

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.

confess - to speak with, in line, or in harmony with the Scriptures,
to agree with God (1 John 1:8-ff)

concord - a common heart, with the one heart,
one in heart with God and one another

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 tessera, 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 (FCSD)

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).

The text of this edition of the *Book of Concord* is in the public domain and may be freely copied.

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 Melanchthon, hence called Melanchthonians 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 Melanchthon. 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, 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.

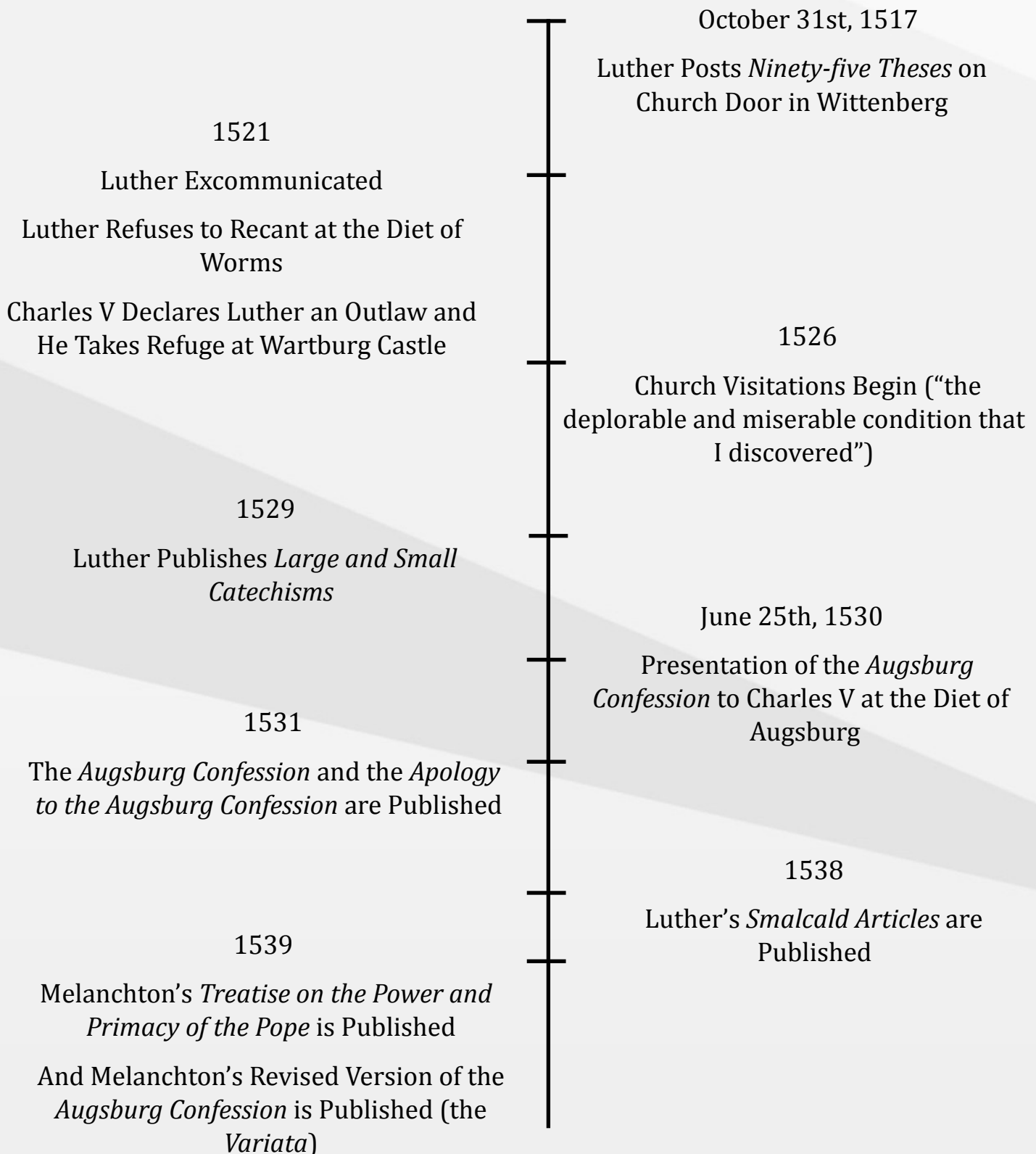
The sixth was the **Antinomistic Controversy**, from 1527 to 1556, in which various false views concerning the Law and the Gospel were defended, especially by John Agricola who maintained that repentance (contrition) is not wrought by the Law, but by the Gospel (a view which, in a modified form was later 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.

