



Faith Alone

As mentioned in the last issue of *Table Talk*, the presentations for the 20th anniversary gathering of the LMS this past June centered on the four Reformation Solas that make up the seal of our church body (seen in the upper right hand corner of this page). The last issue included the paper on *Grace Alone*. This issue includes the paper by Rev. Tylan Dalrymple on *Faith Alone*. Note: This paper was a power-point presentation, so the format included here is some different from the original.

Clearly faith is important. The writer of Hebrews makes the point, "*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him*" (Hebrews 11:6). The first verse of a hymn somewhat popular in evangelical circles reads, "My faith has found a resting place - Not in device or creed..." the refrain continues, "I need no other argument, I need no other plea; It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me."

It sounds good, does it not? But then why, through the centuries, were a good number of church councils necessary? Why the formulation of creeds (statements of faith)? Why need for the Reformation? Most all whose theology was called into question believed "in Jesus" and believed "that He died, and that He died for them."

True faith was(is) necessary for salvation. The Jesus of Scripture is the only Savior - He alone is **the** way and **the** truth and **the** life (John 14:6). The message is a very specific message as Paul indicates in 1 Corinthians 15:3ff "...what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . ". The early church devoted itself to a very specific message, i.e., the "apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42). The Apostle John warned of antichrists (counterfeit Christs) coming into the world... and of the need to "continue in the teaching of Christ" i.e., the Jesus/Christ revealed to us in the pages of Scripture (see 2 John 7 ff).

We need clear statements of faith (creeds) - we need to know what we believe - we need to know in whom we believe (the object of our faith). And, we need personal faith (a gift of God - see Romans 10:17, Ephesians 2:8-9; Proverbs 3:5) that places our hope and confidence in Him (the Jesus of Scripture) in whom alone there is salvation from sin, death, and hell.

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Justification by Faith Alone

(A point by point discussion)

by

Rv. Tylan Dalrymple

Presented at the 2015 LMS-USA Conference and Convention

I. Martin Luther said that justification by faith alone is "the article upon which the church stands or falls."

The Roman Catholic response at the Council of Trent stands in direct opposition to Luther and Lutheran doctrine. In the General Council of Trent [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Trent] the Catholic Church stated in Canon XIV on justification that "If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema (excommunicated)." It was noted by Paul that, "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:14). The proper distinction of Law and Gospel falls directly under this heading. At the convention we noted three key ideas stemming from the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

1. Faith "alone" is most directly linked with the doctrine we call "justification."
2. Justification by faith alone is logically understood, but spiritually discerned (i.e., Our Lord Jesus justifies us before God. Salvation is through Christ alone.) This is easily understood, but not accepted because our sinful nature leads us to believe that we can somehow earn back or become righteous before God on our own.
3. Justification is confused with sanctification. Sanctification is a state of being reshaped and molded by God. "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life." (Romans 6:22 ESV) "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life." (NIV)

II. Does Faith Alone mean "Deeds not Creeds?"

1. ¹⁴"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17). James explains what is known as "living faith." Our confession of faith in the Creeds, provides the basis for good work which flows from true faith. In other words, "Justification will lead to sanctification."
2. One way to think of good works is by considering the modern produc-

tion line. In such a case good works are the "natural" and "necessary" byproduct of one's faith. We would be mistaken to make works the "source" of our faith. Another analogy for discerning faith from works is something people used to send after receiving a gift. What is it? We may remember sending out "thank-you" cards. Our works show gratitude and devotion for the gift Jesus has already paid for and given to each believer.

3. One Biblical text often used to argue against faith alone is found in John 14:15. There Jesus proclaims "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." The question we should ask is, "Who has kept all of God's commandments?" If no one has kept His commandments then what does Jesus mean when He makes this statement? It cannot possibly mean "If someone loves Jesus they will henceforth cease sinning."
4. We should keep "His" commandments and keep on keeping them. The problem is that most interpret John 14:15 excluding the "if-then" statement. "If you love me" goes hand in hand with faith. Keeping the commandments is paired with a love that trusts Jesus at His Word. Without faith and love the commandments are always discarded and replaced with some more "palatable" laws that man invents for himself.

