

## [PART SECOND.]

Thorough, Pure, Correct, and Final [Solid, Plain, and Clear]

# REPETITION AND DECLARATION

## of Some Articles of the Augsburg Confession

concerning which, for Some Time, there has been Controversy among Some Theologians who Subscribe Thereto, Decided and Settled according to the Analogy of God's Word and the Summary Contents of Our Christian Doctrine.

1] When, by the special grace and mercy of the Almighty, the doctrine concerning the chief articles of our Christian religion (which under the Papacy had been horribly obscured by human teachings and ordinances) had been explained and purified again from [in accordance with the direction and analogy of] God's Word by Dr. Luther, of blessed and holy memory, and the papistic errors, abuses, and idolatries had been rebuked; 2] and **this pure reformation was nevertheless regarded by its opponents as [introducing] a new doctrine** and was violently (though without foundation) charged with being entirely contrary to God's Word and the Christian ordinances, and, in addition, was loaded with [almost endless] unsupportable calumnies and accusations, 3] the Christian [the most illustrious and in religious piety most prominent] Electors and Princes, and the Estates [of the Empire] which at that time had embraced the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel and had their churches reformed in a Christian manner according to God's Word, had a Christian Confession prepared from God's Word at the great Diet of Augsburg in the year 1530 and delivered it to the Emperor Charles V. In this **they clearly and plainly made their Christian confession as to what was being held and taught in the Christian evangelical churches concerning the chief articles, especially those in controversy between them and the Papists;** and although this Confession was received with disfavor by their opponents, still, thank God, it remains to this day unrefuted and unoverthrown.

This pure reformation teaching was NOT a new doctrine.

4] **To this Christian [pious] Augsburg Confession, so thoroughly grounded in God's Word, we herewith pledge ourselves again [publicly and solemnly] from our inmost hearts; we abide by its simple, clear, and unadulterated meaning as the words convey it, and regard the said Confession as a pure Christian symbol, with which at the present time true Christians ought to be found next to [which pious hearts ought to receive next to the matchless authority of] God's Word;** just as in former times concerning certain great controversies that had arisen in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were proposed, to which the pure teachers and hearers at that time pledged themselves with heart and mouth. 5] **We intend also, by the grace of the Almighty, faithfully to abide until our end by [the doctrine of] this Christian Confession, mentioned several times, as it was delivered in the year 1530 to the Emperor Charles V; and it is our purpose, neither in this nor in any other writing, to recede in the least from that oft-cited Confession, nor to propose another or new confession.**

We intend faithfully to abide until our end by the Augsburg Confession of 1530.

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6] Now, although the Christian doctrine of this Confession has in great part remained unchallenged (save what has been done by the Papists), yet it cannot be denied **that some theologians have departed from some great [principal] and important articles of the said Confession, and either have not attained to their true meaning, or at any rate have not continued steadfastly therein, and occasionally [some] have even undertaken to attach to it a foreign meaning, while at the same time they wished to be regarded as adherents of [they professed to embrace] the Augsburg Confession, and to avail themselves and make their boast of it [for a pretext].** 7] From this,

**grievous and injurious dissensions have arisen** in the pure evangelical churches; just as even during the lives of the holy apostles among those who wished to be called Christians, and boasted of Christ's doctrine,

horrible errors arose likewise. For some sought to be justified and saved by the works of the Law, Acts 15, 1–29, others denied the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor. 15, 12, and still others did not believe that Christ was true and eternal God. Against these the holy apostles had to inveigh strenuously in their sermons and writings, although [they were well aware that] also at that time such fundamental errors and severe controversies could not occur without offense both to unbelievers and to those weak in the faith. 8] **In a similar manner at present our opponents, the Papists, rejoice at the dissensions that have arisen among us,** in the unchristian and vain hope that these discords might finally cause the suppression of the pure doctrine, while **those who are weak in faith are [greatly] offended [and disturbed], and some of them doubt whether, amid such dissensions, the pure doctrine is with us, and others do not know with whom to side with respect to the articles in controversy.** 9] For the controversies which have occurred are not, as some would regard them, mere misunderstandings or disputes concerning words [as are apt to occur], one side not having sufficiently grasped the meaning of the other, and the difficulty lying thus in a few words which are not of great moment; but here the subjects of controversy are important and great, and of such a nature that the opinion of the party in error cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused or defended.

