

THE REFORMATION CHURCH (1500–1648) (Cont'd)

Lecture 1

Topic Martin Luther (part 2)

Due: Book Review paper on one of the books on the rise of Christian anti-Semitism.

Lecture 2

Topic: The Schmalkaldic League and the Magdeburg Confession

Due: Gonzalez, 2.105–113

End of 9.1; 9.2

5. The conflict with the Church and State.

—The papal bull “*Exsurge Domine*” (“Rise up, O Lord, for a wild boar has invaded your vineyard.”), 15 June 1520

“Leo Bishop, servant of the servants of God, to eternal memory.

Arise, O Lord, and judge thy cause. Be mindful of the daily slander against thee by the foolishly, incline thine ear to our supplication. Foxes have arisen which want to devastate thy vineyard, where thou has worked the winepress. At thy ascension into heaven thou has commanded the care, rule and administration of this vineyard to Peter as head and to thy representatives, his successors, as the Church triumphant. A roaring sow of the woods has undertaken to destroy this vineyard, a wild beast wants to devour it. . . . We prohibit this Martin from now on and henceforth to contrive any preaching or the office of preaching.”

Luther had sixty days to recant or be excommunicated. By the time Luther received it, around Oct 10, several months had gone by. On 10 December 1520 he burned it in a theatrical public ceremony. On 3 January, 1521 he was excommunicated. From then he was a heretic in the mind of the RC church. And whoever aided him would also be excommunicated.

—Three treatises of 1520:

To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation.

4,000 copies were initially printed, sold out in two weeks. A second edition quickly followed, eventually 10 editions in all.

He called upon the nobles and the people to take back their country.

“It is pure invention that pope, bishop, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy.”

Interpretation of Scripture.

“Since these Romanists think the Holy Spirit never leaves them, no matter how ignorant and wicked they are, they become bold and decree only what they want. And if what they claim were true, why have Holy Scripture at all? Of what use is Scripture? Let us burn the Scripture and be satisfied with the unlearned gentlemen at Rome who possess the Holy Spirit!...If I had not read the words with my own eyes, I would not have believed it possible for the devil to have made such stupid claims at Rome, and to have won supporters for them.”

The Babylonian Captivity of the Church.

Christians have been carried away from Scripture and subjected to the tyranny of the papacy.

The Freedom of a Christian.

The freedom the believer has in Christ, freedom from the burden of earning merit, working for salvation.

He argues for *sola fide*, that by faith alone apart from our own moral works, we are saved, it is faith in Jesus alone that guarantees our salvation.

—The Diet of Wörm (April, 1521) – Luther was summoned to appear before the new, young emperor, Charles V (He was elected in 1519 on the death of Maximilian I) by three archbishops and four secular sovereigns). When Maximilian died he ordered that his hair be shorn, body scourged, and his teeth broken so that he could appear before the Lord penitent (such was the understanding if salvation is his day!).

—His inquisitor was Johann von der Ecken, chancellor of the bishop of Trier. He asked: “Do you perhaps wish to defend all of your books?” “Do you alone possess wisdom, against so many centuries—against the Holy Church, against councils, decrees, laws, and ceremonies that our forefathers and everyone around us have upheld up to the present day?”

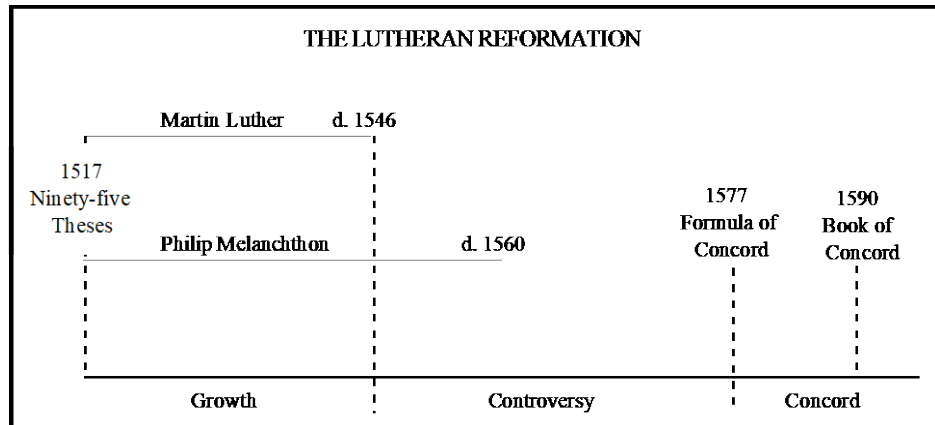
Luther replied: “Since your imperial Majesty and Lordships demand a simple answer I will do so without horns or teeth as follows: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the scriptures or clear reason, for I do not trust in the Pope or in the councils alone, since it is well known that they often err and contradict themselves, I am bound to the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand. God help me. Amen.”