III. 666 and social programs in the church.

1. 666 is salvation by works. It is the number of man and the mark of the beast.
2. This number most specifically relates to the religion of man that declares salvation by works or "earning heaven."
3. **666 is the direct opposite of "faith alone."**
4. Social programs supported by churches have led to confusion about the church's role. The church is not merely a charity organization or social government program. Jesus was fully God and fully man. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the church to support their neighbor both spiritually and physically. Christian doctrine does not allow one to be neglected at the expense of the other.
5. The passage below is from a website entitled "The Bible Study Site." It further details the distinction between faith alone and 666 (or salvation by works.)

The meaning of 666, as many a new Bible student quickly learns, is derived from the number and mark of the Beast Power written about in the book of Revelation. It symbolizes the perfection of man's overall system that is separated from God and under the constant influence of Satan the devil. Man's system on earth is made up of three parts, each represented by a six. Six represents, by itself, incompleteness or imperfection, as it is one less than seven (which is the number of completeness). The first six of 666 represents the false perfected religion of man under Satan's lead. The second six is for the deceived false governments of this world, and the third symbolizes man's self-centered economic system.

Six hundred sixty six represents the world and all that it does to appease and gratify human nature. The book of First John (written by the apostle John who also wrote Revelation) contains an often overlooked set of three verses which uses a subtle form of 6. This hidden form of six, found in the total number of times the word 'world' is used,

warns believers to separate themselves from man's system which is soon to DIE.

Scripture tells us, ¹⁵ "Do not love the WORLD, nor the things that are in the WORLD. If anyone loves the WORLD, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ Because everything that is in the WORLD - the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life - is not from the Father, but is from the WORLD. ¹⁷ And the WORLD and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (John 2:15 - 17, HBFV)

"The Bible Study Site." The Bible Study Site. Accessed June 16, 2015. <http://www.biblestudy.org/>.

IV. The meaning of faith.

1. "There are those who scoff at the school boy, calling him frivolous and shallow. Yet it was the school boy who said, 'Faith is believing what you know ain't so.'" (Mark Twain)
2. Mark Twain understood faith to be something illogical or blind. Christian faith is actually super logical and based on historical evidence. The things we have "not seen" were witnessed in real life by those who testify in God's Word. That same word tells us, ¹ "Now faith is the **assurance** of things hoped for, the **conviction** of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we **understand** that the universe was created by the **word of God**, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible (Hebrews 11:1)." Paul then goes on to quote what he "knows" from God's Word. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).
3. C.S. Lewis described faith as follows:
Roughly speaking, the word faith seems to be used by Christians in two senses or on two levels, and I will take them in turn. In the first sense it means simply belief--accepting or regarding as true the doctrines of Christianity. That is fairly simple. But what does puzzle people--at least it used to puzzle me--is the fact that Christians regard faith in this sense as a virtue. I used to ask how on Earth it can be a virtue--what is there moral or immoral about believing or not believing a set of statements? Obviously, I used to say, a sane man accepts or rejects any statement, not because he wants or does not want to, but because the evidence seems to him good or bad. If he were mistaken about the goodness or badness of the evidence, that would not mean he was a bad man, but only that he was not very clever. And if he thought the evidence bad but tried to force himself to believe in spite of it, that would be merely stupid.
Well, I think I still take that view. But what I did not see then--and a good many people do not see still--was this. I was assuming that if the human mind once accepts a thing as true it will automatically go on regarding it as true, until some real reason for reconsidering it turns up. In fact, I was assuming that the human mind is completely ruled by reason. But that is not so. For example, my reason is perfectly convinced by good evidence that anesthetics do not smother me and that properly trained surgeons do not start operating until I am unconscious. But that does not alter the fact that when they have me down on the table and clap their horrible mask over my face, a mere childish panic begins inside me. I start thinking I am going to choke,

and I am afraid they will start cutting me up before I am properly under. In other words, I lose my faith in anesthetics. It is not reason that is taking away my faith; on the contrary, my faith is based on reason. It is my imagination and emotions. The battle is between faith and reason on one side and emotion and imagination on the other.....

