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# CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS

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by

FRANCIS PIEPER, D. D.

Volume III

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CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE  
3558 S. Jefferson Ave.  
St. Louis, MO 63118-3968

ISBN 0-570-06714-6



## Foreword

THIS third and last volume of Dr. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* is issued with heartfelt thanks to God for His gracious guidance and help in the task of translation. All who had a hand in the work confess that it proved to be a larger undertaking than they had anticipated.

My thanks are offered to all, too, who supported the project and furthered it in one way or another. I shall keep in grateful remembrance particularly the sainted Dr. Theodore Engelder, who devoted the last years of his earthly life to the planning and execution of the entire work.

The first translation of this jewel of Lutheranism in America rose out of circumstances in the 1930's. My students, who no longer had an extensive knowledge of German, induced me to translate the *Dogmatik* for use as our textbook. With the permission of Dr. E. Seuel, then manager of Concordia Publishing House, the students mimeographed the manuscript. Requests made in earlier years, together with the appearance of this edition, led the General Convention of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in 1944 to approve the proposal of the Synodical Centennial Committee for the printing of Dr. Pieper's work in English. The services of Dr. Engelder as chief editor were secured, and the major parts of Volumes I and II, as well as the first two sections of this volume, were the fruit of his labors. After the Lord called him to our eternal home, Dr. J. T. Mueller undertook supervision of the publication of the second volume, and the undersigned was requested to serve as editor of Volume III.

Some reviews of Volumes I and II that have come to my attention assert that Dr. Pieper's doctrinal position is an anachronism, not suited to our day, because he does not propound "the problem of knowledge," the endless, fruitless search of "scientific theology" for certainty of truth. Our answer to such criticism is: "The Word they still shall let remain." The *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Gratia*, *Sola Fide* shall remain our shibboleth also in the future. This is the saving faith, worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel of salvation. May God's Holy Spirit preserve us in this faith unto our end!

I cannot refrain from pointing out two pearls in this dogmatic compend which may escape the casual reader, but hold supreme significance for the Church. They are: "Only dogmatics is edifying" (I, 101) and "The sins of the world are forgiven" (I, 35). The first expresses the divine origin and character and the clarity of Holy Writ, the *fundamentum organicum*; the second emphasizes the objective reconciliation, the *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, or the *fundamentum substantiale*, Christ. Give Scripture its due as the verbally inspired, infallible Word of God, give Christ

His due as the sole and entire source of our salvation, and you have a truly sound theology and saving religion.

The Centennial Committee plans to publish an exhaustive index volume which will offer a topical index to facilitate reference to any particular point of doctrine, an index of the Bible passages cited and discussed, and an index of authors referred to and quoted.

May our Lord and Savior bless this translation as a means of preserving for our children the faith we inherited from our fathers, a faith that stands not on human opinion, but on the Word of God alone.

Ascension, 1952  
Springfield, Illinois

WALTER W. F. ALBRECHT



## Preface

IN this third volume the doctrines of the Christian life, the means of grace, the Church, eternal election, and the last things are presented. Also in the preparation of this volume I have striven to offer a dogmatics which is "up to date" in the proper sense of the term. In the preface of Volume Two, I explained what I regard as "up to date" or "abreast of the times." To deserve this distinction, a dogmatics must have particularly two characteristics. First, it must reject all human speculation and must take the Christian doctrine solely from Holy Scripture, because Holy Writ as the inspired and infallible Word of Christ is the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine till Judgment Day. Secondly, such a dogmatics must judge the doctrinal trends in Christendom, both past and present, by the doctrine of Christ as it is delivered in Scripture and must vindicate the divine truth against all contradictions.

Considerable space has been given to the doctrine of the Christian life, or the doctrine of sanctification and good works, and this for two reasons. First, Scripture describes the Christian life not only in general, but also in its many and varied phases. Secondly, and chiefly, the Scriptural order which obtains between Christian faith and Christian life is in our day, too, disarranged and in most instances completely inverted. All who, like the Roman Catholics, the Calvinists, the Arminians, and modern rationalizing Lutherans, either detract from, or deny outright, the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, have no choice but to let sanctification precede justification in some fashion, because they regard Christ's work of reconciliation as inadequate. But this inversion of the proper order leads to the loss of both justification and sanctification.

The means of grace have been allotted more space than any other doctrine. Several reasons prompted me to offer rather too much than too little in presenting this doctrine. For one thing, here in the United States we are surrounded by Reformed church bodies, and all of them follow the same principles and use the same arguments today to separate the "Spirit" and "grace" from the means of grace which moved Zwingli and his associates to shun the "Church of the Reformation" and induce Calvin and his successors to perpetuate the separation. Ample proof for this assertion has been adduced. Secondly, there is no denying that the modern "theology of experience," pursued also by the "positive" Lutheran theologians of our day, which has abandoned the Biblical teaching of the inspiration of Scripture and of the *satisfactio Christi vicaria*, is everywhere following the paths of Reformed theology. Even some Reformed theologians have pointed this out, for instance, Schneckenburger (*Vergleichende Darstel-*

