

2. Such merit and benefits of Christ are presented, offered, and distributed to us through His Word and Sacraments.

3. By His Holy Spirit, through the Word, when it is preached, heard, and pondered, Christ will be effective and active in us, will convert hearts to true repentance and preserve them in the true faith.

4. The Spirit will justify all those who in true repentance receive Christ by a true faith. He will receive them into grace, the adoption of sons, and the inheritance of eternal life.

5. He will also sanctify in love those who are justified, as St. Paul says (Ephesians 1:4).

6. He also will protect them in their great weakness against the devil, the world, and the flesh. He will rule and lead them in His ways [Deuteronomy 8:6], raise them again when they stumble [Proverbs 4:11–12], comfort them under the cross and in temptation [2 Corinthians 1:3–5], and preserve them for life eternal [John 12:25].

21 7. He will also strengthen, increase, and support to the end the good work that He has begun in them [Philippians 1:6], if they cling to God's Word, pray diligently, abide in God's goodness, and faithfully use the gifts they received [Matthew 25:14–30].

22 8. Finally, He will eternally save and glorify in life eternal those whom He has elected, called, and justified.

Furthermore, we read the following in the *Smalcald Articles* (Repentance):

In Christians, this repentance continues until death. For through one's entire life, repentance contends with the sin remaining in the flesh. Paul testifies that he wars with the law in his members not by his own powers, but by the gift of the Holy Spirit that follows the forgiveness of sins. This gift daily cleanses and sweeps out the remaining sins and works to make a person truly pure and holy.

These words say nothing at all about our will, or that even in regenerate people our will does anything by itself. But they credit this work to the gift of the Holy Spirit, who cleanses a person and makes him daily more godly and holy. Our own powers are entirely excluded from this work.

In Dr. Luther's *Large Catechism*, this is written:

I am also a part and member of this same group, a sharer and joint owner of all the goods it possesses. I am brought to it and incorporated into it by the Holy Spirit through having heard and continuing to hear God's Word, which is the beginning of entering it. In the past, before we had attained to this, we were altogether of the devil, knowing nothing about God and about Christ. So, until the Last Day, the Holy Spirit abides with the holy congregation or Christendom. Through this congregation He brings us to Christ and He teaches and preaches to us the Word. By the Word He works and promotes sanctification, causing this congregation daily to grow and to become strong in the faith and its fruit, which He produces.

Christ's Spirit must not only comfort, but also through the office of the Law "convict the world concerning sin." In the New

Testament, as the prophet says, He must do the work of another (reprove), in order that He may afterward do His own work, which is to comfort and to preach grace. To this end the Spirit was obtained for us through Christ and sent. For this reason He is also called the Comforter, as Dr. Luther has explained in his comments on the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, in the following words:

Anything that preaches about our sins and God's wrath (let it be done however or whenever it will), that is all a preaching of the Law. Again, the Gospel is such a preaching as shows and gives nothing else than grace and forgiveness in Christ. Yet it is true and right that the apostles and preachers of the Gospel (as Christ Himself also did) confirm the preaching of the Law. They begin the Law with those who do not yet acknowledge their sins nor are terrified at God's wrath; as Jesus says, "When [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin ... because they do not believe in Me." Yes, what more forceful, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than the suffering and death of Christ, His Son? But as long as all this preaches God's wrath and terrifies people, it is not yet the preaching of the Gospel nor Christ's own preaching, but that of Moses and the Law against the impenitent. For the Gospel and Christ were never ordained and given for the purpose of terrifying and condemning, but for comforting and cheering those who are terrified and timid.

And again, Luther wrote:

Christ says, "[The Holy Spirit] will convict the world concerning sin," which cannot be done except through the explanation of the Law.

So, too, the *Smalcald Articles* say:

The New Testament keeps and urges the office of the Law, as St. Paul does when he says, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" ... But to this office of the Law, the New Testament immediately adds the consoling promise of grace through the Gospel.

The *Apology* says: "In the preaching of repentance, it is not enough to preach the Law, or the Word that convicts of sin.... The Gospel must be added. Therefore, the two doctrines belong together and should also be taught next to each other, but in a definite order and with a proper distinction. The Antinomians, or nomoclasts [destroyers of the Law], are justly condemned. They abolish the preaching of the Law from the Church and want sins to be rebuked, and repentance and sorrow to be taught, not from the Law, but from the Gospel.

If we want to think or speak correctly and usefully about eternal election, or the predestination or preordination of God's children to eternal life, we should make it our custom to avoid speculating about God's bare, secret, concealed, mysterious foreknowledge. Instead, we should think or speak about how God's counsel, purpose, and ordination in Christ Jesus—who is the true Book of Life—is revealed to us through the Word. In other words, the entire teaching about God's purpose, counsel, will, and ordination belongs to our redemption, call, justification, and salvation. They should be treated together the way Paul treats them and has explained this article (Romans 8:29–30; Ephesians 1:4–10) and as Christ treated it in the parable of Matthew 22:1–14; namely, that God in His purpose and counsel ordained the following:

1. The human race is truly redeemed and reconciled with God through Christ. By His faultless obedience, suffering, and death, Christ merited for us the righteousness that helps us before God and also merits eternal life.