

## The Apology to the Augsburg Confession: Articles XII. Repentance

### Article XII (V): Of Repentance.

1] In the Twelfth Article they approve of **the first part**, in which we set forth that such as have fallen after baptism may obtain remission of sins at whatever time, and as often as they are converted.

They condemn **the second part**, in which we say that the parts of repentance are **1. contrition and 2. faith** [a penitent, contrite heart, and faith, namely, that I receive the forgiveness of sins through Christ]. [Hear, now, what it is that the adversaries deny.]

Repentance 1. Contrition 2. Faith
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**They [without shame] deny that faith is the second part 2] of repentance.**

What are we to do here, O Charles, thou most invincible Emperor? The very voice of the Gospel is this, that by faith we obtain the remission of sins. [This word is not our word, but the voice and word of Jesus Christ, our Savior.] This voice of the Gospel these writers of the Confutation condemn. We, therefore, can in no way assent to the Confutation. We cannot condemn **the voice of the Gospel**, so salutary and abounding in consolation. What else is the denial that by faith we obtain remission of sins than to treat the blood and death of Christ with scorn?

3] We therefore beseech thee, O Charles, most invincible Emperor, patiently and diligently to hear and examine this most important subject, which contains the chief topic of the Gospel, and the true knowledge of Christ, and the true worship of God [these great, most exalted and important matters which concern our own souls and consciences, yea, also the entire faith of Christians, the entire Gospel, the knowledge of Christ, and what is highest and greatest, not only in this perishable, but also in the future life: the everlasting welfare or perdition of us all before God]. For all good men will ascertain that especially on this subject we have taught things that are true, godly, salutary, and necessary for the whole Church of Christ [things of the greatest significance to all pious hearts in the entire Christian Church, on which their whole salvation and welfare depends, and without instruction on which there can be or remain no ministry, no Christian Church]. They will ascertain from the writings of our theologians that very much light has been added to the Gospel, and many pernicious errors have been corrected, by which, through the opinions of the scholastics and canonists, the doctrine of repentance was previously covered.

4] Before we come to the defense of our position, we must say this first: **All good men of all ranks, and also of the theological rank, undoubtedly confess that before the writings of Luther appeared, the doctrine of repentance was very much confused.** 5] The books of the **Sententiaries** are extant, in which there are innumerable questions which no theologians were ever able to explain satisfactorily. The people were able neither to comprehend the sum of the matter, nor to see what things especially were required in repentance, where peace of conscience was to be sought for. 6] Let any one of the adversaries come forth and tell us when remission of sins takes place. O good God, what darkness there is!

Peter Lombard (d. 1160) is the author of the "Book of the Sentences." Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) wrote "The Summa Sententiarum." In the 12 <sup>th</sup> century "the Sentences" or <i>Summæ</i> , compendiums of theology, philosophy, and canon law were written. In the 13 <sup>th</sup> century, Scholasticism used the Sentences/Summae with dialectic to develop a system of philosophy which was used during the Middle Ages.
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**They doubt whether it is in attrition or in contrition that remission of sins occurs. And if it occurs on account of contrition, what need is there of absolution, what does the power of the keys effect, if sins have been already remitted?**

Attrition – out of fear  
Contrition – out of love

Here, indeed, they also labor much more, and wickedly detract from the power of the keys.

7] Some dream that by the power of the keys **guilt is not remitted, but that eternal punishments are changed into temporal.** Thus the most salutary power would be the ministry, not of life and the Spirit, but only of wrath and punishments.

Eternal punishments changed into temporal punishments

Others, namely, the more cautious, imagine that by **the power of the keys sins are remitted before the Church and not before God.** This also is a pernicious error. For if the power of the keys does not console us before God, what, then, will pacify the conscience?

Forgive before Church, not before God

8] Still more involved is what follows. They teach that **by contrition we merit grace.**

By contrition we merit grace

In reference to which, if any one should ask **why Saul and Judas** and similar persons, who were dreadfully contrite, did not obtain grace, **the answer was to be taken from faith and according to the Gospel,** that Judas did not believe, that he did not support himself by the Gospel and promise of Christ. For faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and of Peter. But **the adversaries take their answer from the Law,** that Judas did not love God, but feared the punishments. [Is not this teaching uncertain and improper things concerning repentance?]

Saul and Judas

1. Law Answer  
--Judas did not love God but feared the punishments
2. Gospel Answer  
--Judas did not believe in the Gospel promise

9] **When, however, will a terrified conscience,** especially in those serious, true, and great terrors which are described in the psalms and the prophets, and which those certainly taste who are truly converted, **be able to decide whether it fears God for His own sake [out of love it fears God, as its God], or is fleeing from eternal punishments?** [These people may not have experienced much of these anxieties, because they juggle words and make distinctions according to their dreams. But in the heart, when the test is applied, the matter turns out quite differently, and the conscience cannot be set at rest with paltry syllables and words.] These great emotions can be distinguished in letters and terms; they are not thus separated in fact, as these sweet sophists dream. Here we appeal to the judgments of all good and wise men [who also desire to know the truth]. They undoubtedly will confess that these discussions in the writings of the adversaries are very confused and intricate. And nevertheless the most important subject is at stake, **the chief topic of the Gospel, the remission of sins.**

This entire doctrine concerning these questions which we have reviewed, is, in the writings of the adversaries, full of errors and hypocrisy, and obscures the benefit of Christ, the power of the keys, and the righteousness of faith [to inexpressible injury of conscience].

