

Gender confusion: a font of many confusions.
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Recently American Politics took a turn for the worse when some asserted publicly that a declaration of gender identity is a basic civic right. In other words, if a biological male, e.g. Bruce, identifies as a female, each citizen has a duty to “respect” this declared identity, e.g. refer to Bruce as “she,” “her.” Required behavior related to a declaration of gender identity may soon be incorporated into public standards of decency, and perhaps into public policy and law.

Declaration of gender identity made a grand entrance into pop culture in June 2015 when Bruce Jenner was on the cover of *Vanity Fair* dressed as a woman and quoted as saying “Call me Caitlyn”. In the same month a president of the Spokane chapter of the NAACP admitted a lack of Black ancestry, but “she genuinely self-identified as black.” [1]

There are two issues that became apparent in the ensuing debate:

- (1) Deceitful statements are wrong.
 - (2) Demanding respect for any deceitful statement promotes all deceit, opposes all truth, and so is a font of many confusions, as our title above says. P. 8
- We consider the following points:

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- (1) Deceitful statements are wrong.

Most of the discussion centers around the first issue. People are indignant that someone who should know better is bold enough to declare something as truth which is clearly false (flagrant deceit). Bruce is (charitably?) called “a mentally-ill crossdresser” [1]. It may be less charitable to call Bruce an incorrigible liar (because this assumes that Bruce knows that what Bruce says is false Pro 19:5, 9, Joh 8:44, Mat 24:51), or a blasphemer (because this assumes that Bruce intentionally finds fault with the order that God’s given gender provides Rom 9:20).

1A. *Witness to evidence*. Many point out clear evidence that Bruce is a man: e.g. that Bruce has only one large X chromosome, and one little y chromosome in his 23rd pair of chromosomes. Biologically, for Bruce’s statement to be true, he would need to be made up of DNA that has two large X chromosomes in his 23rd pair of Chromosomes. This is strong, objective evidence that informs us about Bruce, and Bruce’s declaration. It may or may not be true in a particular instance that Bruce has a mental illness, or that Bruce is an incorrigible liar. (Bruce may not be an intentional liar, e.g. if Bruce has lost mental ability to know truth). The objective evidence reveals Bruce’s statement to be deceit.

1B. *Deceit is evil*. If we want to show love and to do good, we should not respect deceit, but rather oppose it, and expose it for what it is, that the victims of deceit might be rescued. Deceit is harmful. Each deceit itself: is a force for evil (Psa 50:19), is spoken by the wicked (Pro 12:5), deceives fools (Pro 14:8), fails to do good (Psa 36:3), shows hatred instead of love (Pro 27:6, Eph 4:15), shortens the lives of those who speak it (Psa 55:23), binds men (Joh 8:32), and harms society (Pro 25:18, Psa 43:1, Psa 52:4). Every harmful deceit will be punished by God (Psa 119:118). As with all laws, there are exceptional cases in our present, fallen world in which deceit is called the fear of God, and not punished, but instead rewarded, blessed, by God in the earth. For example, the midwives who saved lives by deceiving their murderous master, were given houses of the LORD. They chose the lesser of two evils, and risked being murdered themselves when they did not disclose their good work of saving the Hebrew babies alive to the king who wanted the midwives to help premeditated murder. (Exo 1:16-22). Even God, for the sake of correcting the old man, hides things from us, not to harm, but in order to lead us to Him, and to shower more abundant blessings upon us.

Isa 54:8 *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy redeemer.* (c.f. Mat 15:22ff)

1C. *Deceit is a kind of false witness (S7).* That which is factually untrue is false, and it is a sin to bear witness to it as if it were true. *Exodus 23:1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.* A deceitful witness should be punished. *Proverbs 18:6 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.* The punishment of deceitful witnesses should be without pity and in proportion to the harm done. (*Deu 19:16-21*) *If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.*

1D. *Subtle deceit is deceit.* Even though deceit is very subtle, and difficult to discern (S5), a Christian should not taint the truth of God by permitting false knowledge (science falsely so called) or empty statements that cannot be proven (profane and vain babblings). *1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:* All men are subject to deceit, otherwise they would be perfect, therefore man is continually in a battle with himself to oppose his own deceits (*Jam 3:2-18*) Subtly deceitful arguments are sometimes called sophistry: reasoning or argumentation that has a hidden error [5, pdf p. 51, 57, 69, 101f, 188]. (Leading someone down the garden path with false wisdom) Examples of subtle deceits include: the bandwagon argument, emotional appeal, demonizing opponents (ad hominem), flattery, conclusory statements with insufficient evidence. [5, p. 665, para. 298f]

As an example of a conclusory statement consider the following fact pattern: A church-worker is suing his congregation for wrongful termination. Multiple expert

witnesses testify that there was a doctrinal dispute that led to the termination. A judge grants a defense attorney privilege to treat the church-worker as a hostile witness after the church-worker refuses to answer whether or not there was a doctrinal dispute. At one point the defense attorney says: “You just can’t answer the question can you?” 100% of the Jurors decided to award property and damages to the plaintiff. The judge set aside the Jury verdict, and gave the explanation that the evidence was persuasive that there was a doctrinal division before the termination. That summary is a factual historical description, and provides damaging evidence, but does not present a conclusory statement that depends upon facts not in evidence. It would be conclusory to say things like: “The judge knew that church-worker was lying. The judge saved the defendant, because the church-worker perjured himself.” The objection would be raised that this report is deceitful. The report assumes facts not in evidence, namely that the judge knew the church-worker’s heart, or that the judge convicted the church-worker of perjury. A perjury verdict requires evidence that the church-worker knew his testimony was false and intentionally gave false testimony. Both things are difficult to prove.

A more complete discussion of subtle deceit may be based on the study of what Scripture means by enticing words of man’s wisdom (*1Co 2:4-6, Col. 2:4, 8*), e.g. the taxonomy of Enticing Words given in Appendix A. We observe that within enticing words there is a class of worldly wisdom (*Col .2:8*) which does not necessarily involve deceit, but is wisdom that is useful knowledge and advice for this world, e.g. in the civic realm, in business, etc. Even though it is worldly wisdom, it can rob (or spoil) the Christian of the precious time that he should have been thinking about God’s Word, and speaking about God’s Word. But vain deceit can encompass the use of human knowledge to deceive (*Col 2:18*). Those things which involve the elements or rudiments of the world are many, including: those weaknesses in the victim who believes deceit, such as the old filthy deceitful lusts of the old man which are common to all people, and include vanity of mind (*Eph 4:17ff, 2Ti 3:13*) a darkened mind and, and a blind heart (*Eph 4:18, 2Th 2:10*). The elements of the world also include those weaknesses in the one deceived that beguile those who are Christian but unstable, such as covetousness, envy, hatred, personal preferences, and hypocrisy (*2Pe 2:14, Jam 3:14,17*). The elements of the world also include the use of the failings of the old man within the deceiver

Rom 3:9ff: including filthy words and a tongue that speaks deceit Rom 3:13, which may be distinct from speaking deadly false doctrine “poison of asps” Rom 3:13. A deceiver may be known by a lack of fear of God which coarsely breaks any commandment, but especially the first Rom 3:18.

Among the elements of the world, sleight of men (e.g. magicians, Eph 4:14, 2Co 4:2, 2Ti 3:8, Exo 7:11-13) which use intentional deceit, may be distinguished from “cunning craftiness” or clever manipulation (Eph 4:14, Job 15:5, 12-18, Luk 20:23, 1Co 3:19f, 2Co 11:3, 2Co 4:2) which might be unintentional deceit. The sleight of men may be exposed to some extent by behavioral cues in a liar [14]. But we must diligently avoid believing the deceit of cunning craftiness, since partial fault for the success of deceit falls upon the one who believes it (1Jo 2:21, 1Ti 2:14, Pro 26:24, Pro 14:24, 15:14, 24:9, Ecc 7:25, Psa 69:5). [15]

The different kinds of subtle deceit might be studied under the title of cunning craftiness as including deceptive seduction (2Ti 3:13), sporting themselves with their deceivings (2Pe 2:13), flattery 1Th 2:5, taking filthy wages (2Pe 2:15, 1Th 2:5, 2Pe 2:3, 1Th 2:6), signs of Satan (2Th 2:9, 1Ti 6:20, Joh 8:44, Rev 20:10), lying wonders (2Pe 2:9, 2Th 2:9), power of Satan (2Th 2:9, Job 1:12, Job 2:6, Act 26:18, Luk 21:12-17), deceitful workers (2Co 11:3, 2Co 11:13, 15, Luk 20:21, 2Co 11:3, Gen 3:1-5, 2Pe 3:15f, 2Pe 2:15-18 Num 22:6, 32-35, 31:16, 25:1-5, 9, 31:7f), and the condition of growing worse in deceit (2Ti 3:13, 2Th 2:9-12, Job 5:13f).

Note that the “signs of Satan” might be taken as a very broad category that includes anything which results in deceit being believed, as distinguished from “lying wonders” which are false miracles. A deceitful worker then is anyone who practices cunning craftiness, whether he is aware that he deceives or not. He can be either a knowing liar, or an unwitting deceiver who has made a logical error, or merely repeated a devilish argument, but with the result that someone could be deceived by his argument. Note also that all kinds of arguments which contain a fallacy or an error in logic, (e.g. Appendix B or [13, p. 188-190]) may be taken as a kind of a “sign of Satan,” and therefore serve as evidence that an argument is devilish.

