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The Roman Catholic and Lutheran Doctrine of Sin

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THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND LUTHERAN DOCTRINE
OF SIN

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
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requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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INTRODUCTION

Many people believe there is much similarity between the Roman Catholic and Lutheran religions. Perhaps this opinion is due to the fact that both use much liturgy in the church service. Maybe it is because they use similar theological terms. Both use many symbols and pictures and music plays an important part in their divine services. The architectural structure and the appointments of their houses of worship are designed to bring about a more devotional spirit on the part of the worshippers. The clergy of both denominations use ministerial gowns. Both churches are very aggressive in the promotion of parochial schools for the children.

Then, too, it has been heard time and again that the one thing people like about Catholic people is their determination to maintain and foster their convictions. They, the good Catholics, know for what they stand and are not ashamed. No doubt many have this to say also about the people of Lutheran faith. They too, are known to have definite convictions: convictions that cannot be changed by the common opinions of the day.

However, while there are apparent similarities, it must be pointed out that the actual similarity or dissimilarity of churches does not consist in their external rites and ceremonies but in their teachings. Therefore,

in order to get an accurate picture, it is necessary that we examine the doctrine of each church. However, since we cannot treat all the doctrines we shall take a basic one, namely, the doctrine of sin. The writer will attempt to set forth the official teachings of both churches on this one doctrine.

CHAPTER 1

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF SIN

Standard Roman Catholic teachers state that "Sin is a wilful violation of the Law of God."¹ Sin is a "free violation of moral Law."² They teach that an act, word, or desire cannot be sin unless there is consent on the part of the will. For example, if one is forced to do evil, or if he does evil while being overcome with passion, or if fear drives him to evil, such a man is not guilty of sin as long as his will has not consented to the act. Only when the will of man has freely cooperated in an evil act, may his deed or deeds be called sin. Since sin is a free choice against God it is moral evil.³

In order to be charged with sin a man must know the Law of God, or the divine basis for the determination of what is right or wrong. If man is ignorant of a certain law his acts contrary to it cannot be called sin.⁴ Furthermore, there can be no sin unless there be a law involved.

¹Ph. Scharsch, Confession as a Means of Spiritual Progress, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1946), p. 1.

²Watkins W. Williams, The Moral Theology of the Sacrament of Penance, (Oxford: A.R. Mowbray & Co., 1917), p.175.

³A.C. O'Neil, "Sin", Catholic Encyclopedia, (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), XIV, 4.

⁴Ibid.

There must be either a law of Scripture or a law of the church.⁵

⁵E.M. Deck, The Baltimore Catechism, (N.Y.: Rauch & Steecki Printing Co., 1933), No. 3, p. 152.

CHAPTER 11

THE LUTHERAN DEFINITION OF SIN

According to Scripture, "Sin is the transgression of the law."⁶ Sin is lawlessness. In accordance with this Word of God the Formula of Concord, the Lutheran Confession, states that sin is everything contrary to God's Law.⁷

Therefore, the basis for determining what is and what is not sin is the Law of God. It makes no difference whether the Law is written in the heart or contained in the revealed Word. The Formula of Concord says:

The law is properly a divine doctrine in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God.⁸

The intentions of an individual have nothing to do with determining what is and what is not sin. One may have good intentions and his plans and thoughts may be in agreement with his conscience and with the general thought of the day, yea, even with teachers in the Church, yet if these are not in conformity with the will of God there is sin. The good intention of the heart cannot change an

⁶1 John 3:4.

⁷F. Bente, Concordia Triglotta, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 967.

⁸Ibid, p. 957.

unlawful act into a lawful one.⁹ Conscious and deliberate action is not of the essence of sin¹⁰ therefore, a departure from the Law is sin even when it is against our will to offend.¹¹

Sin is not only the thoughts, words and deeds that are contrary to divine will but it is also the corrupt condition of man's heart. God insists that man love Him, fear Him, trust in Him and be free of inner motions towards sin. However, that which is born of the flesh is flesh. That is, all born of Adam and Eve do not measure up to the demands of God. Man's natural condition is such that it in no way conforms to the will of God. That condition is sin.

⁹Edward W.A. Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, (River Forest, Ill.: Koehler Publishing House, 1939), p. 56.

¹⁰Prof. Franz Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, Translated from the German by Walter Albrecht, (Springfield, Ill: Concordia Mimeographing Co., 1941), 1, 321.

¹¹Romans 7: 19.

CHAPTER 111

THE PRIMITIVE STATE OF MAN ACCORDING TO ROMAN CATHOLIC TEACHING

In order to obtain a more complete understanding of the Doctrine of Sin as it is taught by both Catholic and Lutheran teachers it is necessary that we define the position of both on the original or primitive state of man. The Catholic point of view will be presented first.

God created man with certain natural endowments and with certain supernatural endowments.¹² The natural endowments consists of a body and soul. The body, also known as the lower portion of man, was perfect.¹³ God gave to man all that belonged to a complete human nature. Man had a sharp mind, keen intelligence and good health.¹⁴ His body, however was not immortal therefore, unless something besides the natural endowments had been added, Adam and Eve's bodily death would have been quite natural already in their original state. Death, therefore, existed before sin.

There was seen in man's body an opposing principle to

¹²J.L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1947), p. 202.

¹³Felix M. Kirsch and Others, Catholic Faith, (New York: Kennedy and Sons, 1938), p. 43.

¹⁴J.F. Noll and L.J. Fallon, Father Smith Instructs Jackson, (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1948), p. 13.

the higher nature of man which was his soul. This opposing principle was known as concupiscence.¹⁵ Because of it man's body was subject to sensuous matters and was not interested in spiritual things. However, this tension within man is considered a part of nature and therefore not a breach of the Law of God. On the other hand, however, it is considered dangerous and the chance of a breach is very great.¹⁶

The soul being a direct creation of God was inherently good and according to its original endowments it was in possession of a free will. The Catechismus Romanus says:

As to the soul this He formed after His image and similitude and granted it a free will. Besides He tempered all emotions (motus) of the soul and the appetites (desires) in him so that they always obey the rule of reason.¹⁷

Having a free will man was able to keep the commandments of God. Man's will had the power to choose that which was good¹⁸ therefore, it could cooperate with God and help itself in

¹⁵ E.H. Klotsche, Christian Symbolics, (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929), p. 77.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Pieper, Op. cit., p. 315.

¹⁸ J.L. Neve, Churches and Sects, (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1940), p. 114.

obtaining the grace of God.¹⁹

The soul, with its higher power of reason, was able to keep in check the inclinations of the body of man since all of man's material and heterogenous parts were subject to his perfect reason.²⁰ It is with the soul, or the higher nature of man, that the "image" of God is identified. This teaching already suggests that there is a difference between the "image" of God and the "likeness" of God. While the "image" is identified with the natural endowments, the "likeness" is acquired with certain superadded endowments.²¹

By natural right the soul of man was immortal.²² However, it was not in close communion with God.²³ There was something lacking that would bring about the best relations between God and man. Man could make a start in securing the good graces of his God and he could please God to a certain extent but the close Father and son relationship did not exist. Man could not be saved in this state.²⁴

To the natural endowments of man, therefore, were added

¹⁹Pieper, op. cit., p. 330.