**11]** These things occur in the first act. What when they come to *confession*? What a work there is in **the endless enumeration of sins**, which is nevertheless, in great part, devoted to those against human traditions! And in order that good minds may by this means be the more tortured, they falsely assert that this **12]** enumeration is of divine right. And while **they demand this enumeration under the pretext of divine right**, in the mean time **they speak coldly concerning absolution**, which is truly of divine right. They falsely assert that the Sacrament itself confers grace *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using it; no mention is made of faith apprehending the absolution and consoling the conscience. This is truly what is generally called ἀπιέναι πρὸ τῶν μυστηρίων, departing before the mysteries. [Such people are called genuine Jews.]

Roman “Enumeration of sins is by divine right

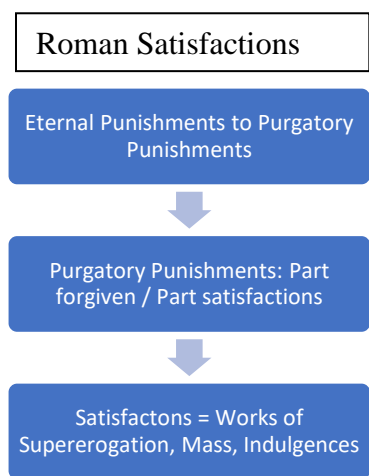
**13]** The third act [of this play] remains, *concerning satisfactions*. But this contains the most confused discussions. They imagine that

**A.** eternal punishments are commuted to the punishments of purgatory,

**B.** and teach that a part of these is remitted by the power of the keys,

**C.** and that a part is to be redeemed by means of **satisfactions**.

**D. 14]** They add further that satisfactions ought to be **works of supererogation**, and they make these consist of most foolish observances, such as pilgrimages, rosaries, or similar observances which **15]** do not have the command of God. Then, just as **they redeem purgatory by means of satisfactions**, so a scheme of redeeming satisfactions which was most abundant in revenue [which became quite a profitable, lucrative business and a grand fair] was devised. For they sell [without shame] **indulgences which they interpret as remissions of satisfactions**. And this revenue [this trafficking, this fair, conducted so shamelessly] is not only from the living, but is much more ample from the dead. Nor do **they redeem the satisfactions of the dead only by indulgences, but also by the sacrifice of the Mass. 16]** In a word, the subject of satisfactions is infinite. Among these scandals (for we cannot enumerate all things) and doctrines of devils lies buried the doctrine of the righteousness of faith in Christ and the benefit of Christ. Wherefore, all good men understand that the doctrine of the sophists and canonists concerning repentance has been censured for a useful and godly purpose.



**For the following dogmas are clearly false**, and foreign not only to Holy Scripture, but also to the Church Fathers:—

**17]** I. That from the divine covenant we merit grace by good works wrought without grace.

**18]** II. That by attrition we merit grace.

**19]** III. That for the blotting out of sin the mere detestation of the crime is sufficient.

**20]** IV. That on account of contrition, and not by faith in Christ, we obtain remission of sins.

**21]** V. That the power of the keys avails for the remission of sins, not before God, but before the Church.

22] VI. That by the power of the keys sins are not remitted before God, but that the power of the keys has been instituted to commute eternal to temporal punishments, to impose upon consciences certain satisfactions, to institute new acts of worship, and to obligate consciences to such satisfactions and acts of worship.

23] VII. That according to divine right the enumeration of offenses in confession, concerning which the adversaries teach, is necessary.

24] VIII. That canonical satisfactions are necessary for redeeming the punishment of purgatory, or they profit as a compensation for the blotting out of guilt. For thus uninformed persons understand it. [For, although in the schools satisfactions are made to apply only to the punishment, everybody thinks that remission of guilt is thereby merited.]

25] IX. That the reception of the sacrament of repentance *ex opere operato*, without a good disposition on the part of the one using it, *i.e.*, without faith in Christ, obtains grace.

26] X. That by the power of the keys our souls are freed from purgatory through indulgences.

27] XI. That in the reservation of cases not only canonical punishment, but the guilt also, ought to be reserved in reference to one who is truly converted.

28] In order, therefore, to deliver pious consciences from **these labyrinths of the sophists**, we have ascribed to

**repentance [or conversion] these two parts, namely, 1. contrition and 2. faith.** If any one desires to add a **third, namely, fruits worthy of repentance**, *i.e.*, a change of the entire life and character for the better [good works which shall and must follow conversion], **29]** we will not make any opposition. From contrition we separate those idle and infinite discussions, as to when we grieve from love of God, and when from fear of punishment. [For these are nothing but mere words and a useless babbling of persons who have never experienced the state of mind of a terrified conscience.]