Those who are washed clean from all their sins by the precious blood of Christ should testify to God’s Word, and should not imitate the tactics of an evil oppressor. *Pro 3:31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways. Phi 1:27 Only let your*

conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

1E. *Best construction does not excuse lax testing.* We generally strive for that “excellent and noble virtue for one always to explain advantageously and put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor (if it be not notoriously evil)...” [5, Trigl. 663 para. 289] 1Co 13:7 [love] *Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.* This, however, is not a unilateral law that you are required to believe every report, even demonstrably false reports. Pro 14:15 *The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going.*

It is not a sin to question or investigate. Indeed, Christians are commanded to prove (test, try, scrutinize, examine) *all things* (1Th 5:21), even prophets, and only *hold fast to what is [true and] good.* 1Jo 4:1 The only man who does not lie is Jesus 1Pe 2:22, Jam 3:2. Only Scripture is truth itself. Joh 17:17 All men are liars Psa 116:11. Your duty to uphold your neighbor’s reputation must also be tempered with the harm it would do to ignore evidence of deceit. We are not to sacrifice one neighbor for another, but to show love toward all. *Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.* Our duty to bear a cross does not allow us to crucify one neighbor for the benefit of a different neighbor. *1Th 3:12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:* Our confessions add to the injunction to “put the best construction” this qualifier: “if it be not notoriously evil” [5, Trigl. 663 para. 289], because there are times when you must defame someone for the public good: bearing witness to a fault, agreeing with a just sentence, and the punishment of the same, etc. This is one reason that we explain to children that “we should... not **deceitfully**... defame our neighbor.” [4, p. 7] When defaming your neighbor is required for the public good, then it does not involve deceit. So, we explain: “We should speak well of our neighbor, that is, we should praise his good qualities and deeds **so far as it can be done in keeping with the truth.**” [4, p. 7]

We need to oppose deceit (1Jo 2:21, Pro 26:24, Pro 14:24, 15:14, 24:9, Ecc 7:25, Psa 69:5, psa 101:6-8), even if it is spoken by someone who is mentally ill, because we want to help our neighbor, and we want to lead every soul to sorrow over sin, and to faith in Christ.

Those who are mentally ill should be made aware of their deceit. But even if the mentally ill person is not able to acknowledge his deceit, it does good for others who hear the deceit to take warning and to know that deceit is sin, and that each sin harms your neighbor and merits eternal wrath. Therefore we should sorrow over sin, and believe in the Savior of sinners, Jesus Christ our LORD. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth (1Pe 2:22). For God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (2Co 5:21).

1F. *Christians want all to be saved.* It is slander against Christians to say that Christians don't want people who are gender confused or mutilated to join their church. We sincerely want to lead all men to true repentance and so to fellowship with God and us. Although in some ways we fall short of it, we strive to be perfectly good like God, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (1Ti 2:4)

Christ Jesus came to take away the sin of the world (Joh 1:29) and to save sinners (1Ti 1:15), and this includes even people who have had their body mutilated, whether with or without their own consent or blasphemy. The bible uses the term eunuch (Mat 19:12) as one who has abstained from procreation for any reason, some are mutilated, some avoid marriage to serve the Gospel, as Paul explained elsewhere (1Co 7:1-9) because they can contain. The Ethiopian Eunuch is an example of one who already believed in God in his mutilated condition, and who was baptized and given fellowship with Christ in his mutilated condition. (Act 8:26-38)

Part of the ceremonial law said that a Eunuch could not enter the court of God's people in the Tabernacle or in the Temple. *Deu 23:1 He that is wounded in the stones, or hath his privy member cut off, shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.* A Eunuch was disfigured. It is God who makes you male or female. God created a man's reproductive members, and if they were mutilated in this way the person was unholy, and unfit to go where God dwelt in the earth (Gen 3:7-11). His body was continually marred with a desecration of God's work. Though a person destroys God's work by mutilation, he can't make it right again. So that person was banned from that court where God dwelt. Many other things banned you for life as well. A wife who committed adultery was banned (Num 5:27). She could not make herself unfilthy. Likewise someone born before his parents

were married—was banned, with all his children for 10 generations. If any of us had even a great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandparent who was born out of wedlock, we still couldn't enter into that court. Only our children would be the first ones for about 200 years to be allowed back in. Do you see how serious God is about holiness?

Those people who did gather into that court were continually reminded of their unholiness and unworthiness to enter there as well. On the great day of atonement, nobody was allowed into that gathering place until one priest went in and *made an atonement for himself, and for his household and for all the congregation of Israel (Lev 16:17).* Things that banned you for some time included touching a dead body, having an impure dream, eating unclean food, and menstruating. Each of us should say: I am a sinner. I am not entitled to come before God. When you are polluted, you are unfit, and we are all polluted. Rom 3:23 *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Eze 18:4 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

Not only those people who were banned for life from the Temple, but also each person who held to the true religion about the true God was to understand that I am filthy with guilt and sin. We all need an atonement. But from the beginning of the fall to the end of time, God promises an atonement for us all. At the time of the first sin, the promise was given of a coming Savior who would crush all the devil's power, overcome death, and so atone for us, and give us life, salvation, and God's favor (Gen 3:15). We receive these treasures through the promise of the Messiah Jesus Christ, our LORD. He completely atoned for us. With His own blood He washed away all our guilt and sin. He lived a perfectly good and holy life in our stead. For His sake God forgives us and receives us as His own dear and innocent children.

The Church has always held to the promise that God forgives us for Jesus sake and receives us. It probably surprises you to think that the Eunuch was already a believer, even before his baptism. Our foolish fleshly minds tend to think more about status, works, and activities than we do about the promise of God, and so we overlook persuasive evidence that a soul believes the promise. All those people who were barred entry into the court of the Tabernacle and Temple were also offered the promise of salvation: that the Savior would come and redeem them. Even in Old Testament times, God told the stranger not to doubt but to believe. Isa 56:3-5 let [not] the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath

utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. So when we hear that this Eunuch was returning from worship at the Temple, we understand that he put his hope in this promise. He held to the covenant of the coming Messiah, that God would earn his salvation and he would be welcomed into God's household as His own dear child with an everlasting home and title. You see how God saves people like this eunuch, not with works, titles, sacrifices, status, pride, pomp, court, etc. but with a promise.

Meanwhile most of those who were able to offer sacrifices and gain entrance into that court did not regard any promise, but they were proud of themselves: their works, titles, sacrifices, pomp, court, etc. Even the officials in the church who crucified Jesus did not count the promise of the Messiah to be worthy of hope or trust. They didn't want a humble spiritual king who would die for them and give them heaven. They saw that as a threat to their titles, court, political aspirations, nation and prosperity. They didn't count the promise of heaven to be of any real, bankable value. They fulfilled the prophecy which said: *the stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.* (Psa 118:22) Even in that day it was their duty to offer the free promise of salvation to people of all nations. The seed of Abraham and Isaac was promised to bless all families of the earth, and all nations of the earth (Gen 12:3, 22:18, 26:1). Gen 26:4 in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. God invited all nations to believe in this coming Messiah. They were supposed to be saying: Isa 56:6f *Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.* The messianic religion of the old testament was not a works-righteous club. It was the promise that God would do the work of gaining us all entrance into His holy house. They were supposed to see all those holy exercises and exclusions as serving the name of the

Savior. They were to trust in the LORD for their salvation, and be certain that God would accept them in heaven for the sake of God's works that He would perform on their behalf to save them. One could regard this promise truly and properly from outside of the court where only the sanctified people were allowed to assemble.

As we look upon the evangelist Philip in this text (Act 8:26-39), we see that he looked upon the true religion as a religion of promise, rather than of works. At the first opportunity, Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. (Act 8:35) The largest thing in Philips heart was the promise of salvation in Jesus' name, and he laid that upon the Eunuch's heart. Philip could have talked about politics. He could have refused entry into the chariot. He could have trusted in his works, focused on works, preached works. But as straight as an arrow, Philip went right to the point: Christ Jesus died on the cross to make an atonement for our sins (Isa 53:6-11). Just as a lamb does when he is sheared doesn't say anything, He was quiet when He was accused of our sins. He was humbled because He took upon Himself all our uncleanness. He was entirely holy and innocent in all His works in our place. He died under the load of our guilt and sin to give us His holiness, life, and eternal salvation. Philip didn't ask about the vast riches of that man, or about politics, or power, he asked if the Eunuch believed the promise of salvation, and Philip was glad to hear a confession of faith.

The works of believers value the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ our LORD. We see that the Eunuch treasured the promise, for he was reading the chapter of Isaiah, 53, which contains one of the most beautiful promises about the dear work of our Savior Jesus Christ. You may observe that the Eunuch was ignorant, and didn't understand who the prophet was speaking about. But ignorance doesn't make someone an unbeliever. Jesus said: *Verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.* Mat 13:17. Before a Scripture has been fulfilled, or before you are aware of its fulfillment, you can't possibly explain it. But, a believing soul is like Mary, who *kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.* (Luk 2:19) So the Eunuch wanted to know God's Word, and was willing to humble himself and be tutored by any believer who knew about God. The Bible does great good when you read it, consider it, study it, listen carefully to those who know it. God the

Holy Spirit works through the words of Scripture to sanctify believers. And believers like the Eunuch, treasure it.

Meanwhile those who do not believe the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ our LORD perform works that show us that they do not value the promise. Philip was fleeing from Jerusalem because the Jews there had stoned Stephen to death since he believed in Jesus. The Jews convicted the Christians of sin for confessing the almighty power of Jesus. As this little devotion from Philip was being preached, a great persecution of all Christians was being carried out in Jerusalem, and so all but the apostles fled for their lives from Jerusalem. But you could see this murderous attack coming long before when they hated John the Baptist, and refused to receive Baptism. *The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the kingdom of God against themselves being not baptized of him.* (Luke 7:30) They only dealt in law, and were blind to the promise, and for this reason they did not receive the promise of the forgiveness of sins that was offered to them in Baptism. They couldn't find enough ways to oppose the promise of salvation, or to cause people to doubt it. They attacked and hunted the prophets of the promise rather than believing the Gospel that God sent to them by the prophets.

Through Philips words, the Eunuch was moved to say: *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God* (Act 8:37). Philip had the high honor of bringing the kingdom of God to this believer, and welcoming him at last, not only into the court of the Temple, but even into the Holy Christian Church where the Eunuch's sacrifices, performed by faith in Christ, are received by God. He is counted as a brother of Jesus. Part of these sacrifices should be to praise the ordinances of God, and to warn against the blasphemy of criticizing God's creation (Rom 9:20) and also to oppose self-mutilation (Psa 139:14, Exo 20:13).