Now just the same thing happens about Christianity. I am not asking anyone to accept Christianity if his best reasoning tells him that the weight of evidence is against it. That is not the point at which faith comes in. But supposing a man's reason once decides that the weight of the evidence is for it. I can tell that man what is going to happen to him in the next few weeks. There will come a moment when there is bad news, or he is in trouble, or is living among a lot of other people who do not believe it, and all at once his emotions will rise up and carry out a sort of blitz on his belief. Or else there will come a moment when he wants a woman, or wants to tell a lie, or feels very pleased with himself, or sees a chance of making a little money in some way that is not perfectly fair; some moment, in fact, at which it would be very convenient if Christianity were not true. And once again his wishes and desires will carry out a blitz. I am not talking of moments at which any real new reasons against Christianity turn up. Those have to be faced and that is a different matter. I am talking about moments where a mere mood rises up against it.

Now faith, in the sense in which I am here using the word, is the art of holding onto things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods. For moods will change, whatever view your reason takes. I know that by experience. Now that I am a Christian, I do have moods in which the whole thing looks very improbable; but when I was an atheist, I had moods in which Christianity looked terribly probable. This rebellion of your moods against your real self is going to come anyway. That is why faith is such a necessary virtue; unless you teach your moods "where they get off" you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of faith.

Lewis, C.S. "Mere Christianity." Mere Christianity. 2001. Accessed June 16, 2015.

V. Faith Alone in the confessions

1. The Defense of the Augsburg Confession; Article IV (II): Of Justification. "In the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and, below, in the Twentieth Article, they condemn us, for teaching that men obtain remission of sins not because of their own merits, but freely for Christ's sake, through faith in Christ. [They reject quite stubbornly both these statements.] For they condemn us both for denying that men obtain remission of sins because of their own merits, and for affirming that, through faith, men obtain remission of sins, and through faith in Christ are justified. But since in this controversy the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated, which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ [which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible], and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences, we ask His Imperial Majesty to hear us with forbearance in regard to matters of such importance. For since the adversaries understand neither what the remission of sins, nor what

faith, nor what grace, nor what righteousness is, they sadly corrupt this topic, and obscure the glory and benefits of Christ, and rob devout consciences of the consolations offered in Christ. But that we may strengthen the position of our Confession, and also remove the charges which the adversaries advance against us, certain things are to be premised in the beginning, in order that the sources of both kinds of doctrine, i.e., both that of our adversaries and our own, may be known."

VI. Faith is a blessing from God

- ¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, ⁶but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹He who has ears, let him hear" (Matthew 13:1-9).
- True faith does not ask "what have I done?" Instead, it ponders why God should have mercy on a wretched person such as me. (Martin Luther)
- Faith sees things in their created order. The attributes of God are like branches of a tree growing each in their right proportion. Faith is a blessing that gives us the discernment to see that if we emphasize any aspect of God at the expense of another that aspect becomes a perversion. I have included below an article I wrote for our local *Chetek Alert* Newspaper on this topic.

This Christmas there will be many who believe the Lord's Kingdom may be furthered by emphasizing the virtues of Christianity. There will be talk of Christian charity. There will be talk of tolerance and love. We who serve the Lord Jesus are greatly distressed by the progressive foothold immorality has taken in our western culture. Briefly, I would like to explain why what we call "Christian virtues" become far more dangerous than many of the vices.

