

The Westminster Standards and Confessional Lutheranism on Justification

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INTRODUCTION

Generations of Reformed Christians have been taught about the *solas* of the sixteenth century Reformation: *sola gratia*, *solus Christus*, *solus Deo Gloria*, *sola Scriptura*, and *sola fide* (grace alone, Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, Scripture alone, and faith alone). While this index of doctrines is certainly not exhaustive of Reformation theology, whether of the Reformed or Lutheran wings, it has nonetheless provided the observer with a brief guide to the doctrinal rallying points that distinguished the theology of the Reformation from that of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Until somewhat recently, that the *solas* accurately describe key points of Reformed theology has not been disputed.

Within recent years, both from the academy and from popular publications aimed at the church, there have been claims that one of the *solas*, *sola fide* (faith alone) is not an accurate label for the historic Reformed understanding of the doctrine of justification. The claim has been made that *sola fide* accurately describes the Lutheran understanding of justification but that the phrase “faith working through love” more accurately describes the Reformed understanding of the doctrine of justification. To say the least, the claim that there is a divergence between the Reformed and Lutheran understandings of justification is quite significant. If the claim is true, then it means that from the very foundations of the Reformation, we do not have unity between the Reformed and Lutheran communities on the chief issue of contention during the Reformation. While the Reformed and the Lutheran have always recognized differences in their theologies, such as in matters of the sacraments, many have often assumed that there was unanimity on justification by faith alone. More importantly, if there is a great divergence between the two communions on this issue it means that the Reformation was not a total recovery of the gospel.

It is the purpose of this essay to prove the thesis that *sola fide* accurately describes the historic Reformed understanding of justification and that there is still unanimity between the Reformed and Lutheran communities on the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* (“the article upon which the church stands or falls”), and that both the Reformed and Lutheran traditions have rightly understood the gospel. To prove this thesis we will first survey the recent claims of those who challenge the legitimacy of *sola fide*. Second, we will survey the Westminster Standards and key confessional documents of historic Lutheranism to verify the accord that exists between the two confessional communities on the doctrine of justification by faith alone.¹

RECENT CHALLENGES TO SOLA FIDE

There are three main figures to which we may draw our attention who bring challenges to the validity of *sola fide* as an accurate description of the Reformed understanding of the doctrine of justification: P. Andrew Sandlin, Norman Shepherd, and Peter Lillback.

Lutheranized Calvinism

In the essay, “Lutheranized Calvinism: Gospel or Law, or Gospel and Law,” P. Andrew Sandlin makes the claim, “Some rather prominent Calvinists are leaning more

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1. Hereafter the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, and Shorter Catechism are abbreviated WCF, WLC, and WSC, and are cited from *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646; Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1995), unless otherwise noted.

heavily toward the Wittenberg Reformer and leaning somewhat away from John Calvin and, more accurately, from a more consistently Reformed perspective at key points.”² Sandlin bases this claim upon his understanding of the Lutheran law-gospel hermeneutic. It is uncontested that Lutherans adhere to a law-gospel hermeneutic. Historically, confessional Lutheranism defines law as “a divine teaching which gives instruction regarding what is right and God-pleasing and condemns everything that is sin and contrary to God’s will.” Hence, Lutherans believe that “everything that condemns sin is and belongs to the proclamation of the law.”³ By contrast, the gospel is “the kind of teaching that reveals what the human being, who has not kept the law and has been condemned by it, should believe: that Christ atoned and paid for all sins and apart from any human merit has obtained and won for people the forgiveness of sins.”⁴ To confuse the two hermeneutical categories of law and gospel leads to confusion in the doctrine of justification—the gospel is to be believed whereas the law is to be obeyed. The law drives the sinner, who is unable to fulfill its demands, to the gospel of Christ. Given these categories, it is easy to see how Lutherans would affirm *sola fide*, that justification is by faith alone because justification is of the gospel, not the law.

Based upon this understanding Sandlin argues that the law-gospel hermeneutic radically separates the gospel from the law. Sandlin argues: “We Calvinists oppose traditional Roman Catholicism’s soteriology, which speaks of ‘condign’ and ‘congruent’ merit, and ties salvation up with a cooperative effort between God and man. But we almost equally oppose Lutheran soteriology, which so separates gospel and law as to lead to antinomianism, the diminution of sanctification, and

the dismissal of good works” (Sandlin, “Lutheranized Calvinism,” 131). While Sandlin does not specifically state his case in these terms, he nonetheless is substantively saying that the law-gospel hermeneutic produces a doctrine of justification that may be characterized by the slogan, *sola fide*. In other words, there is no place for good works in a Lutheran soteriology. We can confirm this conclusion from the following statement: “A crowning aspect of the genius of the Reformed faith is its recognition of the proper relationship between, but fundamental unity of, dogma *and* practice, gospel *and* law, faith *and* works, mercy *and* justice, grace *and* truth, restraint *and* liberty” (Sandlin, 132). Now, while Sandlin casts a wide net concerning his observations concerning the law-gospel hermeneutic and Lutheran soteriology in general, others have been much more specific.

Faith the Alone Instrument

Norman Shepherd makes the claim that though the slogan *sola fide* is popular in Reformed circles that one does not find it in the Westminster Confession: “Although ‘justification by faith alone’ is commonly used among us, the interesting thing is that the Westminster Standards do not use that formula. Neither the Confession nor the Catechisms say that we are justified by faith alone. What they do say is that faith is ‘the alone instrument of justification.’”⁵ Shepherd goes on to exegete the relevant passages of the Westminster Standards to show how faith as the alone instrument is different from the formula “faith alone.” He does so by making several key claims.

First, he argues that the Westminster Confession makes its case for the doctrine of justification not only upon the standard Pauline texts such as Romans 4 or Galatians 2–3 but also upon texts such as James 2 and Galatians 5:4–6: “The Confession acknowledges that James is talking about faith and justification in the same sense that Paul uses these terms when he denies that justification is by works. The Confession also acknowledges that Paul is talking about soteric justification in Galatians 5:4–6 when he says that justification is by ‘faith working through love’” (Shepherd, “Justification by Faith Alone,” 80).