1G. *Fellowship with deceit.* Does a local congregation discriminate against a gender-confused person who might have declared "call me Christian?" Answer: No, a gender confused person is welcome to take the same instruction that we provide for anyone seeking fellowship with us: instruction in the 1943 small catechism, and any other materials necessary to achieve agreement in doctrine and practice. A local congregation has a duty to establish a state of fellowship, and to continue in a state of fellowship with a person on the basis of objective evidence which is known to the local congregation (1Co 5:1-13, Mat 18:15-20). Not even the least member of the

congregation is excluded from being a judge in this fellowship court (Mat 18:15, 1Co 6:1-11). Thus the local congregation serves as a sort of fellowship court which makes decisions when necessary about whether or not to extend fellowship to a person or a group. The fact that a particular person is not yet in fellowship means only that sufficient evidence is not available to the fellowship court to accept that individual into fellowship. Exclusion from fellowship in a local congregation does not always exclude someone from the kingdom of heaven. Lack of evidence can prevent a congregation from receiving an individual into fellowship. For example, the congregation may not have evidence: that the individual has completed training in the basic doctrine of the church or that the person believes it. The congregation may not be able to observe that the person is living in accord with true doctrine. *James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* The congregation may not have evidence that a person has brought forth the fruits of repentance. *1 Corinthians 5:12f For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* (See also Mat 28:18-20, Mat 3:8). Even one deceit that is stubbornly held in impenitence is an obstacle to fellowship. Indeed, it was one deceit to a local pastor which brought God's just judgment upon a husband and wife, removing them not only from fellowship, but from the group of those who are still breathing (Acts 5). The claim that Christians discriminate against one particular kind of deceit is unjust, for as it was at the time of the apostles, there are plenty of people who are un mutilated and not gender confused who are excluded from outward fellowship.

We endeavor to lead all to repentance, and to gather all into true and sincere fellowship. As we do this, we endeavor to bear witness to evidence, show that deceit is evil, remember deceit is a kind of false witness, remember that subtle deceit is deceit, properly apply the best construction requirement, show that Christians want all to be saved, and avoid fellowship with deceit. There will always be more to improve in this work, until judgment day. Now let us consider the second error:

(2) Demanding respect for a deceitful statement promotes all deceit, opposes all truth, and so is a font of many confusions.

The real enemy where deceit is involved is the devil who authored all deceit and uses it as a tool to bring about unbelief and eternal death (Joh 8:44). To defeat the devil in this contest, then we must remember the promise that God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8) We must put this promise to use, and bring those lost in confusion to faith in it, as it is written: *Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.* (Rom 12:14) Satan works confusion so that we will not remember that we are forgiven in the name of Jesus, and that we should forgive others, for Jesus sake, even those lost in confusion (Mat 6:12).

Satan says:

let confusion remain,
let it grow, let it reign.

But we must pray:

Let the light of thy peace shine,
that all sinners may be thine.

By demanding a deceit be “respected” God’s good gifts are harmed by the confusion over a divine good. And such a demand for respect automatically works to bring about an opposite evil (noted in parentheses below). When all opposition to a deceit is condemned as if it were evil, there is present a great and automatic propensity for harm that is found in few other sins. Those are accursed who do so, for it is written: *Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* We might compare such an evil to the Bull Exsurge Domini of 1520 which condemned Luther as a heretic simply because Luther’s statements were identified as heretical, without even an adequate explanation. The pope’s adherents explained that the pope is “the only competent judge.” [12, p. 172] Or the evil of “respect” for flagrant deceit might be compared to the edict of Worms which, without a single shred of evidence, called for Luther’s books to be burned. That edict was so obviously evil that it was welcome only at Brandenburg, Meissen, and Merseberg. Everywhere else it was delayed, or obstructed, even in Mainz. [12, p. 158]. When the executioner, before applying the torch, asked whether the books had been legally condemned, the throng at Mainz with one voice boomed back ‘No!’ the executioner stepped down and refused to act. [12, p. 158] We might also compare the evil in demanding that a deceit be accepted without question to the emperor’s new clothes. It is rare that a flagrant deceit should demand unquestioning approval.

It would be a great shame if we used our new nature, made pure by the blood of Christ, by sitting on the sidelines in any battle between good and evil. We are quipped to be for all good. *Phi 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* According to the new man we are against all evil: *Psa 97:10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil. Pro 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.* No doubt, there are some simple people who are not aware of the good that is being destroyed or of the evil which is being promoted in a particular battle between good and evil. A Christian does not necessarily have an office or ability to punish evil in such a battle or to reward good. To presume an office would be sinful activism. But he does have a duty to testify truthfully to God’s judgment in the matter: to apply the right passage from God’s Word that speaks to the subject. Therefore in the case of confusion, a Christian has a need to warn the simple person who is duped in this battle of corrective punishment that is due from God. *Pro 19:29 Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools.* It often takes quite a load of suffering to correct the simple soul who has been duped. *Pro 17:10 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.* We also owe it to a Christian who has spoken well to immediately approve of his witness to God’s truth. *Pro 3:27f Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.*

Respect for deceit causes the confusion of God’s good gift (for an evil): truth (for deceit), reality (for fantasy), reporting (for propaganda), freedom to speak (for censorship), justice (for injustice), liberty (for libertinism), divine order (for devilish chaos), courtesy (for discourtesy), and worship (for idolatry).

2A. *Truth Confusion (deceit).* There is something much more sinister than mental-illness afoot when each citizen is called upon to show respect for a deceit. The truth is necessarily obscured when deceit is treated like it is just as valid as truth, for then we can no longer tell any difference between truth and deceit. There are many successful philosophies in modern times that assert truth is not objective or constant: e.g. relativism, Kantianism, Post-modernism, subjectivism, etc. When an obvious deceit is asserted as true it has the effect of making others accept, in a practical way, that truth is no better than deceit. If superior honor is denied to the truth, then all judgment is opposed, for only by truth

can anyone judge correctly. For it is written: *John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* Jesus said “*to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*” (Joh 8:31f) The righteous judgment of truth is denied when respect for deceit is demanded. We want people to know the truth that Jesus died for our sins, and we see the value of this salvation when we know the truth that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom 3:23f.

2B. *Reality Confusion (delusion).* One definition of reality is “that which doesn’t simply go away when people stop believing in it.” [2] In other words, reality is objectively true, and known to us by objective facts. If we are to separate fantasy and delusion from reality, we mortals must deal with objective evidence. We would become fools who have adopted a fantasy if we agree that the mere declaration of something is settled without evidence. *Pro 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.* Scripture tells us that we should not put confidence in anything that proceeds from fallen flesh (Psa 118:8, Pro 14:16, Pro 25:19, Pro 21:22, Phi 3:1-4, also see TLH451:3). Objective evidence ought to guide our evaluation of Bruce, and our evaluation of Bruce’s statement. Otherwise fantasy and delusion are confused with reality. The history of Luther makes clear that the conscience is not free from evidence. When Luther said “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason... I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen.” [9, Vol. 32, p. 112] Luther explained that by “clear reason,” he meant “most clear and evident reasons.” Luther was not a citizen of fantasyland, but he was willing to respond to evidence of an error, if his opponents provided it. [9, Vol. 32, p. 119] We must ultimately be called before God for eternal judgment. We will all eventually face the reality of our sin. We can be comforted now with the knowledge that Christ really rose from the dead to promise life to sinners. He said: *because I live, ye shall live also.* (Joh 14:19)

2C. *Reporting Confusion (Propaganda).* When even reporting the reporting of truth is restrained, we may ask with the apostle: *Galatians 4:16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?* When all opposition to Bruce’s statement is condemned ahead of time as if it were disrespect, this punishes a true witness, and so works to prevent the presentation of any contrary objective evidence. If this principle be accepted, then propaganda is the only thing allowed. Even the world knows that witness intimidation is wrong. For example, an attack is made on a reporter of truth that he is a bad person and should not be allowed to talk. This is sometimes called *ad hominem* attack, an attack on the person rather than the presentation of contrary facts. Scripture tells us that determining guilt by reputation of the accused rather than by the facts is wrong (S2). *Lev 19:15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.* Those who determine guilt of a reporter before the facts are presented, are necessarily guilty of doing just this: judging by preconceived reputation, by prejudice. It is an obvious case of slander to punish a witness because of what he says, without regard to whether or not what he says is true. Slander is making a false spoken statement about a person that damages his reputation. God provided severe punishments in civic law for slander. *Deu 19:16-20.* Furthermore, when the injustice of prejudice against a witness is even cloaked with the name of God, as if it were your Christian duty to perform an act of prejudice, then God’s name has been soiled in such a way that the charge of blasphemy could also be added, Even small children should be able to explain this, for our catechism, when asking What is God (Q25) Gives answer G Just (Fair and Impartial), and quotes *Deu 32:4.*

If the facts provided by a witness lead to our own suffering, we should be like Jesus who did not threaten the witness. (*1Pe 2:23*). Even though Jesus was innocent, He was abused. He rebuked the abuse before trial, but gave permission for a witness to speak. *John 18:23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?* And just as Jesus was a victim of *ad hominem*, our Confessions observe, that also godly preachers, Christians, the evidences of truth, and even the Scriptures themselves are made to suffer in a most shameful and malicious manner, by the tactic of name

calling, because they bear witness to God's Word. [5, p. 655, para. 260-2, see also p. 665 para. 298-300]

It is a perversion of justice to hear only one side (S3), even if the person on the other side is a nobody. Righteous judgement, according to God follows this rule: *Deu 1:17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great.* Even if a man has a poor reputation, it is wrong to be against a poor man winning his case because he is poor, and so stealing judgment from the poor (Exo 23:3-6). It is a good work to let the poor state their side (Job 29:16) and it is a gross perversion to "take away the righteousness of the righteous from him." Isa 5:20-23 A witness does wickedly if he recants his witness because of abuse or bribery ("a gift") (S1). It is written: *Deu 16:19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous. Again: Deu 27:25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. (Deu 27:19)* Luther set us a good example at Worms, when he was threatened with death, he did not recant his books. This was part of a propaganda effort, because Luther was not told specifically what was wrong in them. Even those books of his that the pope acknowledged as good and true were forbidden. Although even the so-called doctrinal errors of Luther were not specified by the Roman Catholic church until long after his death, Luther's writings were called "violent" (similar to the modern accusation of hate-speech), without specifying in what way his books were violent. [9, Vol. 32, p. 123]

The accusation of hate-speech or violence is a kind of taking offense. That is, the person who makes the accusation of hate-speech feels wounded, and begs for the other who one is wounding him to stop, but the so-called perpetrator has not given offense. Modern business ethics classes have adopted the crooked standard of modifying your behavior to avoid people taking offense. But Luther, who had much experience with this attack, said that "taking offense" "neither should nor can be avoided." [9, Vol. 26 p. 42]

The person who makes a report while hiding contrary facts, lies by omission (S8). *Jam 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* For example, when the false witnesses lied and said Naboth blasphemed (1Ki 21:7-14), they withheld from the court the fact that Jezebel the queen appointed them to make false accusation. Additionally, "The men of the city, even the elders and nobles... did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it

was written in the letters which she had sent unto them." V11. Thus civic justice was suppressed by the nobles, and the elders of the city when they withheld from the court the evidence of the conspiracy. Likewise, the wicked counsellors of King Darius withheld the fact that the law would be used to have Daniel thrown into the lion's den. (Dan 6:13) Even so, a propagandist withholds the truth to bias the hearer to believe deceit. We desire to deliver those who, like Darius, have been entrapped by deceit to murder the Christians who serve them best. That all may be brought to the place that Darius was: Dan 6:25-27 *king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end. He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.*

Even the worldly Hudson Institute recognizes the need for freedom to speak to effect reform. Nina Shea writes: "It is this failure to recognize the human agency in the interpretation and application of sharia that will place the Taliban system beyond the realm of debate, criticism and accountability." [11] By debate, criticism and accountability we are able to expose deceit, and to persuade others to stand against deceit.

