

# Invisibility Of The Church

*Attributed to Siegbert W. Becker*

## INTRODUCTION

The writing of this paper has not been a pleasant task. The flesh greatly fears the consequences of writing on a topic such as the one which has been assigned to us. It is almost impossible to avoid all seeming harshness under such conditions, especially since in our presentation we shall seem to belabor those who are our betters and whom we ought to honor and respect as our teachers and our spiritual fathers. We only hope that the good Lord, and this we pray he may grant us, will dispose the hearts of the brethren to accept it with the meekness with which, we pray God, we may present it. We must be frank and open if we would settle the controversies that rage among us. The truth hurts in this case too. It hurts us that we must say it, and we shall understand if the brethren feel hurt at first. But many a time we have trembled in our pastoral work, and God showed us that our fears were groundless. We pray that he may show us his grace again in this matter. But whatever the outcome will be, we cannot act contrary to our conscience which is bound in His Word.

In our approach to the issues involved we shall try to be as plain and as simple as possible. So often these matters are treated as purely academic problems, in the discussion of which fine philosophical distinctions and involved and unclear terminology is employed. So often they are looked upon as hairsplitting among theologians, but we hope that the brethren will realize that we speak from the heart, that this is a matter which touches us in the very depths of our soul. We shall seek as best we can to remain child-like, and to avoid involved and difficult arguments. These matters are not difficult. They are simple, just as all of God's doctrine is simple, if only we shall be content to remain within the bounds of God's revelation.

If only we would always be conscious of this, that our soul's salvation is involved in these things! If only men would understand that when we wage theological controversies, we are doing this not because we like a good, knock-down, drag-out fight, with no holds barred. Our own salvation, which ought to be the dearest treasure we have, and for which we ought to be willing to suffer the loss of all things, the salvation of the souls whom God has entrusted to our care as pastors and for whom God holds us responsible as watchmen on the walls of Zion, the salvation of our children and of our children's children, the preservation of the pure doctrine of God's Word to their generations, things for which you and I pray and ought to pray diligently and earnestly, all this is menaced by false doctrine, all this is at stake. Compared with this, nothing else matters, if only the kingdom of Christ, if only the Church is preserved to us.

“And take they our life,  
Goods, fame child, and wife,  
Let these all be gone,  
They yet have nothing won,  
The kingdom ours remaineth.”

It is no pleasant thing to be in controversy with those who are our brethren, and God grant that the day may never come when we shall be forced to say, with those who were our brethren in the faith; it is no easy matter to disagree with those men at whose feet we have sat and learned those things for which we must contend today, men whom we have learned to love and to respect; it is no light task to take up arms in defense of the truth of God's Word, and to know before-hand that we may easily be branded as loveless, as sliver pickers, as hairsplitters, as disturbers of the peace, as psychopathic cases, as causers of division. All this, you and I, who love the Lord Jesus Christ, who have stood beneath His cross and beheld his marvelous love and grace, who have seen with the eyes of faith the blood which was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins and the redemption of our souls, who have seen Jesus in the Gospels, despised, rejected, persecuted, and reviled by men who were the leaders in the visible church, all this shame and reproach, you and I who have knelt before the Lord's altar and sworn to uphold and defend God's Word as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God

committed to us, all this, I say, we ought gladly to take upon ourselves as the cross which we must bear after our Lord and Savior who bore the heavy cross and the fearful load of sin and guilt for us. We might borrow from Luther and say, "The doctrine is not ours, but God's who is not to suffer anything. For if we perish, little harm is done, but if we sit silently by while God's Word is being corrupted, we are doing harm to God and to the whole world."