Second, Shepherd also defines faith in such a way that it includes obedience. Expounding upon Confession 14.2 he writes: “Saving faith is described not only as believing whatsoever is revealed in the word of God but also as obeying its commands, trembling at it threatenings, and embracing the promises of God.”⁶ In other words, faith is not alone, as Lutheran theology insists,

2. P. Andrew Sandlin, “Lutheranism Calvinism: Gospel or Law, or Gospel and Law,” *Reformation and Revival Journal* 11/2 (2002) 123.

3. *Formula Concord* 5.3–4 in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 500: “Legem esse proprie doctrinam divinitus revelatam, quae doceat, quid iustum Deoque gratum sit; quae etiam, quicquid peccatum est, et voluntati divinae adversatur, redarguat. Quare, quicquid extat in sacris literis, quod peccata arguit, id revera ad Legis concionem pertinet” (Latin text from Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., [1931; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1990] 3.127).

4. *Formula Concord* 5.5 in *Book of Concord*, 500: “Quae doceat, quid homo credere debeat, qui Legi Dei non satisfecit, et idcirco per eandem damnatur: videleict, quod illum credere oporteat, Jesum Christum omnia peccata expiasset, atque pro iis satisfecisse, et remissionem peccatorum” (Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.126).

5. Norman Shepherd, “Justification by Faith Alone,” *Reformation and Revival Journal* 11/2 (2002) 76.

6. Shepherd, “Justification by Faith Alone,” 82. This is a trend that

but faith is an obedient faith. Not only is it an obedient faith, but repentance, argues Shepherd, is also necessary for one's justification, as there can be no justification apart from repentance (Shepherd, "Justification by Faith Alone," 86). Hence, concerning the traditional formula of "justification by faith alone," Shepherd finds it wanting because "this perspective offers no way of accounting for the gospel demand for both faith and repentance as necessary for the forgiveness of sins and no way of accounting for obedience as necessary for entering eternal life" (86).

Given this scriptural and confessional exegesis Shepherd concludes that when Martin Luther (1483–1546) inserted the word "alone" into his translation of Romans 3:28 to make it read, "For we hold that one is justified by faith *alone* apart from works of the law," the reformer distorted Paul's meaning (Shepherd, 87). Given Luther's supposed distortion, Shepherd sees a great difference therefore between the Reformed and Lutheran communities on the doctrine of justification. Shepherd claims

There is also a difference between the classic Lutheran and Reformed doctrines of justification. Lutheran doctrine holds that the Holy Spirit kindles faith in us by the hearing of the gospel. Faith then lays hold of Christ and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer for justification. After the believer has been justified, he is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit and good works follow. Lutheranism can also maintain that 'faith is never alone,' but means by this that saving faith is always *followed* by works and is productive of works. The sequence is of fundamental importance. This is not what the Westminster Confession means when it says that the justifying faith is never alone and cites James 2:17, 26 together with Galatians 5:6 to support that affirmation.⁷

Shepherd, therefore, like Sandlin, sees a divergence between the Reformed and Lutheran communities. From the above quotation, one is left with the impression that for Shepherd, the Reformed community sees obedience as a part of faith, whereas for the Lutheran community, obedience follows faith. Shepherd is not alone in his claims.

Faith working through love

The claims of Shepherd and Sandlin are largely dogmatic as they make an effort to give a positive formulation of their understanding of the Reformed doctrine

of justification by faith. A third contributor, Peter Lillback, makes similar claims concerning the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed communities. Lillback's claims, however, are not dogmatic but historical theological. In Lillback's research of the writings of Luther and a representative cross-section of Reformed theologians, but especially in John Calvin (1509–1564), as his monograph focuses upon Calvin's role in the development of covenant theology, he finds a significant difference between the two communities—in their discussions of the doctrine of justification the Lutherans, unlike the Reformed, place the doctrine of justification in the context of the covenant. Given that the covenant is bi-lateral in nature, or a reciprocal relationship between God and redeemed man, it is natural that one would find the Reformed incorporating obedience and good works in their discussions on justification.

Given Luther's commitment to the law-gospel hermeneutic, there was to be no discussion of works or obedience in connection with the doctrine of justification. Lillback writes, "The Reformed hermeneutic discussed works in the context of justification because the covenant had two parts. Justification was the first blessing of the covenant while the second was the law of love engendered by the Holy Spirit. Faith was the condition of the first part of the covenant, and love or obedience was the condition of the second part." Lillback goes on to conclude, "For Luther, it was 'faith alone'; for the Reformed it was 'faith working by love.'"⁸ As Lillback expounds the broader developments in the Lutheran and Reformed communities on the doctrine of justification he observes that in Lutheran theology the instrumental cause of salvation is not works but faith alone. By contrast, Reformed theologians such as Jerome Zanchius (1516–1590) argued that good works were key: "Good works are the instrumental cause of the possession of

one finds in other places in Shepherd's writings: "Faith looks away from personal merit to the promises of God. Repentance and obedience flow from faith as the *fullness* of faith. This is faithfulness, and faithfulness is perseverance in faith. A living, active, and abiding faith is the way in which the believer enters into eternal life" (*The Call of Grace: How the Covenant Illuminates Salvation and Evangelism* [Phillipsburg, Pa.: P & R, 2000] 50, emphasis added). Again, Shepherd writes, "Gospel proclamation call us to a living faith, that is to a penitent and obedient faith" ("Justification by Faith in Pauline Theology," in *Backbone of the Bible*, ed. P. Andrew Sandlin [Nacogdoches, Tex.: Covenant Media Press, 2004] 101; see also idem, "Justification by Works in Reformed Theology," in *Backbone*, 103).