2D. *Freedom to Speak Confusion. (Censorship)* Demanding that opposing arguments be silenced prevents free discussion. Freedom to discuss serves people learning about reality. Mar 14:56, 1Jo 4:1-3, Eph 4:14f. Furthermore, demanding unquestioning respect for a deceit actually demands that deceit be treated better than truth. It is a mistake to demand unquestioning respect, even for a true statement. Forbidding someone from questioning truth, actually harms the success of truth. When a person is not allowed to speak about doubts, this prevents those doubts from being answered and corrected. Ultimately, the cause of truth is foolishly harmed when free inquiry is not allowed, for this also disallows the defense of truth. Free inquiry is practiced in our courts. Our confessions recognize that courts provide the innocent man protection for his reputation. [Trigl. P. 659, para. 274f] Some of the best and most persuasive books could not be published without the liberty to question true statements, and discuss evidence asserted against

truth. For example, great books would be prevented by censorship, such as: Josh McDowell's "Evidence that demands a verdict" [6]. Michael Denton's "Evolution, a Theory in Crisis;" [7] "The Judgment of Martin Luther On Monastic vows" [8]. Even in a cause for good, political measures, such as censorship, do not gain the victory. We ought to meditate upon God's Word. As it is written: *Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* We are well prepared when we know God's word and when we know how to apply it to the facts in the situation that confronts us. 2 Timothy 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* This is the liberty which Luther emphasized when he stood in his conscience at Worms. A Lutheran historian reports Luther's statement:

"For St. Augustine writes that he had learned that only those books which are called canonical should be given the honor of belief in their absolute truth, and that he believed the rest of the learned fathers, no matter how holy and sanctified, only if they wrote the truth.

St. Paul had written on this same point to the Thessalonians: "Test everything; hold fast what is good" [1 Thess. 5:21]; and to the Galatians: "Even if an angel comes from heaven and preaches something different, let him be accursed" [Gal. 1:8], and do not believe him. He [Luther], therefore, besought them all the more not to violate his conscience, bound as it was by the chains of Scripture and the holy Word, by forcing him to deny that clear Word of God. And in order to prove agreeable to them personally and before his imperial majesty, he said that in other respects he would do everything most obediently." [9, Vol. 32, p. 118f]

Also our confessions explain:

"In the beginning, therefore, the theologians communicated to one another certain writings concerning this subject, sufficiently comprehensive, and derived from the Word of God, in which they showed clearly and skilfully how these controversies, which were not without offense to the churches, could be put to rest and removed from sight without any loss to the truth

of the Gospel; for the result would be that the opportunities and pretexts sought for slander would be cut off and removed from the adversaries. Finally they took up and accurately and in the fear of God pondered and explained the controverted articles, and accordingly in a special writing stated comprehensively in what way and by what method the dissensions which had arisen could be settled in a right and godly manner"[5, P. 11f]

2E. *Justice Confusion (tyranny).* Demanding that a statement "must be approved by all" destroys all courts that might consider the statement and so accuses all judges of misconduct. For a judge is not worthy of the name if he is given his verdict before evidence is presented. (S4) It is written: *Proverbs 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.* Again *Proverbs 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.*

The apostle showed us that the Christian is doing a good work when he calls upon the civic court to hear a case before punishment is meted out. (Acts 16:37) Tyranny can take the form of compelling with threats or bribing with gifts or flattery. Threatening any judge or flattering him if he decides without evidence (S6) is even worse than threatening or flattering a witness. *Proverbs 29:5 A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet.* *Psalms 5:9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.* *Psalms 12:2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.* When even the judge is perverted, the society deserves to be destroyed, as Sodom deserved (Gen 19:4), and as the whole world deserved before the flood (Gen 6:5).

The person who demands all others should approve of a statement without a trial is really setting himself up as a self-appointed tyrant. He is not allowing men to hear contrary opinions and weigh evidence themselves, and so he prevents everyone from judging according to the truth the substance of the matter. Since we are mere mortals, and mortals can make mistakes, we ought not compel anyone else in this fashion to accept our own judgment. Even godly people should not set themselves up as masters because each godly person on earth still has a depraved, fallen nature. Even a godly soul at times says something that hurts everyone. (James 3:1f, Luk 22:24-30, Luk 12:13-16)

For this reason, society cannot establish justice by merely establishing a majority consensus. That majority has to be informed about the issue, and has to make a judgment that is in accord with the facts and in agreement with what God’s Word says about the subject, or they will make a wrong decision. It is written: *John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.* There is a prophecy in Isaiah (Isa 29:15-21) that talks about those who have private judgments that are not subject to the will of God. Those who cling to private judgment think that God doesn’t see that their judgments are unjust, and they necessarily claim that God is unjust. This same chapter prophesies of the time of Christ and the apostles when there were tyrants who were unjust with Christ and His followers. The tyrants asserted their right of private judgment to abuse, and even to murder because they envied the teacher of truth (Mat 27:18), and because by a true teacher they came to see their own sin, but they wanted their sin to remain hidden (Joh 15:22, Act 7:53-58). Those tyrants wanted to keep their offices to continue their tyranny (Joh 11:48). They refused to listen to the truth (Act 19:9). They did not receive God’s Word or Sacrament (Joh 8:46-49, Luk 7:30) They put people out of the synagogue who confessed that Jesus is Christ (Joh 9:22). They silenced many among the chief rulers (Joh 12:42). They beat the apostles (Act 5:40), and threatened them not to teach in the name of Jesus, even when the apostles performed miracles (Act 4:16-21), They gave excuses for their perverse ignorance and tyranny (Act 24:25). We should thankfully remember that since we have sinned by tyranny, Christ Jesus our LORD has endured in our place the punishment that a tyrant deserves. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with His stripes, we are healed. Isa 53:5

In light of these examples of tyranny, and the prophecy which traces this back to the evil of private judgment, we must admit that the tyranny of demanding private judgment is very sinful. For God threatens in certain terms to obliterate those who terrify everyone with their misguided power, to consume those who scorn truth and to kill those who are trying to pin iniquity on the innocent. Isa 29:20f *For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.* These are acts of tyranny which God will avenge when those who have power

use their private judgment to unjustly punish those who use certain words, or entrap those who bring true charges against evil, or who refuse to heed the innocent—for no good reason. God threatens to punish also the tyranny of the last days, especially those who are tyrants in His name (Luk 12:35-48)

The Large Catechism, when explaining the evil caused by gossip, illustrates the broader sin of speaking evil (Jam 4:11, Q68D) or “deceitfully defaming.” Our catechism says (Q68D) that to deceitfully defame is to “speak evil of him and thus injure or destroy his good name.” The small catechism makes use of Mat 18:15 to show that to avoid defaming, you must speak to your brother individually in an attempt to bring your brother to repentance privately, before you tell an evil in any larger audience. It is deceitful and wicked to defame (Psa 50:19-22, Q68D) even when the evil that is reported is true, because the one who deceitfully defames pretends to be serving good, but he follows a procedure that avoids the individual discussion, which has the best opportunity to bring an erring soul to repentance.

If someone speaks evil of his brother in a larger group before making use of the individual discussion alone, or before making use of a private discussion with a few witnesses, he defames his brother and violates Mat 18:15f. Defaming is a kind of unjust punishment, and so it is essentially tyranny (Luk 6:37, Q68D) [5, p. 659f, para. 276, 279-283]. Defamation does not prepare to correct the one who errs, but it punishes the accused before the accused has opportunity to be led privately to sorrow or to provide his own private defense, before the proper God-given audience. When we hear a person publicly accused, we should ask: When did you present this privately to him? How specifically would this person say that he responded when this matter was brought to him privately? When was it brought to him again individually, but before two or three witnesses? What is the evidence from those two or three witnesses against the accused? What is the evidence from those two or three witnesses that defends the accused? If any of these questions cannot be answered, what we are hearing is defamation and judgmental abuse of reputation when the matter is unnecessarily brought to the wrong audience.

Often the tyranny of defamation is defended, as being required because it is public sin. Our confessions ([5, p. 659f, para. 284]) list these attributes of public sin, that is not defaming: The judge and everyone already knows the facts (They do not need to be told any facts). The accused is justly barred from fellowship

on the basis of those known facts. E.g. the Pope who has set forth his false doctrine publicly before all. The example of admonishing gossip in our confessions [5, para. 277f], tells us to admonish that person who tells the neighbors without telling his servant privately. This admonition applies just as well to that tyrant who defames his servant, who drags his servant before the neighbors, and troubles them by making them witness a public accusation before a matter has been privately accused. In defamation, the evil reputation is spread wider than it must be. For the possibility exists that the accused is not an incorrigible sinner, and will acknowledge his sin in a private setting. The same harm obtains in the case that the audience is chosen to be larger than it need be, namely, that the person who is accused does not have opportunity to express sorrow privately, or to receive absolution privately, or on the other hand to privately correct and forgive the one who falsely accuses him. Either way the cause of forgiveness, of leading to repentance, and of giving saving faith is harmed. When the accused is guilty his opportunity for private absolution is stolen. When the accused is not guilty the private absolution of the false accuser is stolen. We have the example from St. Paul, that public error, which had given offense, he corrected publicly before those who were offended (Gal 2:14) but the apostle did not dare even to preach the truth publicly in another local congregation, because he wanted to avoid unnecessarily correcting those pastors in public if they needed it, and also to preserve his own reputation, and submit to any necessary correction from the pastors of that local congregation privately (Gal 2:1ff). *I went up again to Jerusalem ... by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.*

A demand to unquestioningly accept a statement of private judgment is tyranny which sets evil free by short circuiting legitimate opposition to evil on earth. The large catechism explains that a person does a good work when he does not pronounce individual private judgment, but instead properly and in good order, after private admonition, brings a matter and evidence before the community, civil or church tribunal “For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence and punish. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person.” [5, p. 661, para. 280]

2F. *Liberty Confusion (libertinism)*. When society observes that an obvious deceit has protection as if it were truth, each takes liberty to define his own “truth,” any falsehood is by the same rule permitted to usurp the right of truth. As absurd as it seems to boldly declare deceit, this is done for a purpose: to remove all opposition to deceit, by forbidding anyone from opposing deceit, or discussing deceit in the light of evidence in the public square where victims might be delivered from deceit by good judgment which resists falsehood and delivers the innocent from the abuse of deceit.