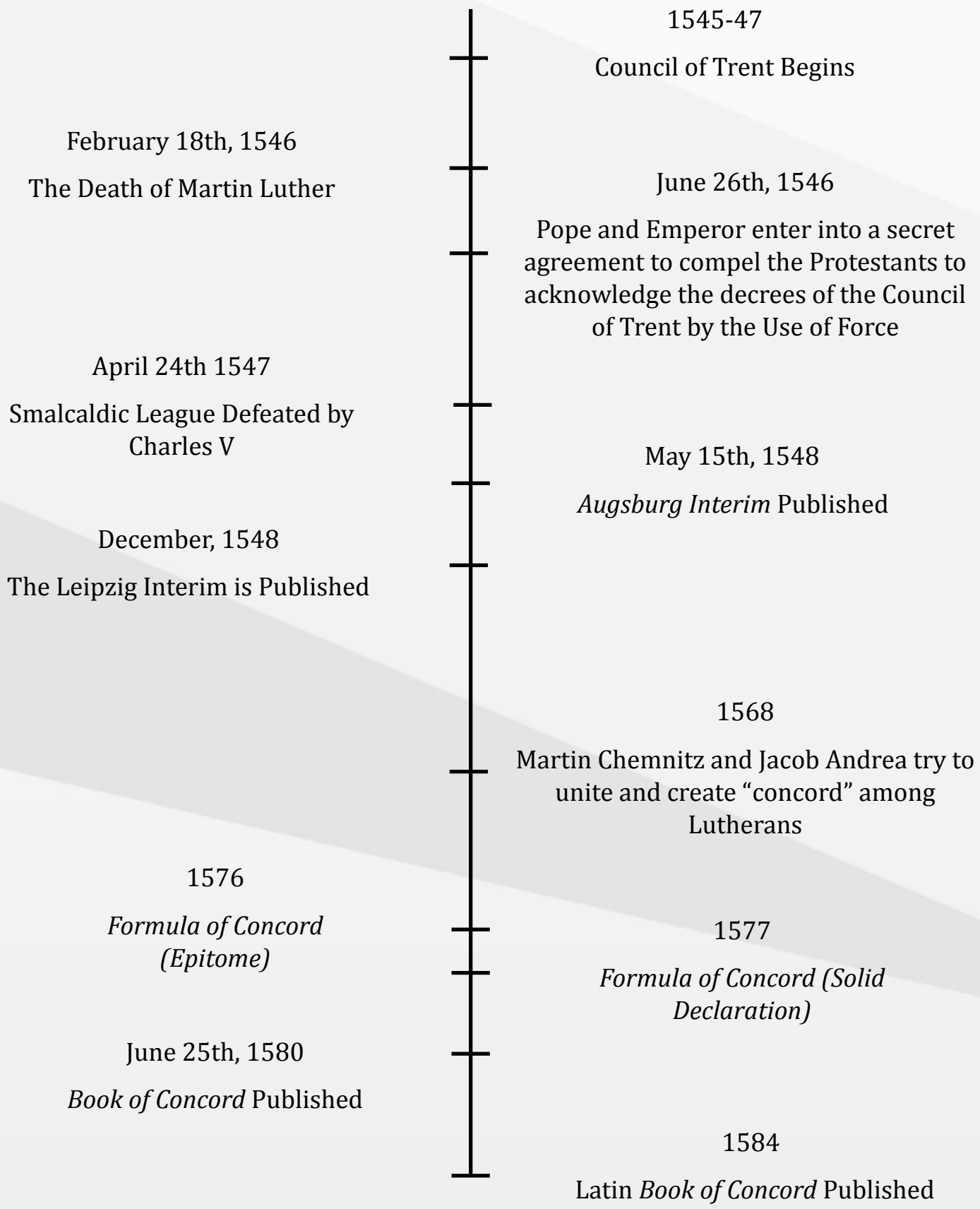
The seventh was the **Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy**, from 1560 to 1574, in which the Philippists in Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Dresden (Peucer, Cracow, Stoessel, etc.) endeavored gradually to supplant Luther's doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper and the majesty of the human nature of Christ by the 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.

Some of the Key Words and Phrases

the "pure doctrine" and "pure reformation" and "pure symbol"

"grounded on God's Word"

"no new confession" BUT "always and everywhere"

"some have departed"

"necessity requires us to explain these disputed articles ..."

"thesis and antithesis"

"regard and receive" AND "reject, shun and avoid"

"for those now living and our descendants"

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 2 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: The "Sparkle Creed"

I believe in the non-binary God whose pronouns are plural.
I believe in Jesus Christ, their child, who wore a fabulous tunic
and had two dads and saw everyone as a sibling-child of God.
I believe in the rainbow Spirit, who shatters our image of one white light
and refracts it into a rainbow of gorgeous diversity.
I believe in the church of everyday saints as numerous, creative,
and resilient as patches on the AIDS quilt, whose feet are grounded
in mud and whose eyes gaze at the stars in wonder.
I believe in the call to each of us that love is love is love,
so beloved, let us love.
I believe, glorious God. Help my unbelief. Amen.

- Edina Lutheran Church of the ELCA (June 2023)

Everyone Has a “God”

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.

Comprehensive Summary, Foundation, Rule and Norm

Whereby All Dogmas should be Judged according to God's Word,
and the Controversies that have Occurred should be Explained
and Decided in a Christian Manner.

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

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.

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)

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)

A Pure Christian Symbol Thoroughly Grounded in God's Word

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Preface

4] To this Christian [pious] Augsburg Confession, **so thoroughly grounded in God's Word**, we herewith pledge ourselves again [publicly and solemnly] from our inmost hearts;

we abide by its simple, clear, and unadulterated meaning as the words convey it, and regard the said Confession as **a pure Christian symbol**, with which at the present time true Christians ought to be found next to [which pious hearts ought to receive next to the matchless authority of] God's Word;

just as in former times concerning certain great controversies that had arisen in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were proposed, to which the pure teachers and hearers at that time pledged themselves with heart and mouth.

5] We intend also, by the grace of the Almighty, faithfully to abide until our end by [the doctrine of] this Christian Confession, mentioned several times, as it was delivered in the year 1530 to the Emperor Charles V;

and it is our purpose, neither in this nor in any other writing, to recede in the least from that oft-cited Confession, **nor to propose another or new confession.**

**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**. (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)

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Summary

1] Since **for thorough, permanent unity** in the Church it is, above all things, necessary that we have a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form wherein is brought together **from God's Word** the common doctrine, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion confess, just as the ancient Church always had for this use its fixed symbols;

moreover, since this [comprehensive form of doctrine] should not be based on private writings, but on such books as have been composed, approved, and received in the name of the churches which pledge themselves to one doctrine and religion, we have declared to one another with heart and mouth that we will not make or receive a separate or new confession of our faith, but confess the public common writings which **always and everywhere** were held and used as such symbols or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession before the dissensions arose among those who accept the Augsburg Confession, and as long as in all articles there was on all sides a unanimous adherence to [and maintenance and use of] the pure doctrine of the divine Word, as the sainted Dr. Luther explained it.

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.

4] 2. And since of old the true Christian doctrine, in a pure, sound sense, was collected from God's Word into brief articles or chapters against the corruption of heretics, **we confess, in the second place**, the three Ecumenical Creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, as glorious confessions of the faith, brief, devout, and founded upon God's Word, in which all the heresies which at that time had arisen in the Christian Church are clearly and unanswerably refuted.