7. Shepherd, "Justification by Faith Alone," 81. Shepherd cites J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1955) 376–377.

8. Peter A. Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 125.

eternal life; by these indeed, just as by an obvious and legitimate way, God leads us into the possession of eternal life.”⁹ Lillback adds the testimony of both Johannes Piscator (1546–1625) and Francis Turretin (1623–1687) arguing that good works are necessary for salvation.¹⁰ Lillback argues that the combination of the covenant context and justification in the Reformed tradition were codified in the Westminster Standards.

In WCF 11.2 we read the following: “Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet is it not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but worketh by love.” Lillback argues that WCF 11.2 says that faith is accompanied “with all other saving graces,” and also that WCF 14.2 states that “the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace” (Lillback, *Binding of God*, 208–209). In other words, he argues that historically the Reformed community has placed justification in the context of the covenant, which makes a place not only for the doctrine of justification but also for the necessity of good works. In the WCF, argues Lillback, one finds agreement between gospel and law not the Lutheran law-gospel hermeneutic (209).

Summary

As we summarize the positions of the aforementioned authors we find primarily two key claims that we can test in a comparative examination of the Westminster Standards and confessional Lutheranism concerning the doctrine of justification. First, Do both communities affirm *sola fide*, justification by faith alone? Second, Do the Lutheran and Reformed communities have a place for the believer’s good works under the broader category of soteriology? Or, in more precise theological terms, Do Lutherans have a place for the third use of the law in their soteriology as the Reformed tradition does? Answering these questions will prove the thesis that both the Reformed and Lutheran communities affirm *sola fide*.

9. Lillback, *Binding of God*, 206–07. Lillback cites Zanchius as cited in M. Schneckenburger, *Vergleichende Darstellung des lutherischen und reformierten Lehrbegriffs*, 2 vols., Hersg. Eduard Guder (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1855) 1.79.

10. Lillback cites Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1978) 460; and Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols., trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison (Phillipsburg, Pa.: P & R, 1994) 2.702–703.

COMPARING THE TWO TRADITIONS

Methodology

In our comparison of the two traditions we must first explore whether both communities affirm *sola fide*. In our comparison it is important that we identify several presuppositions regarding the methodology employed. First, we must compare the confessional documents of both traditions and not the theology of individual theologians, in this case the Westminster Standards and the official confessions of historic Lutheranism found in the *Book of Concord*, among which include the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Small and Large Catechisms (1529), and the Formula Concord (1577). One will undoubtedly find a great range of opinions among individual theologians whereas the confessional corpus of Westminster and the *Book of Concord* give us the historic majority report of both traditions.

Second, we must initially delimit our inquiry to the doctrine of justification. In other words, we should not explore questions as they relate to the other elements of the *ordo salutis*. There appears to be imprecision on the part of those who have challenged the legitimacy of *sola fide* in the Reformed tradition. It is one thing, for example, to say that justification is by faith alone and entirely another to say that good works are necessary for salvation. The two statements are very different, in that justification is one element of the *ordo salutis* whereas *salvation* is an all-encompassing term. To use a simple analogy, it is one thing to say we will explore the functions of the heart and not consider the functions of the lungs. A person requires both heart and lungs to live but if we delimit our survey to the functions of the heart, then we will not attribute breathing to it. Likewise, we must confine our exploration, at least in the initial stage of the investigation, to the doctrine of justification and not confuse it with other elements of the *ordo salutis*, such as sanctification.

Third, our investigation will not explore both sides of each issue, as this would make the essay inordinately long. Rather, there is no need to establish that Lutherans hold to *sola fide* but the question is whether the Reformed tradition holds the same view. Likewise, there is no need to establish whether the Reformed tradition holds to the third use of the law but whether the Lutheran tradition does. Fourth, we are limiting our investigation to the Westminster Standards given our ecclesiastical context, nevertheless we will take note of parallels that exist in the Continental Reformed tradition which finds expression in the Three Forms of Unity:

the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1618–1619). Keeping these four methodological presuppositions in mind, we may proceed to investigate the propriety of *sola fide* as an accurate description of the doctrine of justification according to the Westminster Standards.

Sola Fide?

When we explore the Westminster Standards we see that the divines define faith as: “Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel” (WSC q. 86; cf. WCF 14.1–2; WLC q. 72; cf. Heidelberg Cat, qq. 21–22; Dort, Head 2, art. 3, rej., 4). It is important to see that faith is extraspective in character, in that it is the instrument by which a person looks to the person and work of Christ, trusting and resting in that work alone. Faith does not include any act of obedience, contra the claims of Shepherd: “Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, not as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness” (WLC q. 73; cf. Belgic Conf., §22). Faith, therefore, is not to be confused with any *act* of the believer but is specifically a *grace* that enables a person to trust in the person and work of Christ.

The divines go on to identify the principal acts of faith: “The principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace” (WCF 14.2). Notice in this statement that the acts of faith involve no acts of obedience but are accepting, receiving, and resting. Some have inferred from the use of the term *principal* that the divines allow for other secondary acts, such as repentance or acts of obedience. This conclusion, however, is incorrect for two reasons. First, from what we have seen already in WLC q. 73, a person is justified not because of any of the other evangelical graces that do accompany it, that is, good works is not faith but its fruit.