Real liberty is a blessing which comes from truth, rather than from deceit. The substantial benefit to the soul is upheld when the wicked are restrained by the truth. *Proverbs 17:15 He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.* True Liberty is found where the system operates according to the truth, the Word of God. The Word of God does not deceive, but forbids deceit. Once deceit is permitted, the devil is permitted too, and all his destruction and bondage in every kind of matter come through that deceit. Libertinism sets the devil and his minions free, to destroy everyone and everything.

Nobody has liberty in the sense that he is free to pervert justice. When a person in his station acts justly, according to true facts and according to God’s judgment in a matter, that action should be praised by us all. When a person in his station engages in libertinism which contradicts God’s will, that person should be appropriately warned in view of his station of the curse which certainly comes from God for rebellion against His divine will. We find it very difficult to do either of these duties, because the sinful flesh drags us in the opposite direction.

The sinful nature dishonors those who are in authority over us and who provide a divine blessing, with the excuse they are sinful, and so they should not be honored. We should note well that God says *honour thy Father and thy Mother* (Exo 20:12). This command applies also especially to the mother or father who is an unbeliever. Even though their works are sinful, and do not earn them heaven, the works that they perform according to God’s Word and in a correct conscience should be praised by all. The same thing applies to those who bless us with an example of civic righteousness, whether he be an exemplary citizen, or a ruler. He who gets a matter right, and bears witness to true good in a good conscience should be supported

and praised. Both the natural knowledge of God and the conscience are divine blessings by which God brings about great good among us through those in every station [17, p. 408-411]. Therefore when a person gets a matter right, we should acknowledge and praise good judgment in that matter. But where the judge is wrong, we have a duty to gently lead that erring judge away from deceit to the truth of God's Word that governs each matter, for by doing so, we help him to avoid God's curse and to find God's blessing. This is true in both the sphere of grace and in the sphere of civic righteousness.

Franz Pieper writes: "In this sphere [of civil righteousness] they [those who do civic righteousness] deserve high praise, and, as the Confession says ([5, Trigl. P. 127, 24]), God rewards them in this life with temporal blessings. it is God's will that the kingdoms of this world be maintained, namely, as the scaffolding for the building of the Church. And as civil righteousness is the mainstay of the kingdoms of the world, God bestows temporal rewards upon the works of civil righteousness. That is the glory and the value of the good works of non-Christians in the civil domain." [18, p. 44, c.f. 43-45]

Thus it is our duty, to acknowledge the outward good that is done according to the divine Word and a correct conscience, even when it is done by an unbeliever. We should praise those who do it and assure them that God will certainly bless it. If God openly praises that civic righteousness with rewards, we should also raise our voices to praise these good works that God has both brought about through the conscience and the natural knowledge of God, and also handsomely rewarded. Nevertheless, it is also our duty to preach law and lead those lost souls to repentance. It will very likely be an obstacle to reaching those exemplary civic servants who do not yet believe, if we do not acknowledge that God has worked through them to bring His outward will about. It will be an obstacle if we do not confess that God has helped and blessed us the citizens through an example of civic righteousness. We must carefully explain that a work of civic righteousness does not make anyone righteous before God, nor does it expiate sins that we have committed in other respects. Exemplary civic servants receive scraps from God, blessings in this earth, so that they cannot use those works as a reason to be accepted of God, for God has already abundantly and richly rewarded those works on earth. Nevertheless God desires to give an even better blessing than exemplary civic works deserve, and He gives it freely, even though our works

do not deserve any blessing, but only wrath and punishment. Although we go to the grave, because we are sinners, our LORD Jesus Christ has delivered us from the power of the grave, by earning eternal righteousness through His obedience to God's law in our place, and by His innocent death under the punishment of our sins. Christ Jesus has broken the power that hell had over us, and given us freely the eternal inheritance of a child of God. *Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Gal 4:4ff when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Let us therefore as good citizens ask those who engage in libertinism, in whatever station they may be: "Has your heavenly Father sent you to do this? Is it His will? I know that when I'm a naughty person, I deserve a whipping, and that I'll get a blessing when I follow the good will of my master. Isn't this true for all of us?" All kinds of Fathers are not given this honor that they might establish their own capricious will, for that will is evil (Gen 8:21, Psa 14:3, Ecc 7:20, Isa 64:6, Psa 143:2), but God has given each in authority the duty to do God's will. As He said that fathers have not the duty to reward or punish children according to their own capricious will, but fathers are rather warned against tyrannical use of power: Eph 6:4 *ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* (C.f. Rom 13:1-7)

We seek to deliver men from the shameful libertinism by which the devil leads men through their vile affections even to eternal destruction. We want each soul to be set free from the bondage of corruption, by the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name (Mat 9:2), and to walk in the *glorious liberty of the children of God.* (Rom 8:21) We seek to establish true liberty, Christian Liberty which is not burdened by the law, but which fulfills the law freely and without compulsion, because this is the work that the child of God wants to do, to glorify God, and to help our neighbor. Christian liberty is the truth that a Christian is a willing servant of all laws and cheerfully obeys them whenever they are helpful to faith... Faith is everything. If faith is missing, then no work that may be done is pleasing to God. And if faith is present, then good works of every sort naturally flow from faith as good fruits naturally grow from a good tree." [16, III, Q33]

2G. *Divine Order Confusion (contempt for a divine judge)*. When each judge in each station is condemned for allowing deliberation, God's order that protects us from deceit is destroyed. The judge in each station is accused for doing what is essential to his office, namely to hear charges, evidence for an accusation, and a defense against the accusation. Contempt for a judge is more than getting a single matter wrong, because it also gains permission to get every matter wrong by hatred for that judge which God sent. Imagine the chaos of a society where each citizen declares the deceit that he himself is the only just judge, where each Christian follows his own thoughts rather than the Word of Christ, where each child declares himself the master of Father and Mother. This chaos abounds where a "right" to declare an obvious deceit has been accepted. All legitimate rights are destroyed, because the rightful judge is forbidden from doing his true job. All matters become malleable, when the order which judges them by divine right is held in contempt, and this is done where God's judge is held in contempt.

We have several proofs that a Christian ought to oppose the declaration of statements of men as unquestionable. For the divine office of judge in any estate to be carried out, truth must have superiority over falsehood. Each judge's office requires proper emphasis should be put on the weighty facts which decide a case, as it is written: *John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*. It is certainly not righteous when falsehood is equal to truth. Perfectly innocent Jesus set an example by honoring the judge in his proper station, while still requiring that judge to decide matters according to true facts and according to God's will. When Pilate called on Jesus to respect his office. *John 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin*.

2G1 *Civic Order confusion (contempt of court)*. We have proof that the exclusive right of truth is necessary to establish justice in the civic court. In the state, God has provided the civic judge, which is to operate independently of the church. When a man asked Jesus to perform a property judgment, Jesus (Luke 12:13f) *said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? Again: Eph 6:5-7 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the*

servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: For in this way we show those divinely appointed governors that Christ Jesus has died for your sins, according to His true Word. I will therefore serve you, oh master, in singleness of heart, because Christ deserves that.

2G2 *Church ordinance confusion (Contempt for a fellow believer, a pastor, or a local church)*. Scripture tells us that church courts must operate on the exclusive superiority of truth as well. In ecclesiastical court, each Christian is a kind of judge who makes judgment based on evidence, e.g. to determine the truth of whether or not a fellow brother continues in fellowship with Christ. We teach this truth under the 8th commandment [5, p. 661] and in the 5th chief part of Christian doctrine which all believers ought to know: the office of the Keys and Confession [4, p. 181]. Any attempt to unseat the Christian from his right of judgment according to conscience in the light of Scripture disrupts the order that God has provided. Notably, the Wisconsin Synod has effectively destroyed this court because synodical powers have (through the abuse of the doctrine of the universal priesthood) usurped the individual's right to judge, and the local congregation's right to judge. God says: James 1:22 *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*. God gives the right to judge even to the least member of the congregation who has the power to absolve and to gain a brother (Mat 18:15). It is wrong to leave decisions about manifest sins to the civic courts only. *1 Corinthians 6:1-5 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?* "Ecclesiastical courts" encompass all practical errors by any member in fellowship as the context clearly states (1Co 6:9f). We honor this right because a brother or sister in Christ, be they ever so humble, can tell you truly: Mat 9:2 *be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee*. For God has given this authority, and He regards as innocent those who believe this promise. God said: Joh 20:23 *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;*

Other ordinances of Christendom include the local congregation, the local pastor, and the local deacon. We are bound to what Scripture says of these ordinances. In modern times, when even truth itself is practically denied, and this denial is forced upon others, it will likely also be common for someone to treat these divine ordinances as if they were man-made, and so open to redefinition or open to modification, e.g. changing the qualifications for office.

2G3 *Head of household Confusion (Contempt for a parent)*. Likewise, Father and Mother are established by God as judges of their children, which will be guarded by divine justice, when it is written: *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. (Exo 20:12)* But this duty is bound to promote truth, and to oppose deceit. *Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

2H. *Courtesy Confusion (discourtesy)*. When even the divine order of gender is permitted to be hated and rejected, this sets a precedent that men are also free to oppose human order, which is far less noble than divine order. Human order consists of rules that serve love and peace, but that are not directly commanded by God. Although human order is not contained in the commandments, it serves the purpose for which God gave order, which is that men might be kind and courteous to one another. We ought to serve those things which aid love and peace, as our confessions say [5, p. 91 para. 55]. It does not serve love or peace if a human ordinance is upheld in a way that harms the divine ordinance [5, p. 623, para. 144; p. 735, para. 11; p. 749, para. 62f]. When however the human order does not conflict with God's word it should be observed for the sake of love and peace. For in this way even human ordinances can serve to let God's Word be heard and followed, to aid the war against the devil's purpose of the chaos of confusion [5, p. 721, para. 80f]. It is most certainly of the devil when chaos has the upper hand.