This matter will never be solved by calling names. That there will be times when we do not preserve a calm, objective tone is to be expected. It is hard to remain calm when what we love most in this world seems to be threatened. It is difficult to remain objective and detached when what we discuss lies close to our hearts. That we shall err in our procedure may happen, that there will be times when we seem to become bitter and heated is also natural, and that perhaps at times we may let our anger and our bitterness carry us beyond the bounds of charity is one of those sad human elements which will come to the surface in any controversy. Luther says in one place that it is too bad that we cannot refrain from anger and laugh as our dear Lord, but then our anger is not as destructive as the anger of the Lord will be when once His patience is at an end. If some fault of ours should therefore sometimes show itself, if there are times when we might seem more kind and gentle, we ask the brethren to make up with their charity what is lacking in ours, and to be patient and forgiving. We shall aim to be as charitable and gentle as it is possible for us to be, God helping us, the Savior giving strength, and the Spirit giving guidance, and yet say what we feel must be said, without equivocation and without giving room to the least error.

If we find something amiss in the presentation of the doctrine of the church, we shall not rush forward with a charge of heresy, but we will for the present take for granted that what is amiss was done in weakness, and we shall ask the brethren responsible that they remove the sentences and the phrases which we find inadequate in what is to be a clear official statement of our position. Our president has himself encouraged us to make this request in one of the letters which accompanied one of the sets of theses, in which he asked all of us to inform him if we found in them any error. And it should not be difficult for those who love and respect each other to bring this about. If on the other hand, however, we are met with a pontifical decree, which we do not anticipate, that these words must stand irrevocably, then there will be time enough for righteous anger. We cannot, and we will not, God helping us, ever knowingly compromise the truth of God's Holy and infallible Word, and we will not cry, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace. And we would plead with the brethren that this question be judged on its merits according to the Scripture.

### **THE QUESTION**

The question at issue is this, "Is it contrary to Scripture to speak of a visible manifestation of the one holy Christian Church?" This is the formulation of the conference. The sentence in question in the "Doctrine of the Church" reads, "While these passages refer to the Una Sancta, they apply also to the so-called true visible church, whose aim it must be to become like the Una Sancta, or to be the visible manifestation of the Una Sancta." With the permission of the brethren, we will suggest another formulation, which, in our opinion, will indicate the difficulties under which one labors when dealing with this question. None of the brethren, we are sure, will deny that "Una Sancta", "the one holy Christian Church", and "the invisible church" are synonymous expressions, and that they come as close to being "absolute synonyms" as it is possible to be. This being granted, we shall suggest this formulation, "Is it contrary to Scripture to speak of a visible manifestation of the invisible church?" Now if the term "visible manifestation" means what it says, and if "invisible" means anything, we are confronted first of all by a difficulty in language. There is here a contradiction in terms. We take for granted, and we believe that this is clear from the context, that the words, "visible manifestation", refer to the present age, when it does not yet appear what we shall be, and not to the day when the Lord Jesus will appear in the clouds of heaven and when we shall appear with him in glory, the day when the sons of God will be manifested, and we shall stand before the throne of our dear Lord with that great host arrayed in white, like thousand snowclad mountains bright, to serve him day and night in his temple. This being granted, it would

seem, that simply on the basis of the question as we have formulated it, a clear and simple judgment could be rendered. That which is and must remain invisible in this world cannot be visibly manifested in this world.

But we will not quarrel about words. If this is all that the disagreement amounts to, we are sure that here we could stop, and the brethren involved would say, "We think, too, that perhaps we ought to get rid of that sentence, since we see that it is not good and subject to misunderstanding." If we can do the same with a few other phrases in the theses, we ought to be able to close the case here without great difficulty.

But lest someone say that this is only a quarrel about words, we shall state why we object so strenuously to this phraseology. We believe, we know, that this phraseology can be used to hide the grossest of false doctrines about the church. But before we can discuss the question properly, we must know what is involved in this "visible manifestation." Is it the existence of the church, the nature of the church, or the attributes of the church which are to become visibly manifest? The context will clarify the issue. The words, "to be the visible manifestation of the Una Sancta" are joined to the previous phrase by the conjunction, "or", and are evidently meant to be synonymous to the words, "to become like the Una Sancta". It is clear from this that what is to be manifested is not the existence or the nature of the church, but the attributes of the church. And it is on the basis of the attributes of the church that we shall order our discussion.