Second, the historical context in which the confessions and catechisms were written, namely against the backdrop of the teaching of the RCC, rules out the possibility that obedience or repentance are part of faith. The RCC taught, and still teaches, that faith is only an intellectual assent to the truth. For example, the *Roman Catholic Catechism*, quoting Thomas Aquinas (1225–

1275), states that “believing is an act of the intellect assenting to the divine truth by command of the will moved by God through grace.”¹¹ When the divines, therefore, identify *principal* acts of faith, it is not to imply that obedience or repentance somehow figure into the definition of faith but rather to say that faith is not bare intellectual assent but involves accepting, receiving, and resting upon the person and work of Christ; in other words, faith includes trusting in the promises of the gospel.¹²

One can see how one of the Westminster divines, Edward Reynolds (1593–1676), explains that faith rests and does not work in justification:

Faith has two properties, as a hand, to work, and to receive. When faith purifies the heart, supports the drooping spirits, works by love, carries a man through afflictions, and the like; these are the works of faith. When faith accepts of righteousness in Christ, and receives him as the gift of his Father’s love, when it ‘embraces the promises afar off,’ and ‘lays hold on eternal life,’ this is the receiving act of faith. Now faith justifies not by working (lest the effect should not be wholly of grace, but partly of grace and partly of work), but by bare receiving and accepting, or yielding consent to that righteousness of Christ, and in regard of working, was the righteousness of Christ, and in regard of disposing, imputing, appropriating unto us, was the righteousness of God.¹³

In this quotation we can see Reynolds distinguish clearly between what faith is versus what faith does. Faith rests in the work of Christ but produces the fruit of good works. Reynolds’ explanation is counter-evidence against Shepherd’s claim that the Confession understands Paul to be discussing justification by faith when they cite Galatians 5:4–6 (Shepherd, “Justification by Faith Alone,” 80). Rather, parallel with Reynolds’ explanation, Confession 11.2 cites Galatians 5:4–6 not to deny *sola fide* but to say that faith does produce the fruit of good works. In other words, faith does work, but that work is not considered instrumental in justification.

11. Joseph Ratzinger, ed., *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ligouri: Ligouri Publications, 1994) §155, p. 142; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1911; Allen: Christian Classics, 1948) IIa IIæ qq. 2, 9.

12. See Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (1845; Fearn: Christian Focus, 1998) 194–195; A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (rep.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1958) 206; Francis R. Beattie, *The Presbyterian Standards* (rep.; Greenville, S.C.: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1997) 225–226.

13. Edward Reynolds, *The Sinfulness of Sin* (1826; Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1996) 428.

One can highlight the divergence between the claims of Shepherd, for example, against the statements of the Standards to see his error in defining the nature of faith. Shepherd claims that justification “either is or includes the forgiveness of sins,” and therefore the formula of *sola fide*, or justification by faith alone, “offers no way of accounting for the gospel demand for both faith and repentance as necessary for the forgiveness of sins and no way of accounting for obedience as necessary for entering eternal life” (Shepherd, 84, 86). In other words, Shepherd believes that repentance is necessary for justification. Yet, notice that the Standards mention nothing of repentance in its definition of faith. Moreover, in its treatment of repentance, the divines write: “Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God’s free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it” (WCF 15.3; emphasis added). Notice the differences between faith and repentance: faith is a “resting upon Christ alone for justification” whereas repentance is neither “to be rested in,” nor “any cause of the pardon.” Shepherd’s claim falls in the light of what the divines have said concerning repentance and justification.

We can further demonstrate the errors in Lillback’s claim that justification is by faith alone in the Lutheran tradition and it is faith working through love according to the Reformed tradition. Lillback argues that “the Reformed hermeneutic discussed works in the context of justification because the covenant had two parts. Justification was the first blessing of the covenant while the second was the law of love engendered by the Holy Spirit. Faith was the condition of the first part of the covenant, and love or obedience was the condition of the second part” (Lillback, *Binding of God*, 125). To demonstrate the validity of this point in the broader Reformed tradition, Lillback makes appeal to three theologians, Zanchius, Piscator, and Turretin and then argues that justification by “faith working through love” was codified in the Reformed tradition in the WCF, articles 11 and 14.1–2 (Lillback, 206–209).

14. See, e.g., Samuel Rutherford, *The Covenant of Life Opened* (Edinburgh: 1655) 153–181; idem, *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself* (Edinburgh: 1727) 89, 120, 130; idem, *The Sum of Christian Religion*, in *Catechisms of the Second Reformation* (London: 1886) 203–207; Joseph Caryl, *Bible Thoughts* (rep., Morgan, Pa.: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995) 105–106, 229–230; Reynolds, *The Sinfulness of Sin*, 424–435; James Ussher, *The Principles of Christian Religion* (London: 1654) in *Catechisms of the Second Reformation* (London: 1886) 144–145; idem, *Irish Articles*, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3:532–534, §§ 34–45.

15. Jerome Zanchius, *Confession of Christian Religion* (Cambridge, 1599) 152–153, updated spelling.

First, we should note a methodological problem with Lillback’s claims. Lillback appeals to Turretin to support the claim that the Reformed understanding of justification is “faith working through love,” which is codified in the WCF. Such an argument has an inherent flaw as Turretin was a seventeenth century continental Reformed theologian whose major theological work was written between 1679–1685, some thirty years after the Westminster assembly concluded its work. Lillback does not cite any evidence to show that Turretin wielded any influence upon the Westminster assembly. While the continental and British Reformed traditions bear many similarities, Lillback has gone far afield to the continent rather than to the body of English and Scottish theological works that directly influenced or were written by participants of the Westminster assembly.¹⁴

Second, Lillback’s quotation of Zanchius comes from a secondary source, whereas a quick perusal of one of Zanchius’ chief theological works contradicts the very point that Lillback makes. Zanchius writes,

To be justified by faith in the sight of God, is nothing else, is to be counted just by the remission of sin and justice of Christ apprehended by faith: and that this is only the true righteousness: whereas whatsoever inherent righteousness there is in us, and whatever good works we do, is such as cannot stand in the sight of God: according to that saying, ‘Enter not into judgment with your servant O Lord, for no flesh is righteous in your sight’: and that also, ‘If you marked what is done amiss O Lord, Lord who can abide it?’ it plainly appears, that our belief concerning justification by faith alone is most certain and most true.¹⁵

Zanchius’ statement and affirmation of justification by faith alone is a direct contradiction of the statement to which Lillback appeals. Additionally, Lillback also cites Piscator who states, “Good works, with respect to eternal life, have the reason of efficient causes, not as by merit, but as by a way or a walk, by which one arrives at eternal life out of the ordination of God” (Lillback, *Binding of God*, 207). Citing Piscator, however, as a representative of the common Reformed position is questionable.