“Then comes the devil, inciting and provoking in all directions, but especially agitating matters that concern the conscience and spiritual affairs, namely, to induce us to despise and disregard both the Word and works of God, to tear us away from faith, hope, and love, and bring us into misbelief, false security, and obduracy, or, on the other hand, to despair, denial of God, blasphemy,

and innumerable other shocking things. These are indeed snares and nets, yea, real fiery darts which are shot most venomously into the heart, not by flesh and blood, but by the devil” [5, p 727, para. 104]

Even human order can serve love and peace, and so the order should be carefully observed, unless a pressing need causes this order to be set aside. For it is written: *1Co 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order. Phi 2:14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: Rom 13:7f Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 1Pe 3:8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: (Cmpr. 1Pe 3:9-13)* Our actions should serve, as a fitting adornment that does not repel confused souls from God's kindness and forgiveness. We should say by word and deed: *2 John 1:3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

2I. *Worship Confusion (Idolatry)*. In other contexts, we have no trouble recognizing that it is idolatry to think man has power to create something out of nothing by believing it, (e.g. Tinkerbelle [2][3]). We can't by our declaration change the color of a single hair, but we must let yes remain yes, and no remain no, as it is written: *Mat 5:36f Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* But we live in the times of confused snowflakes who began to abound in the witchcraft of the Victorian era, and have lately produced blasphemous, spoiled children who believe in modern tinkerbelle effects, as if mere belief can perform miracles, and even bring a divine being into existence. [2][3] They are the victims of flattery. (S1) When people are demonized for speaking truth and worshipped for speaking deceit, this pressure strives to keep souls away from Christ by pride and confusion. *Proverbs 20:19 meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.* It ought to be obvious enough that Bruce is not God. So we should gently disagree with his deceit. To do otherwise would be to worship him. Those victims of confusion have been led to worship man, to think of men as the creators of God.

We should strive to deliver people so deluded and led away from God our Savior. Jude 1:21-25 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

We must know and acknowledge that we live in times that are devastated by these fonts of confusion which are similar to gender confusion. There are many who are alarmed at the great confusion descending upon our times. For example, a recent podcast [10] notes: “[A] former opinion editor for the New York Times... left... because... ‘the newspaper now will only listen to the far left’ (2C)(2D)... [An interviewer asked her:] In what ways has the world gone mad (1)?... [Answer:] When you have the chief reporter on the beat for COVID for the New York Times talking about how questioning or pursuing the question of the lab leak is racist, the world has gone mad (1E)(2C)(2D)(2H)... When you are not allowed to say out loud and in public (2) that there are differences between men and women (1) the world has gone mad ... When we are not allowed to acknowledge that rioting is rioting (2A)(2C) and its bad (2E), and that silence is not violence (1D)(2A)(2D)(2E), but violence is violence (2A)(2E) (2F), the world has gone mad (2A, 2C, 2D, 2E 2F)... When we are not able to say that Hunter Biden’s laptop is a story worth pursuing, the world has gone mad (1E)(2C)(2G1) ... When, in the name of progress, young school children, as young as kindergarten, are being separated in public schools because of their race, and that is called progress rather than segregation (2A)(2B), the world has gone mad. ... Who are the people stopping that conversation? You dude... [the media] because if you bring that stuff up you are called all kinds of names (1D)(2I) and accused of being a horrible, awful, evil person... [Interviewer: I can google them and I can find them.] You found it... on a conservative website that actually allowed you to talk about it (2D), you certainly didn’t find it on your network (2C)... you may be able to find it on social media until it is banned (1E)(2D) or people are deplatformed (1D)(2H)... The LA Times Columnist Jakey Combs has written a piece... we need to stop as journalists reporting both sides of every story (2C)...

Journalists are praising this column... Both-siderism in political coverage. [reporters are saying in effect] You are too dumb (2H) to be allowed to make that decision [by hearing both sides] (2D), and come up with your own opinion, we have to feed it to you (2C)...” [10, Ep. 38]

We as Christians face the problem that our brethren in the USA hear falsehood declared as truth every day, together with a threat to him who does not accept that deceit, as truth, that he will be branded as evil, in some way. For example, a Father who went to a schoolboard meeting to protest the policy that allows transgender men in the women’s bathroom, was arrested for disturbing the peace. (2E) But the schoolboard members who said: “we have no evidence that transgenders will attempt rape” (1E)(2A)(2C) (2D) ignored the evidence of a police report, a positive test on a rape kit, and an arrest of a transgender student for rape. [10, Ep. 35] People declare fake news as truth every day (1), and many long for someone strong enough to oppose such bold deceit. If such people hear a statement of a pastor or a Christian in fellowship with the LCR declare things as true which cannot be proven (1), they will naturally believe that we have been infected by the modern madness. We will be at a disadvantage in persuading them that we are not accused, if there is also advocacy or evidence of propaganda (2C), censorship (2D), injustice (2E), or discourtesy (2H). Note that these four categories of error do not necessarily involve flagrant deceptions. We will find it difficult to keep respect for the LCR, or to persuade people that our churches do not condone also flagrant deceptions if we do not oppose deceit and oppose those confusions which help deceit abound.

Some estimate the number of people who are not fooled by flagrant deceit to be about 70%. About 30% of any random gathering of people will either be in the camp creating deceptions, or in the camp of simple people who are fooled by deceit. Each Christian who sees what is going on is trying to lead those 30% to repentance and to the fruits of repentance. If we don’t set a clear example by our own behavior, then even our own parishioners are likely to think that we have joined that 30%, having given up on helping their victims, or converting or reforming anyone.

It is so hard to keep our minds focused on what is good in times that are decaying morally. When respect for a deceit is demanded, if a Christian does not at least mildly disagree, the mind of an observer may be inflamed against Christ. If the observer has strong evidence that it is deceit, silence appears to be

indifference to the destruction of many divine goods, and to be indifference to many destructive evils. Generally, when correcting someone who has wandered into error on one point, it is good to emphasize the good that is done elsewhere by that same person. We make it difficult for a man to think well of us, if we are indifferent to evil. We can compare the goods that we are promoting by the light of this passage:

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true (2B), whatsoever things are honest (2A), whatsoever things are just (2E), whatsoever things are pure (2F), whatsoever things are lovely (2G), whatsoever things are of good report (2C); if there be any virtue (2H), (2D), and if there be any praise, (2I) think on these things.

Conclusion: We believers must not be ensnared by those many confusions which assault us. We must avoid not only becoming indifferent to sin, and so being lost ourselves (Col 3:6), but we must also avoid having a confession which is tainted by harm, and so offensive to the work of sharing the Gospel. *Eph 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.* If we would support God's good gifts, we must diligently advocate truth, decent reporting, freedom to Speak, justice, Christian Liberty, divine order, civic order, church order, order in the home, courtesy, and true worship. If we would oppose evil, we must diligently oppose deceit, propaganda, censorship, tyranny, libertinism, contempt for a divine judge, discourtesy and idolatry. It leads lost souls to salvation when our works are honest, convict of sin, resist sin, and thus tell of God's grace and forgiveness. *Mat 5:15f Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* These works will be successful, because they serve God's power to save which is alone in the promise of salvation in the name of Jesus Christ our LORD. (Rom 1:16) *1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* May God grant us steadfast service to the glory of His name. S.D.G. /Pr. Jeffrey A. Young/

End notes

[1] "Why we shouldn't Compare Transracial to Transgender Identity," by Robin Dembroff, and Dee Payton, Boston Review Online, <https://bostonreview.net/race-philosophy-religion-gender-sexuality/robin-dembroff-dee-payton-why-we-shouldnt-compare>

[2] Efficient Market Hypothesis and the Tinkerbell Effect, by Eric Roll, 10/14/2010, in Economics, Online <http://deanesmay.com/2010/10/14/efficient-market-hypothesis-and-the-tinkerbell-effect/> "...the Tinkerbell Effect. The name is a reference to some versions of the Peter Pan story, in which Tinkerbell is mortally wounded, but since faeries are powered by belief, the audience can heal her by applauding to show they believe in faeries. There's an old saw that reality is that which doesn't simply go away when people stop believing in it; tinkerbell effects are the exceptions to that rule, things which are indisputably real but which only exist because people believe in them. Speculative bubbles are one example: for many years, it was widely believed that housing prices always went up, and it was true so long as everyone believed it, but once people stopped believing it, it abruptly ceased to be true." [2]

[3]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tinkerbell_effect, "The Tinkerbell effect is an American English expression describing things that are thought to exist only because people believe in them. The effect is named after Tinker Bell, the fairy in the play Peter Pan, who is revived from near death by the belief of the audience." [3]

[4] An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, CPH, 1943. p. 75, 76: examples: Mat 26:59-61, 1Ki 21:13, p173, p174=pro 19:5, p175=eph 4:25, Gehazi 2Ki5:22, 25.

[5] Concordia Triglotta, The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1917, The Mott Press, Minneapolis, MN.

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"271] False witness, then, is everything which cannot be properly proved. 272] Therefore, what is not manifest upon sufficient evidence no one shall make public or declare for truth; and, in short, whatever is secret should be allowed to remain secret, or, at any rate, should be

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secretly reprov'd, as we shall hear. 273] Therefore, if you encounter an idle tongue which betrays and slanders some one, contradict such a one promptly to his face, that he may blush; thus many a one will hold his tongue who else would bring some poor man into

bad repute, from which he would not easily extricate himself. For honor and a good name are easily taken away, but not easily restored. 274] Thus you see that it is summarily forbidden to speak any evil of our neighbor, however, the civil government, preachers, father and mother excepted, on the understanding that this commandment does not allow evil to go unpunished. Now, as according to the Fifth Commandment no one is to be injured in body, and yet Master Hannes [the executioner] is excepted, who by virtue of his office does his neighbor no good, but only evil and harm, and nevertheless does not sin against God's commandment, because God has on His own account instituted that office; for He has reserved punishment for His own good pleasure, as He threatens in the First Commandment,—just so also, although no one has a right in his own person to judge and condemn anybody, yet if they to whose office it belongs fail to do it, they sin as well as he who would do so of his own accord, without such office. For here necessity requires one to speak of the evil, to prefer charges, to investigate and testify; 275] and it is not different from the case of a physician who is sometimes compelled to examine and handle the patient whom he is to cure in secret parts. Just so governments, father and mother, brothers and sisters, and other good friends, are under obligation to each other to reprove evil wherever it is needful and profitable. 276] But the true way in this matter would be to observe the order according to the Gospel, Matt. 18, 15, where Christ says: If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. Here you have a precious and excellent teaching for governing well the tongue, which is to be carefully observed against this detestable misuse. Let this, then, be your rule, that you do not too readily spread evil concerning your neighbor and slander him to others, but admonish him privately that he may amend [his life]. Likewise, also, if some one report to you what this or that one has done, teach him, too, to go and admonish him personally, if he have seen it himself; but if not, that he hold his tongue. 277] The same you can learn also from the daily government of the household. For when the master of the house sees that the servant does not do what he ought, he admonishes him personally. But if he were so foolish as to let the servant sit at home, and went on the streets to complain of him to his neighbors,

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he would no doubt be told: "You fool, what does that concern us? 278] Why do you not tell it to him?" Behold, that would be acting quite brotherly, so that the

evil would be stayed, and your neighbor would retain his honor. As Christ also says in the same place: If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Then you have done a great and excellent work; for do you think it is a little matter to gain a brother? Let all monks and holy orders step forth, with all their works melted together into one mass, and see if they can boast that they have gained a brother.