G.K. Chesterton wrote, "The modern world is not [wholly] evil. [Indeed], in some ways the modern world is far too good. It is full of wild and wasted virtues. When a religious scheme is shattered... it is not merely the vices that are set loose... But the virtues are let loose also; and the virtues wander more wildly [than the vices], and the virtues do more terrible damage. The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues have gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone."

Christian virtues are like branches of a tree. If we rip them from the tree the virtue dies a tragic death. Take charity as an example. We can give to people who are truly in need. We can also give to the point that we [enable] our neighbor's delinquency. We can be tolerant of people, but we cannot tolerate sin that will eventually destroy their body and soul. By exercising modern tolerance we metaphorically give a drunken man his keys to drive home. Lewis wrote, "Love may forgive all infirmities and love still in spite of them: but

Love cannot cease to will their removal."

It is the best of things that become most evil when torn from their source. Love for one's country may become nationalism. A mother's love becomes an excuse for any and every behavior. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus we must not emphasize anything apart from Him. All things flow from Him and to Him. When we emphasize virtues apart from Jesus, we make Christmas man centered rather than God centered. Every branch, no matter how good, will die and wither when cut from the tree of life.

I leave you with the words of our Lord, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Faith Versus Sight

by

C. H. Spurgeon.

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We live by faith and not by sight.

Second Corinthians 5:6-9

I. The Posture Mentioned. It implies -

1. *The possession of life.* You can make a dead man sit or even stand in a certain position, but to walk necessitates life. In the sense in which the term is here used, the ungodly man does not walk at all.
2. *Activity.* It is a blessed thing to sit "with Mary at the Master's feet"; but we walk as well as sit. Many can affirm, "We talk; we think; we experience; we feel"; but true Christians can say, "We walk."
3. *Progress.* A man does not walk unless he make some headway. God does not say to us, "This is the way," and then stop; but He says, "This is the way, walk ye in it." We are always to be making advances, from faith in its beginnings to faith in its perfections.
4. *Perseverance.* When a man goes along a step or two and then stops, or returns, we do not call that walking.

5. *That in the ordinary actions of life we are actuated by faith.* Walking is that kind of progress in which a man continues hour after hour. We often read of men who, by faith, did great exploits, and some Christians are always fixing their eyes upon exploits of faith. But Paul does not speak about running or jumping or fighting, but about walking, and he means to tell you that the ordinary life of a Christian is different from the life of another man; that he has learned to introduce faith into everything he does.

II. Two Principles Contrasted.

All men naturally walk by sight. They have a proverb that "Seeing is believing," and no further. Their maxim is - "Know things for yourself; look after the main chance; take care of Number One." Now the Christian is the very opposite of this. He says: "I do not care about looking after the things that are seen and are temporal; the things that are not seen

influence me, because they are eternal." Now, since the world thinks itself wise and the Christian a fool for acting contrary to the world's proverb that "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," let us just see wherein the wisdom of this matter is, and wherein it is not.

1. Walking by sight is a very childish thing. Any child can walk by sight, and so can any fool too. You give him a number of coins; they are all spurious, but he is so pleased with them that he does not care about having real sovereigns. The child says that the sun rises in the morning and sets in the evening, but men know that it does not move, only the earth. But it is a very manly thing to believe something which you cannot see.

What a man was Columbus compared with his contemporaries because he walked by faith! So the Christian is a man, while the worldling saith, "This is all the world; 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,'" he says, "there must be another half; I will leave this world to you children, and will seek another and more heavenly one."

2. The one is grovelling while the other is noble. A man earning his bread all day long - - what is he better than the donkey at Carisbrook Castle, pumping up water and always going round? The children go to the seaside with their little wooden spades and build up a pier of sand, but the tide comes and washes it away, and this is just what men do. They build with heavier stuff, which gives them more care and

not half so much merriment, but the end is just the same, only the children live to build again, while these big children, these grovelers, are washed out to sea with all their works and perish everlastingly. If there be not another world to live for, I must say that this life is not worthy of a man. But to believe what God tells me, that I am God's son, that I shall one day see His face and sing His praise for ever, why, there is

something here. The man who believes this expands into something worthy of a man who is made in the image of the Most High.