—The Wartburg (1521–22).

On the way home, he was kidnapped by a group of knights sworn to protect him and taken to the almost inaccessible Wartburg Castle outside of Eisleben.

Here he would eventually decide to translate the New Testament which he did in eleven weeks. A translation that is highly regarded and still in use today.

6. The establishment of Lutheranism.



a) The disturbance in Wittenberg.

—In Luther’s absence Karlstadt assumed leadership of the Reformation.

Karlstadt was impatient and lacked the wisdom and patience of Luther, to give the people time to adjust to the new ideas. Karlstadt pushed for changes, such as in the Mass. But his reaction to the Roman view of legalism led him, in Luther’s opinion to another form of legalism, a protestant legalism. Luther was eventually forced to return to Wittenberg to resolve these problems as well as those of the Zwickau prophets. A number of years later, Karlstadt will return, humbled.

—Three “prophets” from Zwickau came to Wittenberg. Had new, direct “revelations” from God which superseded the Scripture, mystically achieve the righteousness of God, several steps were to be followed like climbing a ladder to God.

- Nicholas Storch
- Thomas Drechsel
- Thomas Stubner a former student of Melanchthon.

b) Luther's Return to Wittenberg (1522).

Luther's method of reform.

—Preach the Word of God.

—Do not force religious innovations.

c) The dispute with the Peasants: The Peasant's Revolt (1524-1525).

—The peasant's grievances (high taxes, no voice in religious matters, etc.).

—*Treatise on Secular Authority* (1523).

The state is the minister of God. Its task is to make laws, administer laws, punish lawlessness, maintain a just, stable society.

—*Exhortation to Peace* (April, 1525).

—A moderate work.

—Both parties were at fault.

—*Against the Murderous Thieving Mobs of Peasants* (May, 1525).

—An extremely harsh work. Luther himself called it the harsh book.

“If the peasant is in open rebellion, then he is outside the law of God, for rebellion is not simply murder, but it is like a great fire which attacks and lays waste a whole land. Thus, rebellion brings with it a land full of murders and bloodshed, makes widows and orphans, and turns everything upside down like a great disaster. Therefore, let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you don't strike him, he will strike you, and the whole land with you.”

d) The dispute with Erasmus (1525).

—*Dialogue on Free Will* - Erasmus.

“I like those who attribute some to free choice, but most to God.”

For Erasmus, salvation was a cooperative work. Man’s contribution to his own salvation was so significant that it is an excusable exaggeration to attribute salvation totally to God.

—*On the Bondage of the Will* - Luther.

“I praise and commend you highly for this also, that unlike all the rest *you alone have attacked the real issue*, the essence of the matter in dispute, and have not wearied me with irrelevancies about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles (for trifles they are rather than basic issues), with which almost everyone hither to has gone hunting for me without success. You and you alone have seen the question on which everything hinges, and have aimed at the vital spot; . . .”

Oberman described the differences between Luther and Erasmus this way (*Luther*, 216). “Erasmus pinned his hopes on the progress of time and the educated man, the best defender of the loftiest interests, whose innate, ineradicable striving for self-actualization is purified by God and then finds consummation in true piety. From Erasmus’ perspective Luther was impatience personified, a monk who would listen to no one, who had not learned from history and threatened the cause of piety and education by casting doubt on man’s moral disposition and perfectibility”.

