

## FC Ep IX. OF THE DESCENT OF CHRIST TO HELL.

### STATUS CONTROVERSIAE. Chief Controversy concerning This Article.

1] It has also been disputed among some theologians who have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession concerning this article: When and in what manner the Lord Christ, according to our simple Christian faith, descended to hell: whether this was done before or after His death; also, whether it occurred according to the soul alone, or according to the divinity alone, or with body and soul, spiritually or bodily; also, whether this article belongs to the passion or to the glorious victory and triumph of Christ.

2] But since this article, as also the preceding, cannot be comprehended by the senses or by our reason, but must be grasped by faith alone, it is our unanimous opinion that there should be no disputation concerning it, but that it should be believed 3] and taught only in the simplest manner; according as Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, in his sermon at Torgau in the year 1533 has explained this article in an altogether Christian manner, separated from it all useless, unnecessary questions, and admonished all godly Christians to Christian simplicity of faith.

4] **For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell.** But how this occurred we should [not curiously investigate, but] reserve until the other world, where not only this point [mystery], but also still others will be revealed, which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason.

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1] And since even in the ancient Christian teachers of the Church, as well as in some among our teachers, dissimilar explanations of the article concerning the descent of Christ to hell are found, we abide in like manner by the simplicity of our Christian faith [comprised in the Creed], to which Dr. Luther in his sermon, which was delivered in the castle at Torgau in the year 1533, concerning the descent of Christ to hell, has pointed us, where we confess: *I believe in the Lord Christ, God's Son, our Lord, dead, buried, and descended into hell.* For in this [Confession] the burial and descent of Christ to hell are distinguished as different articles; **2] and we simply believe that the entire person, God and man, after the burial descended into hell, conquered the devil, destroyed the power of hell, and took from the devil all his might.** 3] We should not, however, trouble ourselves with high and acute thoughts as to how this occurred; for with our reason and our five senses this article can be comprehended as little as the preceding one, how Christ is placed at the right hand of the almighty power and majesty of God; but we are simply to believe it and adhere to the Word [in such mysteries of faith]. Thus we retain the substance [sound doctrine] and [true] consolation that **neither hell nor the devil can take captive or injure us and all who believe in Christ.**

1 Peter 3:18-19 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

Colossians 2:14-15 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Psalms 16:10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.