3. There is something exceedingly ignorant about believing only what I can see. Nine out of ten things in the world that are the most wonderful

and potent cannot be seen, at least not by the eyes. A man who will not believe in electricity - - well, what can you make of him in these days? And this is the case with regard to spiritual things. If you only walk by sight, and only believe what you see, what do you believe? You believe that while you are living here it is a good thing to make the best you can of it, and that then you will die and be buried, and there will be an end of you! What a poor, miserable, ignorant belief this is! But when you believe in what God reveals, and come to walk by faith, how your information expands!

4. Walking by sight is deceptive. The eye does not see anything; it is the mind that sees through the eye. The eye needs to be educated before it tells the truth, and even then there are a thousand things

You must mind if you do walk by faith, that you walk by the right faith - - viz., faith in Christ. If you put faith in your dreams, or in anything you thought you saw, or in a voice you thought you heard, or in texts of Scripture coming to your mind - -if you put faith in anything else but Christ - - I do not care how good it may be or how bad it may be - - you must mind, for such a faith as that will give way.

about which it does not always speak truly. Now the man who has a God to believe in, is never deceived. The promise to him always stands fast; the person of Christ is always his sure refuge, and God Himself is his perpetual inheritance.

5. The principle of sight is a very changeable one. It is well enough to talk of walking by sight in the light, but what will you do when the darkness comes on? It is very well to talk about living in the present while you are here, but when you go and lie on your dying bed, what about the principle of living for the present then? But the principle of faith does best in the dark. He who walks by faith can walk in the sunlight as well as you can, but he can walk in the dark as you cannot, for his light is still shining upon him.
6. That those who walk by sight walk alone. Walking by sight is just this - - "I believe in myself," whereas walking by faith is "I believe in God." If I walk by sight I walk by myself; if I walk by faith then there are two of us, and the second one - - ah! how great, how glorious, how mighty is He! Sight goes a warfare at its own charges, and is defeated. Faith goes a warfare at the charges of the King's Exchequer, and there is no fear that Faith's bank shall ever be broken.

III. The Caution Implied.

The apostle says positively, "We walk by faith," and then he adds negatively, "not by sight." The caution, then, is - - never mix the two principles. You may go a journey by land, or you may go by water, but to try to swim and walk at the same time would be rather singular. A drunken man tries to walk on both sides of the street at once, and there is a sort of intoxication that sometimes seizes upon Christians, which

makes them also try to walk by two principles.

1. You say, "I believe God loves me; I have prospered in business ever since I have been a Christian." The first part of that is faith; but the second part of it is sight. Suppose you had not prospered in business, what then? Will you deny that God loves you because you have not prospered in business?
2. Another says, "I have believed in Christ, but I am afraid I am not saved, for I feel tonight so depressed." "Oh," says another, "I am sure I am saved, because I feel so happy." Now you are both wrong, for you are both walking by sight. Faith is not meant for sweet frames and feelings only, it is meant for dark frames and horrible feelings. Conclusion - - Take heed to one thing. You must mind if you do walk by faith, that you walk by the right faith - - viz., faith in Christ. If you put faith in your dreams, or in anything you thought you saw, or in a voice you thought you heard, or in texts of Scripture coming to your mind - - if you put faith in anything else but Christ - - I do not care how good it may be or how bad it may be - - you must mind, for such a faith as that will give way. You may have a very strong faith in everything else but Christ, and yet perish. Rest thou in the Lord Jehovah.

"Let the person who cannot believe that God is able to do what He says stay away from Christendom; for our faith is: What God says, that He is able to do. Therefore a real Christian should close his eyes and think: God has said so: consequently, He is also able to do it. I believe the words, although I do not understand how they can be carried out." (Luther)

Martin Luther's Definition of Faith

by Martin Luther

Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion. Because they observe that faith is not followed by good works or a better life, they fall into error, even though they speak and hear much about faith. "Faith is not enough," they say, "You must do good works, you must be pious to be saved." They think that, when you hear the gospel, you start working, creating by your own strength a thankful heart which says, "I believe." That is what they think true faith is. But, because this is a human idea, a dream, the heart never learns anything from it, so it does nothing and reform doesn't come from this 'faith,' either.