*lung des luth. und ref. Lehrbegriffs*, I, 264–287), though not all his observations are correct. According to the “experience theology” saving faith is not produced solely by the Word of the Gospel and does not have the Word of the Gospel as its object (that in which it believes), but is created and preserved also by the so-called “historical” work of Christ, which is to be added to the Word of Christ. Ihmels, too, expressly rejects as “intellectualistic” the “understanding of the revelation” held by the theologians of the Reformation, and states as his view: “Today also, only that is real faith in Christ which is thrust upon man through the appearance of Christ Himself” (*Zentralfragen*, 2d ed., 1912, p. 89). Thirdly, a Christian, and particularly a Christian theologian who has had practical experience in the care of souls, knows how difficult it is for a conscience crushed by the Law of God to cling to the grace offered in the means of grace, even with the correct teaching regarding the means of grace. Recall the complaints of Luther, how difficult it was for him, when attacked by Satan, to disregard all that occurred in him and about him and to trust steadfastly and solely in the gracious promise in the Word of the Gospel. And yet there is no other way to deliver us sinners in our trials and in the throes of death from doubt and despair.

In presenting the doctrine of the Church it was necessary, first, to set forth and to maintain over against Roman and Pseudo-Protestant “institutionalism” that the Church consists of Christians and hence that they are the possessors of all spiritual gifts and privileges which Christ has given His Church on earth. Secondly, it had to be shown that there is absolutely no room in the Christian Church for any word and authority of man because Christ through His Word is the sole Teacher and Ruler of His Church. The public ministry, it is true, is not a human but a divine institution, but it has no authority to teach and to prescribe anything not taught and commanded in Christ’s Word.

The presentation of the doctrine of eternal election takes cognizance, of course, of the controversy which disturbed the Lutheran Church in America for decades. I have assured myself again and again that what Article XI of the Formula of Concord teaches when it maintains the *universalis gratia* over against Calvinism and the *sola gratia* over against synergism is not “untenable ground,” as both of these parties have claimed, but faithfully reproduces the doctrine of Scripture.

In the doctrine of the last things, millennialism and the general conversion of the Jews have been treated in greater detail because these errors have again come to the fore in our times.

The World War and its effect on the economy of our country accounts in part for the fact that this third volume appears later than had been intended.

Soli Deo Gloria!

F. PIEPER

St. Louis, Mo., March, 1920



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*The Christian Life, or Sanctification  
and Good Works*

(DE SANCTIFICATIONE ET BONIS OPERIBUS)



THE Christian life in all its internal and external activities is produced, inevitably and solely, by faith in the reconciliation achieved by Christ. (This doctrine has been set forth in the "Preliminary Survey" of *The Application of Salvation* in Vol. II, p. 397 ff.) But the many inaccuracies and gross aberrations which have arisen in connection with the relation of justification to sanctification, also regarding sanctification itself, necessitate a detailed exposition of the doctrine of the Christian life or, in other words, the doctrine of sanctification and good works. In order to clarify this doctrine, questions such as the following will be discussed: What is the meaning of sanctification? How do justification and sanctification differ? Does sanctification play a part in the obtaining of salvation and in the perseverance in faith? By whom and by what means is sanctification effected? Is sanctification in this life perfect or imperfect? What must be taught concerning the "necessity" and the "freedom" of sanctification and good works?

## 1

### *Sanctification Defined*

The term "sanctification" is used in Scripture and in theology in a wide and in a narrow sense.

In its wide sense, sanctification comprises all that the Holy Ghost does in separating man from sin and making him again God's own, so that he may live for God and serve Him. It includes the bestowal of faith, justification, sanctification as the inner transformation of man, perseverance in faith, and the complete renewal on Judgment Day. The "sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2) certainly includes justification, as is evident from the phrases: "belief in the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13) and "the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2). Christians are the "called saints" (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2), *primo loco* because of their justification by faith. The phrase "But ye are sanctified" (1 Cor. 6:11) is best taken as a synonym of justification, because it is placed between "Ye are washed" and "ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." The inward renewal of man, which follows faith in the forgiveness of sins, by which he turns his back on sin and serves God in doing good works, is also designated in Scripture

as "sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:3-7: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication . . . that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter . . . for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." Similarly holiness of life is meant in 1 Thess. 5:23 and 3:13: "unblamable in holiness"; in 2 Cor. 7:1: "perfecting holiness"; in Eph. 4:24: "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Finally, in Matt. 19:28 the complete and final deliverance of the Christians from all sin is called a "regeneration."

In its wide sense also Luther uses the term "sanctification" in his exposition of the Third Article of the Creed, Large Catechism: "I believe that the Holy Ghost makes us holy, as His name implies. But whereby does He accomplish this, or what are His method and means to this end? Answer: By the Christian Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting." (*Trigl.* 689, 40 f.) Quenstedt: "'Sanctification' is at times used in a wide sense, including justification, as in Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:10; at other times, however, it is used in a narrow sense and, so understood, is identical with renewal in the strict sense, as in Rom. 6:19, 22; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 7." (II, p. 914.)

In its narrow sense, sanctification designates the internal spiritual transformation of the believer or the holiness of life which follows upon justification. It is so used in Rom. 6:22: "Now being made free from sin and become servants to God [namely, by justification],<sup>1</sup> ye have your fruit unto holiness." Vv. 18-19: "Being then made free from sin [namely, by faith in the Gospel, v. 17, or by justification], ye became the servants of righteousness . . . even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." In the narrower sense of sanctification the Formula of Concord states: "In the same manner the order also between faith and good works must abide and be maintained, and likewise between justification and renewal, or sanctification. For good works do not precede faith, neither does sanctification precede justification. But first faith is kindled in us in conversion by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. This lays hold of God's grace in Christ, by which the person is justified. Then, when the person is justified, he is also renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works must then follow." (*Trigl.* 929, Sol. Decl., III, 40 f.)