²⁰John Adam Moehler, Symbolism, (London: Gibbings and Co., 1894), p. 25.

²¹Klotsche, op. cit., p. 76.

²²Kirsch, op. cit., p. 43.

²³Moehler, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁴Klotsche, op. cit., p. 76.

other endowments which may be divided into two groups.²⁵ They are called the preternatural gifts, which are an enlargement of man's natural gifts, and the supernatural gift, which is above the nature of man.²⁶ These extra endowments were truly additions to man's natural state. With the preternatural gifts came a number of additions to man. He was made free from all concupiscence, that is, he was free from all unlawful desires. He would not be troubled or disturbed with evil inclinations.²⁷ His body was no longer subject to death for to it was added immortality. Neither would there be sickness or pain, in short, the body would be free from any and all grief. The knowledge of man in spiritual matters was increased and his will strengthened. However, once these preternatural gifts were lost they would be lost altogether.²⁸

The supernatural gift of God is known as sanctifying grace. This is the gift that brings man into the most intimate relationship with God and graces the soul with a new heavenly beauty.²⁹ Now, man has also the "likeness"

²⁵Moehler, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁶Deck, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁷Noll and Fallon, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁸Deck, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁹Moehler, op. cit., p. 26.

of God³⁰ and becomes a holy and righteous creature.³¹ Internal sanctity is given to him. In this condition man can point to his fine qualities and say in effect to God that He must accept him as his child, for sanctifying grace makes man worthy of the love of God and His highest esteem. Sanctifying grace justifies before God.³²

³⁰Klotsche, op. cit., p. 76.

³¹Neve, Churches and Sects, p. 113.

³²Sheatsley, J., The Pope's Catechism, (Columbus, Ohio: The Lutheran Book Concern, Wod.), p. 160.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRIMITIVE STATE OF MAN ACCORDING TO LUTHERAN TEACHING

Man was created in the image of God.³³ The Scripture says nothing about any certain part of man being created in that image but it makes the simple statement that man, the entire man, was made in God's image. Neither does Scripture make a distinction between image and likeness in the sense that one refers to a natural endowment and the other to an added endowment given by God. Therefore, since these terms are identical, when the one is lost both are gone.

The primitive or original state of man was "very good". Man's will was free.³⁵ It was not disturbed in any way by any internal forces and it was capable of defending itself from outside attack. This does not mean that the will could not choose that which was evil. It could, for that possibility was included in the quality of freedom.³⁶

Man's will was in conformity with the will of God.³⁷ Man wanted to trust in God and he did. Man wanted to love

³³Gen. 1:26.

³⁴Pieper, op. cit., p. 312.

³⁵Klotsche, op. cit., p. 163.

³⁶Ibid. p. 164.

³⁷Th. Engelder and Others, Popular Symbolics, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 80.

and serve God and this he did. God hated evil and so did man. God wanted man to live in the closest relationship with him. Man desired the same thing. God wanted man to love his neighbor as himself and man's desire was in accordance with the will of God.

Man was morally clean and all lust for power and wealth was absent. Sexual uncleanness was not present for Adam and Eve lived together in their natural "clothing" without sinful desires on the part of either one.

In his original state, man had a true and thorough knowledge of God and spiritual things.³⁸ Not that his knowledge in all matters was as that of God but it was "very good". It was a knowledge unachievable by any other human being after the fall except for Christ.

The original righteousness of man pertained not only to his soul but also to his body. The body was immortal as was the soul.³⁹ Death would not have overtaken man in his first state and there never would have been death unless sin had come into the world.⁴⁰ Neither did pain, grief and disease have any power over the body. Man, in

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Romans 5:12.

⁴⁰Pieper, op. cit., p. 316.

his body, could have lived on earth forever being perfectly contented and happy.

Man's power and dominion was very great.⁴¹ It was not a "mock" sovereignty but it was a real power. Of this Luther says:

Adam and Eve are made rulers of the earth, sea, and air---Accordingly the naked man, without arms and walls, yea without any garments on his bare body, ruled over all the bird, beasts and fishes-- Adam and Eve understood all the traits, qualities and strength of every creature--They also had the most reliable kind of knowledge of the stars and astronomy---What we accomplish in our life is not accomplished by that dominion which Adam had, but by toil and tricks".⁴²

None of these attributes of man were supernatural. They were not added to man as supernatural gifts, but they were a part of man's natural gifts. They were not nature itself but they belonged to it.⁴³ Therefore, man needed no additional endowments to be perfectly holy and righteous, for he was that way already.

⁴¹Genesis 1:26-28.

⁴²Pieper, op. cit., p. 317.

⁴³Ibid. p. 316.

CHAPTER V

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Catholic theologians are not definitely agreed as to just what is original sin. Bonaventura says, "Original sin may be described as the want of original justice, whereby the perversity of nature and evil concupiscence hath risen."⁴⁴ The Scotists defined original sin as something negative, as the lack of original righteousness. The spiritual equilibrium was lost and to that extent man was weakened and no longer inclined to good. The Thomists regarded original sin not only as a negation but also as something positive in man consisting essentially in concupiscence. The Council of Trent carefully veiled the point of controversy and stated that Adam through his own fault lost the holiness and righteousness wherein he had been constituted.⁴⁵ The Council of Trent really decided what original sin is not.⁴⁶

At Augsburg the Catholics objected to calling original sin the lack of fear and confidence in God because they regarded these as intellectual traits which no one would

⁴⁴Moehler, op. cit., p. 51.

⁴⁵Klotsche, op. cit., p. 77.

⁴⁶Moehler, op. cit., p. 49.

demand of the unconscious child. Hence, they said, the absence of such acts did not constitute sin in the new born child. The non-existence of fear and love for God established guilt but did not denote the essence of sin.⁴⁷

The general view held today is that original sin should be defined as something negative, namely, the loss of the original endowment.⁴⁸

The loss to man through the transgression of Adam and Eve was great. There was, first of all, the loss of his preternatural gifts which meant that the body of man was now subject to sickness, pain, misery and even death. Had these gifts remained, man's body would have stayed immortal and free from such burdens. Another loss to man was his freedom from unlawful desires or concupiscence. All during his life there will be within man the strong inclination to evil.⁴⁹ Neither will God change that situation by restoring the original gift. The will of man, which was originally perfect, was also weakened by the fall,⁵⁰ and unless it is aided or helped by the special grace of God it cannot be exercised so as to please God to the fullest

⁴⁷Moehler, op. cit., p. 56.

⁴⁸Heve, A History of Christian Thought, p. 202.

⁴⁹Deck, op. cit., p. 26, 29.

⁵⁰Heve, History of Christian Thought, p. 148.

extent. This weakened will will remain with man until full strength is again restored in Paradise. The gift of sanctifying grace was also lost. By their disobedience, Adam and Eve lost the grace that made them friends of God.⁵¹ Their right to heaven was lost and the heavenly beauty that made man's soul have spiritual color in the eyes of God was gone.