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

**Some Reformed Theologians among us  
causing  
grievous and injurious dissensions**

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B. Some have even undertaken to attach to it a foreign meaning, while at the same time they wished to be regarded as adherents of the Augsburg Confession, and to avail themselves and make their boast of it [for a pretext].

## OF THE COMPREHENSIVE SUMMARY, FOUNDATION, RULE, AND STANDARD

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

1] Since for thorough, permanent unity in the Church it is, above all things, necessary that we have a **comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form wherein is brought together from God's Word the common doctrine, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion confess, just as the ancient Church always had for this use its fixed symbols;** 2] moreover, since this [comprehensive form of doctrine] should **not be based on private writings**, but on such books as have been composed, approved, and received in the name of the churches which pledge themselves to one doctrine and religion, we have declared to one another with heart and mouth that we will not make or receive a separate or new confession of our faith, but confess **the public common writings** which always and everywhere were held and used as such **symbols or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession** before the dissensions arose among those who accept the Augsburg Confession, and as long as in all articles there was on all sides a unanimous adherence to [and maintenance and use of] the pure doctrine of the divine Word, as the sainted Dr. Luther explained it.

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

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

5] 3. In the third place, since in these last times God, out of especial grace, has brought the truth of His Word to light again from the darkness of the Papacy **through the faithful service of the precious man of God, Dr. Luther**, and since this doctrine has been collected from, and according to, God's Word into the articles and chapters of **the Augsburg Confession** against the corruptions of the Papacy and also of other sects, we confess also **the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession** as our symbol for this time, not because it was composed by our theologians, but **because it has been taken from God's Word** and is founded firmly and well therein, precisely in the form in which it was committed to writing, in the year 1530, and presented to the Emperor Charles V at Augsburg by some Christian Electors, Princes, and Estates of the Roman Empire as a common

The common doctrine in the church is not based on private writings, but on the public common writings which always and everywhere were held and used as such **symbols or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession.**

1. The Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
2. The three Ecumenical Creeds
3. The First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession, 4. An extensive Apology (1531), 5. The Smalcald Articles, 6. The Small and the Large Catechisms of Dr. Luther
4. Other good, useful, pure books, expositions of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, explanations of doctrinal articles

confession of the reformed churches, whereby our reformed churches are distinguished from the Papists and other repudiated and condemned sects and heresies, after the custom and usage of the early Church, whereby succeeding councils, Christian bishops and teachers appealed to the Nicene Creed, and confessed it [publicly declared that they embraced it].

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

7] 5. In the fifth place, we also confess **the Articles composed, approved, and received at Smalcald** in the large assembly of theologians, in the year 1537, as they were first framed and printed in order to be delivered in the council at Mantua, or wherever it would be held, in the name of the Estates, Electors, and Princes, as an explanation of the above-mentioned Augsburg Confession, wherein by God's grace they were resolved to abide. In them the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession is repeated, and some articles are explained at greater length from God's Word, and, besides, the cause and grounds are indicated, as far as necessary, why we have abandoned the papistical errors and idolatries, and can have no fellowship with them, and also why we know, and can think of, no way for coming to any agreement with the Pope concerning them.

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

9] In the pure churches and schools these public common writings have been always regarded as **the sum and model of the doctrine** which Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, has admirably deduced from God's Word, and firmly established against the Papacy and other sects; and to his full explanations in his doctrinal and polemical writings we wish to appeal, in the manner and as far as Dr. Luther himself in the Latin preface to his published works has given necessary and Christian admonition concerning his writings, and has expressly drawn this distinction namely, that the Word of God alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine, to which the writings of no man should be regarded as equal, but to which everything should be subjected.

10] **But [this is not to be understood as if] hereby other good, useful, pure books, expositions of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, explanations of doctrinal articles, are not rejected;** for as far as they are consistent with the above-mentioned type of doctrine, these are regarded as useful expositions and explanations, and can be used with advantage. But what has thus far been said concerning the summary of our Christian doctrine is intended to mean only this, that we should have a unanimously accepted, definite, common form of doctrine,

which all our evangelical churches together and in common confess, from and according to which, because it has been derived from God’s Word, all other writings should be judged and adjusted as to how far they are to be approved and accepted.