Note that the Formula of Concord uses the terms "renewal" and

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<sup>1</sup> On the entire section Rom. 6:15-23 compare Meyer, Philippi, Stoeckhardt.

“sanctification” as synonyms: “renewal or sanctification.” Sanctification is called “renewal” in order to describe the activity of the new nature in contrast to the old carnal nature; and renewal is called “sanctification” in order to show that according to his new nature man is delivered from the service of sin and dedicated to the service of God. The Formula of Concord also distinguishes between sanctification and good works as *antecedens* and *consequens*. Sanctification is here taken as the new spiritual nature (καινός ἄνθρωπος, πνεῦμα), created through justification, while the good works are the acts flowing from this new nature. Thus Gal. 5:25-26: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory.” Gal. 6:1: “Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” Gal. 5:22 represents love, joy, peace, etc., as “the fruit of the Spirit.”

In another respect good works are identical with sanctification, since sanctification *in concreto* takes place through the performance of good acts, the believer avoiding, internally and externally, the evil and accomplishing, internally and externally, the good. Sanctification *in concreto* is, just as little as faith,<sup>2</sup> an infused substance or a dormant condition (*habitus otiosus, status otiosus*), but it is an unceasing activity, constantly called forth and sustained by the Holy Ghost.<sup>3</sup> That sanctification is a matter of good works, Scripture shows by representing sanctification as the fruit of faith and then, again, by representing good works as the fruit of faith. Rom. 6:22 reads: “Ye have your fruit unto holiness,” and Titus 3:8, 14 states that the believers should be “careful to maintain good works.”<sup>4</sup> And Titus 2:11 the “grace of God that bringeth salvation” is characterized as “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See the section “Saving Faith Is *Fides Actualis*” (Vol. II, 432 ff.) and the statement by Walther: “Faith is continuous action, a continuous apprehending, though we are unable to tell how this takes place, for example, during sleep” (*ibid.*, p. 436, footnote 70).

<sup>3</sup> Faith is not a physical or substantial condition; see Quenstedt, II, 917.

<sup>4</sup> προίστασθαι with the genitive — to devote oneself to, e. g., τέχνης, art.

<sup>5</sup> How sanctification (or renewal) and good works are distinguished as *antecedens* and *consequens*, and how they are actually identical, has been discussed already by the old Lutheran theologians. Baier, for instance, says: “Good works are, on the one hand, related to renewal as its *finis* [end] and *effectus* [result], and, on the other hand, they constitute the renewal. For renewal essentially consists in the good and holy actions or works which are performed through the powers of grace.” (III, 315.) Chemnitz, calling attention to the fact that, e. g., in Rom. 4:5, faith and works are set in opposition, says that therefore the term “good works” designates the whole territory of the new life in which faith is active.

same more gloriously when it shall be revealed. . . . When Christ says: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,' and 'Blessed are ye if men persecute you for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven,' etc., He does not teach me to make this the foundation of my salvation, but He gives me a promise, namely, what is to be my comfort in my suffering and Christian life. Here you must not mingle and brew these things together; you must not turn into a merit of mine what God gives me in Christ through Baptism and the Gospel. For it is not stated here that I can merit this and need no Christ and Baptism for it, but rather that Christ's true disciples, to whom He preaches here and who must suffer all manner of things for His sake, should know what is their comfort. Since they are unwelcome on earth, they shall be the more richly rewarded in heaven; he that works and suffers the most will also get the greater reward. For though, as I have said, all are alike in Christ, and grace bestows on each one the whole salvation as the highest good, possessed by all, so that he who has Christ has everything, nevertheless there will be a difference in the brightness and glory with which we shall be adorned. Just as there is a difference in the gifts which we have now, one laboring more and suffering more than the other, so in the future life it will all be made manifest; all the world will see what everyone has accomplished, and he that has accomplished more will receive greater glory to the joy of the entire heavenly host. Let this now suffice. God keep us in His grace which He showed us in Christ! Amen." (St. L. VII:666 ff.)<sup>90</sup>

## II

### *The Great Value of Good Works*

After Luther had brought to light the great truth of the Christian doctrine that good works have no value in gaining justification and salvation (Rom. 3:28: "without the deeds of the Law"; Eph. 2:8-9), the pseudo-reformers, in their desire to outdo Luther, claimed that the good works of the Christians had no value whatever. Over against them Luther emphasized the great excellence of the good works. He declared: "Outside the article of justification we cannot sufficiently praise and magnify these works which are commanded by God. For who can sufficiently commend and set forth the profit and fruit of

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<sup>90</sup> On the reward of good works see Quenstedt, II, 1419 *sqq.*; Chemnitz, *Examen*, "De bonis opp.," 4. qu., *de praemiis et meritis b. o.*, p. 185 *sqq.*

only one work which a Christian does through faith and in faith? Indeed, it is more precious than heaven or earth." (St. L. IX:442 f.)