The whole sentence is difficult to treat since the meaning is not clear. We are told that the aim of the so-called "true visible church" must be to "become like the Una Sancta". The true visible church is a group of people who confess the pure doctrine of God's Word and celebrate the sacraments according to the institution of Christ. Mixed in this group are both believers and hypocrites. This group is to "become like the Una Sancta". Now just what does this mean? The true visible church is called a church by virtue of the true believers who are in it. Could it mean that this group of true believers in the true visible church are to *become* like the Una Sancta? This, however, would not be the "true visible church," because the "true visible church" is a mixed multitude and, evidently, cannot be meant, since insofar as a part of the Una Sancta can be like the Una Sancta, this group cannot become any more "like" the Una Sancta than it already is. Otherwise we would have to say that a part of the Una Sancta is not like the Una Sancta, but must become so, or in other words, that there are deficiencies in a part of the Una Sancta which are not found in the whole Una Sancta.

On the other hand, if the whole mixed group is meant, the "true visible church", as it appears to us, the whole number of the called, then the whole group, composed of believers and hypocrites is to become like the Una Sancta. Such a mixed assembly, however, is not invisible, for only visible bonds unite the believers and the hypocrites in this visible church; it cannot be like the Una Sancta in being one, since there is no real tie that binds the believers and the hypocrites together; it cannot be without spot or wrinkle, if there are unbelievers in it; it cannot be catholic by virtue of the fact that it is particular; it cannot be said to be imperishable, since God has never promised that there would always be a true visible church. Wherein, then, shall this likeness consist?

Could it mean that the true visible church must aim at this that all its members should be true believers in the Savior? That this should be our aim is true. But this is by no means limited to the true visible church. We should aim at the conversion of all men. And this would not be "becoming like" the Una Sancta, but would be instead "becoming in all its members a part of the Una Sancta."

Could it mean that the individual Christians in the true visible church should in their lives seek to become perfect and holy? This too is true, of course. But it is not what the words say. The "true visible church" is composed of both believers and unbelievers. Besides, no matter how "holy" the believers become outwardly, they would not be "becoming like" the Una Sancta, for its holiness and theirs is more than outward holiness of life, and as individuals they still would not exhibit the characteristics of the Una Sancta, which is a group composed of individuals. Again, if this is what is meant by "becoming like the Una Sancta," why limit it and say that this must be the aim of the "true visible church". This must be the aim of all Christians, to strive to overcome the old Adam and to become perfectly holy, not only of the members of the true visible church, and evidently this is not what is meant.

The same difficulty is met with in the judgment that the aim of the true visible church must be to become the visible manifestation of the Una Sancta. Let us assume that the Missouri Synod is the true visible church.

Now what does this mean that the Missouri Synod must aim at becoming the visible manifestation of the *Una Sancta*? Does this mean that the individual members of the church should give evidence of their faith in their good works? This they should do; but can we say that this is the manifestation of the *Una Sancta*? “Faith” and “Church” are surely not synonyms. And again, evidently we are here not dealing with the individual member of the church but with the church as a whole.

Does it mean that the Missouri Synod must aim to become the mother church of all Christians of all times and places, that she must manifest herself as such? That would be a type of arrogance of which we are surely not aiming to make ourselves guilty. Does it mean that the Missouri Synod must visibly, outwardly, and manifestly unite all Christians in its fellowship? Does it mean that the true visible church is to manifest itself as invisible? Or does it mean that the presence of the church should manifest itself in some visible, external way? This, however, would not be “the true visible church becoming the visible manifestation of the *Una Sancta*.” Or does it mean that the attributes of the Church are to find some expression in the life of the true visible church? If that were meant, could we say that by this process the church becomes “like” the *Una Sancta*, or is it because some of the members of the Church are a part of the *Una Sancta* that these effects of faith and membership in the kingdom of God make themselves known and felt? Do we say, for instance, that a Christian “becomes like” a Christian when he shows the evidences or the fruits of faith? It might be said that a hypocrite “becomes like” a Christian in this way. Frankly, the most charitable thing that we can say about the sentence is that we do not know what the words mean and we are afraid that they can be easily misunderstood and misapplied, and we know that just this idea that the visible church is to be the visible manifestation of the *Una Sancta* has been made the starting point of many an erroneous opinion in regard to the church.

