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### The Relationship of Christ and Faith in Luther's Great Galatians Commentary (1531/1535), Section 2:16-21

Luisivan Veller Strelow

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [ir\\_strelowl@csl.edu](mailto:ir_strelowl@csl.edu)

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THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST AND FAITH IN LUTHER'S  
GREAT GALATIANS COMMENTARY (1531/1535),  
SECTION 2:16-21

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
Luisivan Vellar Strelow  
July 1991

Approved by Dr. nes Mantoufel  
Advisor  
George R. Bell  
Reader

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AC - Augsburg Confession
- BSLK - Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche
- FC - Formula of Concord
- LC - Large Catechism
- LW - Luther's Works, American Edition
- SA - Smalcald Articles
- SC - Small Catechism
- SD - Solid Declaration
- WA - D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe  
(Weimar edition)

## PREFACE

The Augsburg Confession affirms that we are justified or accepted by God as righteous "for Christ's sake through faith." It explains that we are justified "for Christ's sake" because "Christ suffered for us," that is, by his death he "made satisfaction for our sins." And we are justified "through faith" because we believe that we are received into God's favor and that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Therefore, "we cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God by our own merits, works, or satisfactions" (AC IV, both versions).<sup>1</sup> Christ and faith, therefore, exclude works; justification is by grace, not merit.

The Formula of Concord reaffirms the Augsburg Confession when it says that faith justifies "because it lays hold on or accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the Holy Gospel" (SD III, 13). The reference to Christ's merit is the reference to Christ's work: "as God and man he has by his perfect obedience redeemed us from our sins" (SD

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, ed. The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 30. Hereafter citations of Lutheran confessional documents will be given in the text in parentheses without footnote references to Tappert.

III, 4). The merit which is applied to us is "the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ when he satisfied the law for us and paid for our sin" (SD III, 14). In the Formula of Concord, therefore, Christ is confessed as our righteousness in view of his work of redemption. It "is applied, appropriated, and accepted by faith" (SD III, 16). Justification is, therefore, "without the addition of our works" (SD III, 23). As in the Augsburg Confession, Christ and faith exclude works or merit.

In the section 2:16-21 of the Great Galatians Commentary, Luther gives especial attention to the relationship of Christ and faith in justification. His presentation is in agreement with the confessional Lutheran position: Christ and faith exclude works. Luther says, in a phrase which contains his entire thought: "faith grasps and embraces Christ, the Son of God, who was given for us."<sup>2</sup> Christ and his work of redemption for us, faith which grasps and embraces Christ--works are excluded.

However, Luther's language is not always easily understandable in his description of how Christ and faith are related so that faith in Christ justifies with the exclusion of works. Luther refers to the "present Christ" and says: "Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold

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<sup>2</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 26, Lectures on Galatians: Chapters 1-4, trans. and ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 177; hereafter as LW 26.

of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ."<sup>3</sup> Luther says also that Christ is "the form of faith,"<sup>4</sup> and that Christ and the believer are "as one person."<sup>5</sup> How is this language to be understood? In contrast to some authors who isolated these phrases and interpret them in a way which goes against their own context, the purpose here is to study the entire section as a whole, and to interpret these phrases according to their own context.

This thesis is subdivided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction in which it is explained how Great Galatians, 2:16-21 shall be interpreted from a confessional standpoint. Luther's writings integrated in the Lutheran Confessions, not his earlier writings, are indicated as normative writings for the study of Luther's theology. The second chapter presents a study of Luther's confessional writings, the Small and the Large Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles. It is a preliminary study of Luther's theology, with attention to the relationship of Christ and faith in these writings. The third chapter is a study of the section 2:16-21 of the Great Galatians Commentary, under the theme "the relationship of Christ and faith." In the first part of the chapter, the theology of the passage is presented in an order suggested by Luther's

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 168.

text and his theology as seen in chapter 2. In the second part, two sets of paragraphs are analyzed according to their inner structure in order to interpret some difficult phrases in the light of their own context. The fourth chapter is a summary of the results.

The Catholic scholar Peter Manns observes that the Great Galatians Commentary has been frequently cited in connection with the doctrine of justification but "as yet has not been given exhaustive consideration."<sup>6</sup> Lowell C. Green regrets the lack of interest in this work of the mature Luther.<sup>7</sup> We may regret the greater lack of studies on this commentary from a confessional standpoint. This study selects an important section of the commentary for a more careful analysis. It shall be seen that it contains the essentials of Luther's doctrine of justification. The reaffirmation of the doctrine of justification, however, is the continuous task of those committed to the Lutheran Confessions.

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<sup>6</sup>Peter Manns, "Absolute and Incarnate Faith--Luther on Justification in the Galatians' Commentary of 1531-1535" in Catholic Scholars Dialogue with Luther, ed. Jared Wicks (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1970), 122.

<sup>7</sup>Lowell C. Green, How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1980), 32.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The purpose in this thesis is to study Luther's doctrine of justification on the basis of a selected text of the mature Luther. This text is the section 2:16-21 of Luther's Great Galatians Commentary (1531/1535). Karin Bornkamm observes accurately that Paul's summary of his doctrine of justification in this section leads Luther to develop his own presentation of the doctrine of justification.<sup>1</sup> In Great Galatians, 2:16-21, Luther presents his concept of fides apprehensiva Christi over against the scholastic concept of fides charitate formata. In justification, faith is related to Christ, not to love.

The Great Galatians Commentary is, in spite of modern Luther scholarship's concentration on the early writings of Luther, that work in which the consensus between Luther and the Lutheran Confessions has been traditionally

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<sup>1</sup>Karin Bornkamm, Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs von 1519 und 1531: ein Vergleich, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 35 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963), 89.

recognized.<sup>2</sup> Criticisms with respect to the authenticity or the credibility of the Great Galatians Commentary have been determined by prejudices against the confessional doctrine of justification "by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith" rather than by objective reasons.<sup>3</sup> As Brian A. Gerrish has observed,

Nothing is said in the Commentary on Galatians which could not be found elsewhere in Luther's writings, although in no other single writing is the whole matter put together as completely and so forcefully.<sup>4</sup>

Jaroslav Pelikan, in the introduction to volume 26 of the American edition of Luther's works, observes that the reliability of the editorial work of George Röer becomes clear by a comparison between the printed text and the notes.<sup>5</sup>

One of the problems in the interpretation of Luther's theology has been the relationship of his earlier to his later writings, and the precise line dividing both groups.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Lowell C. Green, How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1980), 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 32.

<sup>4</sup>Brian A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 63.

<sup>5</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, Introduction to Luther's Works, American Edition, vol 26, Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4, ed. J. Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), ix-x.

<sup>6</sup>N. Nagel, "Luther's Understanding of Christ in Relation to his Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Cambridge, England, 1961), xvi-xvii; F. Edward Cranz, An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law,

Some authors have understood the later writings in continuity with the earlier ones, while others have advocated discontinuity. The true question is whether Luther understood justification in his earlier works in the same way as in his later ones. Alister McGrath has observed in relation to the discussion of the date of Luther's breakthrough that "the date assigned to the breakthrough is itself determined by the prior decision on the part of the scholar as to the precise nature of Luther's discovery."<sup>7</sup> Uuras Saarnivaara has criticized the advocates of the young Luther for their misapprehension of Luther's real discovery: justification through imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, not a sanative type of justification.<sup>8</sup>

It is assumed here, therefore, that the earlier writings of Luther cannot serve as norm for the interpretation of the later ones, and that earlier and later writings cannot be combined into a systematic presentation of the doctrine of justification. As F. Edward Cranz says it:

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and Society, Harvard Theological Studies, 19, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), xiv.

<sup>7</sup>Alister McGrath, Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough (Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1985), 99.

<sup>8</sup>Uuras Saarnivaara, Luther Discovers the Gospel: New Light Upon Luther's Way from Medieval Catholicism to Evangelical Faith (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 41-43.

The differences between the early and mature works are so great that only confusion results from the assumption that we are dealing with a single, unified position.<sup>9</sup>

Lowell C. Green has stated his own position in a way that it is accepted also here:

This book is written with the certainty that the forensic justification described in the Concordia is basically true to the insights of Paul, that the Young Luther failed to understand justification fully, that in his later years Luther came to a fully evangelical doctrine, and that the Mature Luther explicitly rejected the views of the Young Luther.<sup>10</sup>

It is assumed also here that Luther's reorientation was due to a new understanding of Christ's work, that is, his death, no longer in solidarity with man and as a pattern to be effected in man, but as substitutionary, atoning death, and also of the means by which man benefits from this work.<sup>11</sup>

Luther himself and the Lutheran Confessions provide sound criteria for the interpretation of Luther's theology. Luther was aware of the danger the publication of his earlier works could bring for the preservation of the Gospel; he strongly opposed the publication or reprint of earlier documents. In his famous Preface to the first volume of his Latin Works, in 1545, Luther warned the reader to be aware of his past as a monk and a papist and the

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<sup>9</sup>Cranz, xiv.

<sup>10</sup>Green, xxvi.

<sup>11</sup>See Nagel, xxii-xxiii.

initial developments of the Reformation.<sup>12</sup> He also considered, for example, his first lectures on Galatians as only the beginning of his battle against the righteousness of works.<sup>13</sup>

Luther also published, twice, a writing with the purpose of offering the public a clear witness of his faith and theology. It first happened when Luther published the Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, also known as the "Great Confession," (1528), against the sectarians. The other occasion was Luther's own publication of the Smalcald Articles in 1538 as a testimony of his faith and theology especially against the errors of the Roman church. Luther understood each as being a definite summary of his theology as well as his last word to the adversaries. As general statements of his faith and theology, they should serve also against the misuse of his writings.<sup>14</sup>

An important aspect of both the Great Confession and

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<sup>12</sup>Martin Luther, "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings" (1545) in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 34, Career of the Reformer IV, ed. Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960) 327-328.

<sup>13</sup>Martin Brecht, Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 452.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (1528), Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 37, trans. and ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), 162 and 360; SA, Preface, 3-5, Theodore G. Tappert, ed. The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 289. Hereafter citations of Lutheran confessional documents will be given either in the text or in footnotes without references to Tappert.

the Smalcald Articles is what Luther judges as being in conflict: truth and error, God's truth and the lies of the devil, not human opinions against each other. Luther acknowledges an eschatological significance in confessing the truth. The confession now is a matter of conscience, salvation is at stake, for the same confession will be required in the judgement before the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, Luther provided a basic criterion for the use of his works. He distinguished his later from his earlier works, being critical of the earlier ones. He criticized the misuse of his writings out of their proper context and against his own intention. Twice he published a public confession of his faith and teaching, which he wished to serve as a kind of introduction into his theology and writings. And he understood the whole thing not merely as a matter of having the authentic or definite Luther, but as confession of the saving truth.

On the other hand, it is important to enquire whether the Confessions give us criteria for the understanding of Luther, and whether these criteria agree with Luther's. The "young Luther" approach is critical of the identification of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. Basically it means that these scholars do not acknowledge forensic or imputative justification in Luther. However, if the

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<sup>15</sup>Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 162; SA III, XV (Conclusion), 3.

Confessions indicate the same criteria as Luther, and include as normative for Lutheran theology those writings expressly approved by Luther himself, it will be established that not the Confessions but the "young Luther" scholars rejected Luther's evangelical theology.<sup>16</sup>

When we ask for the Confessions' understanding of Luther's theology, we have to pay attention to the Formula of Concord and the Preface to the Book of Concord, written by those theologians who first subscribed the Lutheran Confessions. In the first place, the Augsburg Confession, the Lutheran Confessions' basic document, and Luther are not dissociated:

By a special grace our merciful God has in these last days brought to light the truth of his Word amid the abominable darkness of the papacy through the faithful ministry of that illustrious man of God, Dr. Luther. This doctrine, drawn from and conformed to the Word of God, is summarized in the articles and chapters of the Augsburg Confession against the aberrations of the papacy and of other sects (SD, Rule and Norm, 3).

In the second place, many of Luther's later works are used for the support of the confessional position. For example, in SD, Article III, "The Righteousness of Faith before God," all quotations are from Luther's later writings (for example, SD III, 6; 21; 29; 41). Luther's Great Galatians is even indicated for further reading:

If anybody regards anything more as necessary by way of a detailed explanation of this high and important article of justification before God, on which the salvation of our souls depends, we direct him for the

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<sup>16</sup>Green, xxvi.

sake of brevity to Dr. Luther's beautiful and splendid exposition of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (SD III, 67).

In the third place, three of the works of Luther are included as confessions of the Lutheran church, namely, the Small and the Large Catechisms (1529) and the Smalcald Articles (1537/1538).

These writings have, besides their confessional status and Luther's own recommendation,<sup>17</sup> other credentials. They are firsthand works of Luther. The value of the Great Galatians Commentary as source for the study of Luther's theology has been questioned, as seen above. The Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles, however, are above such criticism. They were written and prepared for publication by Luther himself. In these writings Luther is concerned with what is necessary to know and to retain for the preservation of the Gospel in the world and for salvation (SC, Preface, 3; LC, Longer Preface, 19; SA III, XV [Conclusion], 3). The content of the Catechisms and that of the Smalcald Articles are, respectively, the doctrine in which a child must be instructed (LC, Shorter Preface, 1-2; SC, Preface, 7) and the uncompromising truth which the entire church on earth should confess in a true Christian council, until the day of the Lord Jesus Christ (SA, Preface, 14-15).

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<sup>17</sup>According to Martin Brecht, Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532, 280, Luther regarded the Large Catechism as one of his best works.

It is clear, therefore, that the Lutheran Confessions do not play off Luther's writings against Luther's Reformation theology. The Confessions do not select writings which Luther himself would not approve, as Luther scholars do. The Lutheran Confessions select Luther's Catechisms, which Luther had in high regard and the Smalcald Articles, published by Luther himself as a witness of his faith and theology. The Large Catechism and the Great Confession are contemporary and, especially with reference to the presentation of the Creed, akin documents. This agreement between Luther and the Lutheran Confessions indicates that these writings, not the earlier ones, such as the Lectures on Romans (1515-1516), are representative of Luther's Reformation theology. Earlier writings of Luther are important documents for the study of Luther's development and discovery of the Gospel, but the establishment of them as norm above and even against Luther's confessional writings is an arbitrary position.

The Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles shall be examined here, therefore, in preparation for the study of Great Galatians, 2:16-21. In this section, as seen above, Luther discusses the fides apprehensiva Christi against the scholastics' fides charitate formata. Studying the Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles in preparation means that these writings shall lead us into Luther's theology and provide the theological criteria for the interpretation of

Great Galatians, 2:16-21.

The guiding question which shall be addressed to these writings is: how are Christ and faith related to each other so that "faith in Christ" justifies, with exclusion of the "works of the Law"? This is the question Luther has set before himself to answer, according to Paul's verse 2:16. For two reasons, each section of these writings shall be analyzed separately and in the order they are found. First, in order to allow the material itself to present the answer at the place it does. Second, because an aspect of Luther's theology cannot be studied in isolation from his whole theology as such. An analytical presentation has the advantage of presenting the related themes in relation to, or the framework within which, Luther presents the relationship of Christ and faith. These are, for example, the distinction of Law and Gospel, and the doctrine of the means of grace. Repetition will occur, but these are, in most of the cases, important points which Luther himself emphasizes throughout his writings.<sup>18</sup>

It shall be seen in Luther's confessional writings that Christ and faith justify with exclusion of work because the benefits of Christ's work are received in faith, leaving no room whatsoever for man's accomplishments.

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<sup>18</sup>See Nagel, xxv.

CHAPTER II  
THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHRIST AND FAITH IN THE  
CATECHISMS AND THE SMALCALD ARTICLES

The Small and the Large Catechism

Luther followed the catechesis tradition as it was transmitted by the church up to his time. Since 1450, the "catechism" consisted of the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, in that order.<sup>1</sup> When Luther says that these are "the minimum of a knowledge required of a Christian" and makes this requisite for admittance to the Lord's Supper (LC, Shorter Preface, 2; V, 2),<sup>2</sup> he is speaking within the tradition: this was even prescribed in late medieval church.<sup>3</sup>

However, he rearranged the catechism order as received

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<sup>1</sup>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, 4th revised edition (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), 502, n. 1, hereafter as BSLK; Theodore G. Tappert, The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 338, n. 3, hereafter as Tappert.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, ed. The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 362 and 447, respectively. Hereafter citations of Lutheran confessional documents will be given in the text in parentheses without footnote references to Tappert.

<sup>3</sup>BSLK, 554, n.2; Tappert, 362, n. 2.

from tradition. The new order became: Ten Commandments, Apostolic Creed, and Lord's Prayer. The Creed, traditionally divided into twelve articles, was divided into three articles, "according to the three persons of the Godhead, to whom all that we believe is related" (LC II, 6). To the traditional parts, he also added new parts to the "catechism:" those on the sacraments, Baptism and Lord's Supper; besides an evangelical form of Confession and Absolution in the SC. In the LC, a corresponding section in the Confession and Absolution was added in the second edition (1529), as an exhortation to confession.<sup>4</sup>

It becomes clear by some of Luther's own statements in the Catechisms that such developments reflect his theology. The Ten Commandments and Creed correspond to the distinction of Law and Gospel; the Lord's Prayer refers to continuing struggle against sin in the life of a Christian (LC III, 1-2). Baptism, Lord's Supper, and Absolution impart forgiveness of sins and all its related blessings (LC IV, 41; V, 22, 28, 31, 34, 70 ; V Confession, 14,15). So, they belong with the work of the Holy Spirit, who through the Word bestows the benefits of the redeeming work of Christ. Thus the sacraments and absolution are related to the Second and Third Articles of the Creed.

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<sup>4</sup>Tappert, 457, n. 6.

## Luther's Prefaces

The Preface of the Small Catechism shows Luther's concern with the knowledge of the Christian doctrine<sup>5</sup> among the people. He expresses his educational concerns both in relation to "the kingdom of God" and to "the kingdom of the world" (19; 340). He is concerned also with the quality of the clergy, not only from a humanistic point of view (the ability to teach), but also in presenting faithfulness and godliness as qualifications of a pastor (SC, Preface [Salutation]).

Christ is mentioned but a few times, as in the beginning and final salutations. Christ is "our Lord." In Christ, there is "grace, mercy, and peace" (SC Preface [Salutation]). Through Christ, praise and thanks are given to the "Father of all grace" (27).

Christ is also mentioned as being Himself the reward [Lohn]<sup>6</sup> of faithful pastors. The unfaithful ones, as the bishops of Luther's time, will have Christ as the One before Whom they will give account of their negligence in their offices. The office [Amt]<sup>7</sup> of pastors and teachers is to preach the Gospel, to teach the catechism, to administer the

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<sup>5</sup>Tappert translates Luther's original Lehre as "teaching." However, the Latin equivalent of the German Lehre is doctrina. Lehre and doctrina have in the confessional writings a technical usage. In view of this, the English "doctrine" shall be preferred over the term "teaching."

<sup>6</sup>BSLK, 505, 18.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 507, 12.

Lord's Supper. Faithfulness is measured by these standards (4).

The Gospel has been restored (3). The office of the pastor and preacher is "now a ministry of grace and salvation" (26). Those who refuse the instruction in the catechism are not Christians. They have denied Christ. He says the same about the refusal of the Lord's Supper (23). The sacrament is to be received in freedom, not under compulsion, because no one can be forced to be a Christian. Those who refuse the sacrament are not Christians: they do not believe, but refuse God's gracious help; they belong to the devil (24).

He who does not highly esteem the sacrament suggests thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no hell. That is to say, he believes in none of these, although he is deeply immersed in them and is held captive by the devil. On the other hand, he suggests that he needs no grace, no life, no paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, nothing good at all. For if he believed . . . he would not neglect the sacrament in which aid is afforded against such evil and in which such good is bestowed (23).<sup>8</sup>

Thus Luther defines a Christian as one who hears and believes the Gospel, who receives (does not refuse) the instruction in the Christian doctrine, and who receives (does not refuse) the sacrament; all administered to him through the office of pastor and preacher (11; 25).

There are two prefaces of Luther to the Large Catechism, the so called Shorter Preface, from 1529, and the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 506, 40 : "so viel Guts gegeben."

Longer Preface, from 1530.<sup>9</sup>

In the Longer Preface, he criticizes those who despise the Catechism (LC Longer Preface, 1-9). The importance of the Catechism is not dependent upon its size or simplicity, but upon its content which is of divine origin (16). True knowledge of the catechism comes not from our own wisdom, but from God's gracious teaching of it to us (9, 16). God teaches through His Word and the Holy Spirit (9). Christians reach no perfect knowledge of the catechism, but need continuously to learn it anew in this life (16, 19). Appreciation of the catechism grows insofar as one realizes how little he knows of it. (20) When it is used, "the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and fervor (9). Christ's promise is fulfilled in this bestowing presence of the Holy Spirit in the Word. Luther quotes Matt. 18:20: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (9).

One needs the catechism as he needs the Word of God. The benefits from the catechism are the benefits from God's Word. What makes the Word needed are "the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts" (10). The benefit of the Word is that it is the power of God for the fight against the devil and for strengthening and comfort of believers (10). By instruction in the catechism, that is, the Word of God, one is enabled to "make decisions in both spiritual and

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<sup>9</sup>Tappert, 358, n. 1; 362, n. 1.

temporal matters" (17).

In the Shorter Preface, the same concern with the "children and uneducated people" is present. The Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer contain "the minimum of knowledge required of a Christian" (2). Without it, no one can be reckoned as Christian or admitted to a sacrament.

Luther presents then the content of the these parts, and says that "these are the most necessary parts of Christian instruction" (15). It is the content of the Scriptures in "short, plain, and simple terms" (18). When one knows it, it is important also to know the significance of the sacraments instituted by Christ: "Baptism and the holy Body and Blood of Christ" (20).

There is in Luther's prefaces a concern with what one should know as a Christian. It was his experience as Visitor which increased Luther's concern with both the ignorance and the negligence of the Gospel even in the churches of the Reformation.<sup>10</sup> Any freedom without knowledge of the Gospel Luther regards as no freedom at all (SC Preface, 3). The emphasis falls on the Gospel or the Word as doctrine of grace and salvation. Instruction is therefore necessary. Luther suggests a method of learning it, which begins with memorization but which aims at the understanding of the content--only then may fruits be

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 357; SC Preface, 1-6.

expected (LC Shorter Preface, 24-28). However, as the doctrine has no origin in man, but comes from God, there is no true knowledge of it which is not given or produced by God. The doctrine of the catechism bestows grace, peace, heaven, Christ, and so forth. So knowledge of it receives grace, peace, heaven, Christ, and so on. The teaching-learning scheme is understood in terms of the bestowing-receiving one. God only gives man true knowledge of the catechism, that is, the Christian doctrine or the Gospel. Man learns it from God, that is, he receives this knowledge from God, as in the instruction in the catechism.