5] 3. **In the third place**, since in these last times God, out of especial grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther, and since this doctrine has been **collected from, and according to, God's Word** into the articles and chapters of the Augsburg Confession against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects,

we confess also the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession as our symbol for this time, not because it was composed by our theologians, but because it has been taken from God's Word and is founded firmly and well therein ...

6] 4. **In the fourth** place, as regards the proper and true sense of the oft-quoted Augsburg Confession, an **extensive Apology** was composed and published in print in 1531, after the presentation of the Confession, in order that we might explain ourselves at greater length and guard against the [slanders of the] Papists, and that condemned errors might not steal into the Church of God under the name of the Augsburg Confession, or dare to seek cover under the same. We unanimously confess this also, because not only is the said Augsburg Confession explained as much as is necessary and guarded [against the slanders of the adversaries], but also proven [confirmed] by clear, irrefutable testimonies of Holy Scripture.

7] 5. **In the fifth place**, we also confess the Articles composed, approved, and received **at Smalcald** in the large assembly of theologians, in the year 1537, as they were first framed and printed in order to be delivered in the council at Mantua, or wherever it would be held, in the name of the Estates, Electors, and Princes, as an explanation of the above-mentioned Augsburg Confession,

wherein by God's grace they were resolved to abide. In them the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, and some articles are explained at greater length from God's Word, and, besides, the cause and grounds are indicated, as far as necessary, why we have abandoned the papistical errors and idolatries, and can have no fellowship with them, and also why we know, and can think of, no way for coming to any agreement with the Pope concerning them.

8] 6. And now, **in the sixth place**, because these highly important matters [the business of religion] concern also the common people and laymen [as they are called], who, inasmuch as they are Christians, must for their salvation distinguish between pure and false doctrine, **we confess also the Small and the Large Catechisms of Dr. Luther**, as they were written by him and incorporated in his works, because they have been unanimously approved and received by all churches adhering to the Augsburg Confession, and have been publicly **used in churches, schools, and in [private] houses**, and, moreover, because the Christian doctrine from God's Word is comprised in them in the most correct and simple way, and, in like manner, is explained, as far as necessary [for simple laymen].

In the pure churches and schools these public common writings have been always regarded as the sum and model of the doctrine which Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, has admirably deduced from God's Word, and firmly established against the Papacy and other sects;

and to his full explanations in his doctrinal and polemical writings we wish to appeal, in the manner and as far as Dr. Luther himself in the Latin preface to his published works has given necessary and Christian admonition concerning his writings, and has expressly drawn this distinction namely, **that the Word of God alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine**, to which the writings of no man should be regarded as equal, but to which everything should be subjected.

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

Some Have Departed

- They don’t understand
- They have not remained faithful
- They have attached a “foreign meaning”

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Summary

6] Now, although the Christian doctrine of this Confession has in great part remained unchallenged (save what has been done by the Papists), yet it cannot be denied that **some theologians have departed** from some great [principal] and important articles of the said Confession,

and either have **not attained to their true meaning**, or at any rate have **not continued steadfastly therein**, and occasionally [some] have even undertaken to **attach to it a foreign meaning**, while at the same time they wished to be regarded as adherents of [they professed to embrace] the Augsburg Confession, and to avail themselves and make their boast of it [for a pretext].

7] From this, grievous and injurious dissensions have arisen in the pure evangelical churches; just as even during the lives of the holy apostles among those who wished to be called Christians, and boasted of Christ's doctrine, horrible errors arose likewise.

For the Sake of the Weak And Disturbed Consciences Necessity Requires Us to Explain

8] In a similar manner at present our opponents, the Papists, rejoice at the dissensions that have arisen among us, in the unchristian and vain hope that these discords might finally cause the suppression of the pure doctrine, while those who are **weak in faith are [greatly] offended [and disturbed]**, and some of them doubt whether, amid such dissensions, the pure doctrine is with us, and others do not know with whom to side with respect to the articles in controversy.

This Is Not a Mere Disagreement About Words

9 For the controversies which have occurred are **not, as some would regard them, mere misunderstandings or disputes concerning words** [as are apt to occur], one side not having sufficiently grasped the meaning of the other, and the difficulty lying thus in a few words which are not of great moment; **but here the subjects of controversy are important and great**, and of such a nature that the opinion of the party in error cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused or defended.

10 **Necessity, therefore, requires us to explain these controverted articles according to God's Word and approved writings**, so that every one who has Christian understanding can notice which opinion concerning the matters in controversy accords with God's Word and the Christian Augsburg Confession, and which does not. And sincere Christians who have the truth at heart may **guard and protect** themselves against **[flee and avoid]** the errors and corruptions that have arisen.

Rightly Present and Proclaim the Truth Refute and Reprove the Error

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Antithesis or False Doctrine in the Disputed Articles

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, —

Discern Between Useless Wrangling and Necessary Controversy

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Antithesis or False Doctrine in the Disputed Articles

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.

“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)

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.

Antithesis or False Doctrine in the Disputed Articles

Formula of Concord, The Solid Declaration, Antithesis or False Doctrine in the Disputed Articles

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 ...**

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)

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”

“The Triune God’s work distinguished from the devil’s work”

Key Question

Is original sin (“inherited sin”) part of man’s very nature, substance and essence? (“substantia”)

OR

Is it a deep and thorough corruption of the human nature? (“accidens”)

Key Thought

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

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.

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

What's at Stake? What if we get "original sin" wrong?

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

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.**

A Caution About the Use of Certain Words

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.

**Context. Context. Context.
Content. Content. Content**

Three Theological Parties

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

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 Stancaric** 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)

Article I, Original Sin The Status of the Controversy

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

The Principal Question In This Controversy

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.

Affirmative Statements

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.

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.

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. 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.

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.*

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.

Negative Statements

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.

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.

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.

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].

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.

20] 10. Now, this original sin is called by Dr. Luther nature-sin, person-sin, essential sin, not because the nature, person, or essence of man is, without any distinction, itself original sin, but in order to indicate by such words the distinction between original sin, which inheres in human nature, and other sins, which are called actual sins.