Man cannot rightfully complain about any of his losses. He cannot demand of God that they be returned to him as though they were his by inherent right, for the divine gifts of God did not in reality belong to the nature of man. They were gifts of God given to man for his use only.⁵³

All that has just been said does not mean that original sin left Adam and Eve destitute. Man did not lose a thing to which he had a strict right. No important alterations took place in his nature therefore, his natural powers remained incorrupt. Bellarmine writes,

The state of man after the Fall does not differ from Adam's state in possession of pure naturals any more than the condition of the man who has had his clothes stolen differs from the condition of the naked man. Hence the corruption of human

⁵¹Noll and Fallon, op. cit., p. 14.

⁵²Kirsch, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵³O'Neil, op. cit., p. 4.

nature does not consist in the want of any natural gift, nor in the assets of any evil quality but flows alone from the loss of the supernatural gift on account of the sin of Adam.⁵⁴

After the fall man was still in possession of his free will although it was weakened. It became inclined to evil but it had not lost all strength in spiritual matters, for example, it still had the power to recognize God. It could desire the good and omit the evil. It could keep the commandments of God and thereby bring about the bestowal of God's grace upon man because of His delight in man's works.⁵⁵

The Tridentine states:

If any one saith, that man's free will moved and excited by God by assenting to God exciting and calling, nowise cooperates towards disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of justification let him be anathema--if any one saith that since Adam's sin the free will of man is lost and extinguished--let him be anathema.⁵⁶

Man had suffered a great deal in the Fall in that there was a weakening of his spiritual powers and therefore unable to free himself by his own will yet he was able to wish to have the physician and to believe in Him.⁵⁷

Man's reason still has the ability to arrive at meta-

⁵⁴Klotsche, op. cit., p. 78.

⁵⁵Bente, op. cit., p. 477.

⁵⁶Pieper, op. cit., p. 330.

⁵⁷Neve, History of Christian Thought, p. 148.

physical certainty. It is able to determine what is the will of God and it is able to so control the lower nature of man, which is the seat of concupiscence, that it remains in line with the virtue of goodness. Since this reason is in accord with the will of God it can subdue the evil inclinations of an individual.⁵⁸

It is denied that the image of God was lost by the fall. The likeness of God, which was the supernatural gift of God, was lost, but the image man retains and can claim as a part of his original nature.⁵⁹

Original sin is not concupiscence because concupiscence cannot really be called sin. Some say it is only a natural imperfection resulting from the composition of body and spirit in man. Others say concupiscence constitutes a kind of a tinder, that is, an occasion for sin.⁶⁰ While the Council of Trent did not bind believers to a special definition of concupiscence, Rome did state,

This concupiscence which the apostle sometimes calls sin, the holy synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood it to be called sin, as being truly and properly sin in those born again, but because it is of sin and

⁵⁸Moehler, op. cit., p. 25.

⁵⁹Ibid. p. 48.

⁶⁰Neve, Churches and Sects. p. 114.

inclines to sin--and if anyone is of contrary sentiment, let him be anathema.⁶¹

Wilmer says, "Original sin does not consist in Concupiscence, as the so called reformers of the sixteenth century asserted."⁶² The Catechismus Romanus says, "But these desires (Motus) (the appetition of the soul according to its nature resisting the mind) are far from the real nature of sin, if they have not the consent of the will and negligence combined therewith."⁶³

However, although concupiscence is not sin it can become such by issuing into evil acts.⁶⁴ With this concupiscence, therefore, man has to struggle but for this he should not be sorry for in the struggle he has the opportunity of earning merits for his salvation.⁶⁵ Thus concupiscence really offers an advantage to man. With this general opinion, however, the Thomists were in disagreement. They say, original sin is not only a negation but also something positive consisting essentially in concupiscence.⁶⁶

The schoolmen teach that all children are born in sin although there is a difference among them as to the mode

⁶¹Ibid. p. 115.

⁶²Klotsche, op. cit., p. 78.

⁶³Pieper, op. cit., p. 330.

⁶⁴Neve, Churches and Sects, p. 116.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 114.

⁶⁶Klotsche, op. cit., p. 77.

of transmitting Adam's sin. The difficulty arises because they teach that each soul is created by God (creationism). The question is,

what happens to the soul created by God, and created in all soundness, purity, and integrity, that, at the moment of its union with the body, it should be deprived not only of all supernatural gifts, but so deeply wounded in all its natural faculties and placed in so fearfully incongruous a relation to the Deity?

While there is much speculation on this matter no definite conclusions have been reached by the official church.⁶⁷

However, while there is not agreement on the mode of transmission there is agreement that all are born in sin with the exception of one human being. Catholic theologians teach that Mary was free of the stain of Adam. Pope Pius IX decreed the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary in 1854.⁶⁸ His decretal reads,

We declare, proclaim and determine: that the doctrine, which holds the most blessed Virgin Mary in the first moment of her conception was through the singular grace and privilege of omnipotent God, in view of the merit of Christ Jesus, the Savior of mankind, preserved immune from the ignominy of original sin, has been revealed by God and therefore is to be believed firmly and invariably by all the faithful. For this reason, if some should think otherwise in their heart than has been determined by us--may

⁶⁷Moehler, op. cit., p. 52f.

⁶⁸Neve, op. cit., p. 202.

God prevent it!--they are innovating and hence-
know that they, condemned by an appropriate
judgment, have suffered shipwreck as to faith
and fallen away from the unity of the church.⁶⁹

It is taught that at the moment God created Mary's soul He
applied to it the merits of His atonement and preserved her
from original sin.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

⁷⁰Noll and Fallon, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

CHAPTER VI

THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

Adam and Eve were not forced to transgress God's will for they had the ability to resist the wicked suggestions of any other creature and they had the power to reject Satan in his advances. They could have forced the devil to flee thus causing him to fail in his attempt. However, man did not choose the right actions but rather, by his own free choice he obeyed the desire of the old wicked foe and disobeyed a very clear command of God. Man very deliberately opposed himself to the will of his Lord,⁷¹ and thereby severed the divine relationship which had existed between God and man.⁷²

Therefore, only two subjects are responsible for the fall. God is not one of them for He wills only that which is good. He created man's nature good and strong and did not set the stage for the tragedy that took place. The two responsible for sin are the devil and man himself. Satan attacked with the intention of spiritual murder and man willingly followed his foe's bidding, hoping for something

⁷¹Genesis 2:17.

⁷²Engelder, op. cit., p. 38.

better than what he already had.⁷³

Through the transgression of Adam and Eve man's nature was completely corrupted. So corrupt did it become that no man can, by self examination or by a study of man's behaviour, ever arrive at a satisfactory description of its full depth and meaning.⁷⁴ We can detect in a measure its presence. When we see the anger, the greed and the foolishness of men we can determine that there is something radically wrong with them. Even pagan writers point out the natural inclination of man to evil. Horace says, "No one is born without faults; the happiest one is he, who is crowded by the least".⁷⁵ But the complete tragedy that took place in the Garden of Eden can be learned only from the Word of God.⁷⁶

In the fall man lost the image of God.⁷⁷ He had been created holy, righteous and with full knowledge of His Creator, but when man's sin took place this was all destroyed. Man became "destitute of the righteousness wherein he was

⁷³Genesis 3:1-16.

⁷⁴Bente, op. cit., p. 109.