#### The Ten Commandments

The Law and Gospel distinction is observed in Luther's explanation of the Ten Commandments. The Commandments are the Law in contrast to the Creed which brings the Gospel (LC II, 2). Therefore he reduces the references to Christ here to a minimum. Christ is fully presented in the Second Article of the Creed.

However, Luther is expounding the Decalog to Christians. This, by itself, poses a question: How are Christians related to the Law, the Decalog, and the Old Testament? Any Christian interpretation of the Commandments and the Old Testament is determined by the kind of answer which is given to this question. Here, Luther deals with it especially in relation to the Third Commandment, but refers to the entire Decalog (79-82).

Luther says that the commandments as they are presented in the Decalog were given to Jews, not to Christians (80; 82; 201; 258; 293). The New Testament is distinct from the Old (80; 306). He is not interested in a formalistic, or legalistic, observance of the commandments. God requires the heart, not mere external obedience (4; 327). This is true even in the case of the Third Commandment: the day is sanctified not on account of rest or external work of worship but only on account of the Word. (81; 88; 92). The Word belongs with the heart (89; 100).

On the other hand, insofar as the Third Commandment prescribes an external regulation, it simply does not apply to Christians: "From all of which [ordinances of the Old Testament] we are now set free through Christ" (82). This is all that Luther says here about Christ and the freedom from the Law. Indeed, what he says is the minimum that he needs to say in order to offer "a Christian interpretation of what God requires in this commandment" (83). The point is that Christians are not related to the Law as the Jews were. The external ordinances of the Old Testament do not bind Christians. Christians have freedom through Christ (82).

Christ is mentioned a few more times. In these references, he is presented according to his attitude toward the Law--as an example for Christians (65), to his moral teaching (279), his commandments (289), and his preaching of

judgement (191). Here, Christ also requires works.

Faith is emphasized, in distinction to works. However, it is also a requirement of the Decalog: that one should trust in God above all things (SC I, 2; LC I, 4). Faith is not related to Christ, it is required by the First Commandment (LC I 4; 13). It is, indeed, the fundamental requirement of the entire Decalog (326; 329). If one has faith, the other commandments are also fulfilled (323; 326; 329). Faith is the true knowledge, whole-hearted trust, and worship of God: it knows God as the source of every good and expects it only from God (24).

We are to trust in God alone and turn to him, expecting from him only good things; for it is he who gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings. It is he who protects us from evil, he who saves and delivers us when any evil befalls. It is God Alone, I have often enough repeated, from whom we receive all that is good and by whom we are delivered from all evil (24).

"Faith and God belong together" (3), says Luther, because faith acknowledges God as the Giver and Dispenser of every good, the Protector in any time of need (2).

Faith, however, may be false, when it trusts in something else than the true God; when it expects good not from the true God (12; 21). What makes the faith true is the true God (3). False faith is idolatry, for to trust in anything else above God is to make this thing a god for oneself (20-21). Thus, idolatry begins in the heart (21)-- as faith is in the heart. In the heart there is either true

worship or idolatry. The most common kind of idolatry is to trust in material possessions (5-9). The greatest idolatry, however, is to trust in one's own power and works for salvation (22-23). What there is in common with any idolatry is that man expects nothing from God, but only from other creatures and himself (22). False faith is therefore a confidence in something else than God (12).

The correct attitude toward God is therefore receptivity and acknowledgement. The First Commandment demands it: "We must acknowledge everything as God's gifts and thank him for them, as this commandments requires" (27). Other creatures are not the source of good, but only "the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings" (26). These are channels through which God gives his blessings (26). One receives thankfully God's gifts when he receives them the way God wants to give them:

Therefore, this way of receiving good through God's creatures is not to be disdained, nor are we arrogantly to seek other ways and means than God has commanded, for that would be not receiving our blessings from God but seeking them from ourselves (27).

This is true not only with respect to temporal blessings, but also and especially with respect to salvation: the greatest idolatry is that by which one, unwilling to receive salvation as a gift from God, seeks to earn and merit salvation by means of works (22-23). Faith and works have distinct functions. Faith alone serves God (147): it trusts in God above all things, and it receives thankfully God's

gifts. This praises God and benefits man (103). Works relate to one's neighbor (103), with the "ordinary world affairs" (55). "Faith alone serves him, while our works serve the people" (147).

He does truly good works who has faith, because faith expects everything from God and does not keep account of works for the purpose of earning and meriting salvation (48; 22). Faith trusts in God, and receives salvation as a gift of God. Faith is not concerned with doing new and difficult works, as in the case of the monks and false saints, but simply with obeying God's Commandments for the sake of God's will and the benefit of the neighbor (48; 103). Luther says: "Do your duty, then, and leave it to God how he will support you and provide for all your wants" (165). What matters is not the appearance of the work, or how it is regarded "in the eyes of the world," but the Commandment and institution of God (102; 120; 140; 144). One who does works this way has joy and a happy conscience, because he is sure that his works are truly holy works, commanded by God's Word and pleasant to him (102; 198; 221; 253; 290-291).

However, before holy works are performed the person must be holy. As the Commandments themselves show, there is no holiness in the world, but only sinfulness. What is required is "a work" that will make a sinful person into a holy person: "Eut here a work must be performed by which the doer himself is made holy" (94). This work is not man's own

work upon himself, but it is solely God's work through his Word (94; 100-101). Relics of saints are dead things which cannot sanctify anyone (91). "The Word of God is the true holy thing above all holy things. Indeed, it is the only one we Christians acknowledge and have" (91). The Word is therefore "the treasure that sanctifies all things" (91). The Word is not "idle or dead, but effective and living" (101).

The Word makes one holy, so that his works become also holy. Faith makes one holy, so that his works become also holy (147). There is no contradiction because faith is that work produced by the Word. In view of this,

places, times, persons, and the entire outward order of worship are therefore instituted and appointed in order that God's Word may exert its power publicly (94).

The Word is necessary also for Christians because the devil exercises his power, attempting both to take away the Word from them and to move their trust from God to works (46). The three first commandments teach the Christian continuously to keep God's Word in his heart, lips, and ears: "For where the heart stands idle and the Word is not heard, the devil breaks in and does his damage before we realize it" (100).

Regarding the use of the Decalog, Luther calls it the "greatest treasure God has given us" (333). They contain a threat and a promise: if one does not trust in God and does not obey his commandments, he finds in God an angry judge;

if one trusts in God and obeys his commandments, he has a gracious father (32; 323; 327; 333). They guide man in his life (92). They indicate and require the works which are pleasant to God (102; 198; 221; 253; 290-291). But the Commandments also accuse man: "So this commandment remains, like all the rest, one that constantly accuses us and shows just how upright we really are in God's sight" (310). Man's sin, his unbelief and disobedience, deserves God's wrath and judgement (34; 46; 191; 333) They reveal that man needs help, but this help cannot be known from the Commandments, but from the Creed and the Lord's Prayer (316).

#### The Apostolic Creed

The Creed, as seen above, is the counterpart to the Decalog in the scheme of Law and Gospel (LC II, 1; 67; III, 1). The emphasis is on God's gracious work toward man: "The Creed tells what God does for us and gives to us" (LC II, 67). The knowledge of the Creed is not natural in man but is given to man: "No human wisdom can comprehend the Creed; it must be taught by the Holy Spirit alone" (LC II, 67).

#### The First Article

The explanation of the first article in the Small Catechism (SC II, 2) does not say more about God and faith than was said in the explanation of the Ten Commandments: to believe that God is one's Creator is to acknowledge him as the Giver of every good. This is also to recognize oneself

as a creature which does not have anything of himself but receives every good thing from God. There is no place for merit or worthiness in man's relationship with God.

There is, however, one fundamental difference in Luther's presentation of the First Article in relation to his exposition of the First Commandment: here no requirement whatsoever is made of man. In the explanation of the Ten Commandments also everything was received by man as a gracious, unmerited, gift from God. But man was required to fulfill the Commandments upon the threat of punishment and the promise of blessing. Here, what man owes to God is not presented as a requirement of God upon man, but as what man owes to God out of gratitude for God's gifts and work toward man. It is neither the requirement nor the promises or threats of the Law that move man to acknowledge God as Creator. Only God's mercy and goodness toward man would move man to a life of filial gratitude and service: "For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him" (2; emphasis mine).

In the Large Catechism, Luther says that the Creed is "nothing else than a response and confession of Christians based on the First Commandment" (10). The First Article describes briefly "God the Father, his nature, his will, and his work" (10). The work of the Father is "creation" (12). To confess God as creator is to confess oneself a creature of God (13). God the Creator gives, sustains, and

protects man's life. Man as God's creature receives continuously life, subsistence, and protection from God in many ways (14-15, 17). God is moved by no merit on man's part, but "all this he does out of pure love and goodness . . . as a kind of father who cares for us so that no evil may befall us" (17). This is what the Creed's words, "Father almighty," mean (18).

As in the SC, also here what man owes to God is not presented as a requirement of man but as thankfulness from man toward God, moved by God's goodness toward man:

Hence, since everything we possess, and everything in heaven and on earth besides, is daily given and sustained by God, it inevitably follows that we are in duty bound to love, praise, and thank him without ceasing, and, in short, to devote all these things to his service, as he has required and enjoined in the Ten Commandments (19).

The trouble is that it seldom happens, because only a few believe it (20). Even Christians do not yet believe with the whole heart, for where it is believed this way there is no room for boasting, "as if we ourselves were to be feared and served," or for the misuse of God's blessings and gifts (21).

Luther comes to the point where the confession of God as Father and Creator ceases to be a joyful and comforting theme, and becomes a humbling and terrifying one (22). The reason is that there is no gratitude and filial love from man to God: "For we sin daily with eyes and ears, hands, body, and soul, money and property, and with all that we

have" (22). There is no difference between non Christians and Christians, except that Christians "acknowledge themselves in duty bound to serve and obey him for these things" (22; 23).

Under the Ten Commandments, that is, according to the Law, Luther presented God as an "angry judge" who punishes the sinner. The Creed is, however, a summary of the Gospel: God has mercy upon the sinner. Luther defines, therefore, the First Article of the Creed as "an excellent knowledge, but an even greater treasure" (24). The First Article not only teaches "what we have and what we receive from God and about what we owe him in return" but especially tells what God did to save sinful man (24).

For here we see how the Father has given himself to us, with all his creatures, has abundantly provided for us in this life, and, further, has showered us with inexpressible eternal treasures through his Son and the Holy Spirit, as we shall hear" (24).

In view of this it is "an even greater treasure." God does not only creates man but also saves man from sin.

#### The Second Article

The confession that "Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord" is also a confession of myself as "a lost and condemned creature" (SC II, 4).<sup>11</sup> Incarnation

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<sup>11</sup>The personal pronouns "I" and "me" are retained in view of their force in Luther's text. The work of Christ is directed to concrete individuals. For Luther what makes the work of Christ Gospel is that it was "for me." See Martin

is clearly confessed. The Incarnate Son of God is confessed as "my Lord." This Lord "redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil" (4). These are important words: to redeem, to deliver, to free (to win). The Lord did this to me, not I myself. It is also important to note from what the redemption, deliverance, and freedom is: from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil. The Lord redeems from condemnation and captivity.

The way the Lord redeemed me was "not with silver and gold," that is, things that are precious in the eyes of the world and that men could also provide, but "with his holy and precious blood and with his innocent [unschuldigen]<sup>12</sup> sufferings and death" (II,4). The blood of the Lord, who was born of Mary, is "holy and precious," because the Lord is "true God, begotten of the Father from eternity." His sufferings and his death are without guilt, that is, he was neither among the "lost and condemned;" nor did he die for his sins. By his death, the Lord redeemed me "from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil."

The entire content of this article is new in relation to what was said under the Ten Commandments. Redemption is outside the threats and promises of the Law. It belongs to

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Brecht, Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532, trans. James L Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 276.

<sup>12</sup>SSLK, 551, 32.

the Gospel. The life and service under the eternal lordship and kingdom of Christ replaces the life under sin, death, and the power of the devil.

To Christ and redemption, so presented, man's only possible attitude is faith or unbelief, acceptance or refusal. "I believe that Jesus Christ . . . is my Lord." This believing I is the one who can confess "my Lord, who has redeemed me . . . in order that I may be his."

In the Large Catechism, some verbs from the Prefaces appear again in Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Creed: to learn, to know: "Here we learn to know the second person of the Godhead," God himself as gift to us (26); "from it we shall learn how we are redeemed" (26); "it is so rich and broad that we can never learn it fully" (33). To learn the catechism is to learn to know Christ. In the Second Article, "we see that we receive from God over and above the temporal goods mentioned above--that is, how he has completely given himself to us, withholding nothing" (26).

The Second Article contains therefore the essence of that knowledge a Christian must have:

Indeed, the entire Gospel that we preach depends on the proper understanding of this article. Upon it all our salvation and blessedness are based, and it is so rich and broad that we can never learn it fully (33).

Luther's concern is with "the substance of the article" (26). He leaves a detailed exposition of the person and work of Christ to be given elsewhere (32).

The substance is contained in the title given to Christ: "Lord" (27; 31). "The little word 'Lord' simply means the same as Redeemer" [Erlöser]<sup>13</sup> (31). When Luther says: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true Son of God, has become my Lord" [sei mein HErr worden]<sup>14</sup> (27), he emphasizes the "becoming:"

What is to "become a Lord"? It means that he has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and from all evil. Before this I had no Lord and King but was captive under the power of the devil. I was condemned to death and entangled in sin and blindness (27).

Christ become the Lord by his redeeming work.

Christ's work is presented by Luther according to two points: the benefits for man and the cost for Christ. He starts at man's need of salvation and presents the Savior. The "summary of this article" is that Christ is the Lord or Redeemer (31). The "remaining parts" indicate "how and by what means this redemption was accomplished" (31).

Man was created by God the Father, receiving from him "all kinds of good things" (28). However, "the devil came and led us into disobedience, sin, death, and all evil" (28). Thus, man came under "God's wrath" and deserved "eternal damnation" (28). Man's situation was such that "there was no counsel, no help, no comfort for us" (29). Christ came, therefore, as Savior of those who could not

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 652, 27.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 651, 32.

save themselves:

There was no counsel, no help, no comfort for us until this only and eternal Son of God, in his unfathomable goodness, had mercy on our misery and wretchedness and came from heaven to help us (29).

Luther leaves no room whatsoever for merit on the part of man for the work of salvation. It is completely out of mercy on the part of the Son of God.

As Luther begins with man's need of salvation, he presents the work of Christ first in term of its benefits. Man's situation is that of captivity under sin, death, and the power of the devil. He is a condemned creature under God's wrath. Christ's work brings deliverance from the "tyrants and jailers" and restoration to "the Father's favor and grace" (30). Salvation is a change of lordship: the "tyrants" are removed, and Christ replaces them, not as a tyrant, but as man's legitimate "Lord and King" (29-30; 27). That is, man is delivered, snatched from the dominion of the tyrants and brought into the rule of Christ:

Those tyrants and jailers now have been routed, and their place has been taken by Christ, the Lord of life and righteousness and every good and blessing. He has snatched us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, made us free, and restored us to the Father's favor and grace. He has taken us as his own, under his protection, in order that he may rule us by his righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness (30).

The work of salvation is Christ's, not man's. It is not man who leaves the dominion of the devil and moves into Christ's rule. But it is the Redeemer who "has brought us back from the devil to God, from death to life, from sin to

righteousness, and now keeps us safe there" (31).

This is the meaning of the confession of Christ as Lord. The other elements in the Creed describe the manner and the cost of redemption:

The remaining parts of this article simply serve to clarify and express how and by what means this redemption was accomplished--that is, how much it cost Christ and what he paid and risked in order to win us and bring us under his dominion (31).

Jesus suffered, died, and was buried so that "he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed" (31). Redemption of man, that is, his deliverance from the dominion of sin, death, and the devil, and his restoration in God's grace and life in Christ's kingdom, was acquired "not with silver and gold but with his own precious blood" (31). This was the cost of redemption, nothing less than Christ's "own precious blood" (31). The purpose of this was "that he might become my Lord" (31). Christ's death was the way he became Redeemer. He himself had no need of going through suffering and death. It was entirely in behalf of man (31). Luther leaves no doubt whatsoever concerning the substitutionary and atoning character of Christ's death: "That he might make satisfaction for me and pay what I owed." Overcoming of death at resurrection, dominion over "the devil and all powers," final judgement; all these are dependent on the work performed on the cross: satisfaction, payment, for sin (31).

It is clear from what came before that man owed such a

debt to God: "We lay under God's wrath and disobedience, doomed to eternal damnation, as we have deserved" (28). Christ's satisfaction for sins was the removal of God's wrath: he "restored us to the Father's favor and grace" (30). The "devil and all powers" receive no payment for the redemption of man, but their power is destroyed by the satisfaction made for sins by Christ's death. They are "tyrants" that cannot maintain their dominion over man in view of Christ's work of redemption (29-30). Christ is the Lord and the King (27).

### The Third Article

The Third Article deals with faith in Christ. It is directly related to the Second Article as the bestowal of Christ's accomplished work and its benefits to us (38).

In the Small Catechism (SC II, 6), Luther begins with a phrase which is a confession concerning the work of the Holy Spirit and a declaration about man himself: "I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him (6)." The work of the Holy Spirit is necessary because man cannot "believe in Christ" of himself:

But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith (6).

"Through the Gospel" and "with his gifts" are how the Holy

Spirit makes his work: he creates and preserves faith in Christ until the last day, when all believers will receive eternal life.

The church is gathered by the work of the Holy Spirit and in the church forgiveness is abundantly administered (6). There is emphasis on preserving in "true faith." The individual believer is preserved in "true faith," the entire church is preserved in "the one true faith," only by the Holy Spirit and his work. The distinction of true-false faith was already seen in relation to the First Commandment. There, true faith was faith in the one true God. The Creed presents the true God: the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. This is "the one true faith," who believes this has a true faith, not of himself, but from the Holy Spirit (6).

In the Large Catechism, the Third Article is characterized by Luther by the word "sanctification" (35). "In it is expressed and portrayed the Holy Spirit and his office, which is that he makes us holy" (35). The individual parts of the Third Article belong together because they are done by the Holy Spirit as means to the ultimate work: sanctification (37):

Just as the Son obtains dominion by purchasing us through his birth, death, and resurrection, etc., so the Holy Spirit effects our sanctification through the following: the communion of saints or Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting (37).

The work of the Holy Spirit will be carried on until the

last day, and it is fulfilled only with the resurrection and granting of eternal life (38, 61). This work of the Holy Spirit is done through the preaching of Christ (37).

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ, since man cannot know anything of Christ as Lord of himself:

The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it he illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it (42).

Without this revelation through the Word the "treasure" would be buried without any use of it (38). Christ's work reveals "the Father's heart" toward man, but it is the Holy Spirit who reveals Christ (43-44; 65; 67). However, the Holy Spirit is present to reveal Christ and bestow "the treasure of salvation" only where Christ is preached (45). In the proclamation of Christ as Redeemer, God gives the Holy Spirit to bestow the treasure of redemption: "God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation" (38). The work of the Holy Spirit is the bestowing revelation of salvation: "Therefore to sanctify is nothing else than to bring us to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, which we could not obtain by ourselves" (39).

The church and all its offices belong to the bestowing work of the Holy Spirit. In the church, the Holy Spirit "preaches to us and brings us to Christ" (37). The church, through its proclamation of the Word, "is the mother that

begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God"

(42). The imparting of forgiveness of sins is the function of the church:

Further we believe that in this Christian church we have the forgiveness of sins, which is granted through the holy sacraments and absolution as well as through the comforting words of the entire Gospel. Toward forgiveness is directed everything that is to be preached concerning the sacraments and, in short, the entire Gospel and all the duties [~~Amter~~]<sup>15</sup> of Christianity. . . . Therefore everything in the Christian church is so ordered that we may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and through signs appointed to comfort and revive our consciences as long as we live. . . . God forgives us, and we forgive, bear with, and aid one another" (54-55).

The Holy Spirit bestows the benefits of Christ's work, "the treasure of salvation," only in view of the completeness of Christ's work (38). "Redemption is accomplished" (61). "The work of Christ is finished and completed, Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death, and resurrection, etc." (38). What Christ acquired is acceptance by the Father (43), "God's grace" (54), "forgiveness of sins" (54), "redemption" (61). This is the work of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us salvation by God's grace. However, men and evil spirits teach us "to obtain grace and be saved by our works" (44). In the church is proclaimed Christ and full forgiveness (54-55). Without this proclamation there is no church:

For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian church, and outside it no one can come to the Lord Christ (45).

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 658, 17.

Those who seek salvation "through their works rather than through the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins" do not belong to the church, even if they call themselves Christians (43-44; 56). These and all non Christian people "remain in eternal wrath and damnation, for they do not have the Lord Christ" (66).

#### The Lord's Prayer

In the Small Catechism, Luther begins by saying that prayer requires faith (2). By presenting himself as "our Father" God encourages faith. Prayer is how "beloved children approach their dear father" (2). The things that are asked for are distinguished according to what they are in themselves and in man's use of them. The sanctity of God's name, the coming of his kingdom, the prevailing of his will, daily bread, dispensation of forgiveness, protection against the devil are all things that were realized and offered by God before and without prayer. In prayer, Christians ask that the name of God may be holy also among themselves, that the kingdom of God may come also to themselves, that the will of God may be done also for their own salvation. (4-5; 7-8; 10-11). Christians ask for daily bread so that "God may make us aware of his gifts and enable us to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving" (13). Christians ask for forgiveness so that "God may grant us all things by his grace" (16), especially the protection against the temptations of "the devil, the world, and our flesh"

(18), and eternal salvation (20). Finally, asking these things, the Christian knows that his prayer is pleasant to God, and is heard according to God's promise (21).

To Luther, Word and faith are the object of prayer in the first three Petitions. God's name is holy among men "when the Word of God is taught clearly and purely and we, as children of God, lead lives in accordance with it" (5). The Kingdom of God comes to men "when the heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit so that by his grace we may believe his holy Word and live a godly life" (8). The will of God is done when God destroys the contrary will, "of the devil, of the world, and of our flesh," and "when he strengthens us and keeps us steadfast in his Word and in faith even to the end" (11). The other petitions are for those things which are needed in this life, both physical as spiritual gifts and protection (13-14; 16; 18; 20).