21] 11. For original sin is not a sin which is committed, but it inheres in the nature, substance, and essence of man, so that, though no wicked thought ever should arise in the heart of corrupt man, no idle word were spoken, no wicked deed were done, yet the nature is nevertheless corrupted through original sin, which is born in us by reason of the sinful seed, and is a **fountainhead of all other actual sins**, as wicked thoughts, words, and works, as it is written Matt. 15:19: Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts. Also Gen. 6:5; 8:21: The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

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

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.

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.

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

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

Genesis 1:26-ff: 26 God said, “Let’s make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them.

31 God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, a sixth day. (WEB)

Genesis 3:4-5: 4 The serpent said to the woman, “You won’t really die, 5 for God knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (WEB)

1 Corinthians 2:14: Now the natural man doesn’t receive the things of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to him; and he can’t know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (WEB)

2 Corinthians 4:3-4: Even if our Good News is veiled, it is veiled in those who are dying, 4 in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Good News of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn on them. (WEB)

Colossians 3:5-11: 5 Put to death therefore your members which are on the earth: sexual immorality, uncleanness, depraved passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 For these things’ sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. 7 You also once walked in those, when you lived in them, 8 but now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and shameful speaking out of your mouth. 9 Don’t lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings, 10 **and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator ...** (WEB)

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.

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

11] 3. That original sin (in human nature) is not only this **entire absence** of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that, instead of the lost image of God in

man, it is **at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption** of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in the understanding, heart, and will, so that now, since the Fall, man inherits *an inborn wicked disposition and inward impurity of heart, evil lust and propensity;*

12] that we all by disposition and nature inherit from Adam such a heart, feeling, and thought as are, according to their highest powers and the light of reason, **naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and His chief commandments**, yea, that they are enmity against God, especially as regards divine and spiritual things. For in other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to reason, man still has to a certain degree understanding, power, and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, however, has been so infected and contaminated by original sin that before God it is of no use.

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 that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was continually only evil.** (WEB)

Genesis 8:21: The LORD smelled the pleasant aroma. The LORD said in his heart, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake because the imagination of **man's heart is evil from his youth.** I will never again strike every living thing, as I have done. (WEB)

Psalms 51:5: Behold, I was **born in iniquity.** My mother conceived me in sin. (WEB)

Psalm 53:1-3: The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are **corrupt**, and have done abominable iniquity. There is no one who does good. 2 God looks down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there are any who understood, who seek after God. 3 Every one of them has gone back. They have become filthy together. **There is no one who does good, no, not one.** (WEB) (see also Romans 3:10-12)

Mark 7:20-23: He said, “That which **proceeds out of the man**, that defiles the man. 21For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, sexual sins, murders, thefts, 22covetings, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. 23All these evil things come from within and defile the man.” (WEB)

Romans 8:20-22: For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21that the creation itself also will be delivered from the **bondage of decay** into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. 22For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. (WEB)

2 Peter 1:3-4: ... seeing that his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue, 4by which he has granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having **escaped from the corruption that is in the world** by lust. (WEB)

James 1:13-18: Let no man say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God,” for **God can’t be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one.** 14But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. 15Then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin. The sin, when it is full grown, produces death.

16Don’t be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation nor turning shadow. 18Of his own will he gave birth to us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. (WEB)

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, alive to carnal things**

Romans 5:9-21: Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through him. 10For if **while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we will be saved by his life.

11 Not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. 12Therefore, **as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death passed to all men because all sinned.**

13For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not charged when there is no law. 14Nevertheless **death reigned from Adam until Moses**, even over those whose sins weren't like Adam's disobedience, who is a foreshadowing of him who was to come.

15 But the free gift isn't like the trespass. For if **by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.** 16The gift is not as through one who sinned; for the judgement came by one to condemnation, but the free gift followed many trespasses to justification. 17For if by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; so much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.

18 So then as **through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life.** 19For as through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, many will be made righteous. 20The law came in that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly, 21that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through (WEB)

Ephesians 2:1-10: You were made alive when you were **dead in transgressions and sins**, 2in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. 3We also all once lived amongst them in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest.

4But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, **5even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved— 6and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus;

8for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9not of works, that no one would boast. 10For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them. (WEB)

Colossians 1:21-23: 21 You, being in past times **alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil deeds**, 22 yet now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without defect and blameless before him, (WEB)

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, foolish and unwise people? Isn't he your father who has bought you? He has made you and established you. (WEB)

Job 10:8-12: "Your hands have framed me and fashioned me altogether, yet you destroy me. 9 Remember, I beg you, that you have fashioned me as clay. Will you bring me into dust again? 10 Haven't you poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese? 11 You have clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. 12 You have granted me life and loving kindness. Your visitation has preserved my spirit. (WEB)

Ps. 139:14-16: I will give thanks to you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. My soul knows that very well. 15 My frame wasn't hidden from you, when I was made in secret, woven together in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my body. In your book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there were none of them. (WEB)

Eccl. 12:7: ... and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. (WEB)

Is. 45:11: 1 The LORD, the Holy One of Israel and his Maker says: "You ask me about the things that are to come, concerning my sons, and you command me concerning the work of my hands! 12 I have made the earth, and created man on it. I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens. I have commanded all their army. (WEB)

See also ... Isaiah 54:5, 64:8

Acts 17:22-ff: 22 Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, “You men of Athens, I perceive that you are very religious in all things. 23For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription: ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ What therefore you worship in ignorance, I announce to you.

24The God who made the world and all things in it, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands. 25He isn’t served by men’s hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself gives to all life and breath and all things. 26He made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the surface of the earth, having determined appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

28‘For in him we live, move, and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also his offspring.’ 29Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, engraved by art and design of man. 30The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked. But now he commands that all people everywhere should repent, 31because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.” (WEB)

Rev. 4:11: “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honour, and the power, for you created all things, and because of your desire they existed and were created!” (WEB)

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: 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2The same was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him. Without him, nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness hasn't overcome it.