### **THE INVISIBILITY OF THE CHURCH**

The church is invisible. The Bible passage which Luther used, which our great dogmaticians have used, which was used in our “Popular Symbolics”, of which the author of the theses on the church was a co-author, and which is used in both our synodical catechisms as a proof for the invisibility of the church is Luke 17:20. The theses indicate, and a document entitled, “Comments by the Author of the Guide-Lines on Observations by the Chicago Heights Pastoral Conference”, states clearly that this passage is no longer to be used for this purpose. In that document we read, “To prove the church to be invisible on the basis of Luke 17:20, is in my opinion an unwarranted use of the text. First, because *entos* undoubtedly means “in your midst” “among you”, and secondly, because the Savior is speaking of His rule in the hearts of men.” This is what we feared when we read in the theses that “the two terms (i.e. “church” and “kingdom”) should not be used as absolute synonyms.”

What follows will sound as though it were roughly and rudely spoken. But unless we are willing to come to grips with the issue and call a spade a spade and contradict where contradiction is called for, even if it earns us the epithet “uncharitable”, we shall never come to a God-pleasing solution of the difference which seems to exist among us. When we are put in this position, we are always reminded of Shakespeare’s words, “He was the mildest-mannered man that ever slit a throat.” We shall appear to be cutting throats,— we hope that we can appear mild in the process.

We have seen churches which have had the life-blood sucked out of them, which have lost all contact with the laity, whose pastors have lost touch with their people, because they have insisted on treating theology, the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures, — which are to make children wise unto salvation, the divine wisdom which is hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, as an academic philosophical discipline devoid of life and vitality. When we deal with these matters, it is well that we remember the words of Paul, “I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?” When we speak in such simple terms, we may appear to be lacking in scholastic ability and philosophical acumen, but what we want is that souls should be saved, and the philosopher and learned scholar can be saved by the same simple, straightforward preaching of the gospel, which brings a little child to faith.

The distinction between “church” and “kingdom”, we are afraid, comes under this indictment to a certain extent. *While we gladly grant* that they are not “absolute synonyms”, — “absolute synonyms” are “*rarae aves*”, — just what difference would that make? We could here enter into a long discussion of the whole field of semantics and a philosophical disquisition on the nature of meaning and show perhaps that there is not a single word which means exactly the same thing to any two people, *but what would it profit?*

There does not seem to be much point in making such a distinction and to separate “ecclesia” and “basileia” so sharply. Granted that “church” emphasizes the people and “kingdom” the activity of God, (we suppose that our children in confirmation class know this distinction), that does not yet separate the two in the least. The author himself is not able to maintain this distinction, for he finds it necessary to bring men, who belong to the church, into relation to the kingdom, describing it as “the rule of God in the hearts of *men*”. It is useless to speak of a ruling unless there is something to be ruled; of a king, unless there are subjects; of a Lord, unless there are servants. Besides, the author should have kept the passages, which he quotes to show that the term is not always used as an abstract, in mind when he formulated his final definition.