The Large Catechism's perspective is also of the Christian life and its needs which are daily presented before God. Although a believer, the Christian is still in the flesh (89), he still has the "old Adam" (102), that is, he is yet a sinner: "No one can keep the Ten Commandments perfectly, even though he has begun to believe" (2; also: 86). On the other hand, the devil is the longtime arch-enemy of Christians, attempting always to remove Christians from the Word, the faith, the confidence and joy in the forgiveness of sins (2; 62; 65; 104; 113; 116).

must be received throughout this life: "Unless God constantly forgives us, we are lost" (91). For in the Gospel "there is nothing but forgiveness" (88). Forgiveness comforts and restores the conscience (89). The Christian prays for the Word, or the Gospel, because his flesh "inclines to evil" and the devil and his allies want to remove either the Word or the confidence in the Word (63-65; 104).

This struggle against sin characterizes the entire Christian life (2). It is a struggle beyond man's power himself, a struggle between two spiritual kingdoms: God's (50), and devil's (54).

The kingdom of God, which comes through the Word and is received in faith, is the kingdom of Christ, the preaching of the Gospel:

What is the kingdom of God? Answer: Simply what we learned in the Creed, namely, that God sent his Son, Christ our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil and to bring us to himself and rule us as a king of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience" (51).

This kingdom comes in two ways: "First, it comes here, in time, through the Word and faith, and secondly, in eternity, it comes through the final revelation" (52). Christians pray that the Word may be preached and accepted in faith so that God's kingdom might prevail and the devil's kingdom might be destroyed (54).

God's kingdom does prevail among us "through the Word

and the power of the Holy Spirit" (53). God gives the Gospel, "in which there is nothing but forgiveness" (88), and when it is received in faith, also the Holy Spirit is given "that he may govern us who have been redeemed from the power of the devil" (61). God gives the Word which is received by faith, once it is received it works and lives in those who have received it (54).

To God's, or Christ's, kingdom is opposed the "kingdom of the devil" (54). Christ delivered us through the Gospel from the dominion of the devil (51). The devil's only purpose and effort is to lead us away from the Word and faith, that is, to bring us out of Christ's kingdom back under his kingdom (64; 104). As man is a sinner, and his flesh is inclined to evil, only God can preserve him in the kingdom of Christ (63; 118). Those who despise the help of God, trusting in their own worthiness or strength, inevitably fall under the temptations of the devil (111). Therefore, not only the deliverance from the power of the devil is a work of God, but also the preservation of man in the kingdom of Christ is a work of God alone. Prayer acknowledges this, and seeks comfort and protection only in God and from God. Because of this, Luther says that prayer is our only protection against the devil, not as a work of man but as a supplication for God's help (69; 116). In God, there is certainty: the kingdom of the devil and the enemies of the Gospel will be destroyed--the will of God will be

done! (70).

### Baptism

In the Small Catechism, Baptism is defined as "water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word" (SC IV, 2). Baptism bestows "gifts or benefits" (5), that is, "it effects forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and grants eternal salvation to all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare" (6). The Word of God makes mere water into "a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Spirit," (Titus 3:5-8) (10). Faith relies on the Word (10). Baptism signifies the Christian life in its daily need of repentance, the death of "the old Adam," and new life before God, the coming forth and rising up of the "new man" (12). Sins and evil lusts are put to death, and a new man, cleansed and righteous, rises up "to live forever in God's presence" (12); according to Romans 6:4 (13-14).

In the Large Catechism, Baptism is related to the work of Christ in a way that the benefits it brings are identical with the benefits of Christ's work, as seen in the Second Article of the Creed: it saves (LC IV, 24):

To be saved, we know, is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter into the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever (25).

Baptism promises and brings "victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sins, God's grace, the entire Christ,

and the Holy Spirit with his gifts" (41). It is also "a priceless medicine which swallows up death and saves the lives of all men" (43). Baptism "snatches us from the jaws of the devil and makes God our own, overcomes and takes away sin and daily strengthens the new man" (83). If Baptism does this, it cannot be a human work, but must be a work of God (35). In fact, Baptism excludes works and requires faith, such as Christ's work does it (36-37). Luther says:

Baptism is not a work which we do but it is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps, just as the Lord Christ upon the cross is not a work but a treasure comprehended and offered to us in the Word and received by faith" (37).

Baptism, as "the Lord upon the cross," is a treasure, that is, a gift and a work of God which can only be received in faith or rejected altogether. This treasure is "comprehended and offered to us in the Word (37)." So, Christ, Word and faith belong together; rejection of Baptism is rejection of these three (31).

Baptism is so related to the work of Christ because it is "that in which God's Word is enclosed" (19). It was seen in relation to the Third Article of the Creed that the benefits of Christ's work are imparted through the Word by the Holy Spirit (LC II, 38). The treasure is offered in the Word (37). Thus the water and the Word cannot be separated, otherwise there is no Baptism but mere water (LC IV, 22). But when water and God's Word are united according to God's commandment, there is "divine water" (14). "When the Word

is present according to God's ordinance, baptism is a sacrament, and is called Christ's Baptism" (22). The benefits of Baptism are not conferred because of the water in itself but because of the Word and God's name along with the water (17, 26, 29). The promise in Baptism, that is, in the Word which accompanies the water, requires faith: "Since these blessings are offered and promised in the words which accompany the water, they cannot be received unless we believe them whole-heartedly" (33). Baptism, Luther says, is despised because people assume that "external things are of no use," that is, spiritual use (7). Luther rejects these opinions, first, because it is commanded by God, and "what God institutes and commands cannot be useless" (8), and second, because Baptism is not a work of man but God's (10). In relation to faith, it is said by the "new spirits" that "faith alone saves and that works and external things contribute nothing to this end" (28). This opinion rejects works on the basis that they were "external things," not on the basis of the completeness of Christ's work. To this fideism, Luther opposes the external reference of faith.

Faith "must have something to believe" (29). Faith cannot be separated from its external object (30). So, faith does not exclude but includes an external object:

Yes, it must be external so that it can be perceived and grasped by the senses and thus brought into the heart, just as the entire Gospel is an external, oral proclamation. In short, whatever God effects in us he does through such external ordinances. No matter where he speaks . . . there faith must look and to it faith

must hold (30).

This external object of faith is also the means by which God bestows his grace and gifts: God "has implanted his Word in this external ordinance and offered it to us so that we may grasp the treasure it contains" (29). As Luther said in relation to the First Commandment, to reject the means is to reject the gift and the Giver altogether and to try to achieve salvation by one's own merit (LC I, 22 and 27). So, "whoever rejects Baptism rejects God's Word, faith, and Christ, who directs us and binds us to Baptism" (IV, 31).

Faith and Baptism are not mutually exclusive, but they require each other. Baptism requires faith, faith needs its external reference or object (29-30). Thus Luther rejects fideism in favor of faith in the Word: "Faith must have something to believe--something to which it may cling and upon which it may stand" (29). Although Baptism and faith belong together, faith only receives the benefits of Baptism: "For my faith does not constitute Baptism but receives it" (53).

Baptism and faith exclude "all works that we may do with the intention of meriting salvation through them" (34).

Baptism is "the sacrament by which we are first received into the Christian church" (64). Its power and effect is indicated by its two parts, being dipped under the water and emerging from it: "The slaying of the old Adam and the resurrection of the new man" (65). These two must remain

throughout the life of a Christian, therefore "a Christian life is nothing else than a daily Baptism, once begun and ever continued" (65).

The Christian belongs to Christ's kingdom, he is the "new man" risen from Baptism (67, 65). The "old man" is "what is born in us from Adam" (66). It is daily "restrained and suppressed by the power of Baptism" (71). "When we become Christians, the old man daily decreases until he is finally destroyed" (71). If the contrary happens, Baptism is being resisted (68). To the old man belong unbelief and all vices (66). The new man is present when faith is present with all its fruits (73, 84). The "power to suppress the old man so that the new may come forth and grow strong" is given in Baptism (76). Thus, the entire Christian life, which is a life of repentance, "is nothing else than a return and approach to Baptism, to resume the practice what had earlier been begun but abandoned" (79). The Christian life is not without sin. Baptism, however, as Christ himself, remains a source of forgiveness throughout the life:

But if anyone falls away from his Baptism let him return to it. As Christ, the mercy-seat, does not recede from us or forbid us to return to him even though we sin, so all his treasures and gifts remain (86).

Thus, in Baptism Christ makes himself available with his mercy and forgiveness.

### The Lord's Supper

In the Small Catechism, Luther defines the Sacrament of the Altar as follows:

Instituted by Christ himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink (SC VI, 2).

The benefits are indicated in the words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins" (6). With forgiveness, "life and salvation" are also given (6). The words "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sins" are the chief thing: "He who believes these words has what they say and declare: the forgiveness of sins" (8), for these words require faith (10).

In the Large Catechism, the Lord's Supper is presented as the sacrament for the strengthening and refreshment of the "new man" born from Baptism in the struggles of the Christian life (LC V, 24; 27;). The Lord's Supper is related to the work of Christ as the bestowal of what Christ did achieve on the cross: forgiveness of sins:

That bread and wine which are Christ's body and blood and with which the words are coupled . . . are the treasure through which forgiveness is obtained. This treasure is conveyed and communicated to us in no other way than through the words, "given and poured out for you" (28-29).

This sacrament is "the very gift he has provided for me against my sins, death, and all evils" (22). It is the "food of the soul" which "nourishes and strengthens the new man" (23), it is the "daily food and sustenance" of faith"

(24). It comprehends the whole Gospel (32). It is a "pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body" (68). It is "a precious antidote" against the poison of sin (70). Its "treasure" and "gift" is the forgiveness of sins, and with forgiveness all other gifts:

For here in the sacrament you receive from Christ's lips the forgiveness of sins, which contains and conveys God's grace and Spirit with all his gifts, protection, defense, and power against death and the devil and all evils (70).

As in the case of Baptism, it is not bread or wine in themselves which convey forgiveness, but it is the Word in and with them: "It is bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and connected with it" (9). The words which constitute the Sacrament also bestow the treasure it contains: "Because the words are there through which this [forgiveness] is imparted" (22). The words give what they say (33), that is, they bestow forgiveness.

The crucial distinction is between achievement and bestowal. "The work was accomplished and forgiveness of sins was acquired on the cross" (31). To use Luther's preferred words, this is the "treasure" or the "gift" (36, et passim) achieved by Christ's death. The Word, both as oral proclamation (31) or attached to the Lord's Supper (29), makes this treasure known (30), offers it to man (32; 35; 36), and imparts it to man (29).

Salvation, therefore, cannot be through works: there

is nothing more to be achieved that Christ did not achieve by his work. It is only by faith in the heart, because only faith in the heart can appropriate or receive what is promised in the Word. The Word of promise requires faith, not works. In the same way, the Lord's Supper is not based upon man's work or worthiness, but exclusively upon the bestowing words of Christ himself who instituted it. There is nothing to do but to receive what is given in the sacrament:

Fasting and prayer and the like may have their place as an external preparation and children's exercise. . . . But what is given in and with the sacrament cannot be grasped and appropriated by the body. This is done by the faith in the heart which discerns and desires this treasure" (37).

The heart receives this "gift and eternal treasure" which "cannot be seized by the hand" (36).

Luther emphasizes the words "for you" as decisive in the words of institution. By these words men are addressed by Christ:

"For you" . . . these words . . . are not preached to wood or stone but to you and to me. . . . Ponder, then, and include yourself personally in the "you" so that he may not speak to you in vain (65).

The one who believes the words receives what they say and give, that is, the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins (33). "Whoever lets these words be addressed to him and believes that they are true has what the words declare" (35). On the other hand, "those who despise the sacrament and lead unchristian lives receive it

to their harm and damnation" (69).

### Confessional Absolution

The Small Catechism defines "confession" as follows:

Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive absolution or forgiveness from the confessor as from God himself, by no means doubting but firmly believing that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven (SC V, 16).

In the form of absolution Luther provides, again absolution or forgiveness and faith are mentioned: "'Do you believe that this forgiveness is the forgiveness of God?'" (27).

The Large Catechism: in relation to Baptism, Luther presented "Penance" as the life of repentance of each Christian:

Here you see that Baptism, both by its power and by its signification, comprehends also the third sacrament, formerly called Penance, which is really nothing else than Baptism. What is repentance but an earnest attack on the old man and an entering upon a new life? If you live in repentance, therefore, you are walking in Baptism, which not only announces this new life but also produces, begins, and promotes it" (LC IV, 74-75).

The emphasis here is that there is no need of such a thing as "the second plank" (LC IV, 81) since "Baptism remains forever" (77).

Luther had also referred to the Absolution under the Third Article of the Creed: Absolution belongs to the offices of the church for the bestowal of forgiveness (LC II, 54). In relation to the Lord's Supper, Luther says: "Nor do we come to confession pure and without sin; on the contrary, we come as poor, miserable men, precisely because

we are unworthy" (61).

"A Brief Exhortation to Confession"

The confession of sins before God or before those against whom we sinned, is commanded by God. This is a "public, daily, and necessary confession" (LC A Brief Exhortation to Confession, 13). Besides this, "there is also the secret confession which takes place privately before a single brother" (13). This was not commanded, but "is left to everyone to use whenever he needs it" (14). Therefore, confession must be voluntary and done in freedom (1, 31).

The Absolution, on the other hand, was commanded: "Thus by divine ordinance Christ himself has entrusted absolution to the Christian church and commanded us to absolve one another from sins" (14). Therefore, if one needs consolation because he feels his sin, the Absolution is a "sure refuge" (14). The essential thing in the Absolution is that "through a man God loses and absolves him from his sins" (14).

Confession of sins and Absolution must be distinguished one from another. The confession of sins itself is "my work and act, when I lament my sin and desire comfort and restoration for my soul" (15). It does not merit forgiveness of sins. Absolution is "a work which God does, when he absolves me of my sins through a word placed in the mouth of a man" (15). These two parts must be

clearly separated, that is, man's work and God's work must not be confused (18). When they are confused, forgiveness is attributed to the work of man and the conscience loses its comfort (16-17). So, Luther says:

We urge you, however, to confess and express your needs, not for the purpose of performing a work but to hear what God wishes to say to you. The Word or absolution, I say, is what you should concentrate on, magnifying and cherishing it as a great and wonderful treasure to be accepted with all praise and gratitude (22).

This "treasure," (22, 25) or "gift" (23) is a "healing medicine" (26), the forgiveness of sins, the Gospel itself (29). So, "confession," that is, confession and Absolution, is a privilege (28). Those who proudly refuse this privilege, do refuse the Gospel itself and may not come to the Lord's Supper (29). Christians do not refuse such a treasure (29; 32; 35).

### The Smalcald Articles

#### Preface and Part I

As we have already noted with relation to the SA, in them Luther presents common "articles of faith" (1) for the church as well as his own personal confession of faith (3). Another aspect of this Preface is Luther's comments on the necessity of a council. There is no need of a council for those who have "the pure Word and the right use of the sacraments" (10) but for those "in the dioceses of the papists," for Christ died also for them (10). However, "those people cannot hear Christ speak to them as the true

shepherd speaking to his sheep" (10). The fundamental thing with which a council should occupy itself, therefore, is with articles such as these prepared by Luther, that is, the Gospel (14).

Christ is mentioned with reference to the Judgment as the "lord and judge of us all" (9). He is mentioned also according to his death for all men (10). He is "the true shepherd" who speaks to his sheep in the Gospel (10). He is also the "dear Lord Jesus Christ" to whom Luther prays for a true council" (15).

In the first part, which deals with "the sublime articles of the divine majesty," Luther confesses the doctrine of Trinity and the Person of Christ with the observation that "these articles are not matters of dispute or contentions, for both parties confess them" (SA, Part I).

#### Part II: The Work of Christ Alone

The Second Part of the Smalcald Articles deals with "the articles which pertain to the office and work of Jesus Christ, or to our redemption."<sup>16</sup>

#### Christ and Faith (SA II, I)

Luther quotes a few Biblical texts<sup>17</sup> for describing the work of Christ. All these texts refer to Christ's death

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<sup>16</sup>Tappert, 292.

<sup>17</sup>Namely, Rom. 4:25; John 1:29; Isa. 53:6; and Rom. 3:23-25.

The Mass and other abuses and human institutions, as the Papacy (IV), attribute to man the work of redemption which is of "the Lamb of God alone" (II, 1), of "Christ alone" (II, 12). The pope, "the real Antichrist who has raised himself over and set himself against Christ" (IV, 10), requires obedience to himself as means of salvation: "The pope will not permit such faith but asserts that one must be obedient to him in order to be saved" (IV, 12). Therefore they turn people aside "from Christ to their own merits" and idolatry (II, 19). The "knowledge of Christ" is undermined (II, 25). However:

The merits of Christ are obtained by grace, through faith, without our work or pennies. They are offered to us without our money or merit, not by the power of the pope but by the preaching of God's Word (Article II, 24).

### Part III

In the third part, Luther presents those "matters which we may discuss with learned and sensible men, or even among ourselves"<sup>18</sup>

#### Man's Need of Redemption (SA III, I-III)

##### Sin (SA III, I)

Luther divides sin into two categories: "original sin, or root sin" (SA III, I, 1) and "the fruits of sin," the "subsequent evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments" (2). Original sin comes from Adam, "through

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<sup>18</sup>Tappert, 302.

whose disobedience all men are made sinners and became subject to death and the devil" (1). Sin, therefore, is "hereditary" and "must be believed" according to the Scriptures, for nature is so deeply corrupted that "reason cannot understand it" (3).

Luther lists the errors of the scholastic theologians concerning man's natural abilities (4-10). They teach sin only as a partial corruption of human nature (4-5; 11). They affirm that man, after the fall of Adam, remains capable of loving God and observing the Law. In addition, they make grace a reward when "man does what he can" (8). Therefore they deny man's need of redemption; they deny the need of Christ's work. Their misunderstanding of what sin is corresponded by a misunderstanding of what Christ achieved through his death (11). Christ's death becomes useless: "Christ would have died in vain, for there would be no defect or sin in man for which he would have to die" (11).

#### The Law (SA III, II)

The Law was given by God and exercises two tasks: the first, through threats and promises, to restrain sin (SA III, II, 1); the second, "to make original sin manifest," that is, to reveal the corruption of human nature (4). This is the "chief function [Ampt]<sup>19</sup> and power of the law" (4).

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<sup>19</sup>BSLK, 436,5.

It is needed since its first purpose, to restrain sin, "failed because of the wickedness which sin has worked in man" (1). Some acted openly against the Law, while others assumed that were able to keep the Law by their own power (1). The "knowledge of the law" leads man to the desire of help but does not indicate where to find it (4).

#### Repentance (SA III, III)

The only use of the Law which is preserved in the "New Testament" (SA III, III, 1), that is, in the church, in contrast to the Old Testament, is that of revealing to man his sin. By its use "open sinners and false saints" are destroyed by God (2). Therefore, the contrition is passive, it is effected in man and it is "true sorrow of the heart" (2). Man hears a judgment that he is unworthy (3).

After the Law, the Gospel follows: "To this office of the law the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace in the Gospel" (4). The purpose of the preaching of the Law is "to accuse them all and convince them that they were sinners in order that they might know how they stood before God and recognize themselves as lost men" (5). When this happens, one is prepared "to receive grace from the Lord and to expect and accept from him the forgiveness of sins" (5). The Law reveals sin and "the Gospel offers consolation and forgiveness in more ways than one" (8). If "the law exercises its office alone, without the addition of the Gospel, there is only death and hell"

(7).

The papists "did not know what sin really is" in view of their confidence in "the natural powers of man" (10). Luther discusses the Roman doctrine of penance, and observes that "there was no mention here of Christ or of faith," but only to human works (14):

Here you see how blind reason gropes about in matters which pertain to God, seeking consolation in its own works, according to its own inventions, without being able to consider Christ and faith (18).

Reason assumes that man is able to keep the Law, and therefore pays no attention to "Christ and faith" but only to his own works (18; 20; 23).

True repentance, however, is the acknowledgement of sin, "that we are utterly lost, that from head to foot there is no good in us" (35). It is not enough to do penance for actual sins (11), but "we must become altogether new and different men" (35). True repentance is therefore neither "partial and fragmentary" nor "uncertain" (36). In true repentance, man confesses himself entirely a sinner (37). On the other hand, the satisfaction is also certain:

For it consists not of the dubious, sinful works which we do but of the sufferings and the blood of the innocent Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (38).

Luther says that with this teaching "we overthrow the pope and everything that is built on our good works" (39).

Repentance is lifelong, because "sin remains in the flesh" (40). However, one fights against sin "not with his

own powers but with the gift of the Holy Spirit which follows the forgiveness of sins" (40). Luther describes the work of this Holy Spirit as a cleansing and expulsion of the sin: "This gift daily cleanses and expels the sins that remain and enables man to become truly pure and holy" (40). There is no such thing as perfection in this life, or that sin after one has become a believer is no longer harmful (42). Christians do feel sin and need to repent daily. Christians also may "fall into open sin," but then "faith and the Holy Spirit have departed from them" (43):

This is so because the Holy Spirit does not permit sin to rule and gain the upper hand in such a way that sin is committed, but the Holy Spirit represses and restrains it so that it does not do what it wishes. If sin does what it wishes, the Holy Spirit and faith are not present (44).

This distinction between restrained sin and ruling sin Luther finds in the first epistle of John (45).

#### The Ministry of the Gospel (SA III, IV-VIII)

##### The Gospel (SA III, IV)

It "offers [gibt]<sup>20</sup> counsel and help against sin in more than one way, for God is surpassingly rich in his grace." Luther indicates these ways as: first, "the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin . . . is preached to the whole world." This proclamation is "the peculiar function [Amt]<sup>21</sup> of the Gospel." Then, follows the

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 449, 6.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 449, 10.

sacraments, the power of the keys and "the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren" (SA III, IV).

#### Baptism (SA III, V)

It is "nothing else than the Word of God in water" as instituted by Christ (SA III, V, 1). Paul and Augustine are cited against the definitions of scholastics (1). It is the Word in the water and not "a spiritual power" (2) or "the assistance of the divine will" (3) that washes away sin. Children should be baptized because they are "included in the promise of redemption" made by Christ (4).

#### The Sacrament of the Altar (SA III, VI)

Luther defines the Lord's Supper as follows:

The bread and the wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ and that these are given and received not only by godly but also by wicked Christians (1).