279] Further, Christ teaches: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. So he whom it concerns is always to be treated with personally, and not to be spoken of without his knowledge. 280] But if that do not avail, then bring it publicly before the community, whether before the civil or the ecclesiastical tribunal. For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence and punish. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person. 281] But if we gossip about another in all corners, and stir the filth, no one will be reformed, and afterwards when we are to stand up and bear witness, we deny having said so. 282] Therefore it would serve such tongues right if their itch for slander were severely punished, as a warning to others. 283] If you were acting for your neighbor's reformation or from love of the truth, you would not sneak about secretly nor shun the day and the light.

284] All this has been said regarding secret sins. But where the sin is quite public so that the judge and everybody know it, you can without any sin avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself into disgrace, and you may also publicly testify concerning him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slandering or false judging or testifying; as, when we now reprove the Pope with his doctrine, which is publicly set forth in books and proclaimed in all the world. For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it. 285] Thus we have now the sum and general understanding of this commandment, to wit, that no one do any injury with the tongue to his neighbor, whether friend or foe, nor speak evil of him, no matter whether it be true or false, unless it be done by commandment or for his reformation, but that every

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one employ his tongue and make it serve for the best of every one else, to cover up his neighbor's sins and infirmities, excuse them, palliate and garnish them with his own reputation. 286] The chief reason for this

should be the one which Christ alleges in the Gospel, in which He comprehends all commandments respecting our neighbor, Matt. 7, 12: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

287] Even nature teaches the same thing in our own bodies, as St. Paul says, 1 Cor. 12, 22: Much more, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. No one covers his face, eyes, nose, and mouth, for they, being in themselves the most honorable members which we have, do not require it. But the most infirm members, of which we are ashamed, we cover with all diligence; hands, eyes, and the whole body must help to cover and conceal them. 288] Thus also among ourselves should we adorn whatever blemishes and infirmities we find in our neighbor, and serve and help him to promote his honor to the best of our ability, and, on the other hand, prevent whatever may be discreditable to him. 289] And it is especially an excellent and noble virtue for one always to explain advantageously and put the best construction upon all he may hear of his neighbor (if it be not notoriously evil), or at any rate to condone it over and against the poisonous tongues that are busy wherever they can pry out and discover something to blame in a neighbor, and that explain and pervert it in the worst way; as is done now especially with the precious Word of God and its preacher”

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297] For we are so inclined by nature that no one desires to see another have as much as himself, and each one acquires as much as he can; the other may fare as best he can. 298] And yet we pretend to be godly, know how to adorn ourselves most finely and **conceal our rascality**, resort to and invent **adroit devices** and **deceitful artifices** (such as now are daily most ingeniously contrived) as though they were derived from the law codes; yea, we even dare impertinently to refer to it, and boast of it, and **will not have it called rascality, but shrewdness and caution**. 299] In this lawyers and jurists assist, who **twist and stretch the law to suit it to their cause**, stress words and use them for a **subterfuge**, irrespective of equity or their neighbor’s necessity. And, in short, whoever is the most expert and cunning in these affairs finds most help in law, as they themselves say: Vigilantibus iura subveniunt [that is, The laws favor the watchful]. 300] This last commandment therefore is given not for

rogues in the eyes of the world, but just for the most pious, who wish to be praised and be called honest and upright people, since they have not offended against the former commandments, as especially the Jews claimed to be, and even now many great noblemen, gentlemen, and princes. For the other common masses belong yet farther down, under the Seventh Commandment, as those who are not much concerned whether they acquire their possessions with honor and right.

301] Now, this occurs most frequently in cases that are brought into court, where it is the purpose to get something from our neighbor and to force him out of his own. As (to give examples), when people quarrel and wrangle about a large inheritance, real estate, etc., they avail themselves of, and resort to, whatever has the appearance of right, so dressing and adorning everything that the law must favor their side, and they keep the property with such title that no one can make complaint or lay claim thereto.

[6] “Evidence that demands a verdict,” Josh McDowell.

[7]. “Evolution, a Theory in Crisis,” Michael Denton’s

[8] “The Judgment of Martin Luther On Monastic vows” Luther’s Works, Fortress Press, Vol. 44, p. 243.

[9] Luther’s Works, Fortress Press.

[10] Gregg Knapp, Ep. 38, Ep. 35 <https://www.iheart.com/podcast/269-the-greg-knapp-experience-86254633/>

[11] President Biden Must Oppose the Taliban’s Current and Future Crackdown on Human Rights, Nina Shea, 8/21/2021

<https://www.hudson.org/research/17206-president-biden-must-oppose-the-taliban-s-current-and-future-crackdown-on-human-rights>

[12] “Here I stand”, by Roland Bainton, Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN, 1950.

[13] “The Fallacy Detective,” Nathaniel Bluedorn & Hans Bluedorn, 2009, Christian Logic, Muscatine, IA, USA.

[14] “Liespotting: Proven Techniques to Detect Deception,” 2011, Pamela Meyer, St. Martin’s Griffin.

[15] https://www.ted.com/talks/pamela_meyer_how_to_spot_a_liar?language=en

[16] Liberty or Death, J. A. Young, Catechism version, 10/31/2007.

[17] Christian Dogmatics, John T. Mueller, Th.D., CPH, 1951.

[18] Christian Dogmatics, Franz Pieper, Vol. 3, CPH, St. Louis, 1953.

Appendix A: Enticing Words Taxonomy

Enticing words of man's wisdom: 1Co 2:4-6, Col 2:4

Broken down by Col. 2:8

Philosophy (love of worldly wisdom)

Vain Deceit

Following traditions of men (2)

Not proven by Scripture (Col. 2:18)

Following Rudiments of the world Col 2:8

Forsake the right way 2Pe 2:15 (3)

Count it pleasure to riot day 2Pe 2:13 (1)

Handle word of God deceitfully 2Co 4:2 (2)

Follow human authority Eph 4:14 (3)

Appeal to pride (Col 2:18 vainly puff)

Idolize messengers (Col 2:18)

Take advantage of weakness (Col 2:18)

old man, dirty deceitful lust (Eph 4:17ff)

* Vanity of mind Eph 4:17, 2Ti 3:13

* Darkened mind Eph 4:18 (2Th 2:10)

Alienated from life of God v18

* Blindness of heart Eph 4:18

Unfeeling of coarse sins Eph 4:19

Wantonly ignore God Eph 4:19

Wantonly ignore law Eph 4:19

Wantonly ignore neighbor v19

Beguiling unstable (2Pe 2:14)

Exercise with covetous pract. 2Pe 2:14

Playing on bitter envy Jam 3:14 (9)

Playing on hatred Jam 3:14 (5)

Playing on preferences Jam 3:17 (4)

* Hypocrisy Jam 3:17 (3)

Make use of old man to mislead Rom 3:9

* Deadly filthy words (Rom 3:13)

* Tongues speak deceit (Rom 3:13)

Speak Deadly false doctrine (Rom 3:13)

Cursing (2nd. Com.) Rom 3:14

Bitterness (5th Com.) Rom 3:14

Go to shed blood (5th Com.) Rom 3:15

Practice destruction 4th Com. Rom 3:16

Cause misery 4th Com. Rom 3:16

Don't forgive (3rd Com.)

Don't fear God (1st & all com)Rom 3:18

* Sleight of men (distract, sw dice Eph 4:14)

Not renouncing secret shame 2Co 4:2

Lie in wait to deceive Eph 4:14

e.g. Jannes, Jamb. 2Ti 3:8, Exo 7:11-13

* Cunning Craftiness (clever manipulation)

Eph 4:14, Job 15:5, 12-18, Luk 20:23,

1Co 3:19f, 2Co 11:3, 2Co 4:2

Deceptive Seduction (2Ti 3:13)

Sport. thmselvs w. deceivings 2Pe 2:13

Flattery 1Th 2:5

Take filthy wages (2Pe 2:15, Tit 1:11)

Covetousness (1Th 2:5, 2Pe 2:3)

Improved reputation (1Th 2:6)

Praise of men (1Th 2:6)

Signs of Satan (2Th 2:9)

Whatever Leads to a lie (Joh 8:44)

Whatever leads to deceit (Rev 20:10)

"A fallacy is an error in logic" p. 10

Lying wonders (2Pe 2:9)

Power of Satan (2Th 2:9, Job 1:12,
Act 26:18,)

Punish good confession Luk 21:12-17

Attack health, wealth, Job 1:12, 2:6

Attack family, business Job 1:12

Keep people ignorant (Act 26:18)

Deceitful workers 2Co 11:13

Fake apostles (2Co 11:13)

Fake ministers of Gospel (2Co 11:15)

Do cunning craftiness, e.g. flattery

e.g. as Pharis. tempt Jesus Luk 20:21

Flattery (Snob appeal)

Pleasure to riot in Daytime

Follow the example of the devil

e.g. as serpent beguiled Eve 2Co 11:3

Fake student Gen 3:1

(part-to-whole fallacy)

Deceitful teacher gen 3:4

(speak deadly false doctrine)

Blasphemous speculator Gen 3:5

(deceitful use of the Word of God)

e.g. Balaam Son of Boser, (2Pe 2:15)

loved wages of unrighteousness

forsaken the right way 2Pe 2:16

madness of tyranny Num 22:32-34

punish good confession

Num 22:6,35 cursing, hypocrisy

gone astray-tempt pleasure to riot

(Ad Hominem, quite literally)

Deadly filthy words, dec. seduction

Num 31:16, Num 25:1-5, Num 25:9

(Taught enemy to corrupt, plague)

God sentences to death Num 31:7f

Grow worse and worse (2Ti 3:13)

By God delusion grows (2Th 2:11f)

God blinds them (Job 5:13-14)

Appendix B: Fallacy Categories (mostly from [13])

Avoiding the question

- Red Herring
- Special Pleading (an excuse not an exception)
- Ad Hominem
- Genetic Fallacy-where arg. Originated.
- Tu Quoque-inconsistent witness
- Faulty appeal to authority

Making assumptions

- Circular reasoning
- Equivocation –change meaning of a word mid argument
- Loaded Question –assumes another question true that is no explicit
- Slippery Slope assumes no barrier to multiple steps if one is granted
- Part-to-whole: true for part=> true for whole (ink is ugly, an ink drawing is ugly)
- Whole-to-part true for whole means must be true for each part (a cake made with butter is delicious, butter is delicious).
- Either-Or only two alternatives given, when there are multiple (study with me, or I won't do it.)

