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day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the Evil Foe may have no power over me. AMEN.

Apology of the Augsburg Confession Art II Original Sin

Now we will show more fully that our description agrees with the usual and ancient definition. First, we must show why we prefer to use these words in this place. In their schools, the adversaries confess that “the material” (as they call it) “of original sin is concupiscence.” We should not have passed by this fact in framing our definition, precisely because some are offering philosophical speculations in a way that is not appropriate for teachers of religion.

[5] Some of them claim that original sin is not a depravity or corruption in human nature, but only servitude, or a condition of mortality. <They say that it is not inherent in our nature, but is rather a burden> put on us <as a result of Adam’s sin>, not that we have any such depravity of our own. Besides, they add that no one is condemned to eternal death on account of original sin, just as a child born of a slave woman becomes a slave not as a result of any personal fault, but as a result of his mother’s condition. [6] To show that this impious opinion is displeasing to us, we used the word concupiscence. With the best intention, we have explained this term as “diseases” and said that “the nature of human beings is born corrupt and full of faults.”

[7] We have not only used the word concupiscence, but we have also said that “the fear of God and faith are lacking.” We added this comment because the scholastic teachers do not understand the definition of original sin well enough. They take what they

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received from the Fathers and extend the definition of original sin. They argue that the evil inclination (fomes) is a quality (like a blemish) on the body. With their usual folly, they ask whether this quality is caused from the contagiousness of the apple or from the breath of the serpent, and whether medicines can cure the condition. They suppress the main point with such questions. [8] So, when they talk about original sin, they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, such as ignorance of God, contempt for God, total lack of fear of God and confidence in God, hatred of God’s judgment, fleeing from God when He judges us, anger toward God, despairing of God’s grace, putting trust in things of this world, and so forth. The Scholastics do not notice all these diseases that are totally contrary to God’s Law. They even say that human nature is entirely capable of loving God above all things and fulfilling God’s commandments “according to the substance of the act.” These diseases are totally contrary to God’s Law, but the Scholastics do not notice them. They do not even realize that they are contradicting themselves. [9] For what else is being able, by one’s own strength, to love God above all things and fulfill His commandments except original righteousness? [10] If human nature is so strong that it is able, on its own, to love God above all things, as the Scholastics confidently affirm, what then is original sin? Why do we need Christ’s grace if we can be justified as a result of our own righteousness? Why do we need the Holy Spirit if we are strong enough on our own to love God above all things and fulfill God’s commandments? [11] Is there anyone who does not realize that our adversaries’ ideas are absurd? They recognize the less serious diseases in human nature, but the more serious they do not even acknowledge. Scripture everywhere warns us, as the Prophets constantly complain, about putting our confidence in our human abilities, contempt for God, hating God, and similar faults with which we are born. [See Psalm 13 and other passages, such as Psalm 14:1–3; 140:3; 36:1.]