Both bread and wine should be given, because "administration in one form is not the whole order and institution as it was established and commanded by Christ" (3). The theory of transubstantiation is rejected, "for that the bread is and remains there agrees better with the Scriptures" (5).

#### The Keys (SA III, VII)

They are "a function and power [Ampt und Gewalt]"<sup>22</sup> given to the church by Christ" (SA III, VII 1). They were given "to bind and lose sins," not only manifest but also

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 452, 9.

secret sins, perceived by God alone (1). It is for God alone, not for men, "to judge which, how great, and how many our sins are" (2).

#### Confession (SA III, VIII)

The "absolution or the power of the keys . . . was instituted by Christ in the Gospel" (SA III, VIII, 1). It is "a consolation and help against sin and a bad conscience" (1). Therefore, "confession and absolution" should remain in use. It is needed especially for the benefit of "timid consciences" and the "untrained young people" (1). Here Luther adds a new function to the confession in relation to the Catechisms, the examination and instruction in Christian doctrine. Confession acquires a pedagogical purpose besides the pastoral one. Enumeration of sins, a requirement of the medieval church, should "be left free to everybody to do or not as he will" (2). "Private absolution" is derived from the public absolution, "the office of the keys," however it, "like all other functions [Ampter]"<sup>23</sup> of the Christian church, should not be despised.

The contempt for the absolution is identified as the contempt for the "external, spoken Word" (3). Against all kinds of "enthusiasm," that is the rejection of the external Word in behalf of particular and internal illumination, Luther says: "God gives no one his Spirit or grace except

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 453, 15.

through or with the external Word which comes before" (3).

All enthusiasm comes from the devil:

All this is the old devil and the old serpent who made enthusiasts of Adam and Eve. He led them from the external Word of God to spiritualizing and to their own imaginations (5).

Indeed, enthusiasm is not the refusal of any word but of the Scriptures and the spoken Word of God when the words of the devil and of men are listened to (4-6). The papacy and other religions are also "nothing but enthusiasm" (4), that is, their teachings are not founded on God's Word (9).

#### Church and Society (SA III, IX-XII)

##### Excommunication (SA III, IX)

As Luther had stated before (III, III, 1), civil punishment for sin does not belong in the church, but only "this spiritual punishment," that "those who are manifest and impenitent sinners" are excluded "from the sacrament and other fellowship of the church until they mend their ways and avoid sin."

##### Ordination and Vocation (SA III, X)

Since those who should be the bishops over the church became "temporal lords and princes," the church is allowed to ordain ministers without them (SA III, X, 1-2). Luther calls for the support of the early church practice (3).

##### The Marriage of Priests (SA III, XI)

The "papists" have no authority or power to change

nature, therefore "so little they have the power to separate such creatures of God or forbid them to live together honestly in marriage" (SA III, XI, 2). Marriage is to be free according to God's institution (3).

#### The Church (SA III, XII)

The "papists" are not the church (SA III, XII, 1). The church consists of "holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd," as even children do confess it (2). Its holiness is not its hierarchy or ceremonies but "it consists of the Word of God and true faith" (3).

#### Justification and Works (SA III, XIII-XV)

How Man is Justified Before God,  
and His Good Works (SA III, XIII)

Luther defines justification in the following way:

That by faith . . . we get a new and clean heart and that God will and does account us altogether righteous and holy [ganz gerecht und heilig]<sup>21</sup> for the sake of Christ, our mediator (SA III, XIII, 1).

Good works follow faith: "Good works follow such faith, renewal, and forgiveness" (2). Without works the faith is not true but false (3). However, these works which follow faith are yet imperfect. They do not help man before God. There is no merit in them (3). On the other hand, man is not condemned by their imperfection or by the sin which still remains in the flesh: "Whatever is still sinful or imperfect

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 460, 10.

in these works will not be reckoned as sin or defect for the sake of the same of Christ." Justification and sanctification are the work of God alone through Christ:

The whole man, in respect both of his person and of his works, shall be righteous and holy through the pure grace and mercy which have poured out upon us so abundantly in Christ (2).

Thus, the important thing is that "we have a gracious God" (3).

#### Monastic Vows (SA III, IV)

Luther says again that the monastic vows contradict the "first chief article" (SA III, IV, 1):

Whoever takes the vows of monastic life believes that he is entering upon a mode of life that is better than that of the ordinary Christians and proposes by means of his work to help not only himself but others to get to heaven. This is to deny Christ, etc. (2).

#### Human Traditions (and Conclusion) (SA III, XV)

"The assertion of the papists that human traditions effect forgiveness of sins or merit salvation is unchristian and to be condemned" (SA III, XV, 1).

Salvation is at stake in whether or not these articles are confessed: "If anybody wishes to make some concessions, let him do so at the peril of his own conscience" (3).

#### Conclusion

The Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles present the same theology, though the order of presentation in the one differs from the other. The question which was addressed to

these works of Luther is: How are Christ and faith related to each other so that "faith in Christ" justifies, with exclusion of "works of the Law"? The following points present the results of this chapter accordingly:

1) Christ is described in relation to his work of redemption. In the Catechisms, Christ and his work are fully presented in the explanations of the Second Article of the Creed. Luther concentrates on what he calls the substance of the article: Christ as Redeemer. Christ's death and resurrection are for us. His own precious blood was the cost of redemption. In the Smalcald Articles, Luther calls it the chief article, which can ever be compromised. He offers no long explanations but a few Biblical texts which present in the plainest way the truth that Christ's death was for us. Christ is the Lamb of God. This is the central thing Luther has to say about Christ.

2) Faith is described in the explanation of the First Commandment as the trust in God from whom every good thing is to be expected. True faith expects salvation from God. The Gospel, not the Law, announces the work of Christ and adds the words: "for you." Reason does not know anything about it; faith is wrought in the heart through the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. Faith believes in the Word and receives what the Word gives. Faith receives forgiveness and salvation as a gift from God. This is emphasized especially in the explanation of the sacraments and the Absolution in

the Large Catechism. By faith we are reckoned as righteous for the sake of Christ, our mediator, says Luther in the Smalcald Articles.

3) Christ and faith exclude works. In the Smalcald Articles Luther emphasizes that when one trusts in works, Christ and faith are rejected altogether. Trust in works, says Luther in the Large Catechism, is unwillingness to receive salvation as a gift. He who trusts in works wants to earn salvation by his own endeavor. Christ and faith are, therefore, omitted in the Roman teaching of justification because it teaches essentially salvation by works. Christ excludes works because redemption from sin, death, and the dominion of the devil is the work of the Son of God alone. Christ excludes works because his work is sufficient. Faith, on the other hand, excludes works, because it receives forgiveness or salvation as a gift.

Thus faith in Christ justifies in view of Christ's work, which achieved forgiveness and salvation now offered in the Gospel, and in view of faith that receives it. There is, therefore, no room for man's endeavors when Christ and faith are taken into account. In the next chapter, in which we ask concerning the relationship of Christ and faith in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, these points shall become clear once more as Luther develops his exposition.

### CHAPTER III

#### CHRIST AND FAITH IN GREAT GALATIANS, 2:16-21.

Luther's Great Galatians Commentary, which first appeared in 1535, was edited by George Rörer on the basis of his own notes taken while Luther lectured on Galatians in 1531. This was the second time Luther lectured on Galatians. He had lectured on Galatians in the years 1516-1517. These first lectures were edited by Luther himself into a commentary in 1519. A second edition of this commentary appeared also in 1523.

The 1530s represent a period of especial concern on the part of Luther in the doctrine of justification. F. Edward Cranz observes:

Once Luther, by about 1522, has worked out a new doctrine of justification, he evidently feels that this is enough for the time being, and not until about 1530 does he turn to the elaboration of an over-all statement of his position.<sup>1</sup>

Marc Lienhard notes that the controversies of the 1520s had forced Luther to concentrate especially on the doctrine of

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<sup>1</sup>F. Edward Cranz, An Essay on the Development of Luther's Thought on Justice, Law, and Society, Harvard Theological Studies (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), 42; see also p. 61.

the Lord's Supper.<sup>2</sup> Martin Greschat observes that the rejection of the Augsburg Confession and the necessity of clarification of the differences in the doctrine of justification in relation to the Roman adversaries had decisive importance for Luther's treatment of the doctrine of justification in this new period.<sup>3</sup>

Luther had the plan of writing a treatise on justification, which he started in 1530 but did not continue beyond the first preparatory notes.<sup>4</sup> The doctrine of justification became also the theme of the disputations in the University of Wittenberg, as, for example, those known as "Theses Concerning Faith and Law" (1535) and "The Disputation concerning Justification" (1536). Luther's decision to lecture again on Galatians is another example of his interest on the doctrine of justification in this period. Luther said as introduction to his lectures:

We have taken it upon ourselves in the Lord's name to lecture on this Epistle of Paul to the Galatians once more. This is not because we want to teach something new or unknown, for by the grace of God Paul is now very well known to you. But it is because, as I often warn you, there is a clear and present danger that the devil may take away from us the pure doctrine of faith and may

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<sup>2</sup>Marc Lienhard, Luther, Witness to Jesus Christ: Stages and Themes of the Reformer's Christology (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 269.

<sup>3</sup>Martin Greschat, Melanchthon neben Luther: Studien zur Gestalt der Rechtfertigungslehre zwischen 1528 und 1537 (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1965), 80.

<sup>4</sup>Lowell C. Green, How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1980), 184.

substitute for it the doctrines of works and of humans traditions.<sup>5</sup>

The theme of Luther's Commentary is the theme of Paul's letter, justification by faith alone to the exclusion of works. Luther wrote in 1535, acknowledging the Great Galatians Commentary as his work "For in my heart there rules this one doctrine, namely, faith in Christ. From it, through it, and to it all my theological thought flows and returns, day and night."<sup>6</sup>

There are two source texts for Luther's exposition of Galatians. George Rörer took notes of Luther's lectures in 1531, and Rörer himself edited these notes into a commentary, which appeared in 1535. Both versions stand and are provided by the Weimar edition in a parallel way. As J. Pelikan has observed, the existence of the notes gives a basis of comparison between them and the edited commentary, with a positive result in terms of the credibility of

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<sup>5</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Works, American Edition, vol 26, Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4, trans. and ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 3; cited hereafter as LW 26; "In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius ex praelectione D. Martini Lutheri collectus [1531] 1535" in D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesamtausgabe, vol. 40, part 1, ed. A. Freitag (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1911), p. 39, l. 4-8; cited hereafter as WA 40/I.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther, "Luther's Preface of 1535" in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol 27, Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapters 5-6, trans Jaroslav Pelikan, Lectures on Galatians 1519, Chapters 1-6. trans. Richard Jungkuntz, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 145.

Rörer's editorial work.<sup>7</sup> It is important to note also that Luther acknowledged the commentary as edited by Rörer as his own.<sup>8</sup>

In the section 2:16-21 of the Commentary, a high point in Paul's own epistle, Luther gives especial emphasis to justifying faith and its apprehension of Christ. Karin Bornkamm observes the importance of the section for Luther's doctrine of justification.<sup>9</sup>

Luther's work is a commentary on a Biblical text. It differs in nature, therefore, from both the Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles. In view of this, the presentation here shall adhere to a systematization of the material according to Luther's theology as seen in chapter II. Some difficult passages, which refer to Christ's presence in faith and union with Christ, shall be examined in more detail in the last section of this chapter.

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<sup>7</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, Introduction to Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 26, Lectures on Galatians 1535, Chapter 1-4, trans. and ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), ix-x.

<sup>8</sup>Luther, "Luther's Preface of 1535," LW 27: 145: "I myself can hardly believe that when I delivered these public lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, I was as wordy as this book show that I was. Nevertheless, I recognize that all the thoughts which I find set down in this book with such diligence by my brethren are really mine, so that I am compelled to admit that all of them, or at least most of them, were spoken by me in my public presentation."

<sup>9</sup>Karin Bornkamm, Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs von 1519 und 1531: ein Vergleich (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1963), 89.

The Grace of God

By grace "God has sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him."<sup>10</sup> This is opposed by those who want to justify themselves before God through their self-chosen works or by the fulfilling of the Law. Thus Law and grace become two ways of salvation opposed to each other.<sup>11</sup> They are mutually exclusive: salvation is either by grace or by the Law. "It is necessary to say that we are pronounced righteous solely by grace or by faith in Christ, without the Law and works."<sup>12</sup> Throughout the section, Luther opposes grace and Law, faith and works. One way is that of captivity and condemnation, the way of the Law; the other way is the way of freedom and salvation, the way of grace.<sup>13</sup> Any attempt to achieve salvation by works or merits is rejection of God's grace: "to want to be justified by the works of the Law is to nullify the grace of God;"<sup>14</sup> "he who performs the Law with the intention of being justified by it nullifies grace . . . ."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>LW 26: 126.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 160; 445: "Either we must be justified by faith and lose the righteousness of the Law, or we must be justified by the Law and lose grace and the righteousness of faith."

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 180.

The Occamist doctrine of salvation,<sup>16</sup> which Luther discusses at length in this part of the commentary, is a denial of God's grace. Grace, that is, infused grace, is made dependent upon man's merit and works.<sup>17</sup> In the Occamist doctrine of salvation, man merits grace by the merit of congruity, that is, good works that man can do without and before the help of grace.<sup>18</sup> God acknowledges such a work out of his own infallible goodness, and rewards man with grace:

Then grace would certainly follow, not by the merit of congruity itself but by the infallibility of God, who is good and just that He cannot help granting grace in exchange for something good.<sup>19</sup>

After grace, man's good works become meritorious of the eternal life by the merit of condignity.<sup>20</sup>

The fundamental assumptions are that man is capable of loving God from his own power and that God rewards man's good deeds first with grace and then with eternal life.

Luther writes:

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<sup>16</sup>Bornkamm, 89-93; Hermann Kleinknecht, Gemeinschaft ohne Bedingungen: Kirche und Rechtfertigung in Luther's grosser Galaterbrief-Vorlesung von 1531, Calwer theologische Monographien, B/7 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1981), 34-36; See also: Alister E. McGrath, Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough (Oxford, UK; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1985), 53-63; 128-136.

<sup>17</sup>LW 26: 133; 180.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 124.

Now in the first case God is not indebted to anyone. But because He is good and righteous, it is proper for Him to approve such a good work, even though it is performed in mortal sin, and to grant grace for such a deed. But once grace has been obtained, God has become a debtor and is obliged by right to grant eternal life. For now this is not only a work of the free will, carried out externally; but it is performed in the grace that makes a man pleasing before God, that is, in love.<sup>11</sup>

This kind of theology, says Luther, is of the "antichristian kingdom" because it excludes Christ.<sup>12</sup> It affirms that man by his own power can love God and achieve grace and eternal life without the help of Christ and his work. If this were true, then Christ would have died to no purpose, because there would be no need of his work.<sup>13</sup>

Papists and fanatics alike confuse Law and grace: They change Law into grace, and Christ into Moses. The scholastics fail to distinguish Law and grace, for they call grace love, which is within the sphere of the Law. Love is a requirement of the Law. When the scholastics and sectarians alike say that faith needs the addition of works, they make justification dependent upon the fulfillment of the Law and reject grace. Luther asks, "What has happened to the distinction between the Law and grace?" So it is only by the doctrine of justification by faith alone that one can distinguish correctly between Law and grace: "anyone

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 176; 181.

who does not believe correctly about the doctrine of justification must necessarily confuse Law and grace."<sup>24</sup> It is necessary that "in the area of justification we look only at grace, and separate it far from the Law and from works, which belong far away."<sup>25</sup> The doctrine of justification is therefore the criterion for the correct separation between grace and Law, or faith and works.<sup>26</sup>

The doctrine of justification by faith, in contrast to the scholastic theories which exclude Christ,<sup>27</sup> has Christ at its the center.<sup>28</sup> Faith alone excludes the Law and human works, not Christ and his work. Faith alone is the counterpart of Christ alone:

Therefore victory over sin and death, salvation, and eternal life do not come by the Law or by the deeds of the Law or by our will but by Jesus Christ alone. Hence faith alone justifies when it takes hold of this . . . .<sup>29</sup>

Faith and Christ belong together; one does not stand without the other: "Here immediately Christ is denied and faith is abolished, because what belongs to Christ alone is attributed to the Commandments of God or to the Law."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 143.

The problem with the Law, is that it does not justify.<sup>31</sup> Luther insists on the basis of verse sixteen that the Law does not justify.<sup>32</sup> It is permissible to say every good thing about the Law, but it is wrong to say that it justifies, for the words say clearly that it does not justify. On this Luther stands immovable.

He rejects whatever qualification narrows the meaning of Paul's words. When Paul says "Law" he refers to the entire Law of the Old Testament. He rejects the idea that Paul was referring only to the Ceremonial Law.<sup>33</sup> The term "Law" must be taken in the broadest sense: "Whatever is not grace is Law."<sup>34</sup>

Luther presents other arguments: if a work done according to the Decalog does not justify, how would a work done according to the Ceremonial Law be able to justify?<sup>35</sup> If works done according to the divine Law do not justify, how would works done after man's own traditions be able to justify?<sup>36</sup> If "works of the Law" were able to justify, man would have no need of the grace of God and the death of

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 122-123; 141.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 122-124.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 122; WA 40/I: 218,7-8: "Quidquid non est gratia, Lex est."

<sup>35</sup>LW 26: 122.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 122-123; 141.

Christ.<sup>37</sup>

The Law, says Luther, does not justify. It does not matter if it is done with or without the help of grace. It remains true that man is not justified by works of the Law.<sup>38</sup> In the matter of justification, there is no room whatsoever for the Law and works, only for Christ and faith.

#### Christ and His Work

Christ's work or officium<sup>39</sup> is twofold: his work on Calvary and his work in the conscience, that is, his past and his present work. This is an aspect which has attracted the attention of those who have studied Great Galatians, 2:16-21: the relation of the past work of Christ to his present work. H. Thimme proposes the concept "exemplar" to explain how the past work of Christ is effective today: "Als exemplar, nicht als exemplum, findet die crux Christi ihre gegenwärtige und ewige geltend Verwirklichung."<sup>40</sup> Thimme works with the paradigmatic scheme from the early Luther: "Wie Christus, so lebt auch der Gläubige . . . . Der

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 179-185.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 123: "Therefore refraining from murder or adultery--whether this is done by natural powers or by human strength or by free will or by the gift and power of God--still does not justify."

<sup>39</sup>WA 40/I: 250,10.

<sup>40</sup>Hans Thimme, Christi Bedeutung für Luthers Glauben: Unter Zugrundlegung des Römerbrief-, des Hebräerbrief-, des Galaterbriefskommentars von 1531 und der Disputationen (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1933), 72.

Gläubige findet also in Christus sein eigenes Geschick exemplarisch vorgebildet."<sup>41</sup>

K. Bornkamm criticizes Thimme's interpretation because it limits the significance of Christ to exemplar, which, in turn, limits faith to conformity.<sup>42</sup> She emphasizes the relationship between Christ's work and the Word.<sup>43</sup> The Word establishes the relationship between the past and the present in the work of Christ, because it effects in man the death of the natural man:

Das Sterben des natürlichen Menschen wird nicht beschrieben als Gleichgestaltetwerden mit Christus . . . sondern sie vollzieht sich im Hören der Verkündigung der durch Christus gewirkten Erlösung."<sup>44</sup>

A death and a resurrection are effected in man not simply in view of the past history of Christ, but as fruit of the "gepredigten Heilsgeschehen."<sup>45</sup> Faith is a grasping, but what faith grasps is the action of Christ: "Der Glaubende erleidet im Hören des Wortes die gleiche Geschichte wie Christus."<sup>46</sup> There is, therefore, a parallel between Christ's history and the history of the believer, but this is not effected because Christ's history was "exemplar," as

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>42</sup>Bornkamm, 113; 116.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 123.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 125.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 127.

Thimme thought, but because the Word effects it.<sup>47</sup> The relation between past and present happens, therefore, through an insertion of the believer into the history of Christ, effected by the Word.<sup>48</sup>

M. Lienhard, who emphasizes the incarnation rather than the work on Calvary, sees the relationship between the past and present work of Christ in terms of actualization of salvation. Christ's coming is twofold: at the Incarnation and by the Word. Christ is present in the Word, and when received in faith he transforms the Christian into his likeness.<sup>49</sup> A new person is created in the course of the Christian life on the basis of what Jesus Christ is and has done.<sup>50</sup> Faith, says Lienhard, in agreement with Regin Prenter,<sup>51</sup> is a movement away from oneself and toward Christ, who is "simultaneously the basis and the likeness of the new life to which I am called."<sup>52</sup>

All the three mentioned authors fail to present the true relationship between past and present in the work of Christ. Luther indicates himself how the past and the

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 127-128; 135.

<sup>49</sup>Lienhard, 287; 289.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 289.

<sup>51</sup>Regin Prenter, Spiritus Creator, trans. John M. Jensen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953), 88.

<sup>52</sup>Lienhard, 290.

present in Christ's work are to be understood when he presents the distinction between achievement and bestowal.<sup>53</sup> Luther, confronted by Karlstadt's idea of meditation upon the cross as the means of actualization of Christ's past work, and his related contempt for the Lord's Supper as sacrament, makes very emphatic this distinction between achievement and bestowal:

Christ on the cross and all his suffering and his death do not avail, even if, as you teach, they are "acknowledged and meditated upon" with the utmost "passion, ardor, heartfeltness." Something else must always be there. What is it? The Word, the Word, the Word! Listen, lying spirit, the Word avails. Even if Christ were given for us a thousand times, it would be in vain if the Word of God were absent and were not distributed and given to me with the bidding, this is for you, take what is yours.<sup>54</sup>

Christ's work in the past, that is, on Calvary, was the achievement of salvation. His present work, also described as the work of the Holy Spirit, is the bestowal of the benefits of this work. This is done, not by effecting in man the pattern of Christ, as the early Luther would have it, but by the Word which gives forgiveness. J. Köstlin observes this distinction when he presents the work of Christ as twofold: the completed and the continuous work of

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<sup>53</sup>N. Nagel, "Luther's Understanding of Christ in Relation to His Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," (Ph. D. Dissertation, Cambridge, England, 1961), xxiii.

<sup>54</sup>Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments" (1525), in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 40, Church and Ministry II, ed. C. Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958, 212-213).

Christ.<sup>55</sup>

This is the scheme which is followed here: Christ's unique work on Calvary and his work in the conscience through the Gospel, the achievement and the bestowal of salvation.