⁷⁵Pieper, op. cit., p. 329

⁷⁶Bente, op. cit., p. 109.

⁷⁷Colossians 3:10.

originally created, and in spiritual things is dead to good."⁷⁸ When we say man lost the image of God we mean that he also lost the likeness of God for these terms are synonomous.

In his original state man feared God and his confidence in His Lord was not disturbed with doubts and moments of despair, but day after day man arose with the assurance that his God loved him and would keep him in His holy family.⁷⁹ However, when Satan won the victory this all changed. Knowledge of God changed to ignorance. Love for Him changed to contempt. God's judgments were held in ridicule and man became angry because of the demands of God. His heart was filled with despair of grace and he put his trust in temporal and earthly creatures. The carnal things of life, such as wealth, understanding and man's "belly" became the objects of worship. Man was now afflicted with disease; spiritual disease of the soul.⁸⁰ The Lutheran Church denies, in accordance with the Word of God, that a man even after the fall has a certain amount of fear, love and trust in God. She teaches that the "carnal mind is

⁷⁸Theodore Laetsch, The Abiding Word, (St. Louis, Mo: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 153.

⁷⁹Bente, op. cit., p. 109.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 107.

enmity against God,⁸¹ and that, therefore, man has no desire whatsoever to please His God by the fulfillment of His commandments. Natural man is too much in love with his own evil thoughts and plans to have a place in his life for the will of God.

The Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions object to the teaching that a man still has some freedom in spiritual matters, for free will in spiritual matters was lost by Adam and Eve through a wrong use of it. Instead of exercising itself for the good pleasure of God, the will of man by nature serves its master, the devil, who brought it into captivity.⁸²

The unregenerate will of man is not only turned away from God but it has also become an active enemy against God. Its only inclinations and desires are for that which is evil and contrary to God,⁸³ therefore, not even the power of choice can be conceded the unregenerate.⁸⁴ This does not mean that man cannot choose between good and evil on the level of civic righteousness. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession admits this freedom when it says,

⁸¹Romans 8:7

⁸²Bente, op. cit., p. 893.

⁸³Genesis 8:21.

⁸⁴Klotsche, op. cit., p. 166.

The human will has liberty in the choice of works which reason can comprehend of itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness.⁸⁵

However, even in these matters the making of the right choice is very much limited by the inherited weakness of men.

The will of natural man is opposed to the Law of God. It can not take any other stand since it is entirely hostile to the Lord.⁸⁶ Even when natural man desires to do things externally good he can do them not by reason of a close relationship with God but because of natural compassion.

All ability in spiritual matter disappeared in the fall. Man is not just sick or weak but entirely dead. He has no aptness whatsoever in spiritual matters.⁸⁷ In such matters man may be compared to a stone for he will not and cannot of himself yield to the advances of God's Spirit. The Formula of Concord observes, that fallen man can neither think, believe nor will anything having reference to divine and spiritual concerns, that he is utterly dead to all good, and has not the least spark of spiritual power.⁸⁸ To such a man the Gospel of Christ is foolishness.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Bente, op. cit., p. 863.

⁸⁶Romans 8:7.

⁸⁷2 Cor. 3:5.

⁸⁸Moehler, op. cit., p. 60.

⁸⁹1 Cor. 2:24.

There is no ability in man to change his wicked way. As little as a dead man can raise himself from the grave so little can a man that is spiritually dead raise himself to spiritual life.⁹⁰ Such a man does not fear or love God neither has he the gifts and the powers to produce these acts.⁹¹ The only power man has left after the fall is the power to resist. He resists, with his reason and passions, the advances of God in His Word and Sacraments.

Man is corrupt in body and soul. The entire man and his entire nature is completely infected with sin⁹² therefore, he did not receive, in the fall, merely a slight blemish, a little stain, but the corruption is deep and pervades the whole man.⁹³ We teach,

that original sin is not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature that nothing healthy or uncorrupted 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.⁹⁴

What has been just described may be called the negative side or original sin. There is also a positive side which we call concupiscence, a vicious disposition to evil.⁹⁵

⁹⁰Bente, op. cit., p. 787.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 111.

⁹²Ibid., p. 105.

⁹³Ibid., p. 863.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 781.

⁹⁵Laetsch, op. cit., p. 153.

The Apostle Paul uses this term when he says, "I had not known lust (concupiscence) except the law had said, thou shalt not covet."⁹⁶

We do not regard concupiscence as being only a defect, or "tinder", or a "penalty" but we regard it as the chief sin: the root and fountain of all actual sins.⁹⁷ Quenstedt wrote, "Paul, Roman 7, calls it (concupiscence, original depravity) sin fourteen times....The apostle names it the law of sin warring against the law of the mind, an evil, a sinning sin."⁹⁸ Luther said,

This sin is not committed like all other sin. It is the essential sin which does not sin for an hour or a certain time but wherever and as long as the person is, that long is this sin also.⁹⁹

To doubt God's wrath, to oppose His grace, to object to His word, to murmur against the goodness of the Lord and to have a heart filled with wrath and lust is more than a defect or a matter of little consequence but it is sin. At the same time however, it is also punishment for the disobedience of man.¹⁰⁰

While the human nature of man is corrupt and depraved

⁹⁶Romans 7:7.

⁹⁷Bente, op. cit., p. 861.

⁹⁸Neve, Churches and Sects, p. 115.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Bente, op. cit., p. 117.

we must be careful to distinguish between man's nature after the fall and corruption itself. One is the work of God while the other is the work of the devil.¹⁰¹ Original sin inheres in the nature of man, in his substance and essence but it is not the essence. It is accidental rather than substantial.¹⁰²

Although original sin like a spiritual poison and leprosy (as Luther says) has poisoned and corrupted the whole human nature so that we cannot show and point out to the eye the nature apart by itself, and original sin apart by itself, nevertheless the corrupt nature or essence of the corrupt man, body and soul or the man himself whom God has created (and in whom dwells original sin which also corrupts the nature, essence, or the entire man), and original sin, which dwells in man's nature or essence, and corrupts it, are not one thing.¹⁰³

Sin cannot be identified with human nature any more than the disease with which a man's body is afflicted can be identified with man himself.¹⁰⁴

The sin of Adam and Eve was passed to all mankind. "Through one man sin entered into the world."¹⁰⁵ The fall of Adam was the ruin of all men. The Augsburg Confession states, "since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 779.

¹⁰²Klotsche, op. cit., p. 164.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴C. H. Little, Lutheran Confessional Theology, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 101.

¹⁰⁵Romans 5:12

natural way are born with sin."¹⁰⁶ All men are guilty of original sin, "by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation",¹⁰⁷ and all men are born with the corrupt condition of their first parents, for the Word of God says, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh".¹⁰⁸ The whole world of mankind is by nature totally depraved in body and soul, in the highest and noblest powers of intellect and will. As children inherit from their parents certain features and traits, sometimes even bodily weaknesses and diseases, so have all men inherited that deep rooted spiritual corruption which we call original depravity.¹⁰⁹

We do not teach that original sin is acquired by us after our birth but it is a condition with which we are conceived. Thus from the very first moment of earthly life all men are in a depraved condition and charged with the guilt of sin. The only exception to this inclusive rule, that all were shapen in iniquity, is Christ the Lord for He did no sin.¹¹⁰ Therefore, we teach that Mary was conceived in sin. She was born with a mind and heart that were at enmity with God.