The Anabaptists declared that good works are worthless. Luther replied: "See what little value they attach to good works — they are ready to sell their good works for a penny! By this they want to ape us and our teaching that good works do not make a sinner pious, do not blot out sins, do not reconcile God. To this the devil adds his bit and so utterly despises good works that he is ready to sell them for a penny. I thank God that the devil in his cleverness here overreaches himself and so shamefully befouls and befools himself. We teach that to reconcile God, to make righteous, to blot out sin, is so high and great and glorious a work that alone Christ, the Son of God, could do it and that this is indeed such a pure, special, peculiar work of the one true God and His grace that our works are nothing and can do nothing. But that therefore good works should be nothing or be worth only a penny, who ever heard of such a thing, or who could teach such a thing except the lying mouth of the devil? I would not give up one of my sermons, not one of my lectures, not one of my treatises, not one of my Lord's Prayers, nay, whatever small work I have ever done or am doing, for all the riches of the world; yea, I hold my good works dearer than my own life, which certainly should be held more precious than all the world; for if what I do is good, God has done it through me and in me. But if God has done it and it is God's work, what is the whole world over against God and His work? Though it does not make me holy — that must be done before, through Christ's blood and grace, without works — still it is done to the praise and glory of God and for the benefit and welfare of my neighbor, both of which cannot be paid for or equaled by all the world's goods. And this fine rabble would take only a penny for it! Has not Satan here hidden himself well? Who cannot feel him here?" (St. L. XIV:310 f.)

Luther's hymnic praise of good works is entirely Scriptural.

1. Good works have such a great value because they are done according to the norm of God's will. While all works that are not done according to God's will are worthless, all works which flow from obedience to the will of God, the supreme Lord, are great and precious.
2. Good works are God's work. He is the *causa efficiens* of them. While the new man of the Christian co-operates in performing them, this co-operation is so completely subordinate to God's operation that the Christian does the good only so far and so long as God works in and through him. Scripture expressly calls the good works of

# *Final Perseverance*

(DE PERSEVERANTIA)



THE subject of a Christian's perseverance<sup>1</sup> in faith is of the utmost importance (Luther, St. L. IX:1807, on Matt. 24:13). When Christ speaks of the trials and tribulations which will come upon the believers, He makes the significant statement: "He that endureth to the end [R. V.: the same] shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Christ repeats the same statement in Matt. 24:13. Only he that endureth to the end, "the same" (οὗτος emphasizing the subject of the sentence) shall be saved, he and no other.<sup>2</sup> What Scripture teaches on the final perseverance may be summarized in these two statements: 1. He that perseveres in faith does so only through God's gracious preservation; the believer's perseverance is a work of divine grace and omnipotence. 2. He that falls from faith does so through his own fault; the cause of apostasy is in every case rejection of God's Word and resistance to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Word. This doctrine the Christian Church must maintain and defend on two fronts: against Calvinism and against synergism.

## I

### *The Calvinistic Doctrine of Perseverance*

Consistent Calvinism teaches the inamissibility of faith. It holds that even *peccata enormia* cannot result in the loss of faith; gross sins will destroy the exercise of faith (*exercitium fidei*), but never faith itself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Chemnitz discusses Final Perseverance under "*De iustificatione*" (*Loci*, II, 709) and "*De bonis operibus*" (III, 48 *sqq.*); likewise Gerhard, *Loci*, "*De iustificatione*," § 83 *sqq.*, and *De bonis operibus*, § 134 *sqq.* So we, too, have shown in the *locus* on Justification that justifying faith includes the assurance both of forgiveness of sin and of salvation (Vol. II, 406) and in the *locus* on Sanctification that good works do not preserve faith and salvation (Vol. III, 20). We shall treat of it again in the section on Election. Here we are stressing particularly the points that must be maintained against Calvinism and synergism.

<sup>2</sup> Fritzsche says that the "οὗτος is put with great force after ὁ δέ."

<sup>3</sup> For instances from the *Canones Synodi Dortrechtanae* and of the *Confession of Faith* see Vol. II, 468, footnote 24. Calvin: "It must be remembered that however feeble and weak the faith of the elect may be, the Spirit of God is to them a sure pledge and seal of their adoption. The impression once engraven can never be effaced from their hearts." (*Inst.* III, 2, 12.) Heidegger teaches the same thing in *loc.* 24, *De constantia foederis gratiae* (see Baumgarten, II, p. 636 *sq.*).

This false teaching, which Luther and the Lutheran Confessions so emphatically reject,<sup>4</sup> has been invented for the purpose of allaying the uncertainty and doubt which the denial of the *gratia universalis* will necessarily raise in the hearts of sinners seeking assurance of grace. By such denial those who have actually lost their faith and are now again seeking grace are either driven to despair or led to trust in their former faith instead of trusting in the grace of God in Christ. Take the case of Cromwell, of which Strong says: "Cromwell questioned his chaplain as to the doctrine of final perseverance and, on being assured that it was a certain truth, said: 'Then I am happy, for I am sure that I was once in a state of grace.'" Strong criticizes the counsel given Cromwell and declares: "But reliance upon a past experience is like trusting in the value of life insurance upon which several years' premiums have been unpaid. If the policy has not lapsed, it is because of extreme grace." He wants a man like Cromwell to be told: "The only conclusive evidence of perseverance is a present experience of Christ's presence and indwelling, corroborated by active service and purity of life." But Cromwell would have profited nothing by such a counsel. He would have replied that in his case the "present experience of Christ's presence" was lacking.