Repentance 1. Contrition 2. Faith { 3. Fruits }
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But we say that **contrition is the true terror of conscience**, which feels that God is angry with sin, and which grieves that it has sinned. And this contrition takes place in this manner when sins are censured by the Word of God, because

<b>Contrition</b> = Terrors of conscience, when convicted by the Law
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**the sum of the preaching of the Gospel** is this, namely,

1. to convict of sin, and
2. to offer for Christ's sake the remission of sins and righteousness, and the Holy Ghost, and eternal life,
3. and that as regenerate men we should do good works.

The Sum of the Gospel (wide sense) 1. Law 2. Gospel (narrow sense)
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**30]** Thus Christ comprises **the sum of the Gospel** when He says in

Luke 24, 47: *That 1. repentance and 2. remission of sins should be preached in My name among all nations.*

**31]** And **of these terrors** Scripture speaks,

as Ps. 38, 4. 8: *For mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.... I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.*

And Ps. 6, 2. 3: *Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak; O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed; but Thou, O Lord, how long?*

And Is. 38, 10. 13: *I said in the cutting off of my days, I shalt go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years ... I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will He break all my bones.*

[Again, 10, 14: *Mine eyes fail with looking upward; O Lord, I am oppressed.*]

**32] In these terrors, conscience feels the wrath of God against sin**, which is unknown to secure men walking according to the flesh [as the sophists and their like]. It sees the turpitude of sin, and seriously grieves that it has sinned; meanwhile it also flees from the dreadful wrath of God, because human **33] nature**, unless sustained by the Word of God, cannot endure it. Thus Paul says, Gal. 2, 19: *I through the Law am dead to the Law.* **34] For the Law only accuses and terrifies consciences.** In these terrors our adversaries say nothing of faith; they present only the Word, which convicts of sin. When this is taught alone, it is the doctrine of the Law, not of the Gospel. By these griefs and terrors, they say, men merit grace, provided they love God. But how will men love God in true terrors when they feel the terrible and inexpressible wrath of God? What else than despair do those teach who, in these terrors, display only the Law?

**35] We therefore add as the second part of repentance, Of Faith in Christ**, that in these terrors the Gospel concerning Christ ought to be set forth to consciences, **in which Gospel the remission of sins is freely promised concerning Christ.**

2. Faith in Christ –  
Consciences are  
consoled by the Gospel

Therefore, they ought to believe that for Christ's sake **36] sins** are freely remitted to them. This faith cheers, sustains, and quickens the contrite, according to Rom. 5, 1: *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* This faith obtains the remission of sins. This faith justifies before God, as the same passage testifies: *Being justified by faith.* This faith shows the distinction between the contrition of Judas and Peter, of Saul and of David. The contrition of Judas or Saul is of no avail, for the reason that to this there is not added this faith, which apprehends the remission of sins, bestowed as a gift for Christ's sake. Accordingly, the contrition of David or Peter avails, because to it there is added faith, which apprehends the remission of sins granted for Christ's sake.

**37] Neither is love present before reconciliation has been made by faith.**

For without Christ the Law [God's Law or the First Commandment] is not performed, according to [Eph. 2, 18; 3, 12] Rom. 5, 2: *By Christ we have access to God.* And this faith grows gradually and throughout the entire life, struggles with sin [is tested by various temptations] in order to overcome sin and death. **38]**

Love  
follows  
Faith

But **love follows faith**, as we have said above. And thus **filial fear** can be clearly defined as such anxiety as has been connected with faith, *i.e.*, where faith consoles and sustains the anxious heart. It is **servile fear** when faith does not sustain the anxious heart [fear without faith, where there is nothing but wrath and doubt].

Filial Fear = Fear  
with faith  
Servile Fear = Fear  
without faith

**39] Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel.** Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation. **40]** And because God truly quickens through the Word, the keys truly remit sins before God [here on earth sins are truly canceled in such a manner that they are canceled also before God in heaven] according to Luke 10, 16: *He that heareth you heareth Me.* Wherefore the voice of the one

absolving **41]** must be believed not otherwise than we would believe a voice from heaven. And absolution [that blessed word of comfort] properly can be called a sacrament of repentance, as also the more learned scholastic theologians speak. **42]** Meanwhile **this faith is nourished in a manifold way in temptations, through the declarations of the Gospel [the hearing of sermons, reading] and the use of the Sacraments.** For these are [seals and] signs of [the covenant and grace in] the New Testament, *i.e.*, signs of [propitiation and] the remission of sins. They offer, therefore, the remission of sins, as the words of the Lord's Supper clearly testify,

Matt. 26, 26. 28: *This is My body, which is given for you. This is the cup of the New Testament, etc. Thus faith is conceived and strengthened through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel, through the use of the Sacraments,* so that it may not succumb while it struggles **43]** with the terrors of sin and death. This method of repentance is plain and clear, and increases the worth of the power of the keys and of the Sacraments, and illumines the benefit of Christ, and teaches us to avail ourselves of Christ as Mediator and Propitiator.