14 **The Word became flesh and lived amongst us.** We saw his glory, such glory as of the only born Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (WEB)

Hebrews 2:11-18: 11For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one, for which cause he is **not ashamed to call them brothers**, 12saying, "I will declare your name to my brothers. Amongst the congregation I will sing your praise." (Psalm 22:22)

13 Again, "I will put my trust in him."

Again, "Behold, here I am with the children whom God has given me." (Isaiah 8:18)

14Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in the same way **partook of the same**, that through death he might bring to

nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16For most certainly, he doesn't give help to angels, but he gives help to the offspring of Abraham. 17Therefore he was obligated in all things to **be made like his brothers**, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. 18For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted. (WEB)

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 and Resurrection

1 John 1:8—2:1: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us the sins and to **cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. 10If we say that we haven't sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counsellor with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. 2And he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. (WEB)

1 Corinthians 15:51-57: 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound and the **dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed**.

53For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory." Isaiah 25:8

55"Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (WEB)

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

Psalm 19:12: Who can discern his errors? Forgive me from hidden errors.
(WEB)

1 Corinthians 2:14: 14Now the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him; and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (WEB)

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)

Key Words and Phrases

“the will of man is found in four different states”

“before the Fall, since the Fall”

“after regeneration, after the resurrection”

“can a person by his own powers, prior to and before his regeneration ...???”

“the Stoics” and “Manichaeans”

“the Pelagians” and “Semi-Pelagians”

“the Synergists” and “the Enthusiasts”

“the efficient causes for a person’s conversion”

Key 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.

Key Thought

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.

What's at stake? What if we get "free will" wrong?

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.

8] This declaration and principal [general] reply to the chief question and statement of the controversy presented in the introduction to this article is confirmed and substantiated by the following arguments from God's Word, and although they are **contrary to proud reason and philosophy**, yet we know that the wisdom of this perverted world is only foolishness before God, and that articles of faith must be judged only from God's Word.

Ephesians 2:1-ff: You were made alive when you were **dead in transgressions** and sins, 2in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. 3We also all once lived amongst them in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest. (WEB)

2 Timothy 2:24-ff: The Lord's servant must not quarrel, but be gentle towards all, able to teach, patient, 25in gentleness correcting those who oppose him.

Perhaps God may give them repentance leading to a full knowledge of the truth, 26and they may recover themselves out of the **devil's snare, having been taken captive by him to do his will.** (WEB)

**Context. Context. Context.
Content. Content. Content.**

Three Theological Parties

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

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 Melancthon, 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)

Article II, Free Will

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.

Affirmative Statements

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.

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.

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.

Negative Statements

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

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.

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.

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.

11] 4. Also, when it is taught that **(Synergists)**, 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.**

12] 5. Also, that man, **after he has been born again, can perfectly observe and completely fulfil God's Law**, and that this fulfilling is our righteousness before God, by which we merit eternal life.

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.)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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, alienated** from the life of God, because of **the ignorance that is in them**, because of the **hardening of their hearts**; who having become callous gave themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (WEB)

1 Corinthians 2:12-16: "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things that were freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things.

Now **the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit**, for they are foolishness to him, and he can't know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual discerns all things, and he himself is judged by no one. 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?' But we have Christ's mind." (WEB)

Romans 1:18-23:"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known of God is revealed in them, for God revealed it to them.

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse. Because, knowing God, they didn't glorify him as God, neither gave thanks, but became **vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened.**

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and traded the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things." (WEB)

Psalms 19: The Natural and Revealed Knowledge of God

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

**the "foolishness" of human reason
the natural knowledge of God and the 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

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: "But the natural man doesn't receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are **foolishness to him**, and he **can't know them** because they are spiritually discerned." (WEB)

1 Corinthians 1:21: "For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom didn't know God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save those who believe." (WEB)

Ephesians 4:17-19: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles also walk, in the **futility of their mind**, being **darkened** in their understanding, **alienated** from the life of God because of the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts; who having become callous gave themselves up to lust, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (WEB)

Matthew 13: The Parable of the Sower and the Seed

Matthew 13:11-13: "He answered them, 'To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance, but whoever doesn't have, from him will be taken away even that which he has.

Therefore I speak to them in parables **because seeing they don't see, and hearing, they don't hear, neither do they understand.**" (WEB)

Romans 3:11-12: "As it is written, 'There is no one who understands. There is no one who seeks after God.' They have all turned aside. They have together become unprofitable. There is no one who does good, no, not so much as one." (WEB)

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

we are spiritually dead

Ephesians 2:1-3: "You were made alive when you were **dead in transgressions and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, even as the rest." (WEB)

Colossians 2:13: "You were **dead** through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh. He made you alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, wiping out the handwriting in ordinances which was against us; and he has taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." (WEB)

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.

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

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 that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was continually only evil.**" (WEB)

Genesis 8:21: "The Lord smelled the sweet aroma. The Lord said in his heart, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, because the **imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.** I will never again strike every living thing, as I have done.'" (WEB)

Jeremiah 17:9: "The **heart is deceitful above all things**, and it is exceedingly corrupt. Who can know it?" (WEB)

Ezekiel 36:25-28: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will take away the **stony heart out of your flesh**, and I will give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. You will keep my ordinances and do them." (WEB)

Romans 5:9-10: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we will be saved from God's wrath through him. For if **while we were enemies**, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we will be saved by his life." (WEB)

Romans 7:18-23: "For I know that in me, **that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing.** For desire is present with me, but I don't find it doing that which is good. For the good which I desire, I don't do; but the evil which I don't desire, that I practice. But if what I don't desire, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the law that, to me, while I desire to do good, evil is present.