No, indeed. Christ would have given an altogether different counsel. He did not ask the malefactor on the cross, whose case was similar to that of Cromwell, to rely on "the present experience of Christ's indwelling" and the corroboration of it by a pure life, but told him the objective Word of grace. This is the cure for these cases — the objective, universal, perfect grace of God, which is not based on Christ's indwelling and on the holy life of the suppliant, but has been gained by Christ's vicarious satisfaction for all men, is offered in the Gospel to all, with the object of bringing them to faith in it. Universal grace (which is an objective reality and is offered in the objective means of grace), and not the "Christ in us" and our virtuous life, is "the grace of God that bringeth salvation" (Titus 2:11); and this grace "that bringeth salvation to all men" is to be proclaimed to all the Cromwells and all the malefactors in the world. This grace alone can rekindle lost faith, for "faith cometh by hearing" (Rom. 10:17).

By its denial of universal grace consistent Calvinism is prevented from supplying this cure to those who have actually lost their faith

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<sup>4</sup> Smalc. Art. (*Trigl.* 491, Part III, Art. III, 42–44); Augsburg Conf. (*Trigl.* 49, Art. XII). See Vol. II, 468, note 25.

# *The Means of Grace*

(DE MEDIIS GRATIAE)



IN reconciling the world unto Himself by Christ's substitutionary satisfaction, God asked no one's advice concerning His singular method of reconciliation. In like manner, without asking any man's advice, He ordained the means by which He gives men the infallible assurance of His gracious will toward them; in other words, He both confers on men the remission of sins merited by Christ and works faith in the proffered remission or, where faith already exists, strengthens it. The Church has appropriately called these divine ordinances the means of grace, *media gratiae, instrumenta gratiae*; Formula of Concord: "*Instrumenta sive media Spiritus Sancti*" (*Trigl.* 903, Sol. Decl., II, 58). They are the Word of the Gospel, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, as will be shown more fully on the following pages.

According to Scripture, a twofold power inheres in these means: first, an exhibiting and conferring, or imparting, power (*vis exhibitiva, dativa, collativa*), and, secondly, as a result of this, an efficacious, or operative, power (*vis effectiva sive operativa*). The conferring, or imparting, power consists in this, that these means offer men the forgiveness of sins, supplied through Christ's work of reconciliation, hence God's grace (*favor Dei*).<sup>1</sup> In other words, through the means of grace God reveals and declares to men that He is fully reconciled through Christ, that because of Christ's work He loves them and would have them believe it. The efficacious, or operative, power of the means of grace consists in this, that through them the Holy Spirit works and strengthens faith, faith in the very forgiveness, God's love and grace, which these means declare and reveal.<sup>2</sup>

One would think that men would not take exception to the means of grace, ordained by God Himself. But history reports the opposite. As critics have declared God's method of reconciling the world unworthy of God and man, so they have also taken exception to the means of grace ordained by God. Some, for instance Zwingli, have

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<sup>1</sup> Formula of Concord: "Christ . . . offers to all men His grace [*clementiam*] in the Word and holy Sacraments" (*Trigl.* 903, Sol. Decl., II, 57).

<sup>2</sup> Formula of Concord: "The Word of God preached and heard is [truly] an office and work of the Holy Ghost, by which He is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts" (*Trigl.* 903, Sol. Decl., II, 56). Augustana: "That we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God [Vol. II, 401, footnote 9], in them that hear the Gospel." (*Trigl.* 45, V, 1, 2.)

argued strongly that it does not befit God to bind His revelation and operation to such external means as the Word and the Sacraments, that for His work the Holy Ghost does not need a vehicle.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Zwingli and his numerous adherents declare that the means God has ordained are unnecessary and hinder true piety. Others, particularly the Papists, create their own means of grace and "improve" those which God has ordained.<sup>4</sup> On this account a manual of Christian dogmatics must devote considerable space to a presentation of the Christian doctrine of the means of grace. The study will also show that the rejection and every alteration of the divinely appointed means of grace impairs the core and center of the Christian faith, the article of justification by faith without the deeds of the Law. When the means of grace are rejected or impaired, human works regularly take the place of Christ's substitutionary satisfaction as the basis of salvation.

## I

### *The Means of Grace in General*

Seeberg correctly writes: "The doctrinal understanding of the means of grace begins with the relation of these means to the work of Christ."<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately the term "work of Christ" has, in both the past and the present, been given widely different connotations, and this ambiguity lessens the value of the statement. Some do not regard the work of Christ as perfect in extent, for they let it count only for a part of mankind. This is done by the Calvinists. Others refer Christ's work of reconciliation to all men, but deny its perfection in value by asserting that His work is insufficient for man's actual salvation and must be supplemented by *aliquid in homine* — some achievement of man, an innate goodness in man, faith as a moral achievement, the free choice of man, faith as the germ of good works, the new life and the good works themselves, etc. Without this complement the work of Christ or the grace earned by Christ could not secure man's salvation. Where such warped conceptions of the "work" of Christ prevail, almost anything except the Scriptural concept of the means of grace can be the outcome. The means of grace do not remain means dispensing grace, but become means of prodding man to virtuous endeavors, variously named and of various grades.