¹⁰⁶Bente, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁰⁷Romans 5:18.

¹⁰⁸John 3:6.

¹⁰⁹Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, p. 61.

¹¹⁰1 Peter 2:22.

CHAPTER VII

ACTUAL SIN ACCORDING TO ROMAN CATHOLIC SOURCES

Rome defines actual sin as a wilful violation of a (known) law of God.¹¹¹ This means, that the will of man must give consent if a transgression of the law is to be regarded as actual sin. It follows therefore, that there is no sin when a man is forced or coerced to violate a law of God which includes also the law of the church. Neither is there sin when the emotions of man, without the consent of the will, cause him to violate the law.¹¹² The Baltimore Catechism states, "If we commit a sinful act, when we have no chance or freedom to consent or refuse consent we are not guilty of sin (accidents, physical but not moral or hypnotic force applied, sins committed in sleep)."

Rome's definition furthermore means that there is no sin when a man is ignorant of right and wrong. Outwardly the act may appear to be diametrically opposed to the will of God, however, the acting subject may not have known the seriousness of the wrong or the full meaning of the Word of God. If that is true, such a man should be absolved of sin

¹¹¹Noll and Fallon, op. cit., p. 75.

¹¹²Deck, op. cit., p. 31.

properly so called. The Baltimore Catechism says, that if we commit a sinful act but do not know the act to be sinful, we are not guilty of sin (to eat meat on Friday).

Actual sins are divided into two kinds: mortal and venial (peccata mortalia et venialia).¹¹³ "Our Lord compared mortal sin to camels and beams, venial sins to gnats and mores. (Math. 23, 24, and 7:3)"¹¹⁴ They are distinguished by the way in which they affect our relation to God.¹¹⁵

Mortal sin is usually described as a wilful transgression of the Law of God. "If a man knowingly and willingly transgresses God's Law in an important matter, if he desires or enjoys a thing, the possession and enjoyment of which cannot go hand in hand with the possession and love of God-- Then he has done a grievous wrong, he has committed a mortal sin."¹¹⁶ The sinner turns his back on God and gives preference to a created thing. However, before there can be mortal sin at all there must be a grievous matter, sufficient reflection and full consent of the will.¹¹⁷ What is and what is not a grievous matter, or a matter of serious gravity is determined by Scripture, Councils, Popes and

¹¹³Neve, Churches and Sects, p. 116.

¹¹⁴Deck, op. cit., p. 33.

¹¹⁵O'Neil, op. cit., XLV, (p. 5.

¹¹⁶Scharsch, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 7.

and reason.¹¹⁸

The indication of sins which are grave ex suo genere is evident in Holy Scriptures, e. g. in Romans 1:20 sqq., 1 Corinthians vj. 9 sqq., and Galations v. 19 sqq.

Broadly speaking they fall under three heads:--

1. Sins which offend directly against the being and attributes of God such as blasphemy, unbelief, despair; 2. sins which inflict serious injury upon the human race or upon society such as rebellion and various forms of unchastity; 3. sins which injure our neighbor in his life, his property, or his good name such as murder, serious theft, false witness.

It is to be noted that a sin may be grave ex genere suo toto, as is murder; or it may be grave only ex genere suo sed non toto, as is theft; not every act of theft is objectively mortal sin. The matter of sin is understood to include all its circumstances, e. g. its end, its time, its place etc.

In all acts of sin there is some advertence. There is incomplete advertence when the sinner is half asleep, or distracted, or drunken or the like. Full advertence requires that the sinner should be in possession of his reason, that he should recognize that his sin is an offense against God, and that it is absolutely unlawful for him to commit it.¹¹⁹

A man cannot be charged with mortal sin when a) he does not see at least confusedly the evil effects which follow on the cause he places, b) he is not able to refrain from placing the cause, c) he is not under the obligation of preventing the evil act. Invincible ignorance excuses from

¹¹⁸O'Neil, op. cit., XLV, 7.

¹¹⁹Watkins L. Williams, The Moral Theology of the Sacrament of Penance, (Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1917), p. 179f.

sin while vincible ignorance lesses the magnitude.¹²⁰ "Sin ordinarily venial might become mortal if it is committed in defiance of God and religion, or if it is followed by serious consequences".¹²¹

There are conflicting opinions as to just what sins are mortal. The Council of Trent listed some of them and then closed with the words, "all the rest". Blasphemy and hatred for God are always mortal.¹²²

The most serious mortal sins are the sins against the Holy Ghost. They are presumption of God's mercy, despair, opposition to truth, obstinancy in sin, envy of another's spiritual good, and final impenitence.

Other serious sins are those that cry to heaven for vengeance, namely, wilful murder, sodomy, oppression of the poor, of widows and orphans, defrauding laborers of their wages.¹²³

Mortal sin deprives the soul of sanctifying grace and separates from God. It removes the heavenly beauty of grace leaving in its place the stain of sin spoken of in Scripture, Is. 4:4 and 1 Cor. 6:11.¹²⁴ This sin removes

¹²⁰O'Neil, op. cit., XIV, 7.

¹²¹Deck, op. cit., p. 33.

¹²²O'Neil, op. cit., XIV, 7.

¹²³Deck, op. cit., p. 34.

¹²⁴O'Neil, op. cit., XIV, 7.

true love for God since it has driven God from the soul and brought divine friendship to an end.¹²⁵ Man surrenders himself to the creature and deprives himself of his Creator. "Together with God, love departs, grace vanishes, life closes, beauty flees, happiness dies, and even hope is no more".¹²⁶ Thus, after mortal sin, the soul is spiritually dead. This does not mean man can do no good works, for he can still do some things which will bring about a "smile" on the face of God. However, while in the state of mortal sin, man can not merit heaven by his deeds. He is now unworthy of heaven.

Mortal sin entails the penalty of suffering. Such suffering may take place in this life or it may be inflicted in the life to come.¹²⁷ All who die in the state of mortal sin will go to hell.¹²⁸ Other effects of mortal sin are listed as follows: remorse of the conscience, inclination towards evil, darkening of the intelligence, hardening of the will and a vitiating of nature which does not destroy faculties of soul but merely weakens their use.¹²⁹

¹²⁵Kirsch, op. cit., p. 332.

¹²⁶Scharch, op. cit., p. 12.

¹²⁷O'Neil, op. cit., XLV, 9.

¹²⁸Kirsch, op. cit., p. 342.

¹²⁹O'Neil, op. cit., XLV, 9.

Venial sin differs from mortal sin in that it is not nearly so grievous.¹³⁰ It does not kill the soul as does mortal sin. While it retards man it does not avert him from heaven. Furthermore, venial sin is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.