#### Christ's Work on Calvary

"Your salvation does not come by works," says Luther, but "God has sent His only Son into the world that we might live through Him. He was crucified and died for you and bore your sins in His own body."<sup>56</sup> Salvation is not per legem aut opera, sed per Christum crucifixum.<sup>57</sup> Calvary, the cross, is therefore where Christ does his unique work of High Priest.<sup>58</sup> The cross is the place of the combat between the Son of God and the tyrants, the Law, sin, death, hell, and the devil. Christ's victory was achieved in "that sublime crucifixion."<sup>59</sup> The cross, that is, Christ's

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<sup>55</sup>Julius Köstlin, The Theology of Luther in its Historical Development and Inner Harmony, 2 vol., trans. C. Hay, (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society), 2: 365.

<sup>56</sup>LW 26: 126.

<sup>57</sup>WA 40/I:27 ; LW 26: 160.

<sup>58</sup>LW 26: 177; 178; 180; 182.

<sup>59</sup>LW 26: 165; WA 40/I: 281,17-19: "Sed loquitur hic de illa sublimi conrucifixione qua peccatum, Diabolus, mors crucifigitur in Christo, non in me."

death, is the decisive point in the work of redemption.<sup>60</sup>

Luther's is an exegetical work. He develops or discusses a theme as the text he is expounding requires or prompts him to do. When Paul's text says "For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God,"<sup>61</sup> Luther interprets the first appearance of "Law" in the verse as referring to grace: "he calls grace itself 'Law' . . . . Thus he opposes the Law to the Law."<sup>62</sup> From this starting point Luther develops the explanation of the work of Christ as iucundissimum duelum<sup>63</sup> between Christ and the tyrants: Law, sin, death, devil.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, Paul's words "the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me"<sup>65</sup> prompt Luther to present Christ as High Priest and his work as the unique sacrifice which placates God and obtains reconciliation.<sup>66</sup>

These two aspects were present in Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism.

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<sup>60</sup>Nagel, xxiii: "The death of Christ is unique in its atoning achievement. . . . the cross is the complete achievement of salvation."

<sup>61</sup>Gal 2:19 in LW 26: 155.

<sup>62</sup>LW 26: 155: "he calls grace itself "Law." . . . Thus he opposes Law to Law."

<sup>63</sup>WA 40/I: 279,25; LW 26: 164.

<sup>64</sup>LW 26: 155-164.

<sup>65</sup>Gal. 2:20 in LW 26: 172.

<sup>66</sup>LW 26: 172-185.

It is clear from the Large Catechism that the overcoming of sin, death, and devil is a result of the satisfaction for sins before God. It is appropriate, therefore, to present Christ first as the High Priest (price for sins, reconciliation to God) and then as the Victor (overcoming of the tyrants).

### Christ, Our High Priest

Luther emphasizes three things: the undeserved love, the magnificence of the price given as payment for sins, and the purpose of Christ's death.

The Occamist doctrine of salvation knew nothing of the undeserved love with which God loved men. They rather said that their natural love for God was the cause of God's grace to be given them.<sup>67</sup> Luther criticizes this Occamistic assumption on the basis of Paul's words. He takes the pronoun "me" and asks:

Who is this "me"? It is I, an accursed and damned sinner, who was so beloved by the Son of God that He gave Himself for me.<sup>68</sup>

Occamism knew nothing of such undeserved love from God. Reason knows nothing of God's undeserved love, but wants always to merit God's love.

This is the wondrous thing in Christ's work: it was done out of an undeserved love for the sinful and condemned

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 172-173.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 176.

mankind:

Therefore Paul says here that not we but Christ took the initiative. "He loved me," he says, "and gave Himself for me." It is as though he were saying: "He did not find a good will or a correct intellect in me, but He Himself took pity on me. He saw that I was ungodly, erring, turned away from God, drawing back and fighting against God; and that I had been captured, directed, and steered by the devil. By a mercy that preceded my reason, will, and intellect He loved me, and loved me so much that He gave Himself for me, that I might be delivered from the Law, sin, the devil, and death."<sup>69</sup>

For Occamism, grace was conferred on those who had done a minimum so that God might have a basis on the ground of which to give his grace. The initiative should come from man. To Luther, this undeserved love and the undeserved gift reveal "the true meaning of justification."<sup>70</sup> The undeserved love of the Son of God toward man has no ground in man, but only in God himself: "not we but Christ took the initiative."<sup>71</sup>

Luther distinguishes between the realm of human reason and the spiritual realm and between natural and spiritual endowments. Man's natural endowments refer to external matters, which are the "political and domestic affairs." In this realm man is a "lord."<sup>72</sup> This is the realm of reason, in which one rules a family, builds a

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 174.

house, or carries on a governmental office.<sup>73</sup> Sin did not impede man in doing these things, though man cannot do them without imperfection. Therefore, in this realm one is not required to do more than he is able to do, for "this realm has boundaries."<sup>74</sup>

The spiritual realm is a different situation, for here man is before God himself, "in regnum spirituale coram Deo."<sup>75</sup> The spiritual endowments with which man was created are not sound but altogether corrupt, even wholly extinguished through sin both in man and in the devil:<sup>76</sup>

Thus there is nothing there but a depraved intellect and a will that is hostile and opposed to God's will--a will that thinks nothing except what is against God.<sup>77</sup>

Man's will is, therefore, unable to love God but it is "contra Deum."<sup>78</sup> "Whatever is in our will is evil; whatever is in our intellect is error."<sup>79</sup> There is no ability in man to love God, but "in divine matters . . . man has nothing but darkness, error, malice, and perversity of will and of intellect."<sup>80</sup> Man deserves nothing but wrath

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 173.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>WA 40/I: 294,17; LW 26: 174.

<sup>76</sup>LW 26: 174.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>WA, 40/I: 293,28; LW 26: 174.

<sup>79</sup>LW 26: 174.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 174-175.

from God.<sup>81</sup>

Therefore, "by a mercy that preceded my reason, will, and intellect He loved me, . . . ."<sup>82</sup> Christ's love is not preceded by my endeavors, it is undeserved. It moved Christ to the sacrifice which only could placate God's wrath and reconcile man to God:<sup>83</sup>

There was such great evil, such great error, and such darkness and ignorance in my will and intellect that I could be liberated only by such an inestimable price. . . . For I hear in this passage that there is so much evil in my nature that the world and all creation would not suffice to placate God, but that the Son of God Himself had to be given up for it.<sup>84</sup>

The Son of God was "given." He was given "in the most shameful way, into death, even death on a cross . . . so that His most precious blood was shed" for man's sins.<sup>85</sup>

The price is beyond reason, it is greater than what man can think of, "the world and all creation." The price is "His most precious blood." The price corresponds to the dignity of God, who should be placated; it is an "immense, infinite price."<sup>86</sup> It is "the death and the blood of the Son of God, one drop of which is more precious than all

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 175; 151.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 176.

creation."<sup>87</sup> This price was paid because nothing less would placate God's wrath.<sup>88</sup> One drop of Christ's blood would have been enough to make satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, but Christ made "abundant satisfaction."<sup>89</sup>

Luther compares the Son of God, his death and his blood which was shed with the works man can produce: they are nothing.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, Luther asks how a person may reject Christ and attempt to placate God with his own sinful works, those required in the Law or, what is worse, those not commanded.<sup>91</sup> Luther says:

If you looked at this price, you would take all your cowls, tonsures, vows, merits of congruity, and merits of condignity, and you would curse, defile, spit upon, and damn them, and consign them to hell!<sup>92</sup>

The payment for sins is a gift,<sup>93</sup> because he was provided by Christ without the help of man: "Here Christ does everything alone."<sup>94</sup> "But He who was completely God gave everything He was, gave Himself for me."<sup>95</sup> The price

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 175-176.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., 178: "[he] gives and is given."

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 177.

or the gift is God himself. The Son of God redeems man by this "giving" of himself into death.<sup>96</sup> The priceless gift is given as the price for sins.

Luther discusses the purpose of Christ's death in reference to Paul's text: "For if justification were through the Law, then Christ died to no purpose."<sup>97</sup> The purpose of Christ's death is that man might be justified.<sup>98</sup> Man's inability to justify himself, that is, to placate God's wrath, is the reason why Christ died on the cross. Christ did what man could not do. Christ's work was in substitution of man. Christ died in place of man. The Occamist doctrine of salvation makes Christ's death unnecessary because it teaches that man is able to justify himself. Luther denies that man has "within himself the power to acquire righteousness."<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, the Occamist doctrine of salvation is blasphemy and denial of Christ. They claim to themselves the glory which is exclusively Christ's. They deny God's grace and make Christ's work useless:

But to make the death of Christ useless is to make His resurrection, His victory, His glory, His kingdom, heaven, earth, God Himself, the majesty of God, in

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 181.

short, everything, useless.<sup>100</sup>

Christ did not die for no purpose. Nor did he die for himself. He died for man--"for me," says Luther with Paul. Man has need of Christ's work. This need is man's sinfulness and hopelessness. Christ saw man's need,<sup>101</sup> not his merit, and loved man when man deserved nothing but wrath and condemnation, and gave himself for man, in place of man, into crucifixion, in order that man might be justified, that is, to have his sin placated before God.

The purpose of Christ's work was that he might become "our High Priest," for his death was a "sacrifice for our sins."<sup>102</sup> In this work, Christ "interposes Himself as the Mediator between God and us miserable sinners:"<sup>103</sup>

Paul gives a beautiful description of the priesthood and the work of Christ, which is to placate God, to intercede and pray for sinners, to offer himself as a sacrifice for their sins, and to redeem them.<sup>104</sup>

The death of Christ is the sacrifice which placates God and redeems man from the dominion of sin, death, and devil.

#### Christ, the Victor

The work of Christ is presented as a combat against the Law, sin, death, and the devil. Christ assumes the sins

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., 178-179.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 177.

of all men. But he becomes the victor, because he overcomes the very power of condemnation: "Christ crucifies the devil, kills death, damns sin, and binds the Law."<sup>105</sup>

Luther's starting point, as seen above, is Paul's text which opposes Law to Law. Luther says that the Law that opposes Law is grace. Grace is the "another Law" against the Law that accuses and damns.<sup>106</sup> Death, sin, and devil--all find their opposite in Christ, who opposes a contrary death and sin and a stronger devil against sin, death, and the devil. Those are in fact not death but life, not sin but righteousness, not devil but Christ, the Savior.

In the Large Catechism, Luther also mentioned sin, death, and devil as "tyrants" which are overcome by Christ. Here, Luther adds the Law. The Law is called "evil" alongside with sin, death, and the devil,<sup>107</sup> not because of the Law itself--for the Law is good, but because of sin. The Law brings death and damnation to men because of their sin. In order to redeem man it was necessary to overcome Law itself, that is, to remove the wrath of God by removing sin: "if sin is taken away, then wrath is taken away; . . . ."<sup>108</sup> Death, hell, and the devil have no power if sin is removed, they are altogether overcome. Thus

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<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 151.

Christ's death and resurrection was Christ's victory.<sup>109</sup>

Christ became the victor<sup>110</sup> over the Law, sin, death, and devil through his death and resurrection:<sup>111</sup>

For by the very fact that He permitted the Law to accuse Him, sin to damn Him, and death to devour Him He abrogated the Law, damned sin, destroyed death, and justified and saved me.<sup>112</sup>

Christ's death has therefore the power to justify because "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dies on the cross and bears my sin, the Law, death, the devil, and hell in His body."<sup>113</sup> Christ's crucifixion damned sin,<sup>114</sup> killed death,<sup>115</sup> captured and conquered the devil,<sup>116</sup> destroyed hell,<sup>117</sup> abrogated the Law.<sup>118</sup>

Luther emphasizes that this victory is available to those who believe in Christ so that faith itself is victory, as he finds in 1 John 5:4-5.<sup>119</sup> However, the victory is

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., 159.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 162.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 162.

achieved by Christ alone at his crucifixion:

But he is speaking here about that sublime crucifixion by which sin, the devil, and death are crucified in Christ, not in me. Here Christ does everything alone.<sup>120</sup>

Overcoming of the tyrants, the Law, sin, death, and the devil, is possible

not through the Law or works but through Christ the crucified, on whose shoulders lie all the evils of the human race--the Law, sin, death, the devil, the hell.<sup>121</sup>

Christ became victor and Lord through his death and resurrection: "But Christ is the Lord of the Law, because he has been crucified and has died to the Law."<sup>122</sup> The victory against the powers of condemnation is in "that bronze serpent, Christ nailed on the cross."<sup>123</sup>

#### Christ's Work in the Conscience (Justification)

The conscience is either under the Law or under grace. Man must be transferred from the Law into grace. Luther says the same when he says that either Moses or Christ rules the conscience; when one comes, he expels the other. If man is under Law, or if Moses rules the conscience, there are in man sin, death, the dominion of the devil, hell. If man is under grace, or if Christ rules the conscience, there rule

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 166-167.

also righteousness and life. As in the Large Catechism, redemption is understood as change of lordship (See LC II, 27-31).<sup>124</sup> There is no middle ground between the dominion of Law, sin, death, and the devil and the kingdom of Christ. There is only an either or. One must be transferred from the power of Law, sin, death, and the devil, in order to be in Christ's kingdom. It is Christ through the Gospel who effects it, not man.

### The Gospel

Luther defines Gospel as "a proclamation about Christ: that He forgives sins, grants grace, justifies and saves sinners."<sup>125</sup> This was his usual definition of Gospel:

The Gospel, then, is nothing but the preaching about Christ, Son of God and of David, true God and man, who by his death and resurrection has overcome for us the sin, death, and hell of all men who believe in him.<sup>126</sup>

And: "The Gospel is nothing else than a sermon about Christ."<sup>127</sup> The Gospel is, therefore, a proclamation

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<sup>124</sup>Theodore G. Tappert, ed. The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 414. Hereafter citations of Lutheran confessional documents will be given in the text in parentheses without footnote references to Tappert.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>126</sup>Id., "Preface to the New Testament" (1546 [1522]), in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 35, Word and Sacrament I, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 360.

<sup>127</sup>Id., "Sermons on the Second Epistle of St. Peter" (1523), in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 30, The Catholic Epistles, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 163.

about Christ and his saving work accomplished by his death and resurrection, that is, his past work. In the Catechisms, the preaching of the Gospel belongs to the Third Article of the Creed and to the Sacraments and Absolution, that is, to the impartation of forgiveness. In the Smalcald Articles, Gospel comprehends the oral proclamation, sacraments, and mutual consolation; it "offers counsel and help against sin in more than in one way, . . . ." (SA III, IV). Here Luther says, "the Gospel . . . preaches the forgiveness of sins to you through Christ, who has abrogated the Law and has destroyed sin and death."<sup>128</sup>

The Gospel is a proclamation about Christ, a proclamation about forgiveness. It points to Christ and his work and calls for faith through its promise: "Believe in Jesus Christ, who was crucified for your sins."<sup>129</sup>

"Believe in Him, and you will be free of the curse of the Law. You will be righteous and will have eternal life."<sup>130</sup>

The Gospel offers "Christ alone" so that nothing is required but faith.<sup>131</sup>

Luther sees human doctrines and traditions as opposed to the Gospel. These are man's own creation, after the idea that one needs to do works to be justified. Human

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<sup>128</sup>LW 26: 152.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., 152.

<sup>131</sup>Ibid., 160.

traditions may exist, but if eternal life and salvation are promised through them, they must be rejected. Human traditions, when done in the trust of meriting eternal life through them, destroy the trust in the Gospel, that is, faith in Christ. This is because man's reason cannot understand the Gospel, the undeserved love of the Son of God and his sacrifice for mankind, but follows the Law. The Gospel, however, must be distinguished from the Law so that one may have a "true definition of Christ."<sup>132</sup>

#### Law and Gospel

True repentance has two parts, which correspond to the distinction of Law and Gospel: "First, a man must be taught by the Law to know himself," that is, to acknowledge himself as a sinner:<sup>133</sup>

Now once a man has thus been humbled by the Law and brought to the knowledge of himself, then he becomes truly repentant; for true repentance begins with fear and with the judgement of God. He sees that he is a such great sinner that he cannot find any means to be delivered from his sin by his own strength, effort or works. Then he understands correctly what Paul means when he says that man is the slave and captive of sin, that God has consigned all men to sin, and that the whole world is guilty in the sight of God.<sup>134</sup>

When man acknowledges his captivity under sin, "he looks about and sighs for the help of the Mediator and

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<sup>132</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid.

Savior."<sup>135</sup>

After the Law has done its officium proprium,<sup>136</sup> the Gospel does its job. Luther says: "then there comes, at the appropriate time, the saving Word of the Gospel, . . . ." <sup>137</sup> The Gospel comforts the conscience tormented by the Law with the promise of forgiveness.

The difference between the Law and the Gospel is that the Law directs man to himself, his works, his many sins<sup>138</sup>--that, to man's own persona, to man as a doer of works.<sup>139</sup> The Gospel points beyond, outside of, man; it points to the one who is the Lamb of God, the bronze serpent, that is, to Christ crucified.<sup>140</sup> The Law accuses, because it never finds in man the works it requires. But the Gospel comforts the conscience because it adds to the proclamation of Christ's work the words "for you."

#### The True Definition of Christ

Luther speaks of the name, the work (officium), the right, and the glory of Christ. His name is Justifier,

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<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

<sup>136</sup>WA 40/I: 259,18; LW 26: 150; LW 26: 148: "the proper use and aim of the Law is to make guilty those who are smug and at peace, . . . ." See also LW 26: 315 and 329.

<sup>137</sup>LW 26: 131.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid.

because he absolves and liberates man's conscience from sin. This is his officium, not the Law's. This is also his right and his glory. To attribute justification to the Law, traditions, and works is to deny Christ, to make him idle, or useless.

Christ is not the Law, or lawgiver, or judge, says Luther several times; "he is the Lamb of God."<sup>141</sup> If Christ is not the Law, he is the grace of God for us. Christ is defined correctly when he is defined as Justifier, Savior, Redeemer, Mediator, Lover, High Priest, Victor, Lord, Lamb of God, bronze serpent, treasure, gift--all these terms indicate the proprium Christi officium: "to liberate from death and sin,"<sup>142</sup> "to embrace the one whom the Law has made a sinner and pronounced guilty, and to absolve him from his sins if he believes the Gospel."<sup>143</sup> The work of Christ, his officium, is the work of grace, to bring freedom to captive consciences:

For where Christ is, there must be a good conscience and joy; Christ Himself is our Reconciliation, Righteousness, Peace, Life, and Salvation. Whatever the miserable and afflicted conscience seeks, that it finds in Christ.<sup>144</sup>

Luther criticizes the fanatics who know Christ only as

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<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 151.

an example to be imitated.<sup>145</sup> Christ as example belongs to the Law, because by the way of example works are required. The papists and fanatics make "Christ the condemner and Moses the savior."<sup>146</sup>

Therefore anyone who teaches that faith in Christ does not justify unless the Law is observed makes Christ a minister of sin, that is, a teacher of the Law, who teaches the same thing that Moses did. Then Christ is not the Savior and Dispenser of grace; but He is a cruel tyrant, who like Moses demands the impossible, which no man can produce.<sup>147</sup>

To attribute justification to the Law and works is to make Christ of no use to man,<sup>148</sup> and "to take Christ's glory away from Him and to assign it to works instead."<sup>149</sup>

However, "Christ is, by definition, the Justifier and the Redeemer from sins."<sup>150</sup>

Because in Justification works are excluded, the righteousness that avails before God is not work but a gift. Christ is the Giver and the gift of grace and righteousness; he "gives and is given."<sup>151</sup> Christ is the treasure or gift.<sup>152</sup> In Christ, it is offered us an inestimable

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 150.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., 178.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., 134.

gift.<sup>153</sup> As seen under the chapter II, the terms "gift" and "treasure" are important words in the Large Catechism. They designate Christ and the benefits of his work: forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Luther accepts Christ as an example, but not in justification. In justification, Christ is gift; for the terms "gift" and "treasure," in contrast to "example," indicate the completeness of Christ's work on Calvary:

Scripture presents Christ in two ways. First as a gift. . . . Secondly, . . . as an example for us to imitate. But I will not let this Christ be presented to me as exemplar except at a time of rejoicing, when I am out of reach of temptations . . . . But in a time of tribulation I will not listen to or accept Christ except as a gift, as Him who died for my sins, who has bestowed His righteousness on me, and who accomplished and fulfilled what is lacking in my life. For He 'is the end of the Law, that everyone who has faith may be justified' (Rom. 10:4).<sup>154</sup>

It is because Christ alone did everything that what he did is offered as a gift and a treasure. There is nothing left to man to do, except to hear the Gospel, to believe it, and to accept what the Gospel offers. The word "gift" indicates here the extra nos of the work of salvation: that bronze serpent, the Lamb of God, Christ crucified. The crucifixion is pointed for that conscience which seeks comfort: "We must turn our eyes completely to that bronze serpent, Christ

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<sup>153</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>154</sup>Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 5-6" in Luther's Works, vol 27, Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 5-6; Lectures on Galatians 1519: Chapters 1-6, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 34, hereafter as LW 27.

nailed to the cross (John 3:14)."<sup>155</sup> Luther refers repeatedly to John the Baptist's words: "He is 'the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29)."<sup>156</sup>

Christ is, therefore, presented to man in the Gospel not as an "example" or "lawgiver," for as such Christ belongs to the Law. Christ is presented as a gift and Savior. In the matter of Justification, Christ as example has nothing to offer to man. It is as a gift and the Lamb of God that Christ justifies men, when they believe the Gospel. This is in complete agreement with Luther's confessional writings, especially the Large Catechism.

## Faith

### Faith Apprehends Christ

Luther defines faith in relation to Christ. The same bestowing-receiving scheme from the Large Catechism is found here: "the only thing necessary is that we accept (recipere) the treasure that is Christ, grasped (apprehensus) by faith in our hearts."<sup>157</sup> The verb apprehendere is Luther's favorite term for describing the relationship of faith and

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<sup>155</sup>LW 26: 166.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., 143.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., 129; WA 40/I: 243,15-17: "Hic prorsus nos nihil facere oportet, sed tantum recipere thesaurum qui Christus est in corde per fidem apprehensus, ut maxime sentiamus nos esse plenos peccatis."