**44]** But as **the Confutation** condemns us for having assigned these two parts to repentance, we must show that [not we, but] **Scripture expresses these as the chief parts in repentance or conversion.** For Christ says, Matt. 11, 28:

1. *Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden,*

2. *and I will give you rest.* Here there are two members. The labor and the burden signify the contrition, anxiety, and terrors of sin and of death. To come to Christ is to believe that sins are remitted for Christ's sake; when we believe, our hearts are quickened by the Holy Ghost **45]** through the Word of Christ. Here, therefore, there are **these two chief parts, contrition and faith.**

And in Mark 1, 15 Christ says: 1. *Repent ye and* 2. *believe the Gospel,* where in the first member He convicts of sins; in the latter He consoles us, and shows the remission of sins. **For to believe the Gospel is not that general faith** which devils also have [is not only to believe the history of the Gospel], **but in the proper sense it is to believe that the remission of sins has been granted for Christ's sake.** For this is revealed in the Gospel. You see also here that the two parts are joined, contrition when sins are reprov'd, and faith, when it is said: *Believe the Gospel.* If any one should say here that Christ includes also the fruits of repentance or the entire new life, we shall not dissent. For this suffices us, that contrition and faith are named as the chief parts.

<p>General Faith vs. Saving Faith</p>
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**46]** Paul almost everywhere, when he describes conversion or renewal, designates these two parts, 1. *mortification and* 2. *quickening,* as in Col. 2, 11: *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, namely, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.* And afterward, 2, 12: *Wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God.* Here are two parts. [Of these two parts he speaks plainly Rom. 6, 2. 4. 11, that 1. *we are dead to sin,* which takes place by contrition and its terrors, and that 2. *we should rise again with Christ,* which takes place when by faith we again obtain consolation and life. And since faith is to bring consolation and peace into the conscience, according to Rom. 5, 1: *Being justified by faith, we have peace,* it follows that there is first terror and anxiety in the conscience. Thus contrition and faith go side by side.] 1. One is putting off the body of sins; 2. the other is the rising again through faith. Neither ought these words, mortification, quickening, putting off the body of sins, rising again, to be understood in a Platonic way, concerning a feigned change; **47]** but mortification signifies true terrors, such as those of the dying, which nature could not sustain unless it were supported by faith. So he names that as the putting off of the body of sins which

we ordinarily call contrition, because in these griefs the natural concupiscence is purged away. And quickening ought not to be understood as a Platonic fancy, but as consolation which truly sustains life that is escaping in contrition. Here, therefore, are **two parts: contrition and faith**. For as conscience cannot be pacified except by faith, therefore faith alone quickens, according to the declaration, Hab. 2, 4; Rom. 1, 17: *The just shall live by faith*.

**48]** And then in Col. 2, 14 it is said that *Christ blots out the handwriting which through the Law is against us*. Here also there are **two parts, 1. the handwriting and 2. the blotting out** of the handwriting. The handwriting, however, is conscience, convicting and condemning us. The Law, moreover, is the word which reproves and condemns sins. Therefore, this voice which says, *I have sinned against the Lord*, as David says, 2 Sam. 12, 13, is the handwriting. And wicked and secure men do not seriously give forth this voice. For they do not see, they do not read the sentence of the Law written in the heart. In true griefs and terrors this sentence is perceived. Therefore the handwriting which condemns us is contrition itself. To blot out the handwriting is to expunge this sentence by which we declare that we shall be condemned, and to engrave the sentence according to which we know that we have been freed from this condemnation. But faith is the new sentence, which reverses the former sentence, and gives peace and life to the heart.

**49]** However, what need is there to cite **many testimonies** since they are everywhere obvious in the Scriptures? Ps. 118, 18: *The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death*. Ps. 119, 28: *My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen Thou me according unto Thy word*. Here, in the first member, contrition is contained, and in the second the mode is clearly described how in contrition we are revived, namely, by the Word of God, which **50]** offers grace. This sustains and quickens hearts. And 1 Sam. 2, 6: *The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up*. By one of these, contrition is signified; **51]** by the other, faith is signified. And Is. 28, 21: *The Lord shall be wrath that He may do His work, His strange work, and bring to pass His act, His strange act*. He calls it the strange work of the Lord when He terrifies, because to quicken and console is God's own work. [Other works, as, to terrify and to kill, are not God's own works, for God only quickens.] But He terrifies, he says, for this reason, namely, that there may be a place for consolation and quickening, because hearts that are secure and do not feel the wrath of God loathe consolation. **52]** In this manner Scripture is accustomed to join these two, the terrors and the consolation, in order to teach that in repentance there are these chief members, contrition, and faith that consoles and justifies. Neither do we see how the nature of repentance can be presented more clearly and simply. [We know with certainty that God thus works in His Christians, in the Church.)

**53]** For the **two chief works of God in men** are these, **1.** to terrify, and **2.** to justify and quicken those who have been terrified.

God Works through Law and Gospel.
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Into these two works all Scripture has been distributed.

**The one part is the Law**, which shows, reproves, and condemns sins.

**The other part is the Gospel**, *i.e.*, the promise of grace bestowed in Christ, and this promise is constantly repeated in the whole of Scripture, first having been delivered to Adam [*I will put enmity*, etc., Gen. 3, 15], afterwards to the patriarchs; then, still more clearly proclaimed by the prophets; lastly, preached and set forth among the Jews by Christ, and disseminated over the entire world by the apostles. **54]** For all the saints were justified by faith in this promise, and not by their own attrition or contrition.