- e) The marriage to Katrina von Bora (13 June 1525) (Bugenhagen and Jonas witnessed the consummation—the Catholic accusation was that Luther was a devil, therefore a-sexual. It was the normal German practice in those times to have witnesses to the consummation of the marital union. Following the consummation, the wedding would take place.)

“Next to God’s Word there is no more precious treasure than holy matrimony.”

The Luther’s had six children: Johannes or Hans (1526), Elizabeth (1527), Magdalena (1534), Martin (1529), Paul

(1533) and Margaret (1534). Elizabeth died in infancy; Magdalena or Lenchen at thirteen. In succession Luther wanted his sons to be a soldier, a scholar, and a peasant. He got a lawyer, a private citizen, and a doctor.

“It was only four hundred years ago that the priests of Germany were compelled by force to take the vows of celibacy” (*Augsburg Confession*, 23).

f) The tensions with Charles V.

—*Diet of Speyer* (1526) – The Emperor was not present, but called for this Diet, to enforce the Edict of Wörms. Lutheran princes stood firmly together seeking toleration. In defiance of the emperor they adopted the Recess of Speyer, calling for a council to address the theological issues facing Germany before any actions should take place.

The diet with the emperor facing a grave Islamic threat in the East, determined that each prince should order ecclesiastical affairs “in accord with his obligations to God and the emperor”.

—*Diet of Speyer* (1529) - Controlled by a Catholic majority which passed legislation to end toleration of Lutherans in Catholic territories. Six princes and fourteen cities “protested”, thus the term “Protestant.” In the 1530s, it came to simply mean anti-Catholic.

—The term “Evangelical” has evolved from the French term “evangelique” and the German “evangelisch,” words used in the early controversial writings of the reformers for their movement.

—*Diet of Augsburg* (1530). First time since Wörms that Charles V was present. He was determined to resolve the problem.

The princes set forth a summary of their faith, written by Melancthon and known as the Augsburg Confession

—The Schmalkaldic League (1531) was a military alliance. The Marburg Colloquy was an attempt to get the Swiss to join in. Its failure ended that hope.

g) The role of Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560).

—Melanchthon had a crucial role in Luther's understanding of grace after his coming to Wittenberg in 1518.

—In 1521 he wrote *Loci Communes (Common Places)* which became the first theology book of the Reformation.

—Melanchthon drew up the *Augsburg Confession*, later a defense of it (*Apology*).

The Bigamy of Philip of Hesse: On 10 December 1539. Luther advocated a second simultaneous marriage. Phillip claimed that Christina was sexually cold, smelly, and an alcoholic (she did have ten children to him, three after his second marriage). On March 4, 1540 Phillip married Margarethe von der Saale who had seven children to him. Christina was the daughter of Duke George of Saxony, brother of Frederick the Wise and a loyal Roman Catholic.

(9) *Of Jews and Their Lives* (1543). Luther advocated the burning of synagogues and Jewish books, expulsion also. In his last sermon (15 February 1546) he evidences a change of heart. He still held that they were enemies of Christ, but argued that we should demonstrate Christian love to them.

2. Luther's Thought.

a) Law and Gospel.

“I have often heard before that there is no better way to hand down and to maintain true doctrine than by following this method, that is, of dividing Christian doctrine into two parts, the law and the gospel.”

“Anyone who can properly distinguish the gospel from the law may thank God and know that he is a theologian.”

“Virtually the whole of the Scriptures and the understanding of the whole of theology depends upon the true understanding of the law and the gospel.”

“Paul desires that in Christianity both of these, the law and the gospel, should be clearly distinguished...don't confuse them! When that happens, you list one of the two, or even both; just as under the papacy no one knew what was the gospel as opposed to the

law; or what was the law as opposed to the gospel; for they had a faith which was only in the law..."

"The Law and the Gospel are two doctrines that are absolutely contrary. To place righteousness in the Law is, therefore, simply fighting against the Gospel. For the Law is an exactor, requiring of us that we should work and give; in a word, it wants to have (something) from us. But the Gospel exacts nothing of us; rather it gives freely and enjoins us to hold out our hands and to give, to take and to offer are opposites and cannot go on at the same time. For that which is given I take; but that which I give, I do not take; I offer it to another. If, then, the Gospel is a gift and offers a gift, it exacts nothing. Again, the Law gives nothing but exacts of us, indeed (it exacts) impossible things."

b) Reason vs. the gospel.