Christ in Great Galatians, 2:16-21.<sup>158</sup> Here, apprehendere runs with recipere: he receives the treasure, or gift, who apprehends Christ.<sup>159</sup>

Christ is therefore the "content" of faith, because he is the gift who is received or apprehended by faith. For Luther, "faith possesses nothing of its own, only the deeds and life of Christ."<sup>160</sup> As W. Elert states it, in faith man remains "a purely receiving I."<sup>161</sup> The following phrase from Great Galatians, 2:16-21, describes it a concise formulation: "Sic fides, ut dixi, apprehendit et involvit Christum filium Dei pro nobis traditum."<sup>162</sup> Faith is the ring; Christ is the gem.<sup>163</sup> Christ, not love, is the form of faith: "we say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and informs faith

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<sup>158</sup>In LW 26, 122-185 (Great Galatians, 2:16-21), apprehendere is translated as "to grasp" or "to take hold of."

<sup>159</sup>LW 26: 73 (under Gal 1:15-17): "But Christ is the subject of the Gospel. What the Gospel teaches and shows me is a divine work given to me by sheer grace; neither human reason nor wisdom nor even the Law of God teaches this. And I accept this gift by faith alone."

<sup>160</sup>Id., "A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels" (1521), in Luther's Works, American Edition, vol. 35, Word and Sacrament I, trans. and ed. E. Theodore Brachmann (Philadelphia:Muhlenberg Press, 1960), 120.

<sup>161</sup>Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism, vol 1, The Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 85.

<sup>162</sup>WA 40/I: 297,30; LW 26: 177.

<sup>163</sup>LW 26: 134.

as color does the wall."<sup>164</sup> Christ is the "object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself."<sup>165</sup> All these ways of speaking say the same thing with respect to the relationship of Christ and faith,<sup>166</sup> Christ is the "content" or "possession" of faith. Faith "takes hold of and possesses this treasure."<sup>167</sup> Faith "has" Christ: "In his heart he [the Christian] has Christ, the Lord of the Law, as a ring has a gem."<sup>168</sup>

Another term which runs with apprehendere is fiducia.<sup>169</sup> The kind of faith that apprehends Christ is no other than "fiducial faith."<sup>170</sup> L. Green has observed that Luther abandoned the medieval futuristic understanding of fiducia for a concept of faith as present possession:

At that time [1518-1519] the eschatological (futuristic) concept had made way for the soteriological (present-

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid.

<sup>166</sup>Gerhard Ebeling, Lutherstudien, vol. 2, Disputatio de Homine, part 3, Die Theologische Definition des Menschen: Kommentar zu These 20-40 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1989), 143 "Die notwendige Zusammengehörigkeit von Christus und Glaube kann Luther auf verschiedene Weise erläutern. Immer aber läuft es auf dasselbe hinaus."

<sup>167</sup>LW 26: 130; WA 40/I: 229,22. "quia apprehendit et possidet istum thesaurum."

<sup>168</sup>LW 26: 134; WA 40/I, 235,22: "Habet enim in corde suo tanquam gemman in annulo Christum, legis Dominum."

<sup>169</sup>WA 40/I: 228,3; LW 26: 129.

<sup>170</sup>Green, 143.

tense) aspect. Faith now involved an existing possession rather than a future hope.<sup>171</sup>

Luther defines faith as "certa fiducia cordis" and a "firmus assensus" in the heart."<sup>172</sup> Luther uses the term fiducia also in reference to confidence in works.<sup>173</sup> It means to place our confidence in something. One may place his confidence either in Christ or in his own merit. Fiducia, as trust, confidence in Christ, gives certainty. This faith is "an undoubted faith."<sup>174</sup>

Faith is also described as knowledge (cognitio).<sup>175</sup> Faith as knowledge is opposed to reason: "Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see."<sup>176</sup> Christ is the only object of faith as knowledge: "the heart must behold and grasp nothing but Christ the Savior."<sup>177</sup>

#### Faith Justifies

Luther develops his presentation of "faith in Christ" in opposition to the scholastic assumption that "faith does

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<sup>171</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>172</sup>WA 40/I: 228,33-34; LW 26: 129.

<sup>173</sup>WA 40/I: 258,30; 259,19; LW 26: 148; 149.

<sup>174</sup>LW 26: 161; WA 40/I: 275, 11: "indubitata fide."

<sup>175</sup>WA 40/I: 229,16; LW 26: 129-130.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 132; WA 40/I: 232,25-26: "cor nihil spectet et apprehendat quam Christum Salvatorem."

not justify unless it does the works of love,"<sup>178</sup> that is, to the fides caritate formata scheme. Occamism saw faith in Christ as "an idle quality or an empty husk in the heart,"<sup>179</sup> that is, as a mere historical knowledge of Christ. Luther says: "Fidem in Christum habent pro phantasmate historico."<sup>180</sup> They attribute justification to love and the works of love.<sup>181</sup> The works of love would be the formal righteousness on the basis of which God would grant eternal life:

For they say: When a man does a good work, God accepts it; and for this work He infuses charity into him. This infused charity, they say, is a quality that is attached to the heart; they call it "formal righteousness." . . . They cannot climb any higher than this cogitation of human reason: Man is righteous by means of his formal righteous, which is grace making him pleasing before God, that is, love.<sup>182</sup>

Luther's answer is that faith does not justify when it is formed by love but because true faith apprehends Christ:

We must conclude with Paul: By faith alone, not by faith formed by love, are we justified. We must not attribute the power of justifying to a "form" that makes a man pleasing to God; we must attribute it to faith, which takes hold of Christ the Savior Himself and possesses Him in the heart. This faith justifies without love and before love.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>178</sup>LW 26: 160.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>180</sup>WA 40/I: 274,4 (Rörer's notes).

<sup>181</sup>LW 26: 160.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 137.

If faith would justify only on account of works, than works and not faith would justify.<sup>184</sup> This would be to deprive faith of its vis iustificandis,<sup>185</sup> and ultimately to reject Christ and his work altogether: "They ascribe justification to them [works], which is to take Christ's glory away from Him and to assign it to works instead."<sup>186</sup> Luther's insistence is that faith justifies on account of Christ, not on account of love or works.<sup>187</sup>

Faith justifies, that is, it avails before God as righteousness, because it apprehends Christ,<sup>188</sup> because it applies the words of the Gospel: "for me."<sup>189</sup> "This applying is the true power of faith."<sup>190</sup> Faith justifies "without and before love," because it "takes hold of Christ the Savior Himself and possesses Him in the heart."<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>184</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>185</sup>WA 40/I: 240,15.

<sup>186</sup>LW 26: 145; see also 147; 150.

<sup>187</sup>Kleinknecht, 48: "Wirksam zur Rechtfertigung ist der Glaube nicht aus sich heraus, als menschliche Qualität, die abseits von Christus in Frage käme, oder konkrete gesprochen, wegen seines Liebe-Gehaltes; der Glaube hat Rechtfertigungskraft allein um Christi willen. Er rechtfertigt, sonst nichts und niemand."

<sup>188</sup>LW 26: 130.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>190</sup>Ibid.

<sup>191</sup>Ibid., 137; WA 40/I: 240, 15-16: "fidei quae apprehendit et possidet in corde ipsum Christum Salvatorem."

Faith is the applicatio<sup>192</sup> of the words of the Gospel: "who loved me," "for me."<sup>193</sup> This faith honors God,<sup>194</sup> and finds "a gracious God:"<sup>195</sup>

It is something sublime and great to have a gracious God. . . . Here we are not obliged to do anything at all. The only thing necessary is that we accept the treasure that is Christ, grasped by faith in our hearts, even though we feel that we are completely filled with sins.<sup>196</sup>

Therefore only faith in Christ avails before God.

### Imputation

Faith apprehends Christ, but this is not the whole thing in Justification. There is a third element, which is imputation.<sup>197</sup> To affirm that the apprehension of Christ through faith justifies is to affirm that God reckons this faith alone as righteousness.<sup>198</sup> Imputation, like Christ and faith, excludes works from justification.<sup>199</sup> The

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<sup>192</sup>WA 40/I: 297, 21.

<sup>193</sup>LW 26: 177.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., 141.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>196</sup>Ibid.

<sup>197</sup>Luther, in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, uses the terms "reputatio" and "acceptatio" for imputation: WA 40/I: 233, 16 and 25 (233, 5 and 7-8 in Rörer's notes); 229, 28-30 (229, 9-11 in Rörer's notes).

<sup>198</sup>LW 26: 132.

<sup>199</sup>Elert, 86: "For him [Luther] the expressions "to account" (reputare) and "to impute" (imputare) deny in the strongest way all synergism as well as the scholastic teaching that there is a disposition (Habituslehre)."

section 2:16-21 contains one of the most important of Luther's references to imputation in the commentary. Luther says:

Therefore it is something great to take hold, by faith, of Christ, who bears the sins of the world (John 1:29). And this faith alone is counted for righteousness (Rom. 3-4).

Here it is to be noted that these three things are joined together: faith, Christ, and acceptance or imputation. Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the gem. And whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous. This is the means and the merit by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins and righteousness.<sup>200</sup>

The doctrine of imputation sheds light upon the relationship of Christ and faith: man is accounted as righteous not in view of his own righteousness but on account of Christ, his righteousness received or apprehended in faith:

Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life.<sup>201</sup>

The doctrine of imputation emphasizes the relationship of Christ and faith in justification: Christ died for us and forgiveness is offered in the Gospel for Christ's sake, faith grasps Christ or forgiveness in the heart. "And

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid. (WA 40/I: 233,14-24).

<sup>201</sup>LW 26: 130. The original reads: "Ergo fide apprehensus et in corde habitans Christus est iustitia Christiana propter quam Deus nos reputat iustus et donat vitam eternam" (Wa 40/I: 229, 8-20); Röser's notes read: "Sic dicimus nos Christum esse formam istius fidei, et sic apprehensus est iustitia Christiana; propter hanc reputat nos iustus et donat vitam" (ibid., 9-11).

whoever is found having this faith in the Christ who is grasped in the heart, him God accounts as righteous."<sup>202</sup> Without Christ, that is, without faith in Christ, there is only "sheer imputation and condemnation of sins."<sup>203</sup>

Luther emphasizes the comforting aspect of the doctrine of imputation: the Christian life is imperfect, if God would take this into account, no one would be saved. But because of the imputation, God accounts us righteous entirely for the sake of Christ: "Thus God accepts you or accounts you righteous only on account of Christ, in whom you believe."<sup>204</sup> Christ is the Mediator, who stands between God and us so that our sins are not imputed to us, but only Christ's righteousness.<sup>205</sup> This is what Luther had said in the SA III, XIII, 2.

### Freedom

The "justified conscience" or "a Christian" enters into a new relationship with the Law: He is "a child of grace and of the forgiveness of sins."<sup>206</sup> Because of the forgiveness of sins or justification "a Christian does not

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<sup>202</sup>LW 26: 132.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>205</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., 159.

have anything to do with the Law and sin."<sup>207</sup> A Christian is, therefore, free from the accusation of the Law because his sin has been forgiven: "If sin is taken away, then wrath is taken away; and if wrath is taken away, so are death and damnation."<sup>208</sup> By the forgiveness of sins, the Law lost its right or jurisdiction over the justified conscience: "the Law has no further right to accuse me or to hold me."<sup>209</sup>

The Law, however, is not destroyed, but "it remains, lives, and rules in the wicked."<sup>210</sup> "The Law still remains, lives, and rules in the whole world and accuses and condemns all men."<sup>211</sup> The Law has its place where there is no faith in Christ: "It remains for the wicked and unbelieving."<sup>212</sup> It remains also for "the flesh"<sup>213</sup> or "the old man,"<sup>214</sup> because these shall not enjoy the same freedom as the conscience:

The righteousness of grace simply does not pertain to the flesh. For the flesh must not be free but must stay in the grave, in the prison, and on the couch. It must

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<sup>207</sup>Ibid., 134.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>209</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>210</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 161.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 167.

be subjected to the Law and be disciplined by the Egyptians. But the conscience must be dead to the Law, that is, free from the Law, and must have no business with it.<sup>215</sup>

Luther says that flesh and limbs are "servants," the conscience, however, is "lord and king."<sup>216</sup>

This freedom from the Law that the justified conscience has is based not upon human merits but upon Christ's work:

Christ reconciles us to God and makes it possible for us to have access to Him. For Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Thus the believer in Christ has the One who took away the sins of the world. If the sin of the world is taken away, then it is taken away also from me, as one who believes in Him.<sup>217</sup>

Faith in Christ is freedom, because Christ is the Victor and Lord over the Law, sin, death, and the devil: "Christ is the Lord of the Law, because He has been crucified and has died to the Law."<sup>218</sup> Christ is "the Victor and the Lord over the Law, sin, death, and every evil."<sup>219</sup>

Christ's work (officium)<sup>220</sup> is to liberate the conscience from the guilt of sin through the absolution:

The work of Christ, properly speaking, is this, to embrace the one whom the Law has made a sinner and

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<sup>215</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid., 165.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>220</sup>WA 40/I: 250,10: "Christi officium."

pronounced guilty, and to absolve him from his sins if he believes the Gospel.<sup>221</sup>

Christ's victory gives freedom for those who believe, for faith apprehends Christ, the Victor and Lord: the Christian is "above the Law and sin, because in his heart he has Christ, the Lord of the Law, as a ring has a gem."<sup>222</sup>

The Christian has another "teacher" in the conscience, that is, his "teacher" is no longer Moses but Christ, that is, no longer the Law but grace.<sup>223</sup> The Christian has been transferred from the Law into grace. Christ is "the only One who ought to rule in the conscience:"<sup>224</sup>

No Law should reign in the conscience except that of the Spirit of life, by which we are delivered in Christ from the Law of the letter and of death, from its works, and from sins.<sup>225</sup>

Christ or the Gospel is the "new guest" in the conscience. Moses, that is, the Law, loses its dominion over man's conscience.<sup>226</sup> Thus, the conscience is free only when only Christ rules in it through the Gospel:

For where Christ is, there must be a good conscience and joy; Christ Himself is our Reconciliation,

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<sup>221</sup>LW 26: 143; WA 40/I: 250,10-11: "Sed Christi officium proprie est, peccatorem per legem factum et reum constitutum amplecti et absolvere a peccatis, si Evangelio redat."

<sup>222</sup>LW 26: 134.

<sup>223</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>226</sup>Ibid., 152.

Righteousness, Peace, Life, and Salvation."<sup>227</sup>  
 He is "sheer liberty."<sup>228</sup>

This freedom that the Christian conscience has is continuously threatened by the weakness of man,<sup>229</sup> his sinfulness, and by the accusation of the Law and by the attacks of the devil. There come times of temptation, of consciencia peccati,<sup>230</sup> terror of the Law. Luther says:

In such conflicts of conscience, therefore, we must form the habit of leaving ourselves behind as well as the Law and all our works, which force us to pay attention to ourselves. We must turn our eyes completely to that bronze serpent, Christ nailed to the cross (John 3:14). With our gaze fastened firmly to Him we must declare with assurance that He is our Righteousness and Life and care nothing about the threats and terrors of the Law, sin, death, wrath and the judgement of God.<sup>231</sup>

The afflicted conscience finds comfort only in Christ:

"whatever the miserable and afflicted conscience seeks, that it finds in Christ,"<sup>232</sup> for "Christ is the joy and sweetness of a trembling and troubled heart."<sup>233</sup>

### New Life

Luther relates freedom and life very closely, for life

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<sup>227</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>228</sup>Ibid., 163.

<sup>229</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>230</sup>WA 40/I: 271,15; LW 26: 158: "consciousness of sin."

<sup>231</sup>LW 26: 166.

<sup>232</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>233</sup>Ibid., 178.

is nothing else than freedom from the Law: "There is no life unless you are without the Law."<sup>234</sup> But, as freedom, life belongs only to the justified conscience, not to the flesh.<sup>235</sup> The old man, says Luther, remains outside, under the Law.<sup>236</sup> "As long as the body is alive, the flesh must be disciplined by laws and vexed by the requirements and punishment of laws."<sup>237</sup> On the other hand, Luther discusses how the Christian lives his new life in this world. Luther answers this by saying that "there is a double life: my own, which is natural or animate; and an alien life, that of Christ in me."<sup>238</sup> The Christian lives in this world as other people live, but his life and their lives are not the same.

A Christian, the one who has his conscience justified and free from the Law, lives a new life. Luther calls it the life of Christ: it is an "alien life, that of Christ in me;"<sup>239</sup> "indeed, Christ Himself is the life that I now live;"<sup>240</sup> he speaks of "Christ, who is truly my Life."<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>234</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>235</sup>Ibid.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>237</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid., 170.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>241</sup>Ibid., 170.

This is "the life of Christ, which is not inborn in me but is granted to me in faith through Christ."<sup>242</sup> This is an "alien and spiritual life,"<sup>243</sup> it is not "Paul-life" but "Christ-life," for "Christ is speaking, acting, and performing all actions in him."<sup>244</sup> This life is identified with faith: "For this life is in the heart through faith."<sup>245</sup> The Christian has this life because through faith he possesses Christ, the Son of God in the heart.<sup>246</sup> This new life is "in faith, on the basis of faith, and according to faith."<sup>247</sup> No one can see this life, because no one can see Christ.<sup>248</sup>

The other life is not spiritual but it is "natural or animate," it is "my own life," it is "this life that is being led within me," it is not the Christian's true life but, though visible to others, it is "only a mask of life." This life is his own flesh, the life he was inborn in him.<sup>249</sup>

Therefore the actions of a Christian are perceived in

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<sup>242</sup>Ibid.

<sup>243</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>244</sup>Ibid., 170.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid., 170.

<sup>248</sup>Ibid.

<sup>249</sup>Ibid.

the same way as those of non-Christians, and yet they are not the same: "Thus you see me talking, eating, working, sleeping, etc.; and yet you do not see my life."<sup>250</sup> The Christian lives in the world and uses the same things others do without any difference and yet these actions are not the same:

Thus a Christian uses the world and all its creatures in such a way that there is no difference between him and an ungodly man. Their food and clothing are the same; their hearing, vision, and speaking are the same; their gestures, appearance, and shape are the same.<sup>251</sup>

However, there is "the greatest possible difference."<sup>252</sup>

This difference is not in the external appearance of the works but in its origin:

I do indeed live in the flesh, but I do not live on the basis of my own self. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God. What you now hear me speak proceeds from another source than what you heard me speak before [that is, before conversion].<sup>253</sup>

The greatest difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is that the Christian possesses Christ by faith, and Christ is in him the source of a new life, rather, this new life itself.

The life of a Christian is ex alio fonte.<sup>254</sup> He also lives in the flesh, but the origin of his new life is not

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> WA 40/I: 290,14; LW 26: 171.

the flesh but faith:

For the time of life that I am living I do indeed live in the flesh, but not on the basis of the flesh and according to the flesh, but in faith, on the basis of faith, and according to faith.<sup>255</sup>

The Christian uses "physical things,"<sup>256</sup> "physical instruments," and uses "the world and all its creatures,"<sup>257</sup> because he cannot do otherwise. However, his new life does not have its origin in his own flesh but it comes "from faith and from the Holy Spirit."<sup>258</sup>

Since the source is new, the life and the works are also new. Luther takes as an example the common activities such as seeing, speaking, and hearing. These do not come from the flesh but from the Holy Spirit and Christ.<sup>259</sup>

Therefore

A Christian speaks nothing but chaste, sober, holy, and divine things--things that pertain to Christ, the glory of God, and the salvation of his neighbor.<sup>260</sup>

These things are done in the flesh, that is, through "physical instruments;" however "these activities do not come from the flesh and do not originate there; they are

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<sup>255</sup>LW 26: 170.

<sup>256</sup>Ibid.

<sup>257</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>258</sup>Ibid.

<sup>259</sup>Ibid.

<sup>260</sup>Ibid.

given and revealed divinely from heaven."<sup>261</sup> The works are new, says Luther, because the source is new. In a Christian they come from faith and the Holy Spirit.<sup>262</sup>

### Faith and Works

One of Luther's major concerns in the Great Galatians Commentary is to teach the correct distinction between faith and works. He says: "When we have taught faith in Christ this way, then we also teach about good works."<sup>263</sup> Good works belong to the new life of the Christian in the world, not to his justification before God:

We concede that good works and love must also be taught; but this must be in its proper time and place, that is, when the question has to do with works, apart from this chief doctrine.<sup>264</sup>

To include works into justification is to make Moses, that is, the Law, the savior, and Christ the condemner; but "when we are involved in the discussion of justification, there is no room for speaking about the Law."<sup>265</sup>

Good works have their place, therefore, after justi-

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<sup>261</sup>Ibid.

<sup>262</sup>Ibid.

<sup>263</sup>Ibid., 133

<sup>264</sup>Ibid., 137; 145: "In due time we shall discuss the teaching that the Law and good works ought to be done. But since we are now dealing with the subject of justification, we reject works, on which our opponents insist so tenaciously that they ascribe justification to them, which is to take Christ's glory away from Him and to assign it to works instead."

<sup>265</sup>Ibid., 137.

fication, which is only by faith. Luther uses a figure to explain this:

This Bridegroom, Christ, must be alone with His bride in His private chamber, and all the family and household must be shunted away. But later on, when the Bridegroom opens the door and comes out, then let the servants return to take care of them and serve them food and drink. Then let works and love begin.<sup>266</sup>

Another figure used by Luther is that of the sound tree and the good fruits:

But after a man is justified by faith, now possesses Christ by faith, and knows that He is his righteousness and life, he will certainly not be idle but, like a sound tree, will bear good fruit (Matt. 7:17).<sup>267</sup>

The scholastics had said that love formed or adorned faith, Luther says the opposite:

Afterwards, when Christ has thus been grasped by faith and I am dead to the Law, justified from sin, and delivered from dead, the devil, and hell through Christ --then I do good works, love God, give thanks, and practice love toward my neighbor. But this love or the works that follow faith do not form or adorn my faith, but my faith forms and adorns love.<sup>268</sup>

These passages leave no doubt that in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, Luther distinguishes justification from Christian life (sanctification). Good works follow faith, or justification.

Good works not only follow faith, but follow from

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<sup>266</sup>Ibid., 137-138.

<sup>267</sup>Ibid., 154-155.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid., 161.

faith--they flow from faith.<sup>269</sup> The scholastics, says Luther, thought that faith was "an empty quality in the soul" which needed to be made effective by the infusion of love.<sup>270</sup> Against this, Luther insists that faith is "no idle quality,"<sup>271</sup> but it is truly a new life, as seen above. The reason why faith is this is because faith apprehends Christ, and once Christ is apprehended by faith,

there Christ rules with His Holy Spirit, who now sees, hears, speaks, works, suffers, and does simply everything, in him, even though the flesh is still reluctant.<sup>272</sup>

Faith is no idle quality, because

the believer has the Holy Spirit; and where He is, He does not permit a man to be idle but drives him to all the exercises of devotion, to the love of God, to patience in affliction, to prayer, to thanksgiving, and to the practice of love toward all men.<sup>273</sup>

Faith is not an idle quality, because Christ himself lives and rules with his Holy Spirit in the heart through faith.