55] And the examples [how the saints became godly] show likewise **these two parts**. 1. After his sin Adam is reprov'd and becomes terrified; this was contrition. 2. Afterward God promises grace, and speaks of a future seed (the blessed seed, *i.e.*, Christ), by which the kingdom of the devil, death, and sin will be destroyed; there He offers the remission of sins. These are the chief things. For although the punishment is afterwards added, yet this punishment does not merit the remission of sin. And concerning this kind of punishment we shall speak after a while.

56] So David is reprov'd by Nathan, and, 1. terrified, he says, 2 Sam. 12, 13: *I have sinned against the Lord*. This is contrition. 2. Afterward he hears the absolution: *The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die*. This voice encourages David, and by faith sustains, justifies, and quickens him. **Here a punishment is also added**, but this punishment does not merit the remission of sins. 57] Nor are special punishments always added, but in repentance these two things ought always to exist, namely, **contrition and faith**, as Luke 7, 37. 38. The woman, who was a sinner, came to Christ weeping. 1. By these tears the contrition is recognized. 2. Afterward she hears the absolution: *Thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace*. This is the second part of repentance, namely, faith, which 58] encourages and consoles her. From all these it is apparent to godly readers that we assign to repentance those parts which properly belong to it in conversion, or regeneration, and the remission of sin. 3. **Worthy fruits and punishments [likewise, patience that we be willing to bear the cross, and punishments, which God lays upon the old Adam] follow regeneration and the remission of sin**. For this reason we have mentioned these two parts, in order that the faith which we require in repentance [of which the sophists and canonists have all been silent] might be the better seen. And what that faith is which the Gospel proclaims can be better understood when it is set over against contrition and mortification.

What about Punishments which follow forgiveness?

59] But as **the adversaries** expressly condemn our statement that men obtain the remission of sins by faith, we shall add a few proofs from which it will be understood that **the remission of sins is obtained not *ex opere operato* because of contrition, but by that special faith by which an individual believes that sins are remitted to him**. For this is the chief article concerning which we are contending with our adversaries, and the knowledge of which we regard especially necessary to all Christians. As, however, it appears that we have spoken sufficiently above concerning the same subject, we shall here be briefer. For very closely related are the topics of the doctrine of repentance and the doctrine of justification.

60] When **the adversaries** speak of faith, and say that it precedes repentance, they understand by faith, not that which justifies, but that which, in a general way, believes that God exists, that punishments have been threatened to the wicked [that there is a hell], etc. In addition to this faith we require that each one believe that his sins are remitted to him. Concerning **this special faith** we are disputing, and we oppose it to the opinion which bids us trust not in the promise of Christ, but in the *opus operatum* of contrition, confession, and satisfactions, etc. This faith follows terrors in such a manner as to overcome them, and render the conscience pacified. To this faith we ascribe justification and regeneration, inasmuch as it frees from terrors, and brings forth in the heart not only peace and joy, but also a new life. We maintain [with the help of God we shall defend to eternity and against all the gates of hell] that this faith is truly necessary for the remission of sins, and accordingly place it among the parts of repentance. Nor does the Church of Christ believe otherwise, although our adversaries [like mad dogs] contradict us.

Roman: Faith precedes repentance



61] Moreover, to begin with, we ask **the adversaries** whether to receive absolution is a part of repentance, or not. But if they separate it from confession, as they are subtle in making the distinction, **we do not see of what benefit confession is without absolution.** If, however, they do not separate the receiving of absolution from confession, it is necessary for them to hold that faith is a part of repentance, because absolution is not received except by faith. That absolution, however, is not received except by faith can be proved from Paul, who teaches, Rom. 4, 16, that the promise cannot be received *except by faith*. But absolution is the promise of the remission of sins [nothing else than the Gospel, the divine promise of God's grace and favor]. 62] Therefore, it necessarily requires faith. Neither do we see how he who does not assent to it may be said to receive absolution. And what else is the refusal to assent to absolution but charging God with falsehood? If the heart doubts, it regards those things which God promises as uncertain and of no account. Accordingly, in 1 John 5, 10 it is written: *He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son.*

Roman: Confession  
without Absolution

Roman Parts:  
1. Contrition  
2. Confession  
3. Satisfactions

63] **Secondly**, we think that the adversaries acknowledge that the remission of sins is either a part, or the end, or, to speak in their manner, the *terminus ad quem* of repentance. [For what does repentance help if the forgiveness of sins be not obtained?] Therefore that by which the remission of sins is received is correctly added to the parts [must certainly be the most prominent part] of repentance. It is very certain, however, that even though all the gates of hell contradict us, yet the remission of sins cannot be received except by faith alone, which believes that sins are remitted for Christ's sake, according to Rom. 3, 25: *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.* Likewise Rom. 5, 2: *By whom also we have access by faith unto* 64] *grace*, etc. For a terrified conscience cannot set against God's wrath our works or our love, but it is at length pacified when it apprehends Christ as Mediator, and believes the promises given for His sake. For those who dream that without faith in Christ hearts become pacified, do not understand what the remission of sins is, or how it came to us. 65] 1 Peter 2, 6, cites from Is. 49, 23, and 28, 16: *He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded.* It is necessary, therefore, that hypocrites be confounded, who are confident that they receive the remission of sins because of their own works, and not because of Christ. Peter also says in Acts 10, 43: *To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins.* What he says, through His name, could not be expressed more clearly, and he adds: *Whosoever believeth in Him.* **Thus, therefore, we receive the remission of sins only through the name of Christ, i.e., for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of any merits and works of our own.** And this occurs when we believe that sins are remitted to us for Christ's sake.