The real nature of this distinction becomes clear when the use of Luke 17:20 as a proof for the invisibility of the church is called “unwarranted”. Two reasons are given for this conclusion. The claim is made that “entos” means “in the midst of” or “among”. According to Young’s, “Concordance”, and Erasmus Schmid’s, “Concordance of the Greek New Testament”, the word “entos” occurs only twice in the New Testament. In the only other passage in which it is used, Mt 23:26, it can only mean “within” or “inside of” which should certainly have some bearing on our passage. Besides, the author himself says that it is “within” you, when he says that it is *in the hearts of men*.<sup>i</sup> But be that as it may, suppose for the sake of discussion that we grant that it means “in the midst of”. Would this not strengthen the proof for the invisibility of the church? It was right in the midst of these people then, and still they did not see it. The second point, namely, that the kingdom is the rule of God in the hearts of men, does not prove either what the author intends to have it prove, unless, and this is what we fear, the “kingdom of God” is not only “not an absolute synonym” but no synonym at all. If the kingdom of God is not the church, and if the church is not the kingdom of God, then and only then can we say that Luke 17:20 does not teach the invisibility of the church. This can be held only if one does not realize the close relation between “church” and “kingdom of God”. Incidentally, if this can be held, then Luther was mistaken,<sup>ii</sup> Pieper was wrong, the whole Missouri Synod taught its children falsely and still uses the Word of God deceitfully in its official catechism. This, of course, proves nothing except that we are decorating the sepulchres of the prophets whom our spiritual fathers killed, and that “*Wir sind nicht was wir waren.*” This distinction is one that we have always rejected over against the millennialists and the social gospelitese. To maintain this distinction is to take the first step and to surrender the outposts, but once we have begun to surrender, the end is not far off, we are found false stewards.

One thing we should make very clear. The invisible church cannot become visibly manifest, else it is no longer an invisible church. And this is no insignificant point which has no more than academic interest. Luther was right when he said, that everyone should learn what should be called and what is the holy Christian Church, and that where this point is rightly understood, there men will have a strong and comforting defense against all false doctrine.<sup>iii</sup> The Church can become visible only when we no longer hold fast the truth that the one thing and the only thing which makes a man a member of the church is faith, faith in the atoning, vicarious sacrifice of our Savior.<sup>iv</sup>

Luther expounds this point well when he says, “He who does not want to err should hold this fast, that the Christian Church is a spiritual assembly of souls in one faith, and that no one is to be considered a Christian for outward reasons, that he may know that the natural, true, real, essential church stands in the Spirit and in no outward thing . . . . For all the other things, with the exception of the true faith, a non-Christian may have, but they never make him a Christian.”<sup>v</sup> And again, “So let us arm our understanding with the Word of God that we may know and confidently believe that the true Church of Christ is nothing else than a spiritual assembly of His believers, wherever they may be on earth; and on the other hand, that everything that comes from flesh and blood, or regard for persons, places, or times, and everything else by which flesh and blood judges or can judge,

does not belong to the church of God. Therefore we must watch with all diligence, lest we howl with the wolves and papacize with the papacy.”<sup>vi</sup>

This is an extremely important and practical point, and we are disturbed by this terminology in the “Theses”, not because we are of the opinion that those who make such statements are willing to draw the conclusions from this phraseology which can be hidden under this language, but because we see all around us also in our church evidences that we are no longer deeply conscious of the invisibility of the church. There is first of all the effort to maintain that faith is to be the basis of fellowship in work and worship, which says, “These people are Christians. They accept Jesus as the Savior. How can we avoid such?” In this connection, another quotation from Luther will be interesting in view of the “new” arguments which have been put forth in our circles in these last few years. He says, “He who is not protected by another kind of armor and strength, and who must hear nothing else than this judgment of the highest and foremost people on earth; ‘You are a heretic and the devil’s apostle, for you preach against God’s people and the church, yea, against God himself,’ he will by this be given such a blow on the head that he must fall. For it is an argument which is immeasurably difficult to take from them or to talk them out of. Yes, we find it extremely difficult to solve this problem and to refute the argument, especially so, since we must concede so much to them as we do concede. We must admit that it is true that in the papacy we find God’s Word, the apostolic office, and we have received from them the Holy Scriptures, baptism, and sacrament, and the pastoral office. Without them, what would we know of these things? Therefore, faith, the Christian Church, Christ, the Holy Ghost, must be with them too. What am I doing then, when I preach against such people as a pupil against his teacher? Then my heart is assailed by thoughts such as these, ‘Now I see that I am wrong; oh that I had never begun this business and had never preached a single word! For who may set himself against the Church, of which we confess in the creed, “I believe one holy Christian Church.”?’ Now I find this Church also in the papacy,— out of that must follow that, if I damn them, I am in the deepest condemnation, rejected and damned by God and all saints.’ Now what shall one do in such a case? It is difficult to hold one’s ground here and preach against such a judgment. But should we let ourselves be frightened by this and do what they would have us do, namely, that we should recant our preaching, of which we know that it is true and that it is God’s Word and cease from it? Then it would go with us as with the prophet Jeremiah, and God’s Word would kindle in us such a fire, that our heart would melt and burn up, and a man could not bear it. I would rather die ten times over than carry such a conscience around with me.”<sup>vii</sup> Church fellowship is not established on a bare claim to Christianity.