**11]** For that we embodied the above-mentioned writing, namely, *the Augsburg Confession, Apology, Smalcald Articles, Luther’s Large and Small Catechisms*, in the oft-mentioned Sum of our Christian doctrine, was done for the reason that these have always and everywhere been regarded as the common, unanimously accepted meaning of our churches, and, moreover, have been subscribed at that time by the chief and most enlightened theologians, and

The Unaltered Augsburg Confession (1530), the Apology (1531), the Smalcald Articles, and the Small and the Large Catechisms, all were written and sent forth BEFORE the divisions occurred.

have held sway in all evangelical churches and schools. **12]** So also, as before mentioned, they were all written and sent forth **before the divisions among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession arose**; therefore, since they are held to be impartial, and neither can nor should be rejected by either part of those who have entered into controversy, and no one who without guile is an adherent of the Augsburg Confession will complain of these writings, but will cheerfully accept and tolerate them as witnesses [of the truth], no one can think ill of [blame] us that we derive from them an explanation and decision of the articles in controversy, **13]** and that, as we lay down God’s Word, the eternal truth, as the foundation, so we introduce and quote also these writings as a witness of the truth and as the unanimously received correct understanding of our predecessors who have steadfastly held to the pure doctrine.

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

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

**STATUS CONTROVERSIAE. The Principal Question in This Controversy.**

**AFFIRMATIVA. The Pure Doctrine concerning This Article, according to God’s Word.**

“We believe, teach, and confess ...”

**NEGATIVA. Contrary False Doctrine.**

“We reject and condemn...”

**15]** Therefore we have thoroughly and clearly declared ourselves to one another, also regarding these matters, as follows: **that a distinction should and must by all means be observed between unnecessary and useless wrangling, on the one hand, whereby the Church ought not to be disturbed, since it destroys more than it builds up, and necessary controversy, on the other hand, as, when such a controversy occurs as involves the articles of faith or the chief heads of the Christian doctrine, where for the defense of the truth the false opposite doctrine must be reproved.**

**Distinction**

- 1. unnecessary and useless wrangling**
- 2. disagreements on articles of faith**

**16]** Now, although the aforesaid writings afford the Christian reader, who delights in and has a love for the divine truth, clear and correct information concerning each and every controverted article of

our Christian religion, as to what he should regard and receive as right and true according to God's Word of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures, and what he should reject, shun, and avoid as false and wrong; yet, in order that the truth may be preserved the more distinctly and clearly, and be distinguished from all errors, and that nothing be hidden and concealed under ordinary terms [rather general words and phrases], we have clearly and expressly declared ourselves to one another concerning the chief and most important articles taken one by one, **which at the present time have come into controversy**, so that there might be a, public, definite testimony, not only for those now living, but also for our posterity, what is and should remain the unanimous understanding and judgment [decision] of our churches in reference to the articles in controversy, namely:

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

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

<p><b>We reject and condemn</b> <b>1. all heresies and errors which were rejected and condemned in the primitive, ancient, orthodox Church,</b> <b>2. all sects and heresies which are rejected in our confessional writings (Augsburg Confession, etc.)</b></p>
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**19]** 3. Thirdly, since within thirty years **some divisions arose among some theologians of the Augsburg Confession** on account of the *Interim* and otherwise, it has been our purpose to state and declare plainly [categorically], purely, and clearly our faith and confession concerning each and every one of these in thesis and antithesis, *i. e.*, the true doctrine and its opposite, in order that the foundation of divine truth might be manifest in all articles, and **that all unlawful, doubtful, auspicious, and condemned doctrines, wherever and in whatever books they may be found, and whoever may have written them, or even now may be disposed to defend them, might be exposed [distinctly repudiated], 20]** so that every one may be **faithfully warned against the errors, which are spread here and there in the writings of some theologians, and no one be misled in this matter by the reputation [authority] of any man.** From this declaration the Christian reader will inform himself in every emergency, and compare it with the writings enumerated above, and he will find out exactly that what was confessed in the beginning concerning each article in the comprehensive summary of our religion and faith, and what was afterward restated at various times, and is repeated by us in this document, is in no way contradictory, but the simple, immutable, permanent truth, and that we, therefore, do not change from one doctrine to another, as our adversaries falsely assert, but earnestly desire to be found loyal to the once delivered Augsburg Confession and its unanimously accepted Christian sense, and through God's grace to abide thereby firmly and constantly in opposition to all corruptions which have entered.

The Interim
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