The Consensus  
of the Church

66] Our adversaries cry out that they are the Church, that they are following **the consensus of the Church** [what the Church catholic, universal, holds]. But Peter also here cites in our issue the consensus of the Church: *To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him, shall receive remission of sins*, etc. The consensus of the prophets is assuredly to be judged as the consensus of the Church universal. [I verily think that if all the holy prophets are unanimously agreed in a declaration (since God regards even a single prophet as an inestimable treasure), it would also be a decree, a declaration, and a unanimous strong conclusion of the universal, catholic, Christian, holy Church, and would be justly regarded as such.] **We concede neither to the Pope nor to the**

**Church the power to make decrees against this consensus of the prophets. 67]** But the bull of Leo openly condemns this article, *Of the Remission of Sins*, and the adversaries condemn it in the Confutation. From which it is apparent what sort of a Church we must judge that of these men to be, who not only by their decrees censure the doctrine that we obtain the remission of sins by faith, not on account of our works, but on account of Christ, but who also give the command by force and the sword to abolish it, and by every kind of cruelty [like bloodhounds] to put to death good men who thus believe.

**68]** But they have authors of a great name, Scotus, Gabriel, and the like, and passages of the Fathers which are cited in a mutilated form in the decrees. Certainly, if the testimonies are to be counted, they win. For there is a very great crowd of most trifling writers upon the *Sententiae*, who, as though they had conspired, defend these figments concerning the merit of attrition and of works, and other things which we have above recounted. [Aye, it is true, they are all called teachers and authors, but by their singing you can tell what sort of birds they are. These authors have taught nothing but philosophy, and have known nothing of Christ and the work of God; their books show this plainly.] **69]** But lest any one be moved by the multitude of citations, there is no great weight in the testimonies of the later writers, who did not originate their own writings, but only, by compiling from the writers before them, transferred these opinions from some books into others. They have exercised no judgment, but just like petty judges silently have approved the errors of their superiors, which they have not understood. Let us not, therefore, hesitate to oppose this utterance of Peter, which cites the consensus of the prophets, **70]** to ever so many legions of the *Sententiaries*. **71]** And to this utterance of Peter the testimony of the Holy Ghost is added. For the text speaks thus, Acts 10, 44: *While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which* **72]** *heard the Word*. Therefore, let pious consciences know that the command of God is this, that they believe that they are freely forgiven for Christ's sake, and not for the sake of our works. And by this command of God let them sustain themselves against despair, and **73]** against the terrors of sin and of death. And let them know that this belief has existed among saints from the beginning of the world. [Of this the idle sophists know little; and the blessed proclamation, the Gospel, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins through the blessed Seed, that is, Christ, has from the beginning of the world been the greatest consolation and treasure to all pious kings, all prophets, all believers. For they have believed in the same Christ in whom we believe; for from the beginning of the world no saint has been saved in any other way than through the faith of the same Gospel.] For Peter clearly cites the consensus of the prophets, and the writings of the apostles testify that they believe the same thing. **Nor are testimonies of the Fathers wanting.** For Bernard says the same thing in words that are in no way obscure: *For it is necessary first of all to believe that you cannot have remission of sins except by the indulgence of God, but add yet that you believe also this, namely, that through Him sins are forgiven thee. This is the testimony which the Holy Ghost asserts in your heart, saying: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." For thus the apostle judges that man is justified freely through faith.* **74]** **These words of Bernard** shed a wonderful light upon our cause, because he not only requires that we in a general way believe that sins are remitted through mercy, but he bids us add special faith, by which we believe that sins are remitted even to us; and he teaches how we may be rendered certain concerning the remission of sins, namely, when our hearts are encouraged by faith, and become tranquil through the Holy Ghost. What more do the adversaries require? [But how now, ye adversaries? Is St. Bernard also a heretic?] Do they still dare deny that by faith we obtain the remission of sins, or that faith is a part of repentance?

75] **Thirdly**, the adversaries say **that sin is remitted, because an attrite or contrite person elicits an act of love to God [if we undertake from reason to love God], and by this act merits to receive the remission of sins.** This is nothing but to teach the Law, the Gospel being blotted out, and the promise concerning Christ being abolished. For they require only the Law and our works, because the Law demands love. Besides, they teach us to be confident that we obtain remission of sins because of contrition and love. What else is this than to put confidence in our works, not in the Word and promise of God concerning Christ? But if the Law be sufficient for obtaining the remission of sins, what need is there of the Gospel? What need is there of Christ if we obtain remission of sins because of our own work? 76] **We, on the other hand, call consciences away from the Law to the Gospel, and from confidence in their own works to confidence in the promise and Christ, because the Gospel presents to us Christ, and promises freely the remission of sins for Christ's sake.** In this promise it bids us trust, namely, that for Christ's sake we are reconciled to the Father, and not for the sake of our own contrition or love. For there is no other Mediator or Propitiator than Christ. Neither can we do the works of the Law unless we have first been reconciled through Christ. And if we would do anything, yet we must believe that not for the sake of these works, but for the sake of Christ, as Mediator and Propitiator, we obtain the remission of sins.