The distinction between mortal and venial sin is said to be found in 1 Cor. 3:8-15. Hay, wood and stubble are called venial sins. St. Thomas says,

Just as (hay, wood, stubble) are gathered together in a house and do not pertain to the substance of the edifice, so also venial sins are multiplied in man, the spiritual edifice remaining, and for these he suffers either the fire of temporal tribulations in this life, or of purgatory after this life and nevertheless obtains eternal salvation.¹³¹

Venial sins are only a version, a deviation from God, without sufficient reflection or full consent of the will. Whatever be the gravity of sin, no matter how serious it may appear to the eyes of men, if the consent of the will be imperfect, the sin is "formally" venial.¹³² A sin may be venial in two ways, 1) when the evil done is not seriously wrong, 2) when the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong or does

¹³⁰Scharsch, op. cit., p. 7.

¹³¹O'Neil, op. cit., XIV, 10.

¹³²Williams, op. cit., p. 181.

not give full consent to it.¹³³

While venial sin is an injury to the highest and most lovable God it does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace or drive God from man. The flame of love in the heart of man for God is not quenched and although great mischief has been done the life of the soul is not destroyed. On the other hand, venial sin retards virtue and perfection. It smudges the soul, blurs the beam of beauty which the soul ordinarily radiates and dulls the delicacy of conscience.¹³⁴ The more venial sins are committed the more the soul is prepared for the performance of mortal sin.

Generally it should be noted that venial sin predisposes the soul to mortal sin, and tends to produce a bad habit and to weaken the resistance of the will to temptation. It familiarizes the soul with wrongdoing, and deprives it of the efficacious grace which God would otherwise bestow upon it.¹³⁵

Venial sin does not merit eternal punishment since sanctifying grace and divine friendship are not expelled by such sin. Furthermore, it is considered out of harmony with the justice of God to inflict a punishment out of proportion with the guilt involved. There is however, a

¹³³Noll and Fallon, op. cit., p. 76.

¹³⁴Scharsch, op. cit., p. 15.

¹³⁵Williams, op. cit., p. 183.

punishment which venial sin does merit which is known as temporal punishment.¹³⁷ Such punishment is to be satisfied already in this life, however, if that can not be done here it can be accomplished in purgatory.

¹³⁷O'Neil, op. cit., XLV, 10.

CHAPTER VIII

ACTUAL SIN ACCORDING TO LUTHERAN SOURCES

Actual sin is that lawlessness (anomia) which is committed by man in distinction from the lawlessness which is the condition of man.¹³⁸ Actual sin involves some activity, either external or internal on the part of man. Speaking of such sins, Christ says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."¹³⁹ Whatever one may do, speak, think, feel or will contrary to the Law of God is actual sin. There need not be a deliberate attempt before there is sin, for knowledge and intent is not of the essence of sin. Paul admits as evil and sinful also those things which he did not want to do.¹⁴⁰

Even though an individual may not know the Law of God in its entirety or has not been made aware of God's will at any time, he is not thereby cleared from guilt, for if his acts, whether they be internal or external, be contrary to a command of God such a man is guilty of actual sin.

¹³⁸Pieper, op. cit., p. 340.

¹³⁹Matthew 15:19.

¹⁴⁰Romans 7:19.

For example, if one is forced to do evil he has sinned even though his will did not give consent. If an individual is asleep, or unconscious from an accident, or mentally deranged, and in some way acts contrary to any command of God, he is not free of guilt. The breaking of God's will is sin whether it be stealing one penny or a million dollars, whether one is angry without a cause or actually murders another, whether one lusts after a woman or actually takes her unlawfully as his mistress. Furthermore, it is not for man, or Popes, or councils, or reason to determine just what is a matter of serious gravity and what is not. For man to set up his own private definitions is to interfere with the wisdom and majesty of God.

All men, including infants,¹⁴¹ are guilty of actual sin with the exception of Christ who was without spot and blemish. This guilt is due to the fact of original sin which is such a stain, such a corruption of the human soul, heart and mind that man cannot prevent himself from producing thoughts, words and deeds contrary to the will of God.¹⁴² From the root of original sin comes corrupt fruit despised by God.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹Bente, op. cit., p. 967.

¹⁴²Matthew 15:19.

¹⁴³Engelder, op. cit., p. 41.

Lutheran theologians sometimes classify actual sins, not to make one sin less devastating in its consequences than another, or more easily pardoned than another, but in order to realize the great multitude of our transgressions, and the great need of help from God. One manner of listing and classifying actual sins may be as follows: 1) sins of offense; 2) voluntary and involuntary sins; 3) sins against conscience; 4) sins of commission and omission; 5) sins against God, neighbor, and self; 6) grievous and less grievous sins; 7) mortal and venial sins; 8) dominant and non dominant sins; 9) secret and open sins; 10) partaking of other men's sins; 11) sins that cry to God for vengeance; 12) the sin of hardening oneself and 13) the sin against the Holy Ghost.¹⁴⁴

God is not to be blamed for actual sin. He concurs in the acts of men, for example, He gives strength to the finger that pulls the trigger of a gun in murder or suicide. He gives wisdom to the mind that devises all evil against the Kingdom of God and man, and He gives motion to legs that lead men to places of lust and wickedness. However, while God participates in all the acts men, He does not

¹⁴⁴Laetsch, op. cit., p. 160 ff.

concur in the sinfulness of men's acts.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, the cause of sin must be sought outside of God. The Formula of Concord states:

The beginning and cause of evil is not God's foreknowledge (for God does not create or effect (or work) evil, neither does He help or promote it), but the wicked and perverse will of men.¹⁴⁶

We speak of internal causes and external causes of sin. The primary internal cause is the flesh, the old man. Original sin is the "root and fountainhead of all actual sins".¹⁴⁷ The nature, depraved and corrupt from the time of conception can only bring forth depraved and corrupt fruit. The secondary internal causes are causes within us, such as spiritual ignorance, sinful emotions and passions, and evil habits developed through repeated individual sinful acts.¹⁴⁸

The external causes of sin, the causes without man, are the devil and other men.¹⁴⁹ The devil is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience and is the adversary of the children of God.¹⁵⁰ Other men, the world, lead men into sin by seductive words and examples. The

¹⁴⁵Laetsch, op. cit., p. 159.

¹⁴⁶Pieper, op. cit., p. 325.

¹⁴⁷Engelder, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁴⁸Pieper, op. cit., p. 341.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 342.

¹⁵⁰1 Peter 5:8-9.

glitter and the riches of the world win many men for the kingdom of darkness.

The consequence of actual sin is by no means insignificant, for by breaking one commandment man breaks the whole Law of God. Every sin, no matter how small it may appear, is a crime against the majesty of God, therefore, as man stands before God with his innermost heart bared and with his outward acts exposed, he should hear God say, guilty.¹⁵¹ Let not a mere human being argue with God over this matter, neither let him gloss over the acts which have circumvented the will of God by making out that such acts are justifiable due to certain conditions that existed. Rather, let man stand before the mirror of the Law and learn the fact of his guilt.

Transgression and guilt go together. If the first takes place, which it does, the sinner must take the consequence of being declared a criminal in the sight of God. However, sin entails more than guilt and the charge of guilt. It subjects man also to punishment,¹⁵² for the wages of sin is death. ¹⁵³

We speak of a threefold death. There is temporal

¹⁵¹Romans 3:19.

¹⁵²Galations 3:10.