"The human heart does not understand, nor does it believe, that so great a treasure as the Holy Spirit is given simply for the hearing of faith, but it argues like this: 'It is a weighty matter—forgiveness of sins, deliverance from sin and death, the giving of the Holy Spirit, of righteousness and eternal life; therefore you must offer something of weight, if you would obtain those unutterable gifts.' This opinion the Devil approves and fosters in the heart. And so when reason hears: 'You can do nothing to obtain the remission of sins, but ought only to hear the Word of God', it immediately cries out: 'No! you make the forgiveness of sins too mean and contemptible.' So, it is the very magnitude of the gift which prevents our accepting it; and because so great a treasure is offered for nothing, it is despised."

"Here we are in a completely different world, outside of reason, where there is no arguing about what we ought to do, or by what kind of works we should earn grace and the forgiveness of sins. Here we are in divine theology, where we hear this Gospel, that Christ died for us, and that believing this we are accounted righteous, though sins nevertheless remain in us—and big ones at that" (cited in *Grace and Reason*, B. A. Gerrish, 90, 94.).

c) Scripture and gospel.

(1) Canon.

"All the genuine sacred books agree in this that all of them preach Christ and deal with Him. That is the true test by which to judge all books, when we see whether they deal with Christ or not, since all the Scriptures show us Christ,

and St. Paul will know nothing but Christ. What does not teach Christ is not apostolic even though St. Peter or Paul taught it; again, what preaches Christ would be apostolic even though Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod did it.”

(2) Inspiration.

“But everyone, indeed knows that at times they (the Fathers) have erred as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they prove their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred.”

“The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, written and lettered and formed in letters.”

“When you read the words of Holy Scripture, you must realize that God is speaking them.”

“Consequently, we must remain content with them and cling to them as the perfectly clear, certain, sure words of God, which can never deceive us or allow us to err.”

“The Bible is God’s Word written—presented in letters, as Christ is the eternal Word presented in human nature.”

d) Bondage of the Will.

“Next: when Christ says in John 6: ‘No man can come to me, except My Father which hath sent me draw him’ (v. 44), what does he leave to ‘free-will’? He says man needs to hear and learn of the Father Himself, and that all must be taught of God. Here, indeed, he declares, not only that the works and efforts of ‘free-will’ are unavailing, but that even the very word of the gospel (of which He is here speaking) is heard in vain, unless the Father Himself speaks within, and teaches, and draws. ‘No man, no man can come,’ he says, and what he is talking about is your ‘power whereby man can make some endeavor towards Christ’. In things that pertain to salvation, He asserts that power to be null.

“But the ungodly does not come, even when he hears the word, unless the Father draws and teaches him inwardly; which He does by shedding abroad His Spirit. When that happens, there follows a ‘drawing’ other than that which is outward; Christ is then displayed by the enlightening of the Spirit, and by it man is rapt to Christ with the sweetest rapture, he being passive while God speaks, teaches and draws, rather than seeking or running himself.”

Says J. I. Packer of the centrality of this doctrine (J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston, Introduction to *The Bondage of the Will*, by Martin Luther):

“Historically, it is a simple matter of fact that Martin Luther and John Calvin, and, for that matter, Ulrich Zwingli, Martin Bucer, and all the leading Protestant theologians of the first epoch of the Reformation, stood on precisely the same ground here. On other points, they had their differences; but in asserting the helplessness of man in sin, and the sovereignty of God in grace, they were entirely at one. To all of them, these doctrines were the very life-blood of the Christian faith. A modern editor of Luther’s great work underscores this fact: ‘Whoever puts this book down without having realized that evangelical theology stands or falls with the doctrine of the bondage of the will has read it in vain.’ The doctrine of free justification by faith only, which became the storm-centre of so much controversy during the Reformation period, is often regarded as the heart of the Reformer’s theology, but this is hardly accurate. The truth is that their thinking was really centered upon the contention of Paul, echoed with varying degrees of adequacy by Augustine, and Gottschalk, and Bradwardine, and Wycliffe, that the sinner’s entire salvation is by free and sovereign grace only.