For I delight in God's law after the inward man, but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity

under the law of sin which is in my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will deliver me out of the body of this death?" (WEB)

Romans 8:6-8: "For the **mind of the flesh is death**, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God; for it is not subject to God's law, neither indeed can it be. Those who are in the flesh can't please God." (WEB)

Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are **contrary to one another**, that you may not do the things that you desire." (WEB)

Ephesians 2:1-10: "You were made alive **when you were dead in transgressions and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, **even when we were dead through our trespasses**, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus;

for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them." (WEB)

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)

Luke 24:44-48: Then he said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

He told them, 'This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'" (WEB)

Acts 16:14: "One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart to pay attention** to what was said by Paul." (WEB)

Philippians 2:13: "For it is **God who works in you**, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (WEB)

Acts 5:31: "God exalted Him at His right hand as Leader and Savior, **to give repentance** to Israel and forgiveness of sins." (WEB)

2 Timothy 2:25: "God may perhaps **grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth." (WEB)

Philippians 1:29: "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake." (WEB)

Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is **not your own doing; it is the gift of God.**" (WEB)

John 6:29: "Jesus answered them, **'This is the work of God,** that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'" (WEB)

Deuteronomy 29:4 (see also Matthew 13:15): "But to this day **the LORD has not given you a heart to understand** or eyes to see or ears to hear." (WEB)

Titus 3:5-6: "**He saved us,** not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior." (WEB)

Ezekiel 11:19-20 (see also Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 51:10): "**And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them.** I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My rules and obey them." (WEB)

Ephesians 2:10: "For **we are His workmanship,** created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (WEB)

2 Corinthians 5:17 (see also Galatians 6:15): "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (WEB)

James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is **from above.**" (WEB)

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me **unless the Father** who sent Me draws him." (WEB)

Matthew 11:27: "No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." (WEB)

1 Corinthians 12:3: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' **except in the Holy Spirit.**" (WEB)

John 15:5: "For **apart from Me** you can do nothing." (WEB)

2 Corinthians 3:5: "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God." (WEB)

1 Corinthians 4:7: "What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" (WEB)

Reference to the Lutheran Confessions

29] In **Article XX (29-32) the Augsburg Confession** says as follows:

Because through faith the Holy Ghost is given, the heart thus becomes fit for doing good works. For before, because it is without the Holy Ghost, it is too weak, and, besides, is in the devil's power, who drives poor human nature into many sins. [Without Christ, without faith, and without the Holy Ghost men are in the power of the devil, who drives men to manifold and open crimes. Therefore men are first taught regarding faith, how the Holy Spirit is given, and that Christ aids and protects us against the devil, etc.]

And a little afterward: For without faith and without Christ human nature and ability [reason and virtue] are much too weak to do good works [to resist the devil who drives men into sinning].

30] These passages clearly testify that **the Augsburg Confession does not at all recognize [pronounce] the will of man in spiritual things as free**, but says that he is the devil's captive; how, then, is he to be able of his own powers to turn himself to the Gospel or Christ?

31] The **Apology, Art. XVIII (70-73)** teaches thus of free will:

[We do not deny liberty to the human will.] We also say that reason has, to a certain extent, a free will; for in the things which are to be comprehended by reason [as such] we have a free will [liberty in the choice of works and things].

And a little after:

For such hearts as are **without the Holy Ghost are without** the fear of God, without faith, without trust [in God]; they do not believe that God hears them, that He forgives their sins, and helps them in troubles; therefore they are godless.

32] Now, “a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit,” and “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Therefore, although we concede that it is within our ability to perform such an outward work [we concede to free will the liberty and power to perform the outward works of the Law], nevertheless, we say that in spiritual things [truly to fear God, truly to believe in God] the free will and reason have no ability, etc.

Here it is clearly seen that **the Apology ascribes no ability to the will of man**, either for beginning good or for operating of itself.

33] In the **Smalcald Articles (Sin, III, I 5, 10)** also the following errors concerning the free will are rejected:

That man has a free will to do good and omit evil, etc.

And shortly afterward it is also rejected as an error when men teach:

That it is not founded upon Scripture, that for a good work the Holy Ghost with His grace is necessary.

34] Furthermore, we read in the **Smalcald Articles (Of Repentance, III, III, 40)**, as follows:

And in Christians this **repentance continues until death**, because through the entire life it contends with sin remaining in the flesh, as Paul, Rom. 7:23, testifies that he wars with the Law in his members, etc., and that not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Ghost, which follows the remission of sins. This gift daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins, and works so as to render man truly pure and holy.

35] **These words say nothing whatever of our will**, or that even in regenerate men it works anything of itself, but ascribe it to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which cleanses man and makes him daily more godly and holy; and our own powers are entirely excluded therefrom.

36] In the **Large Catechism of Dr. Luther (the Third Article of the Christian Faith)** it is written thus:

And I am also a part and member of the same, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses, brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Ghost, **by having heard and continuing to hear the Word of God**, which is the beginning of entering it.

37] For formerly, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ. Thus, until the last day, the Holy Ghost abides with the holy congregation or Christendom, by means of which He brings us to Christ, and which He employs to teach and preach to us the Word, whereby He works and promotes sanctification, causing [this community] daily to grow and become strong in the faith and the fruits of the Spirit, which He produces.

38] In these words **the Catechism does not mention our free will or cooperation with a single word**, but ascribes everything to the Holy Ghost, namely, that through the office of the ministry He brings us into the Christian Church, wherein He sanctifies us, and brings it about that we daily grow in faith and good works.

39] And although the regenerate even in this life advance so far that they will what is good, and love it, and even do good and grow in it, nevertheless this (as above stated) is not of our will and ability, but the Holy Ghost, as Paul himself speaks concerning this, works such willing and doing, Phil. 2:13. As also in Eph. 2:10 he ascribes this work to God alone, when he says:

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk therein.

40] In the **Small Catechism of Dr. Luther** it is thus written:

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, and 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, etc.

41] And in the **explanation of the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer** the following words occur: How is this, done? When our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and live a godly life, etc.

42] **These testimonies state that by our own powers we cannot come to Christ**, but God must give us His Holy Ghost, by whom we are enlightened, sanctified, and thus brought to Christ through faith, and kept with Him; and no mention is made either of our will or cooperation.

