the papistic mass the bread is not distributed, but offered up or enclosed, borne about, and exhibited for adoration, it is to be regarded as no sacrament; just as the water of baptism, when used to consecrate bells or to cure leprosy, or otherwise exhibited for worship, is no sacrament or baptism. For against such papistic abuses this rule has been set up at the beginning [of the reviving Gospel], and has been explained by Dr. Luther himself, Tom. IV, Jena.

Session 8: Article VIII - The Person of Christ

Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VIII, The Person of Christ*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ*, pp. 491-494
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article VIII, The Person of Christ* pp. 581-596

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of *The Person of Christ* can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- *Apostles' Creed; Nicene Creed; Athanasian Creed* pp. 16-18
- *Augsburg Confession, Article III, The Son of God*, p. 32
- *Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article III, Christ*, p. 82
- *Smalcald Articles, Part I, The Awe-Inspiring Articles of the Divine Majesty*, p. 262
- *Smalcald Articles, Part II, I, The Chief Article*, pp. 262-263
- *Small Catechism, Part II, The Creed, The Second Article*, p. 329
- *Large Catechism, Part II, The Apostle's Creed*, pp. 401-408

The Teaching of the Scriptures and the Confession of the Universal (ecumenical) Church

**Jesus Christ is ...
One Person
with Two Distinct Natures**

The Scriptures

1 Timothy 3:16: Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

John 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning ... the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

Colossians 1:15-20: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

The Three Ecumenical Creeds (*Concordia* pp. 16-18)

Apostles' Creed, the Second Article

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Nicene Creed

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made;

who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;

He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

Athanasian Creed

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe faithfully the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man;

God of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood;

Who, although He be God and Man, yet He is not two, but one Christ: One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ;

Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead; He ascended into heaven; He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give an account of their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.

The Augsburg Confession (*Concordia* pp. 32)

Augsburg Confession, Article III: Of the Son of God.

1] Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did assume the human nature in 2] the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person,

one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and 3] buried, that He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

4] He also descended into hell, and truly rose again the third day; afterward He ascended into heaven that He might sit on the right hand of the Father, and forever reign and have dominion over all creatures, and sanctify 5] them that believe in Him, by sending the Holy Ghost into their hearts, to rule, comfort, and quicken them, and to defend them against the devil and the power of sin.

6] The same Christ shall openly come again to judge the quick and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession (*Concordia* pp. 82)

The Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article III: Of Christ

52] The Third Article the adversaries approve, in which we confess that there are in Christ two natures, namely, a human nature, assumed by the Word into the unity of His person, and that the same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that He was raised again to reign, and to justify and sanctify believers, etc.,

according to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The Smalcald Articles (*Concordia* pp. 262-263)

Smalcald Articles, Part I, The Awe-Inspiring Articles of the Divine Majesty

I. That Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three distinct persons in one divine essence and nature, are one God, who has created heaven and earth.

II. That the Father is begotten of no one; the Son of the Father; the Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son.

III. That not the Father nor the Holy Ghost but the Son became man.

IV. That the Son became man in this manner, that He was conceived, without the cooperation of man, by the Holy Ghost, and was born of the pure, holy [and always] Virgin Mary.

Afterwards He suffered, died, was buried, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God, will come to judge the quick and the dead, etc.,

as the Creed of the Apostles, as well as that of St. Athanasius, and the Catechism in common use for children, teach.

Concerning these articles there is no contention or dispute, since we on both sides confess them. Therefore it is not necessary now to treat further of them.

The Small Catechism (Concordia pp. 329)

The Second Article, Of Redemption.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

What does this mean?

Answer: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord,

who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won [delivered] me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death,

in order that I may be [wholly] His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.

This is most certainly true.

The Status of the Controversy

“Many objections to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord’s Supper are based on a faulty understandings. These misunderstandings concern the relationship of Christ’s divine and human natures. The issues confronting the writers of the Formula of Concord was this: Does the human nature of Christ share in the divine attributes so that Christ, according to both natures, is present everywhere, even under the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper. The biblical position, explained in this article is, clearly Yes.”

From the study notes *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, Paul T. McCain p. 491

Because of the personal union, do the divine and human natures (and their properties) really have “communion” with each other? If so, how far does this “communication of attributes” extend?