‘Justification by faith only’ is a truth that needs interpretation. The principle of *sola fide* is not rightly understood till it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of *sola gratia*. What is the source and statue of faith? Is it the God-given means whereby the God-given justification is received, or is it a condition of justification which is left to man’s own contribution to salvation? Is our salvation wholly of God, or does it ultimately depend on something that we do for ourselves?

These things need to be pondered by Protestants today. With what right may we call ourselves children of the Reformation? Much modern Protestantism would be neither owned nor even recognized by the pioneer Reformers. *The Bondage of the Will* fairly sets before us what they believed about the salvation of the lost mankind. In the light of it, we are forced to ask whether Protestant Christendom has not tragically sold its birthright between Luther’s day and our own.”

e) The Sacraments and the gospel.

“The sacraments are not only signs among men, but signs of God’s

will towards us, so it is correct to define the New Testament sacraments as signs of grace. There are two parts to a sacrament, the sign and the Word. In the New Testament, the Word is the added promise of grace. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the forgiveness of sins, as the text says. ‘This is my body, which is given for you; this is the cup of the New Testament with my blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ Therefore the Word offers forgiveness of sins, while the ceremony is a sort of picture or “seal,” as Paul calls it (Rom. 4:11), showing forth the promise. As the promise is useless unless faith accepts it, so the ceremony is useless without the faith which really believes that the forgiveness of sins is being offered here. Such a faith encourages the contrite mind. As the Word was given to arouse this faith, so the sacrament was instituted to move the heart to believe through what it presents to the eyes. For the Holy Spirit works through the Word and the sacraments” (Melancton, *Apology for the Augsburg Confession*).

- (1) Baptism (Quotations from “Luther’s Large Catechism”, *Book of Concord*.)

*The purpose of baptism:

“The power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of baptism is to save” (439).

“To be saved. . . is nothing else than to be delivered from sin, death, and the devil and to enter the kingdom of Christ and live with him forever” (439).

*Why such an external ordinance is important:

“Whatever God effects in us he does through external ordinances such as baptism and the Gospel (which is an external, oral proclamation)” (440).

*Baptism - a work of God:

“Baptism is the work of God, not men” (437).

*Why baptism is effective:

“It is effective because God’s Word and commandment are added to the water” (438).

“It receives power through the Word” (440).

“The Word and the water must not be separated” (439).

(2) Baptism and faith:

“Baptism is not our work but God’s...God’s works, however, are salutary and necessary for salvation, and they do not exclude but rather demand faith, for without faith they could not be grasped” (441).

“Baptism is not a work which we do but is a treasure which God gives us and faith grasps” (441).

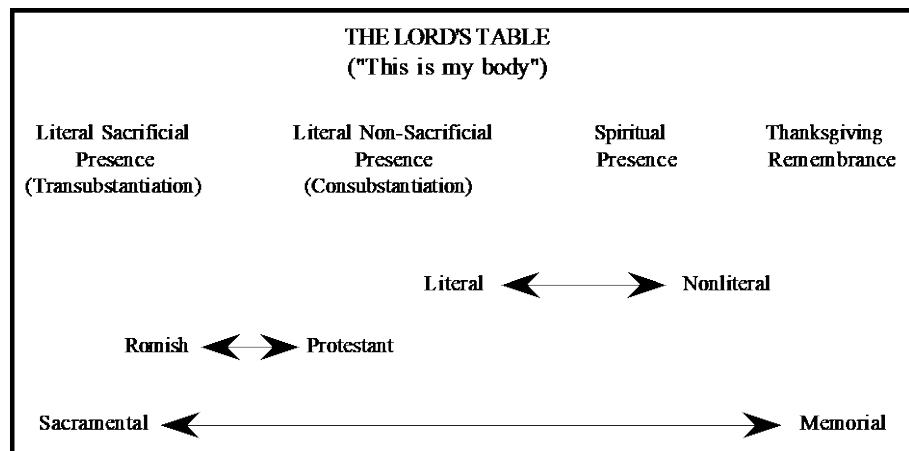
“Without faith baptism is of no use, although in itself it is an infinite, divine treasure” (440).