<p>Attrition – sorrow for sins over fear of punishment          Contrition – sorrow for sins based on selfless love for God at offending Him.</p>
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77] Yea, it is a reproach to Christ and a repeal of the Gospel to believe that we obtain the remission of sins on account of the Law, or otherwise than by faith in Christ. This method also we have discussed above in the chapter Of Justification, where we declared why we confess that men are justified by faith, not by love. 78] **Therefore the doctrine of the adversaries, when they teach that by their own contrition and love men obtain the remission of sins, and trust in this contrition and love, is merely the doctrine of the Law,** and of that, too, as not understood [which they do not understand with respect to the kind of love towards God which it demands], just as the Jews looked upon the veiled face of Moses. For let us imagine that love is present, let us imagine that works are present, yet neither love nor works can be a propitiation for sin [or be of as much value as Christ]. And they cannot even be opposed to the wrath and judgment of God, according to Ps. 143, 2: *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* Neither ought the honor of Christ to be transferred to our works.

79] For these reasons Paul contends that we are not justified by the Law, and he opposes to the Law the promise of the remission of sins, which is granted for Christ's sake, and teaches that we freely receive the remission of sins for Christ's sake. Paul calls us away from the Law to this promise. Upon this promise he bids us look [and regard the Lord Christ our treasure], which certainly will be void if we are justified by the Law before we are justified through the promise, or if we obtain the remission of sins on account of our own righteousness. 80] **But it is evident that the promise was given us and Christ was tendered to us for the very reason that we cannot do the works of the Law.** Therefore it is necessary that we are reconciled by the promise before we do the works of the Law. The promise, however, is received only by faith. Therefore it is necessary for contrite persons to apprehend by faith the promise of the remission of sins granted for Christ's sake, and to be confident that freely for Christ's sake they have a reconciled Father. 81] This is the meaning of Paul, Rom. 4, 16, where he says: *Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure.* And Gal. 3, 22: *The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given them that*

*believe, i.e.,* all are under sin, neither can they be freed otherwise than by apprehending by faith the promise of the remission of sins. **82]** Therefore we must by faith accept the remission of sins before we do the works of the Law; although, as has been said above, love follows faith, because the regenerate receive the Holy Ghost, and accordingly begin [to become friendly to the Law and] to do the works of the Law.

**83]** We would cite more testimonies if they were not obvious to every godly reader in the Scriptures. And we do not wish to be too prolix, in order that **84]** this case may be the more readily seen through. Neither, indeed, is there any doubt that the meaning of Paul is what we are defending, namely, that by faith we receive the remission of sins for Christ's sake, that by faith we ought to oppose to God's wrath Christ as Mediator, and not our works. Neither let godly minds be disturbed, even though the adversaries find fault with the judgments of Paul. Nothing is said so simply that it cannot be distorted by caviling. **We know that what we have mentioned is the true and genuine meaning of Paul; we know that this our belief brings to godly consciences [in agony of death and temptation] sure comfort, without which no one can stand in God's judgment.**

**85]** Therefore let **these pharisaic opinions of the adversaries** be rejected, namely, that we do not receive by faith the remission of sins, but that it ought to be merited by our love and works; that we ought to oppose our love and our works to the wrath of God. Not of the Gospel, but of the Law is this doctrine, which feigns that man is justified by the Law before he has been reconciled through Christ to God, since Christ says, John 15, 5: *Without Me He can do nothing;* likewise: *I am the true Vine; ye are the branches.* **86]** But the adversaries feign that we are branches, not of Christ, but of Moses. For they wish to be justified by the Law, and to offer their love and works to God before they are reconciled to God through Christ, before they are branches of Christ. Paul, on the other hand [who is certainly a much greater teacher than the adversaries], contends that the Law cannot be observed without Christ. Accordingly, in order that we [those who truly feel and have experienced sin and anguish of conscience must cling to the promise of grace, in order that they] may be reconciled to God for Christ's sake, the promise must be received before we do the works of the Law. **87]** We think that these things are sufficiently clear to godly consciences. And hence they will understand why we have declared above that men are justified by faith, not by love, because we must oppose to God's wrath not our love or works (or trust in our love and works), but Christ as Mediator [for all our ability, all our deeds and works, are far too weak to remove and appease God's wrath]. And we must apprehend the promise of the remission of sins before we do the works of the Law.