¹⁵³Romans 6:23

death which is the separation of the soul from the body. The body is laid in the grave and the soul is carried either into heaven or hell. There is spiritual death which is the separation of the soul from God. When Adam sinned the close relationship of God and his soul ceased. Thus it is today: the man who lives in sin has a soul that is at enmity with God. Then, there is eternal death, the separation of both body and soul from the blissful presence of God.¹⁵⁴

All sins whether venial or mortal merit eternal damnation.¹⁵⁵ It is not Scriptural when it is said that venial sins merit only temporal punishment. The sin that flows from the greatest weakness deserves the full and everlasting wrath of God.

¹⁵⁴Koehler, Summary of Christian Doctrine, p. 60.

¹⁵⁵Neve, Churches and Sects, p. 17.

CHAPTER IX

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE ON THE REMEDY FOR SIN AND SIN'S CONSEQUENCES

According to Rome, no one enters heaven without sanctifying grace.¹⁵⁶ As soon as that grace, which has been earned by the work of Christ, departs from the soul, the close relationship that existed between God and man ceases. This loss took place in the fall of our first parents and is the natural state of all men except for Mary and Christ.

In order to regain this grace of sanctification the means provided by God and the Church must be used. One means is the Sacrament of Baptism, for in Baptism the soul is given grace, which is the life of the soul.¹⁵⁷ The Baltimore Catechism states,

Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses from original sin, makes us Christians, children of God and heirs of heaven. Baptism is the most necessary sacrament because other sacraments cannot be received without it, and because it is the beginning of spiritual life in man. By it we become members of the church, on earth and members of God's family in heaven.¹⁵⁸

With the infusion of sanctifying grace through Baptism, original sin is destroyed, therefore, man can no longer be

¹⁵⁶Kirsch, op. cit., p. 167.

¹⁵⁷Deck, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 73.

charged with the sin of his first parents. His nature has been repaired, love has been infused into his soul, good works have become perfected and man can demand eternal life.¹⁵⁹ He becomes a new man and partaker of the divine nature. In short, the sinner is changed into a saint.¹⁶⁰ However, the blessing of Baptism, namely, sanctifying grace, may again be lost by the performance of mortal sin. When that happens man must seek another way of regaining his great loss. Here the church comes to his rescue and provides him with the Sacrament of Penance, which is a laborious task consisting of three parts: contrition, confession and satisfaction.¹⁶¹

Contrition, or sorrow for sin, may be either perfect or imperfect. Imperfect contrition, or attrition, does "not trace its ancestry beyond a fear of gaining hell or losing heaven."¹⁶² It is prompted by the fear of hell. It however is sufficient for the Sacrament of Penance.

Imperfect contrition, though it cannot of itself without the Sacrament of Penance, justify the sinner, yet disposes him to receive divine grace in the Sacrament of Penance. (Council of Trent)¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹Neve, History of Christian Thought, p. 203.

¹⁶⁰Deck, op. cit., p. 52.

¹⁶¹Farrell, op. cit., p. 358.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Kirsch, op. cit., p. 90.

Perfect contrition, or perfect sorrow, is the desired contrition and "contrition in its stricted sense."¹⁶⁴ It exists when man is truly sorry for having offended God and when he has the firm resolve to sin no more, especially to avoid all mortal sin.¹⁶⁵

The next work in the Sacrament of Penance is the act of confession, wherein a man tells his sins to a duly authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining the forgiveness of sins. In confession man is bound to confess all mortal sins, but it is also well that he confess his venial sins. If he has trouble expressing himself any priest will gladly help him. The priest wants to hear how often a particular sin was committed, whether it was once or five times or more,¹⁶⁶ but if one cannot remember the number of his sins he should tell the number as nearly as possible and say how long such a sinful habit had been going on. If, without a person's fault, a mortal sin is forgotten, the confession is worthy, but the sin must be later told in confession if it again comes to mind, for it is a very grievous offense against God to wilfully conceal a mortal sin.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴Farrell, op. cit., p. 358.

¹⁶⁵Deck, op. cit., p. 87.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p. 91.

After a worthy confession the priest grants absolution. He remits both the guilt and the eternal punishment, however, there is something which the man making the confession must still do. He must still satisfy temporal punishments, which have to be suffered either on earth or in purgatory.¹⁶⁸ "We must suffer some punishment for every sin even if forgiven. Thus Adam, Moses, Aaron, and King David were forgiven their sins but were nevertheless punished."¹⁶⁹ The Council of Trent declares, "If anyone shall say that together with sin the whole punishment due is always remitted by God--let him be anathema". God requires such punishments as satisfaction for sin to teach men the great evil of sin and to keep them from falling again. Thus the priest must assign penance after confession that God may be satisfied by its performance. "Except you do penance you shall all likewise perish". (Luke 13:5)¹⁷⁰ If the penance given cannot be performed the priest should be respectfully told and asked to change his decision.

It must be remembered that the penance given by the priest does not always make full satisfaction for sins,

¹⁶⁸Klotsche, op. cit., p. 111.

¹⁶⁹Deck, op. cit., p. 92.

¹⁷⁰Kirsch, op. cit., p. 252.

therefore, other acts of penance and good works should be performed. The chief good works which help man in making satisfaction for sins are prayer, fasting, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, giving alms to the poor, patient suffering and indulgences. In defining the last work, indulgences, Catholic theologians state that it is simply a remission of the temporal punishment due to God on account of sin after the guilt and eternal punishment have been remitted.¹⁷¹

It is not a pardon for sin, nor a license to sin and no one may gain an indulgence who is in the state of mortal sin.¹⁷²

The basis for indulgences is the superabundant satisfaction of the blood of Christ with the added satisfaction of the Virgin Mary and the saints, which is called the spiritual treasury of the Church. St. Thomas says of this treasure,

All this treasure is at the dispensation of the chief rulers of the Church, inasmuch as our Lord gave the Keys of the Church to Peter. When then the utility or necessity of the Church requires it, the chief ruler of the Church can draw from this infinite store of merits to communicate to anyone who through charity is a member of the Church, as much as he deems to be opportune, whether it be such as will suffice for the total remission of his punishment, or up to a certain portion of the whole in such wise, namely, that

¹⁷¹James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, (New York: Kennedy and Sons, 1917), p. 307.

¹⁷²Deck, op. cit., p. 95.

the passion of Christ (through whom alone the merits of the others have efficacy) and the other saints may be imparted to him just as if he himself had suffered what was necessary for the remission of his sin--as happens when one person satisfies another.¹⁷³

There are various means of securing indulgences, but chiefly by works of devotion such as reading of Scripture, offering certain prayers, attending to religious exercises, and many other ways. A plenary indulgence was granted to all those faithful Catholics who attended the opening of the holy doors at St. Peter's Cathedral by Pope Pius XII on December 24, 1949. Such indulgence was also granted to all the faithful who listened to the program by radio. It will be given those who, during the Holy Year of 1950, visit the holy buildings of Rome.

It is not considered a simony if on the occasion of receiving an indulgence a portion of money is paid to the Church because the money is not received in payment for spiritual goods but it is regarded as a token of appreciation for kindnesses received. The New Law Code (canon 730) declares it to be "no simony if something earthly be given on such occasion though not for spiritual things."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³J. C. Macaulay, Truth Vs. Dogma, (Chicago, Ill: Moody Press, 1946), p. 91.