There is also the danger among us that we shall begin to judge the doctrine which is taught in the church by outward, fleshly considerations. How many times have we not heard that the controversy is nothing more than a clash of personalities, — have even heard it said by some men that they are opposed to one side or the other because they just can’t stand the voice or the bearing of one or the other of the disputants. Now, the only questions for us to decide are, “What do men teach?” and “Is it in harmony with God’s Word or not?” Even Balaam’s ass spoke the truth. When these slurring remarks are made, we are reminded of the words of our Lord, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil. But if well, why smitest thou me?”

Besides this, we are afraid that the invisible character of the church is left out of consideration to some extent when we press for recognition in the world. We so often see an overemphasis of our reputation among men. One of our professors said some time ago, that it is sad that the most wonderful thing that can be said of one of our men nowadays is that “he is recognized also outside our circles.” Scholarship, a flowery style, a master’s or doctor’s degree, these are often the things for which we strive and to which we look. Are we perhaps in danger of forgetting, that if God himself does not teach, preserve, and extend the church, and give it the victory, then all the rest is on the side of the enemies, such as the multitude, the size, the power, oratorical ability, the wise heads, scholarliness, the respect of the world, riches and the like, as Luther says?<sup>viii</sup> Are we perhaps under the impression that our scholarship or cleverness is going to build the church? “By my spirit,” says God. We know that the church with its learning and scholarliness will never cut much of a figure in the world, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. Are we perhaps in danger of being ashamed of Jesus? This thing has progressed so far that one of our men in high places can write that our

Norwegian brethren and our Free Church brethren are afraid that if they do not continue their criticisms they will no longer have to suffer shame for Christ's sake. All that we can say to this is, "Woe unto you when all men should speak well of you."

We cannot refrain from referring once more to the statement that the use of Luke 17:20, as a proof for the invisibility of the church is unwarranted. If that is true, then we have absolutely no business putting it into our catechism under that heading. If we leave it there, under those conditions, we are surely guilty of playing fast and loose with the name of God which is not to be taken in vain. Or shall we excuse it by saying, "This is for the laity. They will not know the difference." Shall we have one manner of teaching doctrine to the laity and another for the learned clergy? Brethren, this is no light matter. The laity have souls too, souls for which we hope and pray and labor that they may be saved.

The *Una Sancta* is invisible. We are not disagreed on that. Let us be satisfied to let it be invisible until our Lord in his own good time and by his mercy chooses to reveal it and manifest it in all its glory wherewith it shall be and will be glorified.

### **THE ONENESS OF THE CHURCH**

And this invisible church is one. Again, this is a spiritual oneness. There is one body, the body of Christ, of which the Lord Jesus is the Head. Now this body is the church and only he who is a member of the church by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is joined to the Head and is a member of the body. There is one Spirit, who creates this faith, and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Whether or not a man has the Spirit of Christ is inseparable from his faith, which is invisible. These believers are called in one hope of their calling. But only he who knows and believes that he has the forgiveness of all his sins through the Lord Jesus Christ has this one hope. One Lord there is in the church, and only he who believes that he has been redeemed to God by the blood of the Lamb has the Son of God as his Lord. The members of the church are united with Christ in one faith. It is not true that men of many creeds belong to this church, unless we take creed in the sense of denomination, but only those who have the one true faith. It is by one baptism, the baptism instituted by our Lord, that all the blessings of the church are given to them. But the benefit of this baptism is received again by faith. There is one God and Father of all, but until men know Christ by faith, they are without God, and God is the Father of those who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. It is clear that this unity is a unity in the true faith, it is oneness in Christ Jesus, as St. Paul writes to the Galatians, a spiritual hidden oneness and unity, which is visible and manifest just as little as faith is visible and manifest.