**88]** **Lastly, when will conscience be pacified** if we receive remission of sins on the ground that we love, or that we do the works of the Law? For the Law will always accuse us, because we never satisfy God's Law. Just as Paul says, Rom. 4, 15: *The Law worketh wrath.* Chrysostom asks concerning repentance, Whence are we made sure that our sins are remitted us? The adversaries also, in their "Sentences," ask concerning the same subject. [The question, verily, is worth asking; blessed the man that returns the right answer.] **This cannot be explained, consciences cannot be made tranquil, unless they know that it is God's command and the very Gospel that they should be firmly confident that for Christ's sake sins are remitted freely, and that they should not doubt that these are remitted to them.** If any one doubts, he charges, as 1 John 5, 10 says, the divine promise with falsehood. We teach that this certainty of faith is required in the Gospel. The adversaries leave consciences uncertain and wavering. **89]** Consciences, however, do nothing from faith when they perpetually doubt whether they have remission. [For it is not possible that there should be rest, or a quiet and peaceful conscience, if

they doubt whether God be gracious. For if they doubt whether they have a gracious God, whether they are doing right, whether they have forgiveness of sins, how can, etc.] How can they in this doubt call upon God, how can they be confident that they are heard? Thus the entire life is without God [faith] and without the true worship of God. This is what Paul says, Rom. 14, 23: *Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* And because they are constantly occupied with this doubt, they never experience what faith [God or Christ] is. **Thus it comes to pass that they rush at last into despair [die in doubt, without God, without all knowledge of God]. Such is the doctrine of the adversaries, the doctrine of the Law, the annulling of the Gospel, the doctrine of despair.** [Whereby Christ is suppressed, men are led into overwhelming sorrow and torture of conscience, and finally, when temptation comes, into despair. Let His Imperial Majesty graciously consider and well examine this matter; it does not concern gold or silver, but souls and consciences.] Now **90]** we are glad to refer to all good men the judgment concerning this topic of repentance (for it has no obscurity), in order that they may decide whether we or the adversaries have taught those things which are more godly and healthful to consciences. Indeed, these dissensions in the Church do not delight us; wherefore, if we did not have great and necessary reasons for dissenting from the adversaries we would with the greatest pleasure be silent. But now, since they condemn the manifest truth, it is not right for us to desert a cause which is not our own, but is that of Christ and the Church. [We cannot with fidelity to God and conscience deny this blessed doctrine and divine truth, from which we expect at last, when this poor temporal life ceases and all help of creatures fails, the only eternal, highest consolation: nor will we in anything recede from this cause, which is not only ours, but that of all Christendom, and concerns the highest treasure, Jesus Christ.]

**91]** We have declared for what reasons we assigned to **repentance these two parts, contrition and faith.** And we have done this the more readily because many expressions concerning repentance are published which are cited in a mutilated form from the Fathers [Augustine and the other ancient Fathers], and **which the adversaries have distorted** in order to put faith out of sight.

Such are: *Repentance is to lament past evils, and not to commit again deeds that ought to be lamented.*

Again: *Repentance is a kind of vengeance of him who grieves, thus punishing in himself what he is sorry for having committed.*

In these passages **no mention is made of faith.** And not even in the schools, when they interpret, is anything **92]** added concerning faith. **Therefore, in order that the doctrine of faith might be the more conspicuous, we have enumerated it among the parts of repentance. For the actual fact shows that those passages which require contrition or good works, and make no mention of justifying faith, 93] are dangerous [as experience proves].** And prudence can justly be desired in those who have collected these centos of the “Sentences” and decrees. For since the Fathers speak in some places concerning one part, and in other places concerning another part of repentance, it would have been well to select and combine their judgments not only concerning one part but concerning both, *i.e.*, concerning contrition and faith.

**94]** For **Tertullian speaks excellently concerning faith,** dwelling upon the oath in the prophet, Ezek. 33, 11: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* For as God swears that He does not wish the death of a sinner, He shows that faith is required, in order that we may believe the one swearing, and be firmly confident that He forgives us. The authority of the divine promises ought

by itself to be great in our estimation. But this promise has also been confirmed by an oath. Therefore, if any one be not confident that he is forgiven, he denies that God has sworn what is true, than which a more horrible blasphemy cannot be imagined. For Tertullian speaks thus: *He invites by reward to salvation, even sweating. Saying, "I live," He desires that He be believed. Oh, blessed we, for whose sake God swears! Oh, most miserable if we believe not the Lord even when He swears!* 95] But here we must know that this faith ought to be confident that God freely forgives us for the sake of Christ, for the sake of His own promise, not for the sake of our works, contrition, confession, or satisfactions. For if faith relies upon these works, it immediately becomes uncertain, because the terrified conscience sees that these 96] works are unworthy. Accordingly, Ambrose speaks admirably concerning repentance: ***Therefore it is proper for us to believe both that we are to repent, and that we are to be pardoned, but so as to expect pardon as from faith, which obtains it as from a handwriting.*** Again: *It is faith which covers our sins.* 97] Therefore, there are sentences extant in the Fathers, not only concerning contrition and works, but also concerning faith. But the adversaries, since they understand neither the nature of repentance nor the language of the Fathers, select passages concerning a part of repentance, namely, concerning works; they pass over the declarations made elsewhere concerning faith, since they do not understand them.

<b>Tappert</b>	<b>Triglotta/Monoglot</b>
<b>Article XII: Penitence, 1-97</b>	<b>Article XII (V): Of Repentance. 1-97</b>
<i>98-178. Confession and Satisfaction</i>	<b>Article VI: Of Confession and Satisfaction. 1-81</b>
<b>Article XIII: The Number and Use of the Sacraments</b>	<b>Article XIII. (VII): Of the Number and Use of the Sacraments.</b>