Instead, faith is God's work in us, that changes us and gives new birth from God (John 1:13). It kills the Old Adam and makes us completely different people. It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts and all our powers. It brings the Holy Spirit with it. Yes, it is a living, creative, active and powerful thing, this faith. Faith cannot help doing good works constantly. It doesn't stop to ask if good works ought to be done, but before anyone asks, it already has done them and continues to do them without ceasing. Anyone who does not do good works in this manner is an unbeliever. He stumbles around and looks for faith and good works, even though he does not know what faith or good works are. Yet he gossips and chatters about faith and good works with many words.

Faith is a living, bold trust in God's grace, so certain of God's favor that it would risk death a thousand times trusting in it. Such confidence and knowledge of God's grace makes you happy, joyful and bold in your relationship to God and all creatures. The Holy Spirit makes this happen through faith. Because of it, you freely, willingly and joyfully do good to everyone, serve everyone, suffer all kinds of things, love and praise the God who has shown you such grace. Thus, it is just as impossible to separate faith and works as it is to separate heat and light from fire! Therefore, watch out for your own false ideas and guard against good-for-nothing gossips, who think they're smart enough to define faith and works, but really are the greatest of fools. Ask God to work faith in you, or you will remain forever without faith, no matter what you wish, say or can do.

Lenski on Faith

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, [it is] the gift of God; (Ephesians 2:8)

"For," just as stated in v. 5. "by this grace (by it alone, the article to indicate the very grace just mentioned) you have been saved" etc.

This repetition is emphatic: the past act of rescue plus the resultant condition of safety (periphrastic perfect) is entirely due to

God (the agent in the passive) and to the grace he used as his means. But now Paul extends the statement by adding: "by means of (or through) faith," living trust in Christ and all his redemptive work. God accomplishes his purpose of delivering the Ephesians when by the power of his grace and the means of this grace (Word and Sacrament) he kindled faith in their hearts. Faith is not something that we on our part produce and furnish toward our salvation, but is produced by God in our hearts to accomplish his purpose in us.

Col. 2:12 states this directly: "through the faith of the operation of God." One often meets careless statements such as: "Grace is God's part, faith ours." Now the simple fact is that even in human relations faith and

confidence are produced in us by others, by what they are and what they do; we never produce it ourselves. Even deceivers know that

they must cunningly make their deceptions of such a nature that they may appear true and grand, and that they may thus produce faith in those whom

they wish to deceive. There is no self-produced faith; faith is wrought in us. Saving faith is wrought by the saving grace of God. Salvation is received "by means of faith." The dogmaticians call it the (Greek, *οργανον λεπτικον*, I think), (German, *die Nehmehand*.) by which God makes the gifts of grace our own. In this matter of being saved by God, faith is the trustful reception wrought in us by God, only this reception, which is distinguished from the subsequent activity of gratitude and works of faith. On this account faith is essential, and he who does not believe is lost because he does not by faith receive the salvation he ought to receive."

From Lenski's commentary on *Ephesians 2:8*, p 422-423

Faith is not something that we on our part produce and furnish toward our salvation, but is produced by God in our hearts to accomplish his purpose in us.

Table Talk
P. O. Box 31
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The LMS-USA is Lutheran Church body describing itself as *Biblical, Confessional, Evangelical, Liturgical and Congregational*. It is a 'Forum' in which there is an on going discussion of theological issues and concerns among clergy and lay alike. The LMS-USA meets annually for a Theological Conference and this publication, besides carrying news of the Ministerium and Synod, functions also as a vehicle for this continuing dialogue.

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