¹⁷⁴Klotsche, op. cit., p. 117.

When the Sacrament of Penance is properly carried out, as has just been set forth, the party concerned about his soul may be assured that all his sins after Baptism are forgiven. This "Sacrament is an instrument of forgiveness absolutely infallible in the production of its effects", and it is absolutely necessary either in fact or in desire,¹⁷⁵ for it is the only means after Baptism by which sanctifying grace can be restored.

Venial sins may also be removed by the Sacrament of Penance. It is considered good judgment to confess even these sins to the priest for the purpose of absolution, however, it is not necessary.¹⁷⁶ The reason lies in the fact that venial sin does not break the intimacy that exists between God and man. It weakens but does not destroy the supernatural life of the soul, that is, it does not put the soul into such a condition that it requires a new infusion of grace.¹⁷⁷

Other means, therefore, may be used in expiating venial sins. The Council of Trent states:

Venial sins may without guilt be omitted in confession and expiated by a variety of other

¹⁷⁵Farrell, op. cit., p. 351.

¹⁷⁶Scharsch, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁷⁷Farrell, op. cit., p. 355.

means.¹⁷⁸

St. Thomas says, that whatever arouses love for God expiates venial sin. Works of penance, such as fasting, patient endurance of trials, acts of self denial and prayers have atoning powers. The Holy Eucharist cleanses from venial sin,¹⁷⁹ and Sacramentals also may be used for expiatory purposes.¹⁸⁰

It must be pointed out that the remedy for sin and sin's consequences cannot always be completely administered and carried out in this life. Very few find themselves in such a condition at death that they can enter directly into heaven. Therefore, there is provided a purging place, a purgatory, for those souls who have not removed all venial sins and have failed to do sufficient penance for sins which had been forgiven.¹⁸¹ Such insufficient penance, or satisfaction, may be due either to man's lack of time, ability, or inclination, or it may be due to the fact that the priest failed in assigning the right amount of temporal punishments. Whatever may be the cause for the lack, sufficient satisfaction may be made in purgatory.

¹⁷⁸Scharsch, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁷⁹Klotsche, op. cit., p. 110.

¹⁸⁰Deck, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁸¹Kirsch, op. cit., p. 343.

The souls in purgatory are called the Church suffering because extreme pain and anguish continue until souls are completely purged of their sins and all temporal punishments taken care of.¹⁸² Such souls, however, can be assisted by our prayers, good works, indulgences and especially by the Church's divinely instituted sacrifice, called the mass.¹⁸³

¹⁸²Noll and Falon, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁸³Ibid., p. 70.

CHAPTER X

THE REMEDY FOR SIN ACCORDING TO LUTHERAN DOCTRINE

"By grace are ye saved through faith."¹⁸⁴ Moved by His love and compassion for sinful man God resolved to save him by the death of His Son. God's Son, Jesus Christ, being filled with love for man carried out the work of God that all men might have eternal life. Through the work of Christ, and Christ alone, the whole world was reconciled to God. Thus, if sinners are saved it is due solely to the grace and mercy of God.

When we speak of the grace that saves sinners we do not have reference to the gifts and qualities which God imparts to man and we do not have reference to an infused grace, such as sanctifying grace, which supposedly makes man holy and just in himself. We object to the false use of the term grace in salvation which makes it an attribute of man rather than the personal good favor of God towards man.

We teach that grace is free gift of God.¹⁸⁵ God's loving and forgiving disposition is bestowed upon all men without any payment from them and without any good in them.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴Ephesians 2:8.

¹⁸⁵Romans 2:8.

¹⁸⁶Romans 3:23.

In fact it is bestowed upon man even though he deserves wrath and eternal punishment. Scripture teaches that grace is for the ungodly.¹⁸⁷ Whenever anyone attempts to mix works with grace, that is, whenever anyone wants to make salvation depend on something good in man and at the same time wants to give God some credit, grace is voided. Therefore, any doctrine of forgiveness that allows for the merit of man in paganistic doctrine.

By reaffirming the right definition of grace as "gratuitus Dei favor"¹⁸⁸ and excluding from it the false conception of infused grace, the Church of the Reformation returned to the purity of Biblical and Christian doctrine. It bears witness against any form of synergism, and upholds grace, grace through Christ, as the sole cause of the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. The Lutheran Church gives all glory to God rather than to man and his powers¹⁸⁹

The means by which God shows His grace and by which He bestows upon men the remedy for sin are known as the Gospel, Baptism and Holy Communion. The Gospel, the Word of reconciliation, is the means by which He offers and conveys to

¹⁸⁷Romans 4:5.

¹⁸⁸John T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 245.

¹⁸⁹Engelder, op. cit., p. 43.

sinful man the merits which Christ has secured for the world by His death on the cross. The Formula of Concord states XI, 76: "The Father will not do this (draw anyone to Himself) without means, but has ordained for this purpose His Word and Sacraments as ordinary means and instruments."¹⁹⁰ Wherever the divine Gospel is, there is the divine Spirit, therefore, whenever the Word of Promise is being proclaimed the Holy Spirit is at the same time using His power to make the Word effective and to convey the remedy for sins.

Baptism also is for the remission of sins, for it washes away sin.¹⁹¹ However, while Baptism washes away the guilt of sin it does not remove man's sinful condition.

Original sin which is born in the flesh, passes away in baptism as guilt, but remains as a work; for although it is forgiven, nevertheless it lives and works and raves and assails us until the body dies and only then it is destroyed.¹⁹²

Augustine said, "Sin is forgiven in Baptism; not that it is no longer present but it is not imputed."¹⁹³

In the Lord's Supper also, we have the gracious offer of pardon for the sake of Him who died and shed His blood

¹⁹⁰Mueller, op. cit., p. 441.

¹⁹¹Acts 2:38.

¹⁹²Martin Luther, Works of Martin Luther, (Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1932), 111, 34.

for the remission of sins. All means of grace, therefore, have the same purpose and effect, namely, they offer to man God's gracious forgiveness. Since this is true, there is no necessity that man look to any other creature or to himself for the virtues which would help make him a fit subject for eternal salvation.

The means of grace, the power of God unto salvation, not only offer grace, but they are also the means by which the Holy Spirit brings about faith in Christ in the heart of man. Thus it is not a work of man that he believes, and trusts in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but it is due solely to the effective operation of God.¹⁹³

The faith of which we speak,

does not signify merely the knowledge of history-- but signifies a faith which believes...also the effect of the history--namely, this article: the forgiveness of sins, to wit, that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ.¹⁹⁴

Faith is not only knowledge in the intellect, but also confidence in the will, i. e. it is to wish and to receive that which is offered in the promise-- namely, reconciliation, and remission of sins.¹⁹⁵

Therefore, we conclude that faith, clinging to the crucified and the resurrected Christ is the effective remedy for all

¹⁹³Colossians 2:12

¹⁹⁴Bente, op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 205.

men's sins and we deny that men's work can do anything for the salvation of man. "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law".¹⁹⁶ "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶Romans 3:28.

¹⁹⁷1 Corinthians 15:57.

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