“To appreciate and use baptism aright, we must draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or conscience oppress us, and we must retort, ‘But I am baptized! And if I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life’” (442).

(3) Infant baptism:

“We bring the child with the purpose and hope that he may believe, and we pray God to grant him faith. But we do not baptize him on that account, but solely on the command of God” (444).

(4) Lord’s supper



“It is the true body and blood of the Lord (Jesus) Christ in and under the bread and wine” (447).

“The sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine” (447).

“It is bread and wine comprehended in God’s Word and connected with it” (447).

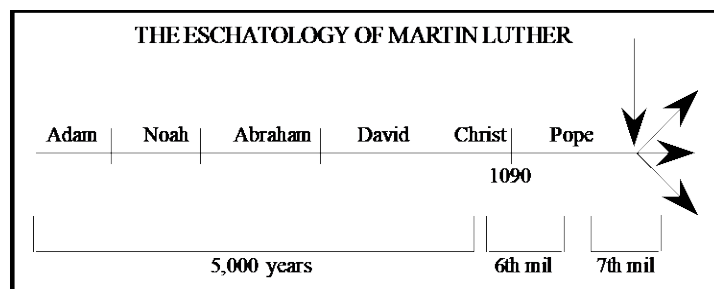
“It is the Word...which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine” (448).

“We go to the sacrament because we receive there a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins. Why? Because the words are there through which this is imparted!” (449)

“It is called the food of the soul since it nourishes and strengthens the new man....The Lord’s Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may refresh and strengthen itself” (449).

“What is given in and with the sacrament cannot be grasped and appropriated by the body. This is done by the faith of the heart which discerns and desires this treasure” (451).

(5) Eschatology



(6) Relationship of Church and State

3. The Development of Later Lutheran Orthodoxy.

- a) Luther’s death (1546), Melanchthon’s conciliatory spirit.

Luther died in Eisleben, 18 February 1546, in the presence of Justus Jonas, then pastor at Halle. He had said, “When I get home to Wittenberg again, I will lie down in my coffin and give the worms a fat doctor to feast on”.

- b) The controversies within Lutheran Orthodoxy.

(1) *the Antinomian controversy* (the use of the law)
The first phase of the controversy concerned whether we

should preach the law at all. Melancthon said yes. Agricola said no, because the gospel produces repentance.

The second phase concerned whether the law has any role in the life of the Christian. Some Lutheran teachers said “the best art of the Christian is to know nothing of the law.”

(2) *the Osiandrian controversy*

A controversy over the teachings of Andreas Osiander who taught that justification is something more than the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, something more than a declarative righteousness. It is the process of becoming righteous through our union with Christ. The emphasis is on Christ in us rather than Christ *for* us.

(3) *the Adiaphoristic controversy* (things indifferent).

A controversy concerning whether Roman ceremonies are to be regarded as indifferent things (*adiaphora*). Is it acceptable for a pastor to conform to Roman Catholic ceremonial rites if he continues to preach sound Christian doctrine?

(4) *the Majoristic controversy*

A controversy between Nicholas von Amsdorf and George Major over the role of good works in salvation.

Major wrote that “good works are necessary for salvation, since no one is saved by wicked works and no one without good works.”

Amsdorf responded that such a statement could only be defended by a “Pelagian, a Mameluke (Turk), and a denier of Christ.” He continued, “Good works are injurious to salvation.”

(5) *the Synergistic controversy*

A controversy concerning the issue of human cooperation in salvation. Is the will of man weakened by sin but still able to cooperate with grace? Is the will passive?

c) The settlement of the controversies.

- (1) *The Formula of Concord* (1577) - a statement drawn up in 1577 by a number of Lutheran theologians which became the definitive statement of Lutheran orthodoxy.

- (2) *The Book of Concord* (1580) - a work assembled in 1580 that contains the confessions recognized in the Lutheran churches. It includes the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Formula of Concord, and a number of other specifically Lutheran statements.