Now the word, "one" is an exclusive term. No one who does not know the one Lord, who does not have the one faith and the one hope and the one Spirit, no one who is not a child of the one God and Father, is a member of that body. It is plain from this that the unity or oneness of the *Una Sancta* never consists in outward fellowship, since the Lord Jesus teaches us very plainly that there are bad fish in this net. Since the oneness depends on nothing which is visible to the eyes of men, it must remain invisible to our eyes, and we shall never be able to establish this oneness by an outward organic union. Even if such an outward union of all Christendom could be brought about, the real unity of the Church would even then not be visible, for even then it would include many who are not united to Christ by faith. And even if it were based on complete confessional agreement, it would still not be visible manifestation of the unity of the Church, for as Luther says somewhere, "Christ does not say, 'he that has my Word', but 'he that keeps my Word', he is my disciple". And in his sermon on the Good Shepherd gospel, he says, and certainly none of us will contradict him here, "Although the Christians also have outward marks, given by Christ, namely, baptism, the sacrament, and the preaching of the gospel, these are not infallible marks so far as the judgment of the individual person is concerned. For many a man has been baptized, hears the gospel, and goes with the others to the sacrament, and is nevertheless a rascal and non-Christian. It can be known only by this that within the heart there is that faith which looks upon Christ as the Shepherd. But who knows this? You will not see it in me, nor will I in you. For no one can look into another's heart; therefore we shall have to be satisfied with this that no one knows these sheep and this flock, except Christ the Shepherd alone."<sup>x</sup>

Nor would the unity of the Church become visibly manifest if we could bring about a union of all Lutherans, even if this union were based on a full agreement in confession. This would certainly not be the unity of the Church unless we are willing to outromanize the Romanists, and say, "Outside this church, there is no salvation." Now we want it understood that we are not opposed to a union of churches if this can be done in a God-pleasing way, but the unity of the one holy Christian Church cannot be used as a basis of such union. But how else will this unity manifest itself, if it is to become visible than by an outward unity and fellowship? This is what disturbs us. The unity of the Christian Church is a spiritual unity, without which no unity of place, time, persons, cooperation, or whatever it might be, makes a Christian Church.<sup>x</sup>

And certainly this unity is not established by cooperation in externals, nor dare such cooperation in externals be made the beginning of true church unity. At the risk of bringing this charge upon our heads, that we are establishing our thesis with Luther (although we were told to read and study Luther in our student days), we cannot forbear from quoting him again. In his address to Chancellor Brueck, he says, "My dear doctor, — I am speaking to you, as in the presence of my gracious Lord,— I have been annoyed enough by the count and his men, because they twist the Lord's Prayer as they do, and seek quiet and peace first, and pay no attention to what happens to the name and the kingdom and the will of God. What is this, that one strains out the gnats and swallows the camels? If we want to settle controversies in religion, then let us begin with the things that really count, such as doctrine and the sacraments, and when that has been settled, then the rest, which they call the "neutralia", will take care of itself, as has happened in our churches, and God Himself would be in the concord, and the quiet and peace would be lasting. But if one wants to pass by the big issues, and deal with the "neutralia", then God is forgotten; then we will have a peace without God, instead of which we would rather have nothing but discord."<sup>xi</sup>