**Reference to Luther's ...
Confession Concerning Christ's Supper
and The Bondage of the Will**

43] To this we will add a passage in which Dr. Luther declared himself later, with a solemn protestation that he intended to persevere in this doctrine unto the end, in his **Large Confession concerning the Holy Supper**, where he says:

Herewith I reject and condemn as nothing but error all dogmas which extol our free will, as they directly conflict with this help and grace of our Savior Jesus Christ. For since outside of Christ death and sin are our lords, and the devil our god and prince, there can be no power or might, no wisdom or understanding, whereby we can qualify ourselves for, or strive after, righteousness and life; but we must be blinded people and prisoners of sin and the devil's own, to do and to think what pleases them and is contrary to God and His commandments.

44] In these words Dr. Luther, of blessed and holy memory, **ascribes to our free will no power whatever to qualify itself for righteousness or strive after it**, but says that man is blinded and held captive to do only the devil's will, and that which is contrary to God the Lord. Therefore there is here no cooperation of our will in the conversion of man, and man must be drawn and born anew of God; otherwise there is no thought in our hearts which of itself could turn to the holy Gospel for the purpose of accepting it.

Even so Dr. Luther wrote of this matter also in his book **De Servo Arbitrio, i. e., Of the Captive Will of Man**, in opposition to Erasmus, and elucidated and supported this position well and thoroughly, and afterward he repeated and explained it in his glorious exposition of the book of Genesis, especially of Gen.

26. There likewise his meaning and understanding of some other peculiar disputations introduced incidentally by Erasmus, as of absolute necessity, etc., have been secured by him in the best and most careful way against all misunderstanding and perversion; to which we also hereby appeal and refer others.

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: "Jesus answered them, 'Most certainly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the **bondservant of sin.**'" (WEB)

Ephesians 2:1-3: "As for you, you were **dead in your offenses and sins**, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience; among whom we also all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." (WEB)

2 Timothy 2:25-26: "25 in gentleness correcting those who oppose him: perhaps God may give them repentance leading to a full knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may recover themselves **out of the devil's snare**, having been taken captive by him to his will." (WEB)

Titus 3:3: "For we **were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures**, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." (WEB)

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 Good News of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, 'But the righteous shall live by faith.'" (WEB)

Romans 10:13-17: "For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? How will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'

But they didn't all listen to the glad news. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' **So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.**" (WEB)

Psalms 95:8: "Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness." (WEB)

Acts 16:14: "A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one who worshiped God, heard us; **whose heart the Lord opened to listen to the things which were spoken by Paul.**" (WEB)

John 15:5: "I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (WEB)

1 Corinthians 1:27-31: "But God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world that he might put to shame the things that are strong.

God chose the lowly things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are, that

no flesh should boast before God. But of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, 'He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.'" (WEB)

2 Corinthians 12:5: "Of such a one I will boast, but I will not boast of myself, except in my weaknesses." (WEB)

Jeremiah 9:23-24: "Thus says Yahweh, 'Don't let the wise man glory in his wisdom. Don't let the mighty man glory in his might. Don't let the rich man glory in his riches. But let him who glories glory in this, that he has understanding, and knows me, that I am Yahweh who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth, for in these things I delight,' says Yahweh." (WEB)

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.

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

**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.

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

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 ...

- 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

Key Words and Phrases

“Christ alone is our righteousness”

“the entire Christ” not just according to one or another nature

“the work of Christ is credited to us for righteousness through faith”

“faith is the means and instrument by which we lay hold of Christ”

the exclusive particles ... “apart from”, “not by” works

“Christ FOR us vs. Christ IN us”

“imputed” vs. “infused”

“faith alone justifies but faith is never alone, good works follow”

The Key Question

According to which nature is Christ our Righteousness?

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.

1 Corinthians 1:30-31: "30 But of him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was **made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:** 31 that, according as it is written, 'He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord.'" (WEB)

2 Corinthians 5:21: "21 For him who knew no sin he **made to be sin on our behalf**; so that in him we might become the **righteousness of God.**" (WEB)

Key Thought

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".

**What's at stake?
What if we get it wrong?**

**"nothing can be yielded or surrendered"
"no poor conscience can have consolation"
"ff this is abandoned, all is lost"**

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.)

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 *particulas 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.

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.

Context. Context. Context. Content. Content. Content.

Three Theological Parties

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

The Theological Controversies

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.

- 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

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 Melancthon, Flacius, and practically all other Lutherans, the Philippists included. This controversy was settled **by Article III**.

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

Article III, The Righteousness of Faith Before God The Status of the Controversy

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

1] The third controversy which has arisen among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession is **concerning the righteousness of Christ or of faith**, which God **imputes by grace, through faith**, to poor sinners for righteousness.

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

3] **Over against this**, others have held and taught that Christ is our righteousness according to His human nature alone.

4] **In opposition to both these parties** it has been unanimously taught by the other teachers of the Augsburg Confession that ...

Christ is our righteousness **not according to His divine nature alone, nor according to His human nature alone, but according to both natures;**

for He has redeemed, justified, and saved us from our sins as God and man, through His complete obedience;

that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and our adoption as God's children only on account of the obedience of Christ, which through faith alone, out of pure grace, is **imputed for righteousness** to all true believers, and on account of it they are absolved from all their unrighteousness.

Affirmative Statements

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

AFFIRMATIVE THESES: Pure Doctrine of the Christian Churches against Both Errors Just Mentioned.

3] 1. Against both the errors just recounted, **we unanimously believe, teach, and confess** that Christ is our Righteousness neither according to the divine nature alone nor according to the human nature alone,

but that it is the entire Christ according to both natures, in His obedience alone, which as God and man He rendered to the Father even unto death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written:

As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous, Rom. 5:19.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Negative Statements

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

NEGATIVE THESESES: Rejection of the False Opposite Dogmas.

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

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**.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

One God, Three Persons One Salvation Plan

Martin Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*

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.