Good works are not done for justification but follow justification which is by faith alone. Good works are indeed the justification by faith lived out in the world.

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<sup>269</sup>Ibid., 133: "These are truly good works, which flow from this faith and joy conceived in the heart because we have the forgiveness of sins freely through Christ."

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., 130: "In this way these dreamers have made faith an empty quality in the soul, which is no use alone, without love, but becomes effective and justifies when love is added to it."

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>272</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>273</sup>Ibid., 155.

The following text expresses it well:

Quia apprehendisti fide Christum per quem iustus es, nunc eas et diligas Deum et proximum, Invoca, Gratias age, praedica, lauda, confitere Deum, Benefac et serve proximo, fac officium tuum.<sup>274</sup>

There are two points to be emphasized here: First, the believer loves God and the neighbor because he has apprehended Christ by faith and is already righteous; second, the justified person lives out his justification in the world when he does his "office," that is, when he does freely and joyfully what is given him to do according to his vocation:

Do good to your neighbor, and serve him; do your duty. These are truly good works, which flow from this faith and joy conceived in the heart because we have the forgiveness of sins freely through Christ.<sup>275</sup>

The Christian lives in the world like any other person, but his works are good because done in faith, his works come ex alio fonte.<sup>276</sup>

#### Christ's Presence and Union with Christ

In Great Galatians, 2:16-21, Luther uses two phrases for expressing the relationship of Christ and faith which require a more close examination here. Under verse 2:16, he

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<sup>274</sup>WA 40/I: 234, 19-21. The translation in LW 26, 133, does not express well the indicative in the Latin. It reads: "Because you have taken hold of Christ by faith, through whom you are righteous, you should now go and love God and your neighbor, etc."

<sup>275</sup>LW 26: 133.

<sup>276</sup>WA 40/I: 290, 14; LW 26: 171.

refers to the presence of Christ in faith, and under verse 2:20, he speaks of the union of the believer with Christ. These phrases have been used out of their context in some interpretations, as if Luther would be referring to the indwelling of Christ in the believer as the ground for justification. This is the case in the interpretations of Marc Lienhard and Tuomo Mannermaa.<sup>277</sup>

The purpose here is to interpret these two phrases according to their own context. Therefore they shall be examined within the sequence of thought followed by Luther himself in the text. In this way, it shall be seen that Luther in these phrases teaches the same relationship between faith and Christ as seen above: faith apprehends Christ, and because of this it justifies.

#### Christ's Presence

Luther criticized both scholastics and fanatics for teaching a doctrine of justification which left Christ out. In the place of Christ, they put their own works, that is, the Law. Christ and his work are mentioned, of course, but the power of justifying man before God is assigned to works rather than to Christ. So Luther criticizes them for actually denying Christ, for leaving Christ out of the

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<sup>277</sup>Lienhard, 287; Tuomo Mannermaa, "In Ipsa Fide Christus Adest: Der Schnittpunkt zwischen lutherischer und orthodoxer Theologie" in Der im Glauben gegenwärtigen Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung zum ökumenischen Dialog. Arbeiter zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, Neue Folge, 8 (Hannover: Lutherischer Verlagshaus, 1989), 16; 31; 32.

doctrine of justification.

In opposition to them, Luther presents Christ and faith as two of the elements of justification, besides the third, imputation. Here, Christ is not left out but comes right at the center, as H. Kleinknecht states it:

Welche Rolle spielt denn der Glaube bei den Scholastikern? Natürlich ist er nicht einfach vergessen, aber er ist aus dem Zentrum herausgedrängt, das die Liebe besetzt hat. . . . Luther weist die Liebe des Menschen, die ja auch eingegossene von den Scholastikern als die Liebe des Menschen begriffen wird, aus der Mitte und gibt diesen Platz dem Herrn Jesus Christus und dem Glauben, der Christus ergreift.<sup>278</sup>

Faith and Christ exclude works and the Law. It is faith alone, because it is Christ alone. Where there is true faith, there Christ is: "Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present."<sup>279</sup> Thus the theme of Christ's presence in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, is in fact the theme of faith alone (sola fides). Over against the absence of Christ in the legalist understanding of justification by both scholastics and fanatics, Luther speaks of the presence of Christ.

The paragraph within which Luther refers to Christ's presence for the first time comes after a long explanation on the scholastic concept of justification. According to the scholastics, says Luther, "man is righteous by means of his formal righteousness, which is grace making him pleasing

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<sup>278</sup>Kleinknecht, 36.

<sup>279</sup>LW 26: 130.

before God, that is, love."<sup>200</sup> W. Elert describes such grace or love as "a gift that gives the psyche a God-pleasing content of strength, of thoughts, and of impulses of the will."<sup>201</sup> Therefore, according to the scholastics, faith could justify only on account of love, which would make man pleasing to God.<sup>202</sup> Luther begins the paragraph by saying: "Such are the dreams of the scholastics. But where they speak of love, we speak of faith."<sup>203</sup>

Faith in Christ, and not love, justifies. Luther's intention in the text is, therefore, to present justification by faith against the scholastic idea of "love." Luther says:

And while they say that faith is the mere outline but love is its living colors and completion, we say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and informs faith as color does the wall.<sup>204</sup>

Faith justifies not on account of love or the works of love, which are within the sphere of the Law, but on account of Christ, who is apprehended by faith.

Luther knows that when he says that faith and not love justifies, he is speaking of faith in a different way than in scholasticism: "Therefore Christian faith is not an idle

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<sup>200</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>201</sup>Elert, 78.

<sup>202</sup>LW 26: 129.

<sup>203</sup>Ibid.

<sup>204</sup>Ibid.

quality or an empty husk in the heart, which may exist in a state of mortal sin until love comes along to make it alive."<sup>111</sup> For Luther, faith is certa fiducia cordis et firmus assensus quo Christus apprehenditur.<sup>112</sup> True faith apprehends Christ, and nothing else, and it is because of this that it justifies, not on account of a love which fulfills the Law.

It is in this context that Luther refers to Christ's presence. The text from 1535 reads, in the English translation:

It [faith] takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God, sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple.<sup>113</sup>

The words "in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object but, so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself" do not appear in Röcher's notes (1531). They do, however, connect the two thoughts, that Christ is apprehended by faith and that he is present in faith, and explain them.

Christ, when apprehended by faith as its object, is present in this same faith. Christ remains the object of

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<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> WA 228,33; LW 26: 129.

<sup>113</sup> LW 26: 129-130.

faith, but an object grasped and embraced by faith.<sup>288</sup>

When apprehended by faith, Christ is truly present in this same faith. There must be no gap between Christ and faith. Because scholastics, as well as fanatics, separate Christ from faith, they place the Law or works into the question of justification.<sup>289</sup>

The faith in which Christ is present is "a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see."<sup>290</sup> It is "a cloud in our hearts, that is, trust in a thing that we do not see, in Christ, who is present especially when He cannot be seen."<sup>291</sup> For Luther the object of faith is always unseen, according to Hebrews 11:1.<sup>292</sup> Faith is opposed to reason. P. Althaus writes that for Luther "faith transcends

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<sup>288</sup>Luther, "Luther an Joh. Brenz (Nachschrift zu einem Briefe Melanchthons an denselben)" in WA, Ser. 4, Briefwechsel, vol 6, 98-101, trans. L. Green, 224: "I also, my dear Brenz, who understand the matter better, try not to think of any quality in my heart such as faith or love, as it is called, but in their place I set Christ and say: 'This is my righteousness.' He is that formal quality, as they put it, my righteousness, by whom I am freed from the Law and works . . . . Thus he says: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' He does not say, 'I give you the way, the truth, and the life,' as if it was if he were outside me and worked it within me. But these things should be, remain, and live not through me but in me."

<sup>289</sup>LW 26: 166.

<sup>290</sup>Ibid., 129-130.

<sup>291</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>292</sup>Köstlin, 2: 425; Walter von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross. Trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), 35; Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 56.

reason. Faith believes against reason . . . ."<sup>293</sup>

Luther's main concern, however, is not epistemological, but soteriological, as B. Gerrish places it:

For Luther's concern was with justifying faith--faith, not as a mode of cognition, but as the organon leptikon of salvation . . . His notion of faith transfers us from the critical and epistemological sphere . . . into the sphere of soteriology.<sup>294</sup>

What makes the difference between reason and faith, says

Althaus, is that reason is bound to the limits of the Law:

Reason thinks about the way to salvation in legalistic terms. The reason of sinful man is so corrupted and has become so blind through the fall that it simply can not think of any other way of justification than the way of work righteousness.<sup>295</sup>

Reason does not think beyond the Law. And this is the point of Luther's criticism to the scholastics: their theory is nothing but a "cogitation of human reason,"<sup>296</sup> that is, it attributes justification to works, and cannot do otherwise.

The darkness,<sup>297</sup> therefore, in which Christ is

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<sup>293</sup>Althaus, 67.

<sup>294</sup>Brian A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 58.

<sup>295</sup>Althaus, 68-69.

<sup>296</sup>LW 26: 127.

<sup>297</sup>Ibid., 129-130: "Thus faith is a sort of knowledge or darkness that nothing can see. Yet the Christ of whom faith takes hold is sitting in this darkness as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai and in the temple."

present, is faith, as knowledge, in opposition to reason.<sup>298</sup> Luther is using mystical language for his own purposes.<sup>299</sup> Faith as darkness is no step in a mystical progressive way to God. Faith, however, is not based on reason. Christ's presence in faith is beyond reason: "But how he is present--this is beyond our thought; for there is darkness, as I have said."<sup>300</sup>

The faith which apprehends Christ has Christ present, because Christ is the only content of true faith: "the heart must behold and grasp nothing but Christ the Savior."<sup>301</sup> To say therefore that faith apprehends Christ or that Christ is present in faith is to say the same thing in two different ways. Luther says the same thing in yet another way, when he uses the scholastic language against the scholastics. They defined faith and love according to the matter-form scheme, and said that love was the form of faith (faith formed by love). Luther uses their terminology, and relates faith to Christ: "We say in opposition that faith takes hold of Christ and that He is the form that adorns and

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<sup>298</sup>Ibid., 113-114: "Ascend into darkness, where neither the Law nor reason shines, but only the dimness of faith (1Cor. 13:12), which assures us that we are saved by Christ alone, without any Law. Thus the Gospel leads us above and beyond the light of the Law and reason into the darkness of faith, where the Law and reason have no business."

<sup>299</sup>Bornkamm, 98.

<sup>300</sup>LW 26: 130.

<sup>301</sup>Ibid., 132.

informs faith as color does the wall."<sup>302</sup> "In short, just as the sophists say that love forms and trains faith, so we say that it is Christ who forms and trains faith or who is the form of faith."<sup>303</sup> Luther not only uses different figures to describe the apprehension of Christ by faith but he combines them. Christ apprehended by faith, present in faith, or as form of faith express the same thing, that true faith has Christ as its content: "Faith takes hold of Christ and has Him present, enclosing Him as the ring encloses the gem."<sup>304</sup>

The conclusion Luther draws from this faith that has Christ present is that this faith justifies on account of Christ: "Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life."<sup>305</sup> The "present Christ" is the righteousness the Christian has, the righteousness on account of which man is justified: "faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present

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<sup>302</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>303</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>304</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>305</sup>Ibid., 130; WA 40/I: 229,9-11 (Rörer's notes): "Sic dicimus nos Christum esse formam istius fidei, et sic apprehensus est iustitia Christiana; propter hanc reputat nos iustus et donat vitam."

Christ."<sup>306</sup> In this passage, Luther equates the possession of the treasure, which is his more usual way of speaking, with the presence of Christ in faith. Luther's purpose is to say that faith justifies, and that it does it on account of Christ.

Therefore, M. Lienhard's interpretation (that it refers to the "personal presence" which produces the conformity to Christ as an step beyond receiving the benefit of Christ's work)<sup>307</sup> must be rejected. In the same way, T. Mannermaa's interpretation (that the presence of Christ refers to the indwelling of the Person of Christ in the believer which produces the deification of man)<sup>308</sup> must be rejected. Luther speaks of the Christ present in faith as the treasure which is apprehended in faith. As seen in the study of the Large Catechism, the word "treasure" describes the forgiveness of sins as achieved by Christ alone through his death and bestowed through the Word and received in faith. What Luther wants to emphasize is that faith has no other object but Christ, and that the faith of which he speaks against the scholastics is neither a dead knowledge of Christ nor a faith that needs to be formed by love. Christ is present in this faith, that is, he is apprehended by faith, in a way that reason does not understand. God

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<sup>306</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>307</sup>Lienhard, 287.

<sup>308</sup>Mannermaa, 55.

reckons this faith as righteousness because "faith grasps and embraces Christ, the Son of God, who was given for us."<sup>309</sup>

Faith, Luther says, is "our 'formal righteousness.'"<sup>310</sup> Luther is using again the language of the adversaries against themselves. According to the scholastics, Luther says, love is the "formal righteousness."<sup>311</sup> Luther summarizes their understanding of justification: "Man is righteous by means of his formal righteousness, which is grace making him pleasing before God, that is, love."<sup>312</sup> Luther opposes this: "Therefore our 'formal righteousness' is not a love that informs faith; but it is faith itself, . . . ."<sup>313</sup>

Where the confidence of the heart is present, therefore, there Christ is present, in that very cloud and faith. This is the formal righteousness on account of which a man is justified; it is not on account of love.<sup>314</sup>

Christ, present in faith, apprehended by faith, is the formal righteousness. Therefore Christ in the heart is "the true Christian righteousness."<sup>315</sup> This righteousness is

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<sup>309</sup>LW 26: 177.

<sup>310</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>311</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>312</sup>Ibid.

<sup>313</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>314</sup>Ibid.

<sup>315</sup>Ibid., 130.

Christ present; it is a treasure, that is, a gift of God received in faith. What Luther says here is very similar to what he wrote to Brenz in 1531: "I also . . . try not to think of any quality in my heart such as faith or love, as it is called, but in their place I set Christ and say: "This is my righteousness."<sup>316</sup> Luther says:

Here there is no work of the Law, no love; but there is an entirely different kind of righteousness, a new world above and beyond the Law. For Christ or faith is neither the Law nor the work of the Law.<sup>317</sup>

Luther demonstrates, therefore, against the scholastic understanding of justification that faith and not love justifies. Faith justifies because it apprehends Christ, because it is formed by Christ, because it has Christ present in it--all these mean the same. In the words of J. Köstlin, the apprehension of Christ is "the justifying element of faith."<sup>318</sup>

#### Union with Christ

The context is Luther's discussion of verse 2:20 of Paul's Epistle: "I have been crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me."<sup>319</sup> According to Paul's words in verse 2:19, "that I

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<sup>316</sup>Luther, "Luther and Joh. Brenz (Nachschrift zu einem Briefe Melanchthons an denselben)" in WA, ser. 4, Briefwechsel, vol 6: 100, trans. Green, 224.

<sup>317</sup>LW 26: 130

<sup>318</sup>Köstlin, 2: 443-444.

<sup>319</sup>LW 26: 165-170.

might live to God," Luther understands this being alive as being alive coram Deo, which is also a death to, or freedom from, the Law. Therefore, Luther paraphrases Paul's "yet not I" with the words: "not in my own person or substance."<sup>320</sup> That is, the life coram Deo is not a life "in my own person or substance." It is a life, not on the basis of what man does but on the basis of what faith receives. Luther identifies this being alive coram Deo with the "Christian righteousness," which he begins to discuss then. There are two righteousnesses, the one "by which Christ lives in us" and the one "that is in our person."<sup>321</sup> One is alive coram Deo, not by the righteousness "that is in our own person" but by the righteousness "by which Christ lives in us." Luther's conclusion is:

Therefore when it is necessary to discuss Christian righteousness, the person must be completely rejected. For if I pay attention to the person or speak of the person, then, whether intentionally or unintentionally on my part, the person becomes a doer of works who is subject to the Law.<sup>322</sup>

The righteousness "that is in our own person" is therefore the righteousness of works, which belongs within the sphere of the Law. The persona is, therefore, rejected in the discussion of the "Christian righteousness" because the persona is "a doer of works," and, as such, it is subjected

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<sup>320</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>321</sup>Ibid.

<sup>322</sup>Ibid.

to the Law (operarius legis subiectus).<sup>323</sup>

Man lives coram Deo not as a doer of works, but by the righteousness of Christ: "But here Christ and my conscience must become one body, so that nothing remains in my sight but Christ, crucified and risen."<sup>324</sup> Man lives coram Deo not as a doer of works but as a believer, not as one who presents his own righteousness to God but as one who receives it from God. K. Bornkamm emphasizes the sphere of the persona over against the sphere of the relationship to God. She distinguishes between man's natural condition and his relation to the Word.<sup>325</sup> However, this is not the correct distinction in this context, for Luther's exposition of Gal. 2:6, on which she bases it, deals with a different question than that of the exposition of Gal. 2:20. Under Gal. 2:6, the problem is the authority in the church and the Gospel: the doctrine is founded not upon the persona, that is, the authority of men but upon the authority of the Word. Here, Luther's distinction is between the doer of works and the believer. Such an interpretation is supported by other passages in the commentary, in which Luther distinguishes

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<sup>323</sup>Ibid.; WA 40/I: 282,20-21; LW 26: 166.

<sup>324</sup>LW 26: 166. The words: "But here Christ and my conscience must become a body" are not in Rörer's notes but represent an anticipation of what Luther will say some paragraphs later. They, however, emphasize Luther's teaching that in the matter of justification, that is, in the conscience, there is no room for works but only for Christ.

<sup>325</sup>Bornkamm, 100-101.

between the doer of works and the believer:

Paul is obviously distinguishing between Abraham and Abraham by making one and the same person into two persons. It is as though he were saying: "There is an Abraham, who does works and an Abraham who has faith."<sup>326</sup>

The doer of works presents his own works to God, the believer receives righteousness and forgiveness from God: "Thus Abel the sacrificer gives to God, but Abel the believer receives from God."<sup>327</sup> Luther distinguishes also between the "worker of the Law" and the "man of faith."<sup>328</sup>

The emphasis in Luther's explanation of verse 20 is, therefore, on the exclusion of the persona, "a doer of works," from the sight, so that only Christ may remain, "who alone is my Righteousness and Life."<sup>329</sup> Christ and works are, therefore, mutually exclusive: "By paying attention to myself and considering what my condition is or should be, and what I am supposed to be doing, I lose sight of Christ, who alone is my Righteousness and Life."<sup>330</sup> Persona is opposed to Christ, persona is man as a doer of works; Christ is apprehended or received in faith as the righteousness of the Christian. Christ and faith exclude the persona, that is, works.

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<sup>326</sup>LW 26: 244.

<sup>327</sup>Ibid., 271.

<sup>328</sup>Ibid., 274.

<sup>329</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>330</sup>Ibid.

Man naturally pays attention to his own works, Luther directs the Christian, especially in the conflicts of conscience, to ignore works and pay attention to Christ:

In such conflicts of conscience, therefore, we must form the habit of leaving ourselves behind as well as the Law and all our works, which force us to pay attention to ourselves. We must turn our eyes completely to that bronze serpent, Christ nailed to the cross (John 3:14). With our gaze fastened firmly to Him we must declare with assurance that he is our Righteousness and Life and care nothing about the threats and terrors of the Law, sin, death, wrath, and the judgement of God.<sup>331</sup>

In the matter of justification, therefore, there is no reference to man and his works but only to Christ and his work.

Luther begins then to discuss the "I" in verse 20 of Paul's Epistle. He pays attention to Paul's correction of the verse. First Paul says "I live," then he corrects it to "yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Luther says:

When he says: "Nevertheless, I live," this sounds rather personal, as though Paul were speaking of his own person. Therefore he quickly corrects it and says: "Yet not I." That is, "I do not live in my own person now, but Christ lives in me." The person does, indeed live, but not in itself or for its own person.<sup>332</sup>

What Luther wants to clarify is that the life the Christian lives is not a work-righteous life, but it is a Christ-righteous life. To affirm that the persona lives could lead to the danger that Luther wants to avoid, that reference might be made to works with respect to the life coram Deo:

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<sup>331</sup>Ibid.

<sup>332</sup>Ibid., 167.

"this sounds rather personal, as though Paul were speaking of his own person."<sup>333</sup> Luther's concern here is the same as in the two preceding paragraphs: to exclude any reference to works or the Law from the matter of justification.

There are two "I"s, one who lives, and one who does not live: "But who is this 'I' of whom he says: 'Yet not I'?"<sup>334</sup> Luther describes this "I" as "the one that is a person separate from Christ" (persona quaedam segregata a Christo),<sup>335</sup> "a person distinct from Christ" (distincta persona a Christo).<sup>336</sup> This persona is, as seen before, "a doer of works who is subject to the Law" (operarius legi subiectus),<sup>337</sup> it is "the one that has the Law and is obliged to do works."<sup>338</sup> Luther observes: "This 'I' Paul rejects; for 'I,' as a person distinct from Christ, belongs to death and hell."<sup>339</sup> Later on in this same context, Luther says:

When it comes to justification, therefore if you divide Christ's Person from your own, you are in the Law; you remain in it and live in yourself, which means that you

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<sup>333</sup>Ibid.

<sup>334</sup>Ibid.

<sup>335</sup>Ibid.; WA 40/I: 283,24.

<sup>336</sup>LW 26: 167; WA 40/I: 283,25.

<sup>337</sup>LW 26: 166; WA 40/I, 282,20-21.

<sup>338</sup>LW 26: 167.

<sup>339</sup>Ibid.

are dead in the sight of God and damned by the Law.<sup>340</sup>  
 In justification, that is, coram Deo, man does not stand on the basis of own persona, that is, according to his own works. As a doer of works man is under the Law and belongs to death and hell: "you are dead in the sight of God and damned by the Law."<sup>341</sup>

The "I" who lives, that is, that stands coram Deo, is not the doer of works but the believer. It is important to note that when Luther begins to speak of the "I" who lives, he refers no longer to works but to Christ and faith: "This is why he says: 'Not I, but Christ lives in me.' Christ is my 'form,' which adorns my faith as color or light adorns a wall."<sup>342</sup> As seen above, Luther, describing Christ as the form of faith, is emphasizing that Christ, not love or works, gives faith its content.<sup>343</sup> Here, Luther refers to the Christian himself: Christ, not infused love, is his "form." That is, the Christian or believer is reckoned as righteous, not on account of the infusion of grace or love but on account of Christ.