The Sacramentarians assert that within the personal union of Christ the divine and human natures have no real “communion” with one another. They wrongly teach that it is a union in name only ...

**“God is called man.
And man is called God.”**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ

2] The chief question, however, has been

whether, because of the personal union, the divine and human natures, as also their properties, have realiter, that is, in deed and truth, **a communion with one another** in the person of Christ, and **how far this communion extends**.

3] The Sacramentarians have asserted that the divine and human natures in Christ are united personally in such a way that neither has realiter, 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 name alone**.

For unio, they plainly say, facit communia nomina, 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 realiter, that is, in deed and truth, in common with humanity, and humanity nothing in common with divinity, its majesty and properties.

Dr. Luther, and those who held with him, have contended for the contrary against the Sacramentarians.

We believe, teach and confess!

**two natures united in one person
not two Christs but one Christ with two natures**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ

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

5] 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.

two natures are not ...

**mingled into one substance
nor changed into the other**

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ

6] 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 that each retains its own essential properties, which [can] never become the properties of the other nature.

the properties of the divine nature are ...

7] 3. The properties of the divine nature are: to be almighty, eternal, infinite, and to be, according to the property of its nature and its natural essence, of itself, everywhere present, to know everything, etc.; which never become properties of the human nature.

the properties of the human nature are ...

8] 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.

two natures united in one person

- not like two boards glued together
- but like iron glowing with fire

9] 5. As the two natures are united personally, i. e., in one person, we believe, teach, and confess that this union **is not such a copulation and connection** that neither nature has 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.

But here is the highest communion, which God truly has with the [assumed] man, from which personal union, and the highest and ineffable communion resulting therefrom, there flows everything human that is said and believed concerning God, and everything divine that is said and believed 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.

**God is man.
Man is God.**

10] 6. 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.

11] For how could the man, the son of Mary, in truth be called or be God, or the Son of God the Most High, if His humanity were not personally united with the Son of God, and He thus had realiter, that is, in deed and truth, nothing in common with Him except only the name of God?

12] 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 also is rightly called and truly is **the mother of God**.

13] 8. Hence we also believe, teach, and confess that it was **not a mere man who 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 for us, but a man whose human nature has such a profound [close], ineffable union and communion with the Son of God that it is [has become] one person with Him.

14] 9. Therefore the **Son of God truly suffered for us**, however, **according to** the property of the human nature which He assumed into the unity of His divine person and made His own, so that He might be able to 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.

15] 10. Hence we believe, teach, and confess that the **Son of Man** is realiter, 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.

The State of Humiliation

(Jesus Christ does not always or fully uses the attributes that are communicated to the human nature)

16] 11. This majesty He [Christ] always had according to the personal union, and yet He **abstained from it in the state of His humiliation**, and on this account truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and men; 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, but not the [human] nature, and was established in the full use, manifestation, and declaration of the divine majesty, and thus entered into His glory, Phil. 2:6ff,

The State of Exaltation

(Jesus Christ always and fully uses the attributes that are communicated to the human nature)

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. And this His power, He, being present, can exercise **everywhere**, and to Him **everything** is possible and **everything** is known.

Implications for the Lord's Supper

17] 12. Hence He also is able and it is very easy for Him to impart, as one who is present, 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 accordance with our Christian faith for children, which presence [of Christ in the Holy Supper] is not [physical or] earthly, nor Capernaitic; nevertheless it is true and substantial, as the words of His testament read: This is, is, is My body, etc.

Errors

18] By this our doctrine, faith, and confession the person of **Christ is not** divided, as it was by **Nestorius**, who denied the communicatio idiomatum, that is, the true communion of the properties of both natures in Christ, and thus divided the person, as Luther has explained in his book Concerning Councils.

Neither are the natures together with their properties confounded with one another [or mingled] into one essence (as **Eutyches** erred);

nor is the human nature in the person of Christ denied or annihilated;

nor is either nature changed into the other;

but Christ is and remains to all eternity God and man in one undivided person, which, next to the Holy Trinity, is, as the Apostle testifies, 1 Tim. 3:16, the highest mystery, upon which our only consolation, life, and salvation depends.