Lillback notes that Lutheran theologians rejected the positions of Zanchius, Piscator, and Turretin. He also explains that Piscator denied the imputation of Christ’s active obedience, which is why Piscator believed that the believer’s good works were the efficient cause of one’s salvation. In Piscator’s theology, the believer receives the forgiveness of sins through the imputation of Christ’s

passive obedience alone; the believer then required his own good works in the place of Christ's active obedience.¹⁶ Turretin, for example, acknowledges that this is the position of Piscator but then goes on to say that the common opinion received in the Reformed churches is that both Christ's active and passive obedience is imputed to the believer in justification (Turretin, *Institutes*, 14.13.1–2, v2.445.). For Lillback to say, therefore, that the rejection of the imputed active obedience of Christ "was taught by various Reformed theologians, including such highly respected authors as Piscator" is misleading and gives the impression that his position was common and accepted, when this was clearly not the case (Lillback, 207).

Third, when Lillback appeals to Turretin to substantiate that the Reformed tradition holds to justification "by faith working through love" he does so imprecisely. He writes that Turretin "also affirmed the necessity of good works for salvation" (Lillback, 207). Yet, Lillback fails to note that the Turretin quotation to which he appeals comes, not from Turretin's treatment of justification, but from his locus on sanctification and good works. Turretin states that good works are necessary for salvation, not for one's justification, but as a part of one's sanctification, or as the fruit of justification:

Works can be considered in three ways: either with reference to justification or sanctification or glorification. They are related to justification not antecedently, efficiently and meritoriously, but consequently and declaratively. They are related to sanctification constitutively because they constitute and promote it. They are related to glorification antecedently and ordinatively because they are related to it as the means to the end; yea, as the beginning to the complement because grace is glory begun, as glory is grace consummated.¹⁷

Turretin then goes on to write, in direct contradiction of the point for which Lillback appeals to him:

Although we acknowledge the necessity of good works against the Epicurean, we do not on this account confound the law and the gospel and interfere with gratuitous justification by faith alone. Good works are required not for living according to the law, but because we live by the gospel; not as the causes on account of which life is given to us, but as effects which testify that life had been given to us.¹⁸

Given this evidence it seems that one cannot make the claim that Turretin holds to justification by "faith

working through love" as Lillback claims. Moreover, we also see that Turretin, a marquis representative of the Swiss Reformed tradition, indeed a successor of Calvin at the academy of Geneva, states that the Reformed do not confuse the categories of law and gospel, which according to the claims of Sandlin and Lillback, is supposedly a hallmark of Lutheran, not Reformed, hermeneutics. To claim that Reformed theologians did not adhere to the law-gospel hermeneutic does not accord with the evidence.

The Law-Gospel Hermeneutic in the Reformed Tradition

We see in the writings of Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), one of the chief authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, which is the authoritative catechism for the Dutch Reformed tradition, the use of the law-gospel hermeneutic employed in terms of the covenants of nature and grace, which finds its parallel in Westminster's covenants of works and grace:

The law contains the natural covenant, established by God with humanity in creation, that is, it is known by humanity by nature, it requires our perfect obedience to God, and it promises eternal life to those who keep it and threatens eternal punishment to those who do not. The gospel, however, contains the covenant of grace, that is, although it exists, it is not known at all by nature; it shows us the fulfillment in Christ of the righteousness that the law requires and the restoration in us of that righteousness by Christ's Spirit; and it promises eternal life freely because of Christ to those who believe in him.¹⁹

16. See Johannes Piscator, *A Learned and Profitable Treatise on Man's Justification* (London, 1599) 20.

17. Turretin, *Institutes*, 17.3.14, v. 2, p. 705: "Opera trifariam spectari possunt, vel ratione Justificationis, vel Sanctificationis, vel Glorificationis. Ratione prioris non se habent antecedenter, efficienter, et meritorie, sed consequenter, et declarative. Ratione Sanctificationis, se habent constitutive, quia eam constituunt et promovent. Ratione Glorificationis vero antecedenter et ordinative, quia ad eam referuntur ut medium ad finem, Imo ut initium ad complementum, quia gratia est gloriae inchoatio, ut Gloria est gratiae consummation" (Francisco Turretino, *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae* [Edinburgh: John D. Lowe, 1847]).

18. Turretin, *Institutes*, 17.3.15, v2.705: "Quamvis necessitatem bonorum operum agnoscamus contra Epicureos, non confundimus ideo Legem et Evangelium, et laudamus justificationem gratuitam per solam fidem. Quia bona opera requiruntur non ad vivendum ex Lege, sed quia vivimus per Evangelium, no ut causae propter quas nobis datur vita, sed ut effecta eque testantur vitam esse nobis datum."

19. Larger Catechism, q. 36, in *An Introduction to the Heidelberg*

In fact, Ursinus elsewhere states that, “The doctrine of the church is the entire and uncorrupted doctrine of the law and gospel concerning the truth of God, together with his will, works, and worship.”²⁰ Ursinus was not alone in this observation.

Theodore Beza (1519–1605), Calvin’s successor at Geneva also wrote that “ignorance of this distinction between Law and Gospel is one of the principal sources of the abuses which corrupted and still corrupt Christianity.”²¹ Calvin could likewise observe that the medieval Roman Catholic theologians confused the categories of law and gospel, or promise

by saying that works of their own intrinsic goodness are of no avail for meriting salvation but by reason of the covenant, because the Lord of his own liberality esteemed them so highly. Meanwhile they did not observe how far those works, which they meant to be meritorious, were from fulfilling the condition of the promises unless preceded by justification resting on faith alone, and by forgiveness of sins, through which even good works must be cleansed of spots.²²

Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology, ed. and trans. Lyle D. Bierma, et al (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2005) 168–169.

20. Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* (1852; Phillipsburg, Pa.: P & R, n. d.) 1.

21. Theodore Beza, *The Christian Faith*, trans. James Clark (Lewes: Focus Christian Ministries, 1992) 41ff.

22. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, LCC, vols. 20–21, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 3.17.3, 805–806: “Atqui hinc apparet quantopere delusi sint sophistae, qui belle se absurda omnia evasisse putarunt quum dicerent, non intrinseca sua bonitate valere opera ad salutem demerendam, sed ex pacti ratione: quia Dominus liberalitate sua tanti aestimavit. Atqui non observabant interim, quae meritoria opera esse volebant, quantum absessent a promissionum conditione, nisi et iustificatio sola fide subnixta, et peccatorum remissio, per quam a maculis bona quoque opera abstergeri necesse habent, praecederet” (idem, *Institutionis Christianae Religionis*, in *Opera Selecta*, vol. 4, ed. Peter Barth and William Niesel [Munich: 1926–1952]).

23. Expounding upon the application of Scripture in preaching, Perkins writes: “The basic principle in application is to know whether the passage is a statement of the law or of the gospel” (*The Art of Prophesying* [1606; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996] 54ff).

24. Michael Horton, “Law, Gospel, and Covenant: Reassessing Some Emerging Antitheses,” *WTJ* 64/2 (2002) 287.

25. This section is largely drawn and adapted from J. V. Fesko, “Calvin on Justification and Recent Misinterpretations of His View,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 16 (2005) 96–101.

26. See Gerhard Ebeling, *Word and Faith* (London: SCM Press, 1963) 62–78; Werner Elert, *Law and Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967) 38–43; Gerhard O. Forde, “The Lutheran View,” in *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, ed., Donald L. Alexander (Downers Grove: IVP, 1988) 13–32, esp. 13–15.

27. Luther is truly the fountainhead of Lutheranism, unlike Calvin

Continental Reformed theologians were not alone in affirming the law-gospel hermeneutic, as one can find similar statements in the writings of British theologians such as William Perkins (1558–1602).²³ Based upon this, we must conclude that “as far as the law-gospel distinction is concerned, it is as integral to Reformed theology (embedded in federalism) as it is to Lutheranism.”²⁴

Summary

Based on the evidence presented above, therefore, one may safely reject the claim that the Reformed understanding of justification is best understood by the phrase, “faith working through love.” While the Reformed tradition, as it is represented in the Westminster Standards, maintains the necessity of good works for one’s salvation as “the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith” (WCF 16.2), this in no way means that its doctrine of justification is not by faith alone (cf. Belgic Conf., §24; Heidelberg Cat., q. 91). *Sola fide* accurately describes the Westminster Assembly’s understanding of the doctrine of justification: “Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification” (WCF 11.2). We must now turn to the second question of our investigation, namely whether Lutherans hold to the third use of the law.

LUTHERANS ON THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW²⁵

In turning to the second-half of our investigation, we must explore the question of whether the Lutheran commitment to *sola fide* is such that they make absolutely no place for the necessity of good works, in some sense, in the broader category of their soteriology. In other words, is Lutheran soteriology antinomian? There have been those in both the distant and recent past who have argued that Luther and Lutheranism only hold to two uses of the law: the political or civil, in restraining evil, and the elenctic or pedagogic, in leading people to a knowledge of sin and the need of redemption.²⁶ Yet, at the same time a perusal of primary sources, including Luther’s writings, Lutheran confessions, and other Lutheran theologians evidences that Luther and Lutheranism hold to the third use of the law in some form, the didactic or normative use, regulating the life of the regenerate. One may begin with Luther’s own writings, as his writings are incorporated in the confessional corpus of the Lutheran church.²⁷

Luther

While Luther certainly divided the scriptures into the categories of law and gospel, commands and promise, just because a person became a Christian did not mean that he was now suddenly free from the demands of the law. Luther, for example, writes that

as long as we live in a flesh that is not free of sin, so long as the Law keeps coming back and performing its function, more in one person and less in another, not to harm but to save. This discipline of the Law is the daily mortification of the flesh, the reason, and our powers and the renewal of our mind (2 Cor 4.16).... There is still need for a custodian to discipline and torment the flesh, that powerful jackass, so that by this discipline sins may be diminished and the way prepared for Christ.²⁸

So long as the Christian is *simil iustus et peccator*, there is always a need for the law in the life of the believer.²⁹ Luther's use of the law in the life of the believer is further evidenced from his catechisms.

Luther's Small Catechism begins with an exposition of the Decalogue.³⁰ At the close of the exposition of the Decalogue in Luther's Large Catechism, Luther explains the importance of the law in the life of the believer:

Thus, we have the Ten Commandments, a compend of divine doctrine, as to what we are to do in order that our whole life may be pleasing to God, and the true fountain and channel from and in which everything must arise and flow that is to be a good work, so that outside the Ten Commandments, no work or thing can be good or pleasing to God, however great or precious it be in the eyes of the world.³¹

Luther saw a need for good works, but was careful, like the Reformed tradition, to teach about the proper relationship between good works and justification.³² Luther addresses the proper place of the law as it relates to justification when he writes:

The matter of the Law must be considered carefully, both as to what and as to how we ought to think about the Law; otherwise we shall either reject it altogether, after the fashion of the fanatical spirits who prompted the peasant's revolt a decade ago by saying that the freedom of the Gospel absolves men from all laws, or we shall attribute to the Law the power to justify. Both groups sin against the Law: those on the right, who

want to be justified through the Law, and those on the left, who want to be altogether free of the Law. Therefore we must travel the royal road, so that we neither reject the Law altogether nor attribute more to it than we should.³³

Luther, then, saw a place for the law in the life of the believer. When he was explaining the doctrine of justification he said that there was no place for works or the

who is one among many influential theologians in the Calvinist, or more properly, reformed, tradition. Cf. Carl R. Trueman, "Is the Finnish Line a New Beginning? A Critical Assessment of the Reading of Luther Offered by the Helsinki Circle" *Westminster Theological Journal* 65.232; also Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero: Images of the Reformer, 1520-1620* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 63-104.

28. Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535 Chapters 1-4*, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan, LW, vol. 26, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1963), p. 350: "Quamdiu igitur in carne quæ sine peccato non est, vivimus, subinde redit lex et facit suum officium, in uno plus, in alio minus, Non tamen ad perniciem, sed salutem. Hoc enim exercitium legis est quotidiana mortification carnis, rationis et virium et innovatio mentis nostræ, 2 Corin 4 ... Hic opus est ad huc pædagogico qui fortem asinum, Carnem, exerceat et vexet, ut hac pædagogia minuantur peccata et Christo via paretur" (idem, *D. Martin Luther's Werke* [Weimar: 1883-1987], vol 40, pt. 1, p. 537).

29. Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (1988; Wipf & Stock, 1998) 10.

30. Martin Luther, "Small Catechism," in *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., ed. Philip Schaff (1931; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) 3.74-75, §1.

31. Martin Luther, "Large Catechism," in *Triglott Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921) 669-670. Luther also says: "Therefore it is not in vain that it is commended in the Old Testament to write the Ten Commandments on all walls and corners, yes, even on garments, not for the sake of merely having them written in these places and making show of them, as did the Jews, but that we might have our eyes constantly fixed upon them, and have them always in our memory, and that we might practice them in all our actions and ways, and every one make them his daily exercise in all cases, in every business transaction, as though they were written in every place wherever he would look, yea, wherever he walks or stands. This in our own house and abroad with our neighbors, to practice the Ten Commandments, that no one need run far from them" ("Large Catechism," 677).

32. Carl R. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers 1525-56* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 63-66; Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) 264-266.

33. Luther, *Lectures on Galatians*, vol. 26, 343 (*Werke*, 40/1.527-528): "Ideo locus de Lege diligenter est considerandus, Quid et quomodo sit de lege sentiendum, Nee am aut omnio reiciamus more Phanaticorum spirituum qui ante decennium moventes seditionem rusticorum dicebant libertatem Evangelicam absolvere homines ab omnibus legibus, aut ne vim iustificandi et tribuamus. Utrique enim in legem peccant, in dextra qui per legem iustificari, in sinistra qui prorsus a lege liberi esse volunt. Ingrediendum est igitur regia via, ut neque legem plane reiciamus, neque plus ei tribuamus, quam oportet."

law. In relationship, though, to one's sanctification and the knowledge of what is pleasing to God, the Decalogue served as a guide as well as a tool in the hand of God to confront the remaining sin in the believer.³⁴ This careful fencing of justification from works, yet at the same time connecting justification to sanctification, is especially evident in the Lutheran confessions.

Lutheran Confessions

The Augsburg Confession is the first official Lutheran confession, and was largely written by Luther's lieutenant, Philip Melancthon (1497–1560).³⁵ The Augsburg Confession carefully explains that justification is by faith alone: "Our works can not reconcile God, or deserve remission of sins, grace, and justification at his hands, but that these we obtain by faith only, when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed the Mediator and Propitiatory, by whom the Father is reconciled." Yet, at the same time the confession gives an apology against antinomianism: "Ours are falsely accused of forbidding good works. For their writings extant upon the Ten Commandments, and others of the like argument, do bear witness that they have to good purpose taught concerning every kind of life, and its duties; what kinds of life, and what works in every calling, do please God."³⁶

The confession even goes as far as to say that Lutherans "teach that it is necessary to do good works," but it specifies that "not that we may trust that we deserve grace by them, but because it is the will of God that we should do them. By faith alone is apprehended remission of sins and grace. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, our hearts are now renewed, and so put on new affections, so that they are able to bring forth good works" (Augsburg Conf., §20, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.24–25). So, here, in this Lutheran confession we see the emphasis upon justification by faith alone but also the need for good works, informed by the law. While this is not precisely the same nomenclature that one finds in the Westminster Standards is nonetheless parallel to the Standards' emphasis on the third use of the law (WLC qq. 95–97; WCF 19.6; cf. Belgic Conf.,

§25; Heidelberg Cat., q. 93). What we find in inchoate forms in the Augsburg Confession, however, emerges quite clearly in the Formula of Concord.

The Formula of Concord was born out of the need to interpret authoritatively the Augsburg Confession in the face of various controversies, which included subjects such as original sin, synergism, justification, good works, antinomianism, the Lord's supper, christology, predestination, and others. Hence, one finds several articles that explain and elaborate upon the relationship between justification and good works (See Schaff, *Creeds*, 2.268–307). It is in the Formula of Concord that the Lutherans, legendary for their insistence upon justification by faith alone, also state that "good works must certainly and without all doubt follow a true faith (provided only it be not a dead but a living faith), as fruits of a good tree" (Formula of Concord, §4, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.122.). It is in article six, "Of the third use of the law," where the document makes its most pronounced statement about the importance of the law and good works: "We believe, teach, and confess that although they who truly believe in Christ, and are sincerely converted to God, are through Christ set free from the curse and constraint of the Law, they are not, nevertheless, on that account without the Law" (Formula of Concord, §6, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.131). The document goes on to state that "the preaching of the Law should be urged not only upon those who have not faith in Christ, and do not yet repent, but also upon those who truly believe in Christ, are truly converted to God, and regenerated and are justified by faith" (Formula of Concord, §6, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.132). So, then, it appears from primary sources such as Luther, the Augsburg Confession, and the Formula Concord that Luther and Lutheranism places a heavy emphasis upon justification by faith alone but not to the exclusion of the importance and necessity of good works or the third use of the law. This is not a unique conclusion.