<sup>3</sup> *Fidei Ratio*, ed. Niemeyer, p. 24; Jacobs, *Book of Concord*, II, 168.

<sup>4</sup> More on the Roman sacraments and the denial of the cup later.

<sup>5</sup> R. E., 3d ed., VI, p. 726.

The starting point in presenting the doctrine of the means of grace must be the universal objective reconciliation or justification. This is the procedure of Scripture. What it says of the divine transmission of the grace which Christ has gained for all men it joins immediately to the objective reconciliation or justification of sinful mankind. We here repeat and expand the thoughts we touched upon in the Preliminary Survey of the Application of Salvation, or Soteriology, in Volume II. The reconciliation which Christ brought about is history, a finished event lying in the past (θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ) that pertains to all mankind and is of an entirely objective character. For it does not consist in a change of mind or “moral transformation” on the part of man, but in a change in God; God in His heart is not imputing their trespasses unto men, but forgiving them (μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, 2 Cor. 5:19). To the report of the finished universal objective reconciliation the Apostle immediately adds that God has committed unto us the Word or news of this complete reconciliation (καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς) in order that men may share in the finished reconciliation.

Hence the first means of grace is “the Word of Reconciliation,” the Word of the Gospel. The Law of God, which is also contained in Scripture, must be excluded from the concept “means of grace,” because the Law does not assure those who have transgressed it—and all men have transgressed it—of the remission of their sins, or God’s grace, but on the contrary proclaims God’s wrath and damnation. For this reason the Law is expressly called ἡ διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως, “the ministration of condemnation,”<sup>6</sup> whereas the Gospel is ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης, “the ministration of righteousness” (2 Cor. 3:9).<sup>7</sup>

Two things must here be kept in mind. The Gospel is means of grace not only in the sense that it tells of a readiness on the part of God to forgive, but in the sense that whenever we hear the Gospel, we hear God pronouncing absolution upon us, forgiving our sins. Luther: “The Gospel is in itself a general absolution, for it is a promise

<sup>6</sup> Luther: “*das Amt, das die Verdammnis predigt*”; Meyer: “the office transmitting condemnation.”

<sup>7</sup> Luther: “*das Amt, das die Gerechtigkeit predigt*”; Meyer: “The office transmitting righteousness.” That “righteousness” must here be understood juridically as acquittal or justification is evident from its antithesis to “condemnation.” Meyer: “Observe the antithesis of *κατάκρισις* and *δικαιοσύνη*. The former is an *actus forensis*, hence the latter, too, is founded on imputation. This against Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*, I, 627 f.”

## 9

*Baptismal Customs*

In the course of time a number of customs have been introduced in connection with the baptismal rite for the purpose of explaining and portraying both the nature and the effect of Baptism (Luther, St. L. X:2138). Gerhard (*Loci*, “*De baptismo*,” §§ 254–255) divides the usual “ceremonies and customs” at a Baptism into three classes: (1) Those enjoined by God, (2) those free but used by the Apostles, (3) those added by church dignitaries. Better, however, is the division into two classes. And actually Gerhard makes one class of classes two and three when he says that only the ceremonies enjoined by God (the application of water in the name of the Triune God) are binding on the Church, but that those freely observed by the Apostles rest as much on the Christian liberty of the Church as those added by the later Church. We include under baptismal customs all ceremonies and customs not prescribed by God and here make mention of such as were received into the Lutheran baptismal formularies, though perhaps not in all places. Walther (*Pastorale*, p. 130 f.) enumerates the following: (1) the reminder of original sin; (2) the giving of a name; (3) the so-called “small exorcism”; (4) the sign of the cross; (5) a prayer and the *devotum Davidicum*; (6) the “great exorcism”; (7) the reading of Mark 10:13-16; (8) the laying on of hands; (9) the Lord’s Prayer; (10) the *abrenuntiatio* and the *confessio* (the Apostles’ Creed); (11) the use of sponsors; (12) the covering of the child with a chrisom; (13) the votum.<sup>47</sup>

Christians should, on the one hand, bear in mind that these customs are *adiaphora* (not prescribed by God), so that Baptism loses none of its validity if several or even all of these ceremonies are not used. Gerhard says: “In the customs neither commanded nor forbidden by God (*in ritibus adiaphoris*) the liberty must be guarded which Christ has dearly purchased and conferred on His Church, namely, by observing them freely, without the notion that they are necessary. They may be abrogated or altered according to the regulation and with the consent of the Church. particularly if they cease to be of benefit, do not achieve their salutary purpose, are misused, or degenerate into a superstition.”

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<sup>47</sup> Gerhard’s enumeration of the customs common in the Lutheran Church in “*De bapt.*,” §§ 258–269; in the Catholic Church, § 257.

On the other hand, Baptism being a public function, the customs connected with it should not be left to the option or caprice of any individual, not even of the pastor. The Formula of Concord properly defines where authority lies to decide on, or change, the baptismal customs. In Article X, on "Church Rites or Adiaphora," it says: "Therefore we believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the good right, power, and authority (in matters truly adiaphora) to change, to diminish, and to increase them, without thoughtlessness and offense, in an orderly and becoming way, as at any time it may be regarded most profitable, most beneficial, and best for [preserving] good order, [maintaining] Christian discipline [and for εὐταξία—*christlicher Wohlstand*—worthy of the profession of the Gospel], and the edification of the Church" (*Trigl.* 1055, Sol. Decl., X, 9). Self-evidently a local congregation will, as far as feasible, conform to the customs in surrounding congregations of the true faith in order thus to confess outwardly the agreement in doctrine and to avoid confusing members who transfer from one congregation to another.