We reject and condemn!

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article VIII, The Person of Christ

19] Accordingly, 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:

We reject the teaching that ...

20] 1. That God and man in Christ are not one person, but that the Son of God is one, and the Son of Man another, as Nestorius raved.

We reject the teaching that ...

21] 2. That the divine and human natures have been mingled with one another into one essence, and the human nature has been changed into the Deity, as Eutyches fanatically asserted.

We reject the teaching that ...

22] 3. That Christ is not true, natural, and eternal God, as Arius held [blasphemed].

We reject the teaching that ...

23] 4. That Christ did not have a true human nature [consisting] of body and soul, as Marcion imagined.

We reject the teaching that ...

24] 5. Quod unio personalis faciat tantum communia nomina, that is, that the personal union renders only the names and titles common.

25] 6. That it is only phrasis et modus loquendi, that is, a phrase and mode of speaking, when it is said: God is man, man is God; since Divinity, as they say,

has realiter, that is, in deed [and truth], nothing in common with the humanity, nor the humanity with the Deity.

26] 7. That there is merely communicatio [idiomatum] verbalis [without reality], that is, that it is nothing but words when it is said the Son of God died for the sins of the world; the Son of Man has become almighty.

We reject the teaching that ...

27] 8. That the human nature in Christ has become an infinite essence in the same manner as the Divinity, and that it is everywhere present in the same manner as the divine nature because of this essential power and property, communicated to, and poured out into, the human nature and separated from God.

We reject the teaching that ...

28] 9. That the human nature has become equal to and like the divine nature in its substance and essence, or in its essential properties.

We reject the teaching that ...

29] 10. That the human nature of Christ is locally extended to all places of heaven and earth, which should not be ascribed even to the divine nature.

We reject the teaching that ...

30] 11. That because of the property of the human nature it is impossible for Christ to be able to be at the same time in more than one place, much less everywhere, with His body.

We reject the teaching that ...

31] 12. That only the mere humanity has suffered for us and redeemed us, and that the Son of God in the suffering had actually no communion with the humanity, as though it did not concern Him.

We reject the teaching that ...

32] 13. That Christ is present with us on earth in the Word, the Sacraments, and in all our troubles, only according to His divinity, and that this presence does not at all pertain to His human nature, according to which also, as they say, He, after having redeemed us by His suffering and death, has nothing to do with us any longer upon earth.

We reject the teaching that ...

33] 14. That the Son of God who assumed the human nature, after 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 only in the place where His human nature is locally.

We reject the teaching that ...

34] 15. That according to His human nature He is not at all capable of omnipotence and other attributes of the divine nature, against the express declaration of Christ, Matt. 28:18: All power is given unto He in heaven and in earth, and of St. Paul, Col. 2:9: In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

We reject the teaching that ...

35] 16. That to Him [to Christ according to His humanity] greater power is given in heaven and upon earth, namely, greater and more than to all angels and other creatures, but that He has no communion with the omnipotence of God, nor that this has been given Him. Hence they devise mediam potentiam, that is, a power between the almighty power of God and the power of other creatures given to Christ according to His humanity by the exaltation, such as would be less than God's almighty power and greater than that of other creatures.

We reject the teaching that ...

36] 17. That Christ according to His human mind has a certain limit as to how much He is to know, and that He knows no more than is becoming and needful for Him to know for [the execution of] His office as Judge.

37] 18. That Christ does not yet 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.

38] 19. That it is impossible for Christ according to His human mind to know what has been from eternity, what at present is occurring everywhere, and what will be in eternity.

39] 20. When it is taught, and the passage Matt. 28:18: All power is given unto Me, etc., is thus interpreted and blasphemously perverted, namely, that all power in heaven and on earth was restored, that is, delivered again to Christ according to the divine nature, at the resurrection and His ascension to heaven, as though He had also according to His divinity laid this aside and abandoned it in His state of humiliation. By this doctrine not only the words of the testament of Christ are perverted, but also the way is prepared for the accursed Arian heresy, so that finally the eternal deity of Christ is denied, and thus Christ, and with Him our salvation, are entirely lost if this false doctrine were not firmly contradicted from the immovable foundation of the divine Word and our simple Christian [catholic] faith.

