

THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 9. It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein, nor of God, who calls men by the gospel and confers upon them various gifts, that those who are called by the ministry of the Word refuse to come and be converted. The fault lies in themselves; some of whom when called, regardless of their danger, reject the Word of life; others, though they receive it, suffer it not to make a lasting impression on their heart; therefore, their joy, arising only from a temporary faith, soon vanishes, and they fall away; while others choke the seed of the Word by perplexing cares and the pleasures of this world, and produce no fruit. This our Savior teaches in the parable of the sower (*Matt 13*).

I.e., some reject the Gospel call outright. In addition, according to the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13), some men and women receive the Gospel temporarily – though not savingly – and then fall away for various reasons as articulated by Jesus in the parable.

EVANGELISTIC NOTE: We should be evangelizing within the Church also! Each other...as a means of encouragement and perseverance of our brothers and sisters. And, we should be evangelizing ourselves!! When doubts and sin beset us, we should examine and evangelize ourselves, “keeping ourselves in the love of God” (Jude 20-21)!!

THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 11. But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit He pervades the inmost recesses of man; He opens the closed heart and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised; **infuses new qualities into the will**, which, though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions.

I.e., the monergistic work of God effects the means of conversion and affects the mind, heart, and will of a converted sinner. In short, God’s Holy Spirit moves in the entire evangelistic situation and *truly converts* a dead and wicked sinner and turns him/her into a sin-hating, God-loving, spiritually alive, obedient child of God.

DOCTRINAL NOTE: We see here the role of the will in the evangelistic and conversion process. To begin, the will of fallen man is wholly against God. Then, upon regeneration – “true conversion” above – that same man’s will is “infused with new qualities.” Thus, and at all times, a human being is always acting in accordance with his will; it is only that said will is *changed* upon being acted upon by the sovereign mercy and grace of God in the Holy Spirit’s regenerating (re-birthing) work.

THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 12. And this is that regeneration so highly extolled in Scripture, that renewal, new creation, resurrection from the dead, making alive, which God works in us **without our aid**. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation that, after God has performed His part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the Author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. Whereupon the will thus renewed is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence becomes itself active. Wherefore also man himself is rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received.

I.e., regenerating work is wholly supernatural, likened to the original Creation (Genesis 1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17) or to resurrection from the dead (John 11).

DOCTRINAL NOTE: What are the immediate effects of regeneration, that is, what effects are manifest in conversion: repentance (turning away) from sin (which previously was embraced) and faith in God (who was previously rejected and disbelieved). “Repent and believe,” this is our Gospel command. A man’s will, now “renewed,” is thus able to respond by these actions.

THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 13. The manner of this operation cannot be fully comprehended by believers in this life. Nevertheless, they are satisfied to know and experience that by this grace of God they are enabled to believe with the heart and to love their Savior.

I.e., the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is a mysterious work, which itself cannot be “seen,” but only discerned as manifest in its fruits: repentance from sin, and faith toward and love for God. Beware “conversion experiences”...

THIRD AND FOURTH HEAD: ARTICLE 14. Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure, but because it is in reality conferred upon him, breathed and infused into him; nor even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will consent to the terms of salvation and actually believe in Christ, but because He who works in man both to will and to work, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also.

I.e., this faith – the primary conduit of our salvation – is wholly and completely a gift of God.