In justification, Luther says, there can be no separation between the believer and Christ: "Sed in negotio

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<sup>340</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>341</sup>Ibid.

<sup>342</sup>Ibid., 167.

<sup>343</sup>Ibid., n. 83.

justificationis müssen wir bey samen bleiben."<sup>344</sup> Luther develops the theme of the "blessed exchange:"<sup>345</sup>

What a marvelous way of speaking! Because He lives in me, whatever grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation there is in me is all Christ's; nevertheless, it is mine as well, by the cementing and attachment that are through faith, by which we become as one body in the Spirit.<sup>346</sup>

In this blessed exchange, the sin of the believer becomes Christ's, that is, it is no more attributed or imputed to the believer but to Christ and Christ's righteousness is reckoned or imputed to him. W. Elert notes that

the union with Christ consists in this, that we receive His righteousness and that He takes our sin upon Himself--in the sense of the later doctrine of "commutative imputation" (imputatio commutativa).<sup>347</sup>

Elert observes also that "this relationship comes about only through faith and imputed righteousness," and this, he adds, makes the difference between Luther and the mystics.<sup>348</sup>

In the blessed exchange, the believer is a receiver of the gifts Christ bestows.<sup>349</sup> These are received in no

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<sup>344</sup>WA 40/I: 284,4-5.

<sup>345</sup>Althaus, 213: "This blessed exchange takes place only through faith;" Elert, 168: "A union of the believer with Christ--a union which consists in faith and comes about through faith."

<sup>346</sup>LW 26: 167-168.

<sup>347</sup>Elert, 167.

<sup>348</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>349</sup>Ebeling, 175: "Die Kommunikation zwischen Christus und dem Glaubenden ist ein völlig ungleicher Tausch von Gerechtigkeit und Sünde, wobei in positiver Hinsicht Christus allein der Gebende, der Mensch der Empfangende ist."

other way than through faith. Man's justification is not based on anything man has of himself, but only on Christ. In the same way, the fruits of the justification, that is, a free conscience and a new life are not man's own achievement but are given him in Christ. Luther says:

Because He lives in me, whatever grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation there is in me is all Christ's; nevertheless, it is mine as well, by the cementing and attachment that are through faith, by which we become as one body in the Spirit. Since Christ lives in me, grace, righteousness, life, and eternal salvation must be present with Him; and the Law, sin, and death must be absent.<sup>350</sup>

The emphasis is on what Christ gives to man, which becomes man's "by the cementing and attachment that are through faith." Christ gives to man freedom from the Law<sup>351</sup>:

"This attachment to Him causes me to be liberated from the terror of the Law and of sin."<sup>352</sup> At the presence of Christ (a facie Christi),<sup>353</sup> Law, sin, and death lose their power over man.<sup>354</sup> It is impossible for Christ and the Law to dwell at the same time in the heart, that is, man has either to trust in works or in Christ for his justification before God. Christ, or trust in Christ, expels the Law, or trust in the Law:

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<sup>350</sup>LW 26: 167-168.

<sup>351</sup>Luther's emphasis is on freedom from the Law, not on conformity to Christ, as Lienhard, 289, sees it.

<sup>352</sup>LW 26: 167.

<sup>353</sup>WA 40/I: 283,10-11 (Rörer's notes).

<sup>354</sup>LW 26: 167.

Living in me as He does, Christ abolishes the Law, damns sin, and kills death; for at His presence all these cannot help disappearing. Christ is eternal Peace, Comfort, Righteousness, and Life, to which the terror of the Law, sadness of mind, sin, hell, and death have to yield. Abiding and living in me, Christ removes and absorbs all the evils that torment and afflict me.<sup>355</sup>

Christ and the Law cannot rule at the same time in the conscience. H. Kleinknecht writes: "Ein Zusammenwohnen Christi und des Gesetzes im Herzen ist unmöglich."<sup>356</sup>

Luther writes:

For Moses, the old settler, has to yield and emigrate somewhere else, when Christ, the new guest, comes into the new house to live there alone. And where He is, there the Law, sin, wrath, and death have no place. In their stead there is present now nothing but grace, righteousness, joy, life, and a filial confidence in the Father, who is now placated, gracious, and reconciled.<sup>357</sup>

This "attachment" to Christ, which is through faith, liberates man from Law, sin, and death, transfers man from the dominion of the Law and sin "into Christ and into His kingdom," in which there is no harm but "grace, righteousness, peace, joy, life, salvation, and eternal glory."<sup>358</sup> The attachment to Christ through faith excludes the Law. Man is no longer under the dominion of the Law, but is transferred into Christ's kingdom:

Paul seeks to withdraw us completely from ourselves, from the Law, and from works, and to transplant us into

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<sup>355</sup>Ibid.

<sup>356</sup>Kleinknecht, 57.

<sup>357</sup>LW 26: 152.

<sup>358</sup>Ibid., 167.

Christ and faith in Christ, so that in the area of justification we look only at grace, and separate it far away from the Law and from works, which belong far away. )))

In justification, therefore, a transference from the dominion of Law and sin into the kingdom of Christ happens, which is, as seen above, what Luther says in the explanation of the Second Article of the Creed in the Large Catechism (LC II, 27-31).

Luther returns, then, to the discussion of faith. He denies that such a thing may exist as a faith formed by love. Those who claim to have such a faith have "only a historical faith about Jesus," without difference from the Turk,<sup>360</sup> and are actually dead coram Deo.<sup>361</sup> The true faith, in opposition to the historical faith, makes Christ and believer "as one person, which cannot be separated but remains attached to Him forever."<sup>362</sup> Again, the emphasis is on Christ and faith as belonging together. The believer cannot be separated from Christ because faith and Christ belong together.

Faith joins together the believer and Christ.<sup>363</sup> A

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<sup>359</sup>Ibid., 168.

<sup>360</sup>WA 40/I: 285,4 (Rörer's notes): "Ipsi historica fide credunt in Christum ut Turca."

<sup>361</sup>LW 26: 168; WA 40/I: 285,3 (Rörer's notes): "mortuus apud deum."

<sup>362</sup>LW 26: 168.

<sup>363</sup>Köstlin, 2: 428.

classical statement of Luther about this is found in The Freedom of a Christian:

The third incomparable benefit of faith is that it unites the soul with Christ as a bride is united with her bridegroom. By this mystery, as the Apostle teaches, Christ and the soul become one flesh [Eph. 5:31-32].<sup>364</sup>

It is important to note the reference to Ephesians 5, which is done also in our text: "Thus Eph. 5:30 says: 'We are members of the body of Christ, of His flesh and of His bones,' in such a way that this faith couples Christ and me more intimately than a husband is coupled to his wife."<sup>365</sup>

According to W. Elert, "Luther has Biblical grounds for repeating again and again the pictures of the nuptial relationship of Christ to the Christian . . . ."<sup>366</sup>

Another Biblical reference, outside of this immediate context, is to John 6:56, which Luther interprets: "By faith we are in Him, and He is in us."<sup>367</sup> Faith is, therefore, the "wedding ring" which unites believer and Christ.<sup>368</sup>

Here Luther says: "faith couples Christ and me more

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<sup>364</sup>Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520) in Luther's Works, American Edition, volume 31, Career of the Reformerr: I, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 351.

<sup>365</sup>LW 26: 168.

<sup>366</sup>Elert, 166.

<sup>367</sup>LW 26: 137.

<sup>368</sup>Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian," LW 31: 352.

intimately than a husband is coupled to his wife."<sup>369</sup>

The conclusion Luther draws from his argumentation here is:

Therefore this faith is no idle quality; but it is a thing of such magnitude that it obscures and completely removes those foolish dreams of the sophists' doctrine-- the fiction of a "formed faith" and of love, or merits, our worthiness, our quality, etc.<sup>370</sup>

As in relation to the presentation of Christ as present in faith or as the form of faith, under verse 2:16, also here Luther's point is that "faith is no idle quality."

There is a break then in the commentary. The sentence "I would like to treat this at greater length if I could" indicates the end of a lecture.<sup>371</sup> The new paragraph corresponds to a new lecture, in which Luther expounds, as seen above, how Christ is the new life of the Christian. The theme of this new lecture, however, is a continuation of the exposition of verse 20:

Christ . . . is fixed and cemented to me and abides in me. The life that I now live, He lives in me. Indeed, Christ Himself is the life that I now live. In this way, therefore, Christ and I are one.<sup>372</sup>

The justified person lives a new life which comes not of his

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<sup>369</sup>LW 26: 168.

<sup>370</sup>Ibid., 168-169.

<sup>371</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>372</sup>LW 26: 167; WA 40/I: 283, 8-9 (Rörer's notes): "Sic tam proprie et inhesive, ut albedo in pariete, sic Christus manet in me et ista vita vivit in me, et vita qua vivo, est Christus."

own flesh but from Christ.<sup>373</sup> It is a life ex alio fonte, as seen above. Faith in Christ excludes the Law and works in justification, and yet faith in Christ is a new life and produces works. It is not "an idle quality" in the heart, but it is life.

Luther's interpretation of John 15:5 serves to make Luther's thought here clearer:

Thus Christ and the Christian become one loaf and one body, so that the Christian can bear good fruit--not Adam's or his own, but Christ's. For when a Christian baptizes, preaches, consoles, exhorts, works, and suffers, he does not do this as a man descended from Adam; it is Christ who does this in him. The lips and tongue with which he proclaims and confesses God's Word are not his; they are Christ's lips and tongue. The hands with which he toils and serves his neighbor are the hands and members of Christ, who, as He says here, is in him; and he is in Christ.<sup>374</sup>

This, as seen above, is what Luther says about Christ as the life of the Christian. When Christ is apprehended in faith he becomes the source of a new life.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>373</sup>Ebeling, 176: "Der von Paulus in Gal 2,20 ausgesagt Wechsel hinsichtlich des Lebensbestimmenden: "Christus lebt in mir", ist nur dann recht verstanden, wenn das eigene Ich nicht einfach verschwindet, sondern einem anderen Lebensgrund und Lebensquell außerhalb seiner selbst Raum gibt."

<sup>374</sup>Martin Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 24, Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 226; See also Luther's Works, vol 4, Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 21-25, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 167; and "Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter" in Luther's Works, vol 30, The Catholic Epistles, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 52, 56, and 57.

<sup>375</sup>Köstlin, 2: 449: "The view of Luther may therefore be epitomized as follows: Faith, in order to obtain righteousness and the assurance of salvation, must look to Christ, as the

### Conclusion

The relationship of Christ and faith in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, is described by Luther in different ways. Luther uses various figures to emphasize the same point: Faith, not works, justifies, because faith apprehends or takes hold of Christ. When Luther speaks of Christ, he has always in view the work of Christ, redemption. Justification is possible only in view of Christ's vicarious death. The Gospel is the proclamation about Christ, about the work of Christ. The Gospel presents Christ to sinful man as the Lamb of God, the bronze serpent--figures which point only to the cross of Christ--and adds "for you." It is, therefore, a gift. Faith receives this gift because faith applies the words of the Gospel. Faith in Christ excludes works of man and the Law because the Gospel presents the work of Christ alone. Thus, a phrase in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, which summarizes better the thought of Luther is: "faith grasps and embraces Christ, the Son of God, who was given for us."<sup>376</sup>

Faith and Christ exclude man's own persona, that is, his works and achievements, and the Law. In justification,

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objective Reconciler, presented to us in the Word, and must embrace (schliessen) Him in the heart, in order that forgiveness of sins may thus be effected for those who believe; and only then will Christ, embraced in the heart, prove effectual in them also as the author of a new moral life and deportment."

<sup>376</sup>LW 26: 177.

faith and Christ, or the believer and Christ, form a unity. The Law with its requirements and accusation is completely excluded. The work of man is excluded. The only things that remain are Christ alone and faith alone. Christ alone paid the price of man's redemption to God and overcame the condemning power of sin, Law, death, and the devil. Faith alone receives this; it apprehends Christ as the Savior and Justifier.

Faith and Christ exclude works in justification. But, when this happens, a new life begins. This life is not a life through works of the Law in view of justification before God. This life is received in justification when works were completely rejected. The Christ who is received in faith and is the only righteousness of the Christian before God, is also the Christian's new life. The Holy Spirit is also given to those who possess Christ by faith. Faith is, therefore, the new life. Works follow faith as fruits of a sound tree. Justification is lived out in the world through good works. These good works are good, not because of a new appearance in them but because they are done ex alio fonte. Christ himself and the Holy Spirit are this other source from which good works flow in the life of a Christian.

The relation of Christ and faith in Great Galatians, 2:16-21, may be described, therefore, as twofold. First, faith apprehends Christ and justifies; then, faith does

works, because Christ, apprehended by faith, is the Christian's new life. Within this context the phrases "Christ's presence" and "union with Christ" are to be understood. We have seen that Luther speaks of presence of Christ in faith as the content of faith, on account of which faith justifies. We have seen also that Luther speaks of union with Christ under the twentieth verse in order to say that the Christian does not live on the basis of works or the Law but receives his life from Christ through faith.

CHAPTER IV  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis was subdivided into three chapters, in which the following results were presented:

1) The use in Luther scholarship of the early Luther as normative for the interpretation of Luther's theology is rejected. In accordance with Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, the Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles, the works of Luther included in the Book of Concord, are taken as normative for the study of Luther's theology. These provide a basic understanding of Luther's theology, necessary for the interpretation of Great Galatians Commentary, 2:16-21.

2) Luther's Catechisms emphasize the distinction of Law and Gospel, the centrality of Christ's work, and the means through which forgiveness is bestowed.

Knowledge of Christian doctrine or the Gospel is received from God; man does not have it from himself.

The Law comes first; then follows the Gospel. The Christian is free from the Old Testament regulations through Christ. Faith is the first and fundamental requirement of the Decalog. It trusts in God and expects only from him

every good thing, temporal and eternal (salvation). The attempt to earn salvation through works is the greatest idolatry because it expects nothing from God. Faith trusts in God, and receives salvation as a gift from God. Faith and works are distinguished: faith alone serves God; works serve the neighbor. Works done in faith are pleasing to God, though imperfect, because the person (the believer) is pleasing to God. Only God, through his Word, makes a person holy, that is, a believer. The Law contains promises and threats which are to move man to obedience. As man does not obey the Law, it accuses man of sin. Through this accusation, the Law reveals sin and the need of help; however, the Law cannot give this help.

The Creed presents the Gospel. God is the Creator; he freely bestows all his gifts to man. Man is always a receiver before God. Man, however, lacks faith; he neither acknowledges God's goodness nor serves God as he should. God sees the misery of man, and gives his Only Son for man's salvation.

The Second Article of the Creed contains the fundamental Christian doctrine. Christ is the Redeemer; he redeems man from God's wrath and condemnation, from the dominion of sin, death, and the devil. Christ restores man into God's favor and liberates him from the dominion of the devil. This Christ achieved through his own precious blood, that is, his death for us.

The Holy Spirit bestows the treasure of salvation achieved by Christ. Bestowal is possible because of the completeness of Christ's work. The work of Christ would not benefit man if the Gospel were not preached and faith were not wrought in man's heart to believe it. The church and its offices belong in this bestowing work of the Holy Spirit.

The struggle against sin characterizes the entire Christian life. The devil, the world, and the Christian's own flesh are his enemies. Christ's kingdom is opposed by the kingdom of the devil. Therefore not only the deliverance of the devil but also the preservation in Christ's kingdom is a work of God alone.

Baptism bestows the benefits of Christ's work: the forgiveness of sins and salvation. It delivers from death and the devil. Baptism excludes works, for it is a work of God, not of man. Baptism requires faith, because of the Word of promise which accompanies water. Faith has in the Word and in Baptism its external referent. Faith is always faith in the Word; fideism is rejected. Faith does not constitute Baptism; it receives it. Baptism and faith exclude works. The Christian life is also signified by Baptism: the "new man" is born daily, as the "old Adam" is suppressed daily. Christian life, therefore, is not without sin. Baptism, as Christ himself, remains an immovable source of forgiveness throughout the life.

The Lord's Supper strengthens and refreshes the new man for the struggles of the Christian life. It bestows what Christ achieved: forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is the treasure or gift of this sacrament. The words: "for you," offer and impart it to man. The one who believes the words: "for you," receives and has what the words say and give. These words are a promise; they require faith--works are excluded.

It is necessary to distinguish man's work from God's in the "Confession." Confession of sins is man's work. Absolution is the work of God alone. Absolution, or the forgiveness of sins, is a treasure or a gift. Christians do not reject but receive it.

The Smalcald Articles present the Gospel which Luther confesses and which a true Council of the church should also confess.

Christ died for the sins of mankind. He is the Lamb of God. The purpose of Christ's work is justification. Faith believes and receives it; there is no room for works or merit.

Luther rejects everything that brings works into the doctrine of man's redemption before God. Redemption is the work of Christ alone; and the benefits of this work are received by faith alone. The Roman church with its traditions is criticized because it attributes to human works the work that belongs to Christ alone.

Man cannot redeem himself, but needs Christ's work of redemption. The Law reveals such need by revealing to man his own sin and guilt. The Law leads man to the desire of help; it does not indicate, however, where to find it. Thus it follows the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel offers consolation and forgiveness in various ways. Reason does not know the Gospel; it thinks that it can fulfill the Law. Therefore it rejects Christ and faith. True repentance, however, is the acknowledgement of sin and trust in the sufficiency of Christ's work. There is no perfection in this life; the work of the Holy Spirit is a daily cleansing and expulsion of sin.

The Gospel's office is the preaching of the forgiveness of sins. Oral proclamation, Baptism, Lord's Supper, the Keys, and the mutual consolation are ways by which forgiveness is imparted. The external Word must be preserved in order to preserve the Gospel.

The church takes care of the Word, not of civil affairs, such as civil punishment, government, marriage. The holiness of the church consists in the Word and true faith; for the preaching of the Word, it calls and ordains ministers.

Justification is by faith: God does account man righteous on account of Christ. Good works follow faith; they are, however, imperfect. The only basis of God's imputation must remain Christ alone. Monasticism and other

traditions which contradict justification by faith alone for Christ's sake are rejected, that is, works are excluded.

The Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles present Christ always in reference to his work. Christ is the one who redeemed man through his unique death on the cross. He achieves forgiveness and salvation. This treasure or gift is bestowed through the Word or the Gospel, and it is received by faith. The work of Christ and faith exclude works.

3) Grace and Law are mutually exclusive. By grace, God sent Jesus Christ, who died for us. The Law requires works. The Occamist doctrine of salvation assumes that man is capable of fulfilling the Law. It is, therefore, a denial of God's grace and of Christ's work. The adversaries (Scholastics and fanatics alike) teach works in addition to faith in the doctrine of justification. Luther teaches justification by faith alone. Only by the doctrine of justification is it possible to distinguish between grace and Law. The Law or works do not justify; only Christ and faith justify.

Through his unique work, the crucifixion in place of man, Christ achieved salvation. This salvation he now bestows through the Gospel. Achievement and bestowal are the correct relation between the past and the present work of Christ. Christ's work for us has two aspects: satisfaction and overcoming. Accordingly, Christ is

presented as our High Priest or Mediator and as Victor. Luther emphasizes the undeserved love of Christ for the sinner, the magnificence of the price given as payment for sins, the Son of God himself, and the purpose of Christ's death, justification of the sinner. Christ died not for himself, but for man. His death was in place of man. To make justification dependent on works is a denial of Christ. Christ's work is also presented as a combat against the tyrants: the Law, sin, death, and the devil. Christ became the Victor through his death and resurrection. In Christ's cross the tyrants are crucified. Luther emphasizes that it happened "in Christ, not in me."

The conscience is either under Law or grace. The conscience is liberated by Christ through the Gospel, not through works of the Law. The Gospel is a proclamation about Christ and his saving work. It points to Christ and his work and calls for faith. Nothing is required but faith. The Gospel is, therefore, distinguished from the Law. The Law, in its proper office or function, leads man to the knowledge of himself. It reveals the sin and guilt of man. The Gospel points beyond man himself, to Christ crucified; therefore it comforts the conscience. The Gospel presents Christ as a Savior and Justifier; to absolve and to liberate the conscience are his proper office. It presents Christ as a gift, not as an example. For in justification works are excluded. The righteousness that avails before

God is a gift, not works. Christ is both the Giver and the gift. He is the treasure of faith.

Faith apprehends and receives Christ. Christ is the content of faith. Faith apprehends and embraces Christ, the Son of God, who died for us. It trusts only in Christ. The only object of (justifying) faith is Christ. This faith, therefore, justifies, not faith formed by love. For God reckons this faith which apprehends Christ as righteousness. Christ, faith, and God's acceptance or imputation are, therefore, the three elements in justification.

The justified conscience is free from the Law. The Law remains for the flesh, but it loses its jurisdiction over the conscience. Christ expels Moses, that is, the Law, or the trust in the works for justification. Faith gives freedom because Christ is the Victor and the Lord over the Law, sin, death, and the devil. The justified conscience does not care for the accusation of the Law, for Christ is the comfort of the afflicted conscience.

The justified person lives a new life, which is freedom from the Law and death. The Christian still lives in the world, but his life is not the same. Besides the life that the world can see, he lives a new life coram Deo. This life is Christ living in him, acting through him. Christ and the Holy Spirit are the source of this new life, not the flesh. This life is faith itself, which produces works. Good works have their place after justification, for

they flow from faith. Good works are the way the Christian lives out his justification by faith alone.

Two phrases of Luther require a special attention: Christ's presence in faith and union with Christ.

Luther says that Christ is present in faith. Luther rejects a faith without Christ, which needs to be formed by love. If faith is true faith, Christ is present. Luther's phrase proves to be another way of referring to the apprehension of Christ by faith. The Christ present is the Christ apprehended by faith. The faith that apprehends Christ does not need the addition of love or works, but it produces works, for it is not an idle quality.

Luther says that in justification the Christian must be united to Christ and cannot be separated from him. Luther distinguishes the believer from the doer of works. The Christian lives coram Deo as a believer, not as a doer of works. To consider the persona (person) separated from Christ is to consider the person according to his own works, and, therefore, under the condemnation of the Law. The attachment to Christ through faith gives man freedom from the Law. Faith joins the believer and Christ together; it is not an idle quality, it is a new life.

Luther presents the relationship of Christ and faith in a twofold manner. First, faith apprehends Christ, and, therefore, it justifies. Here faith in Christ excludes

works. Then Christ is presented as the source of a new life, which is faith that produces good works.

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