Statistical errors

- False generalization: all salesmen are rich
- Hasty generalization: my ford was junk, all fords are junk
- False analogy same in one respect means same in another respect
- A happened before B means A caused B (Post Hoc ergo propter Hoc)
- Proof by lack of evidence

Propaganda

- Appeal to fear
- Appeal to pity
- Bandwagon
- Fake Hurry
- Repetition
- Transfer (Fit man says: tone up in 2 wks)
- Snob Appeal
- Appeal to Tradition
- Appeal to High Tech

Others:

- Emotional Appeal
- Leading the witness
- Improper form, (calls for ambiguous answer)
- Conclusory –Assumes fact not in evidence
(Can also be seen as part-to-whole)

From the Lutheran Confessions:

Apol. AC, Pdf p. 51, 57 Art II original sin.

“To be without the fear of God, to be without faith, is actual guilt;” and therefore they deny that it is original guilt.... 8] Therefore, when they speak of the sin of origin, they do not mention the more serious faults of human nature, to wit, ignorance of God, contempt for God,... **being destitute of fear and confidence in God**, hatred of God’s judgment, flight from God [as from a tyrant] when He judges, anger toward God, despair of grace, putting one’s trust in present things [money, property, friends], etc. These diseases, which are in the highest degree contrary to the Law of God, the scholastics do not notice; yea, to human nature **they meanwhile ascribe unimpaired strength for loving God above all things, and for fulfilling God’s commandments according to the substance of the acts,**” p. 51

“puerile (childish) and trivial sophistry...our adversaries, to a great extent, do not understand what they say. They often speak what is contradictory, and neither explain correctly and logically that which is essential to [i.e., that which is or is not properly of the essence of] original sin.” P. 57

--vanity of mind, Darkened mind, blindness of heart, ignore law, don’t fear God, flattery

Apol. AC, pdf p. 69, Art. IV, justification

“they have also devised sophistry whereby they elude them. They say that these passages of Scripture, (which speak of faith,) ought to be received as referring to a fides formata, i.e., they do not ascribe justification to faith except on account of love. Yea, they do not, in any way, ascribe justification to faith, but only to love”

-Handle the word of God deceitfully, Rom 3:22-28, flattery,

Apol. AC pdf p. 101 Art III of love and the fulfilling of the law

“that hearts may have a true, certain comfort and hope, we point them, with Paul, to the divine promise of grace in Christ, and teach that we must believe that God gives us eternal life, not on account of our works, but for Christ’s sake, as the Apostle John says in his Epistle, 1 John 5, 12: He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.] 213] Here belongs also the declaration of Christ, Luke 17, 10: So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants... at this point the adversaries **play wonderfully with the words of Christ**. In the first place, they make an antistrophe and turn it against us. Much more, they say, can it be said: “If we have

believed all things, say, We are unprofitable servants.” 215] Then they add that **works are of no profit to God, but are not without profit to us.** See how the **puerile [childish] study of sophistry delights the adversaries, and although these absurdities** do not deserve a refutation, nevertheless we will reply to them in a few words. **The antistrophe is defective...**[for the adversaries speak of the “faith” of devils, mere knowledge Jam 2:19. Concerning “faith”] We are speaking... of confidence in the promise and mercy of God. And this confidence in the promise confesses that we are unprofitable servants; yea, this confession that our works are unworthy is the very voice of faith, as appears in this example of Daniel, 9:18, which we cited a little above: We do not present Our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, etc. 217] For faith saves because it apprehends mercy, or the promise of grace, even though our works are unworthy; and, thus understood, namely, that our works are unworthy, the antistrophe does not injure us: “When ye shall have believed all things, say, We are unprofitable servants;” for that we are saved by mercy, we teach with the entire Church....

“Faith is strong, not because of its worthiness, but because of the divine promise.] ... Christ, however, condemns confidence in our works; He does not condemn confidence in His promise. He does not wish us to despair of God’s grace and mercy. He accuses our works as unworthy, 219] but does not accuse the promise which freely offers mercy. And here Ambrose says well: Grace is to be acknowledged; but nature must not be disregarded. We must trust in the promise of grace and not 220] in our own nature. But **the adversaries act in accordance with their custom, and distort, against faith, 221] the judgments which have been given on behalf of faith.** [Hence, Christ in this place forbids men to trust in their own works; for they cannot help them. On the other hand, He does not forbid to trust in God’s promise. Yea, He requires such trust in the promise of God for the very reason that we are unprofitable servants and works can be of no help. **Therefore, the knaves have improperly applied to our trust in the divine promise the words of Christ which treat of trust in our own worthiness. This clearly reveals and defeats their sophistry.** May the Lord Christ soon **put to shame the sophists** who thus **mutilate His holy Word! Amen.**] We leave, however, these thorny points to the schools. The sophistry is plainly puerile when they interpret “unprofitable servant,” as meaning that the works are unprofitable to God, but are profitable to us. Yet Christ speaks

concerning that profit which makes God a debtor of grace to us, although it is out of place to discuss here concerning that which is profitable or unprofitable. For “unprofitable servants” means “insufficient,” because no one fears God as much, and loves God as much, and believes God as much 222] as he ought. But let us dismiss these **frigid cavils** (petty and unnecessary objections) of the adversaries, concerning which, if at any time they are brought to the light, prudent men will easily decide what they should judge. They have found a flaw in words which are very plain and clear. But **every one sees that in this passage confidence in our own works is condemned.** 223] Let us, therefore, hold fast to this which the Church confesses, namely, that we are saved by mercy.”

Handling the Word of God deceitfully, flattery, Appeal to pride, traditions of men, evident deceit

Apol. AC Pdf p. 134, Art VI Of Confession and Satisfaction.

“the adversaries acknowledge that satisfactions are of no profit for the remission of guilt. Yet **they imagine that satisfactions are of profit in redeeming from the punishments,** whether of purgatory or other punishments. For thus they teach that in the remission of sins, God [without means, alone] remits the guilt, and yet, **because it belongs to divine justice to punish sin, that He commutes eternal into temporal punishment.** They **add further that a part of this temporal punishment is remitted by the power of the keys, but that the rest is redeemed by means of satisfactions.** Neither can it be understood of what punishments a part is remitted by the power of the keys, unless they say that **a part of the punishments of purgatory is remitted,** from which it would follow that satisfactions are only punishments redeeming from purgatory. And **these satisfactions, they say, avail even though they are rendered by those who have relapsed into mortal sin, as though indeed the divine displeasure could be appeased by those who are in mortal sin.** 22] This entire matter is **fictitious, and recently fabricated without the authority of Scripture and the old writers of the Church.** ...

They cite many passages from the Scriptures, in order to impose upon the inexperienced, as though this subject which was unknown even in the time of Longobard, had authority from the Scriptures... Afterward they cite certain passages of the Fathers and the canons, and conclude that satisfactions in the Church are not to be abolished contrary to the plain Gospel and the decrees of the Councils and Fathers

against the decision of the Holy Church]; nay, even that those who have been absolved by the priest ought to bring to perfection the repentance that has been enjoined, following the declaration of Paul, Titus 2:14: *Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* 26] May God put to confusion these **godless sophists who so wickedly distort God's Word to their own most vain dreams! What good man is there who is not moved by such indignity?... Who has taught these asses such logic? Yet this is neither logic nor sophistry, but cunning trickery.** Accordingly, **they appeal to the expression repent in such a way that, when the inexperienced hear such a passage cited against us, they may derive the opinion that we deny the entire repentance. By these arts they endeavor to alienate minds and to enkindle hatred,** so that the inexperienced may cry out against us [Crucify! crucify!], that such pestilent heretics as disapprove of repentance should be removed from their midst. [Thus they are **publicly convicted of being liars in this matter.**

Take filthy wages, by covetousness, traditions of men, not proven by Scripture, Follow human authority, idolize messengers, vanity of mind, darkened mind, blindness of heart, unfeeling of coarse sins, ignore neighbor (greediness), exercise with covetous practices, deadly filthy words, tongues speak deceit, speak deadly false doctrine, don't fear God, slight of men, lie in wait to deceive, flattery, sign of Satan (proof by lack of evidence, appeal to tradition, faulty appeal to authority) handle the Word of God deceitfully (21 fallacies) hence liars.

Apol. AC Pdf p. 188, Art 27 of monastic vows

“And it is worth while to hear how **they pervert our reasons, and what they adduce to fortify their own cause. Accordingly, we will briefly run over a few of our arguments, and, in passing, explain away the sophistry of the adversaries** in reference to them. Since, however, this entire cause has been carefully and fully treated by Luther in the book to which he gave the title *De Votis Monasticis*, we wish here to consider that book as reiterated.

11] First, it is very certain that a vow is not lawful by which he who vows thinks that he merits the remission of sins before God, or makes satisfaction before God for sins. For this opinion is a manifest insult to the Gospel, which teaches that the remission of sins is freely granted us for Christ's sake, as has been said above at some length. Therefore we have correctly quoted the declaration of Paul to the Galatians, Gal. 5, 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace. Those who seek the remission of sins, not by faith in Christ, but by monastic works, detract from the honor of Christ, and crucify Christ afresh. But hear, hear how the composers of the Confutation escape in this place! 12] They explain this passage of Paul only concerning the Law of Moses, and they add that observe all things for Christ's sake, and endeavor to live the nearer the Gospel in order to merit eternal life. And they add a horrible peroration in these words: Wherefore those things are wicked that are here 13] alleged against monasticism. O Christ, how long wilt Thou bear these reproaches with which our enemies treat Thy Gospel