Later Lutheranism

Contemporary Lutheran theologians have previously observed that Luther and later Lutheranism have guarded justification by faith alone but at the same time maintained the importance of good works. Paul Althaus notes that "Luther saw the commandments not only as a mirror in which he recognizes sin—although they certainly are and remain that even for the Christian—but beyond this as instruction about the 'good works' God wants; and such instruction is necessary and wholesome for the Christian."³⁷ Likewise, Francis

34. Contra Lillback, *Binding of God*, 185–193; cf. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy*, 66.

35. Mark A. Noll, ed., *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1991) 82–83; also Trueman, "Finnish Line," 240.

36. Augsburg Conf., § 20, in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.20–21.

37. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress, 1966) 272; see also Eugene F. Klug,

Pieper (1852–1931) notes that “while the theologian must differentiate sharply between Law and Gospel, yet he must in practice join them most intimately.” Pieper also lists three reasons as to why the Christian still needs the law:

1. Because the Christian is *simil iustus et peccator*—he still sins and needs the law to understand the gravity of his sin.
2. The Christian must learn from the law to know what is pleasing to God and what he would have him do.
3. To keep the flesh outwardly in check.³⁸

To say, then, that there is a large chasm between the Reformed and Lutheran traditions on justification because Reformed theologians hold to the third use of the law whereas Luther and the Lutherans reject it neither accords with the evidence nor with history.

CONCLUSION

In our survey we explored the claims of those who argue that the Reformed tradition especially as it is represented by the Westminster Standards is not properly described by the Reformation slogan of *sola fide*. However, we found their claims wanting for several key reasons: (1) issues over historical-theological methodology; (2) comparison of primary sources; and (3) a lack of precision at times in either the definition or use of terms. It appears, therefore, that the dogmatic interests of Sandlin and Shepherd and the historical theological claims of Lillback require significant reconsideration in light of the gathered evidence.

Making a broader observation, while almost anything is possible, it seems unlikely that two theological traditions such as the Reformed and Lutheran communities would acknowledge their agreement for hundreds of years on a point so crucial as justification by faith alone and then only in recent years would there arise the claim that the two traditions were in conflict.³⁹ The analysis of Robert Traill (1642–1716), a Scottish covenant writing in the midst of the antinomian and neonomian controversies of the late seventeenth century, seems a bit more accurate than the recent claims we have surveyed concerning the unanimity on justification by faith alone between the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. Drawing attention to the great German reformer’s reason for success against the doctrine of the RCC,

Traill could approvingly quote Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*: “Luther gave the stroke, and plucked down the foundation, and all by opening one vein, long hid before, wherein lieth the touchstone of all truth and doctrine, as the only principal origin of our salvation, which is, our free justification, by faith only, in Christ the Son of God.”⁴⁰ Indeed, it was a Reformed theologian, J. H. Alsted (1588–1638), not Luther as it is commonly supposed, that coined the phrase in a rather Luther-like fashion, that justification is the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, “the article upon which the church stands or falls.”⁴¹ So, then, whether in the Lutheran or Reformed tradition, we may conclude that justification is *sola fide*, by faith alone. ■

“Luther on Law, Gospel, and the Third Use of the Law,” *The Springfielder* 38/2 (1974) 166.

38. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 3 (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1953) 236, 239–240; also Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, Lutheran Quarterly Books, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 67–68.

39. Scholars both within and without the Reformed tradition have acknowledged that the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, both in the Reformed and Lutheran expressions, had its roots the theology of Luther (see B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. S. G. Craig [Philadelphia, Pa.: P & R, 1956] 489–490; T. H. L. Parker, “Calvin’s Doctrine of Justification,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* 25 [1952] 101–07; François Wendel, *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, trans. Philip Mairet [1950; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997] 255–63; David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* [New York: OUP, 1995] 117–118; Joseph Wawrykow, “John Calvin and Condign Merit,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 83 [1992] 74–75).

40. Robert Traill, *Justification Vindicated* (1692; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2002) 32.

41. J. H. Alsted, *Theologia Scholastica Didactica* (Hanover, 1618) 711, as cited in Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, vol. 2 (1986; New York: CUP, 1994) 193, n3. Many thanks to my colleague, Scott Clark, for drawing my attention to this reference, and to those in note 39 above.

Appendix

Category	<i>Westminster</i>	<i>Lutheranism</i>	<i>Continental</i>
Faith Alone	“Faith, thus receiving and resting on Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification” (WCF 11.2).	“By faith alone is apprehended remission of sins and grace” (Augsburg Conf., §20).	“We just say with Paul, <i>that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith without works</i> ” (Belgic Conf., §22).
Place of Good Works	“These good works, done in obedience to God’s commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith” (WCF 16.2).	“Moreover, ours teach that it is necessary to do good works; not that we may trust that we deserve grace by them, but because it is the will of God that we should do them” (Augsburg Conf., §20).	“It is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man; for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith as is called in Scripture <i>a faith that worketh by love</i> , which excites man to the practice of those works which God has commanded in His Word. Which works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by His grace” (Belgic Conf., §24).
Third Use of the Law	“Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly” (WCF 19.6).	“And in this way do the children of God live in the Law, and fashion their life according to the rule of the divine Law, which way of living St. Paul is wont to call in his epistles the Law of Christ and the Law of the mind (Rom 7.25; 8.2, 7; Gal 6.2).” “We repudiate, therefore, as a false and pernicious dogma, contrary to Christian discipline and true piety, the teaching that the Law of God ... is not to be set forth before the godly and true believers, but only before the ungodly, unbelievers, and impenitent, and to be urged upon these alone” (Formula Concord, art. 6, “On the Third Use of the Law”).	“We still use the testimonies taken out of the law and the prophets, to confirm us in the doctrine of the gospel, and to regulate our life in all honesty to the glory of God according to His will” (Belgic Conf., §25).