We add a few remarks on the baptismal customs in vogue in the Lutheran Church. The reference to original sin, with which also the baptismal formulary in our Agenda begins, has the purpose of pointing out the need for Baptism, since "from the fall of Adam we are all conceived and born in sin."—The giving of a name in Baptism serves as a reminder that the person baptized has in his Baptism been given a guarantee of grace, executed in his name, that is, for his personal possession, and valid for his whole life.<sup>48</sup>—How exorcism came to be added to the baptismal customs and in what sense the Lutheran Agendas adopted it, Walther relates (*Pastorale*, p. 133 ff. [Fritz, *Pastoral Theology*, p. 113]). Walther, following Chemnitz, Hutter, and Gerhard, voices the opinion: "Exorcism was indeed not abolished in our German Lutheran Church in the manner which Hutter correctly calls the only correct one; rather this ceremony was dropped in a most irregular manner when indifferentism and rationalism became rampant in the Church. However, since this ceremony manifestly belongs to those that must constantly be explained to avoid misunderstanding, it is, indeed, where still in use, not to be abolished in haste, still less, however, would it seem advisable to strive for its reintroduction."

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<sup>48</sup> Framed certificates of Baptism are very fitting "diplomas" for display on the walls of a Christian home, particularly, too, in the studies of theological students.

# *The Christian Church*

(DE ECCLESIA)



AFTER Christ had reconciled all mankind to God by His vicarious satisfaction and had risen from the dead, He sat down at the right hand of God to gather a Church on earth for Himself until the end of time by the Word of the completed reconciliation (λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς), the Gospel.

## A. THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

(DE ECCLESIA UNIVERSALI)

### I

#### *Its Nature*

The Christian Church consists of all those, and only those, who believe in Christ. Since, however, an anti-Scriptural meaning is today given the words “believe in Christ,” we must make our definition more specific and say: The Christian Church is composed of all those, and only those, in whom the Holy Spirit has worked the faith that for the sake of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction their sins are forgiven.

Nothing else makes one a member of the Church: neither holding membership in a church body, nor outward use of the means of grace, nor profession of the Christian faith, nor filling an office in the Church, nor zeal for a moral life in imitation of Christ, nor any immediate regeneration or submergence in God of which the “enthusiasts” of all shades talk. Only personal faith in the forgiveness of sins which was purchased by Christ’s *satisfactio vicaria* and is proclaimed and dispensed in the Gospel makes one a member of the Christian Church. Acts 5:14 tells us that believers in the Lord were added, προσετίθεντο πιστεύοντες τῷ Κυρίῳ, namely, to the Christian church at Jerusalem. Nothing but that by which man comes to Christ and is justified before God, by which he enters into the communion of God’s grace and becomes a child of God, that is, nothing but faith in the redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις) that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24), makes man a member of the Christian Church. This is a Scriptural axiom: *Sola fides in Christum membra ecclesiae constituit*. Still shorter: *Christiani sunt ecclesia*.

Inevitably connected with the personal, Spirit-wrought faith in the remission of sins is, as its fruit and effect, the *unio mystica*, sanctification, "moral conduct," "the recasting of life in its God-pleasing form." Hence we find the members of the Church characterized as, for instance, in Psalm 15; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Pet. 2:5. But this does not depose faith as the constitutive factor. Luther remarks as to the relation of the *sola fide* in justification to the generation and preservation of the Church, that only this article "begets, nourishes, sustains, keeps, and defends the Church; and without it the Church of God could not subsist an hour" (*Opp. v. a. VII, 512; St. L. XIV:168*).

A question that has received much attention is the relation to the Christian Church of the manifestly wicked and hypocrites (*mali et hypocritae*) who are in outward communion with the Church. Scripture teaches: They do not belong to the Church, are not a part of the Church (*non sunt pars ecclesiae*), but have only outward fellowship with the Church (*ecclesiae admixti sunt secundum societatem externam*). None but those in whose hearts the Spirit has wrought faith in Christ are members of the Christian Church, as is evident from all Scripture texts which speak of an inner, spiritual communion of the members of the Church with God, with Christ, with the Holy Ghost. The members of the Church are called the house of God, οἶκος θεοῦ (1 Tim. 3:15); God's building, θεοῦ οἰκοδομή (1 Cor. 3:9); the temple of the living God, ναὸς θεοῦ (2 Cor. 6:16); the temple of the Holy Ghost, ναὸς τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος (1 Cor. 6:19); Christ's body and the fullness of Him, σῶμα Χριστοῦ, πλήρωμα Χριστοῦ (Eph. 1:23); the children of God, τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ (John 11:52). All unbelievers, be they Jews or Greeks, are not God's house, etc., but workshops of the devil, "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:1-3). To define the Church as the whole number of the elect, a definition for which Luther praises Huss,<sup>1</sup> likewise is Scriptural (1 Pet. 2:9: ὑμεῖς γένος ἐκλεκτόν).