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”

The Prepositions of Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1:"1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, 4 even as he **chose us in him** before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love;

5 having predestined us for adoption as children **through Jesus Christ** to himself, according to the good pleasure of his desire, 6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely bestowed favor on us **in the Beloved**, 7 **in whom** we have our redemption **through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

8 which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he **purposed in him** 10 to an administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in him." (WEB)

One God, Three Persons, One Salvation Plan

John 3:16:"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (WEB)

1 Peter 1:1-3:"1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen ones who are living as strangers in the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 according to the **foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit**, that you may **obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with his blood:** Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy became our father again to a living hope **through the resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the dead." (WEB)

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14): "13 But we are bound to always give thanks to God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because **God chose you** from the beginning for salvation **through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth**. 14 He called you through our Good News, to the obtaining of the glory of **our Lord Jesus Christ**." (WEB)

Salvation Achieved and Acquired by Jesus Christ Offered by the Holy Spirit and Applied by Faith

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 **particulas 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.

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

In the Chief Article, Nothing Can Be Yielded or Surrendered

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.

Romans 3:19-24:"19 Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. 20 Because **by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight**. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God

through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe, for there is no distinction. 23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 **being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.**"(WEB)

Romans 4:20-25: "20 Yet, looking to the promise of God, he (Abraham) didn't waver through unbelief, but grew strong through faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what he had promised, he was also able to perform. 22 Therefore it also was 'credited to him for righteousness.'

23 Now it was not written that it was credited to him for his sake alone, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, those who believe in him who raised Jesus, our Lord, from the dead, 25 **who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification.**" (WEB)

John 1:29: "The next day, he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (WEB)

Though Sin in the Flesh Has Not Yet Been Entirely Removed The Lord Will Not Punish or Remember It

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 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, Epitome, Article III, The Righteousness of Faith

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

extra nos = outside of ourselves

“imputed” and not “infused”

“declared righteous” and not “made righteous”

Romans 5:19: "For as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of one many will be made righteous."
(WEB)

1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." (WEB)

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.

Matt. 5:17 ""Don't think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I didn't come to destroy, **but to fulfill**. For most certainly, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not even one smallest letter or one tiny pen stroke shall in any way pass away from the law until all things are accomplished." (WEB)

You have heard it said ...

But I tell you ...

Matt. 5:21-24: "You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I tell you that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be in danger of the judgment." (WEB)

Matt. 5:27-28: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." (WEB)

The "MAN" – the "Righteous One"

Psalm 1:1: "**Blessed is the man** who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers." (WEB)

Psalm 15:1-2: "Lord, who shall live in your sanctuary? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? **He who walks blamelessly and does what is right.**" (WEB)

Psalm 31:1: "In you, Lord, I take refuge. Let me never be disappointed. Deliver me in **your righteousness.**" (WEB)

Jesus ...

Acts 3:14: "But you denied the Holy and **Righteous One**, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you," (WEB)

Hebrews 2:11: "For both **he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified** are all from one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brothers," (WEB)

1 John 2:1: "My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. If anyone sins, we have a Counselor with the Father, **Jesus Christ, the righteous (one).**" (WEB)

Romans 1, 3, 6

"no one righteousness"

"the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus"

"crucified with Christ, raised with Christ"

Romans 1:16-17: "16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and also for the Greek.

17 For in it is revealed **God's righteousness from faith to faith**. As it is written, 'But the righteous shall live by faith.'" (WEB)

Romans 3:19-22: "19 Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God.

20 Because **by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight**, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

21 But now **apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed**, being testified by the law and the prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe." (WEB)

Romans 6:1-6: "1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer? 3 Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin." (WEB)

Through Faith Christ's Righteousness is ... Imputed to Us NOT Infused in Us

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

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.

Faith Alone is the Means and Instrument

Romans 4:4-8: "4 Now to him who works, the reward is not counted as grace, but as something owed. 5 But to him who doesn't work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness**. 6 Even as David also pronounces blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness apart from works,

7 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man whom the **Lord will by no means charge with sin.**" (Psalm 32) (WEB)

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: "31 What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who didn't spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how would he not also with him freely give us all things? 33 **Who could bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies.**" (WEB)

Revelations 12:10-12: "10 I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now is come the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; **for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down**, who accuses them before our God day and night.

11 They overcame him because of the Lamb's blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their life, even to death. 12 Therefore rejoice, heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has gone down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time.'" (WEB)

Some other words ...

“Regeneration” and “vivification”

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 of the Word “Regeneration”

**the forgiveness of sins AND
the succeeding renewal**

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 of the Word “Regeneration”

**Only the forgiveness of sins AND NOT
The succeeding renewal**

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.

The Exclusive Particles Give Honor Solely to Christ

“without”
“apart from”
“not by ...”

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.

Bible Verses

Ephesians 2:8-9: "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that **not of yourselves**; it is the gift of God, 9 **not of works**, that no one would boast." (WEB)

Romans 1:17: "For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, 'But **the righteous shall live by faith.**'" (WEB)

Romans 3:24: "21 But now **apart from the law**, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the Law and the Prophets; 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe,

for there is no distinction, 23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely **by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (WEB)

Romans 4:3-ff: "3 For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' 4 Now to him who works, the reward is not counted as grace, but as something owed.

5 But to him who doesn't work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, **his faith is accounted for righteousness.**" (WEB)

Galatians 3:1-ff: "1 Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you not to obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth among you as crucified?

2 I just want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by **the works of the law or by hearing with faith?** 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now completed in the flesh?" (WEB)

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

"... by faith ..."

"... by faith ..."

"... by faith ..."

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: "16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you won't fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, that you may not do the things that you desire. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law." (WEB)

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious ...

But the fruit of the Spirit is ...

James 2:14-17: "14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man says he has faith, but **has no works**? Can faith save him? 15 And if a brother or sister is naked and in lack of daily food, 16 and one of you tells them, 'Go in peace. Be warmed and filled;' yet you didn't give them the things the body needs, what good is it? **17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead in itself.**" (WEB)

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

(From the Apology of the Augsburg Confession)

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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.

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

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**.

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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 and solely 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
Can Coexist with Faith in Christ**

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

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

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