This is the doctrine which with Scripture Luther and the Lutheran Church teach. Clearly pointing out that no outward communion with the Christians and no perfunctory use of the means of grace, but only personal faith in the Gospel makes one a member of the kingdom of heaven on earth, the Christian Church, Luther says: "Otherwise a man would be in the kingdom of heaven just as wood or stone when thrown

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<sup>1</sup> On Psalm 118, St. L. V:1234 f. Cp. Baier-Walther, III, 614: "Those whom God, according to His eternal decree, has endowed with faith and grace are collectively called the Church." Likewise (*ibid.*) Aeg. Hunnius, *Volum. th. disp.*, Witteb., 1598, p. 329.

*Eschatology, or the Last Things*

(DE ESCHATOLOGIA)



THIS section presents: (1) Temporal Death, (2) the State of the Souls Between Temporal Death and the Resurrection, (3) the Second Advent of Christ, (4) the Resurrection of the Dead, (5) the Final Judgment, (6) the End of the World, (7) Eternal Damnation, (8) Eternal Life.

## 1

### *Temporal Death*

(De morte temporali)

*Its Nature.* — Scripture teaches that physical death<sup>1</sup> is not annihilation, but the separation of the soul from the body.<sup>2</sup> The death of the rich man whose ground had brought forth plentifully is described in this way: “This night thy soul shall be required of thee [τὴν ψυχὴν σου ἀπαιτοῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ],” Luke 12:20. Likewise of the dying Christ’s suffering a real death, it is stated: ἀφῆκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (Matt. 27:50) and παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα (John 19:30). Quenstedt: “The nature of death is the loosening, and local [τοπικὴ *seu localis*] separation, of the soul from the body” (*Syst.* II, 1701).<sup>3</sup>

*Its Cause.* — Death is not due, as both heathen<sup>4</sup> and some professed Christians<sup>5</sup> asserted, to the constitution of human nature. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments know of no cause of death but sin. When God warns (Gen. 2:17): “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” and after the Fall pronounces

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of spiritual, temporal, and eternal death, see Vol. I, 535 f.

<sup>2</sup> Gerhard, *Loci*, “*De morte*,” § 54: “Neither the soul nor the body of man is annihilated in death. Not the soul, because it subsists immortally (Matt. 10:28) when separated from the body. Not the body, because, when dormant in the sleep of death, it rests in the dust of the earth, expecting its resuscitation on the Last Day (John 5:28).”

<sup>3</sup> *Localis* Quenstedt explains by adding: “Since the soul really parts from the body and no longer stays in it, it leaves the latter both as to its presence and as to its instruction.”

<sup>4</sup> Seneca: “That you die is the nature of man, not punishment.” In Gerhard, *loc. cit.*, § 27. The extensive antithesis, § 38.

<sup>5</sup> The Pelagians, Hoenecke, *Dogm.*, II, 461. The old and the modern Unitarians, *Catech. Racov.*, s. 2, c. 1, qu. 2—6. Modern theologians: Nitzsch-Stephan, *Ev. Dogm.*, p. 358; Kirn, *Ev. Dogm.*, p. 92. Cf. the full antithesis in Gerhard, *op. cit.*, § 39.

the verdict (Gen. 3:17 ff.): "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife . . . unto dust shalt thou return," He plainly declares that death does not inhere in the nature of man as originally constituted, but came into the world only as a consequence of the transgression of the divine commandment. In the same way the New Testament speaks of the cause of death. Rom. 5:12: "Death by sin," διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, and Rom. 6:23: "The wages of sin is death," τὰ ὀψώνια τῆς ἁμαρτίας θάνατος. The idea that death prevailed even prior to sin, but after the Fall was connected with sin as its judgment (and thus was given a special meaning),<sup>6</sup> has no Biblical warrant. Scripture knows of no death except the one that is the divine judgment on sin.

All other causes of death mentioned in Scripture are such only because and in consequence of sin. God Himself is the cause of death inasmuch as He, as the righteous Judge, according to His retributive justice (*iustitia vindicativa*), inflicts death on the sinner as a punitive evil (*malum poenae*). Ps. 90:7-8: "We are consumed by Thine anger. . . . Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee." The devil is a cause of death — he is called a "murderer" of men, ἀνθρωποκτόνος (John 8:44) — inasmuch as he seduced man to sin. Also Adam, the first man, is expressly called the cause of death (Rom. 5:15): "Through the offense of one many be dead," τῷ τοῦ ἑνὸς παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον. But "the many" died through Adam's sin because his sin was imputed to the many and thus transmitted to posterity. Disease, old age, fire, water, war, etc., come into consideration only as intermediate causes of death. Behind these, as the ultimate and proper cause, lies the fact that sin has come into the world and all men have become sinners. Scripture expressly ascribes to sin the fact that men die after seventy or eighty years, are killed in accidents, in war, etc. From Psalm 90 we see that it is not the number of years that cause death, for not only the deaths we call untimely, but also those at seventy or eighty are attributed to the anger of God provoked by the sin of man. And speaking of the death of the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell and of the Galilaeans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, Christ exclaims: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5), thereby declaring the accidental death of some men the consequence of the wrath of God at the sins of all men.

To bolster their notion that death would have been man's lot

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<sup>6</sup> Thus Kirn, *Dogm.*, p. 92 f.; Nitzsch-Stephan, *Dogm.*, p. 357 f.