Outward peace and unity will never be the visible manifestation of the unity of the church. Outward peace is often only the peace of the cemetery, the peace of dead consciences and unfeeling souls. Where Christ is truly preached, there must be conflict. As Luther says so often, "Where God builds his church, the devil builds a chapel." "I am come to send a sword", says Christ. Here again it is truly remarkable that Luther had exactly the same problems to face which we face today. He says, "For many years now I have carpentered on this block with all diligence, and given a great deal of thought to how I could preach about the Lord Christ in such a way that I would please everybody, so that neither pope, nor emperor, nor prince, nor anyone else would stumble and be offended in Him. But it just won't work and it doesn't go. We might as well get used to it and learn how we can answer those who say, 'Under the papacy everything was nice and quiet, and we heard nothing about heresies and disunity. But when this doctrine came along, everything went wrong, and little or no good came out of it?'" Such smart alecks and blasphemers you can answer by saying that wherever the pure doctrine of Christ is found, there this will always certainly follow that some will cook up false mobs, sects, and everything unfortunate. But nevertheless, the Word will bring forth fruit and some will cling to Christ."<sup>xii</sup>

If we would only understand this, we would see how utterly impossible and wrong it is to say that this unity of the Christian Church should become visibly manifest in an outward fellowship, which is "like" the fellowship of the invisible Church. Show us a Bible passage which says this in one single place. On the one hand, this is impossible because this unity is exclusive. On the other hand, it would lead to something which, we hope, none of us is willing to do. If the unity of faith is to become visibly manifest in outward fellowship, if this is God's will, then there is only one thing left to do. Go back to Rome. Go back to the pope. With him there are some who believe. If there are, and it is God's will that unity in faith, (and we are here not speaking of unity of doctrine), should manifest itself in outward unity, there is nothing else left for us to do.

Certainly, we are all agreed, that it would be lovely if we could have a church in which all Christians are united in doctrine, a church which lives in peace, but we shall have to wait until our dear Lord makes all things new. Again Luther says, "There probably is no one who does not wish that the state would be quiet, and the people were obedient and holy; so one wishes also that the church would be united, that there would be no offenses in doctrine or life, and that the princes would accept the Word and not hate and persecute it. But such a church and state could perhaps be painted by a skillful artist, — but in this world they will be



found nowhere. Therefore we ought to act as people who know that such a church, such good and peaceful worldly government as we desire, we shall never see. But we should be satisfied with this, that the church and the government, (though there be many discordant and harmful things there) are not completely destroyed, that there is some respect for the civil government, but that in the church the pure doctrine is found, that some scattered few treasure the Word highly, use the sacraments, and pray, even if the majority do the opposite. You will find such a church nowhere, in which there are no offenses, no disunity, and no faults and weaknesses. One could wish that such things were far from us, and that the church would appear as it is painted in word pictures, in which she is compared to a beautiful bride in whom there is no spot or wrinkle. But outwardly you will never find her, for she is constantly oppressed by tyrants and plagued with disobedience, the contempt of the peasants, the unfaithfulness of false brethren, and such like. In all these dangers, we must hold fast to this comfort that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, and we must continue with greater courage in teaching, in admonishing, in punishing, and in the other duties which belong to the office of the ministry. And if some are disobedient and headstrong, they may depart.”<sup>xiii</sup>

“Ecumenicity” is the watchword of the day, “church union” is the cry of the hour, and the disunity of the church is held up as the greatest offense of them all. A greater offense is that which causes this disunity; and as long as we have the devil in the world, we shall have this offense, even if there were one visible, organically united church. Again Luther says what we would say, much better than we could say it, and even if he becomes a little too sarcastic for our modern taste yet we cannot refrain from quoting him again, “There are certain annoying, vile people, who dare contemptuously to hold this up to the Christian Church, that there are so many quarrels, sects, errors, heresies, and offenses in her, as though on this account the doctrine of the gospel is no doubt to be considered false and wrong, because the Christian Church should be united and peaceful. They are very wise and admirable people, who can teach the Holy Ghost how he should govern the Church. Yes, my dear, if the devil did not seek to bite the heel of Christ, or had to cease from this, it would be very easy to have such a quiet, peaceful church. But now since he is Christ’s enemy, and intent upon stirring up war, sects, and rebellions in the church without ceasing, one does the church a great wrong if one lays the blame on her for such disturbances and disorder, which she does not bring about at all, but must suffer. Why don’t people blame us Christians because there is so much discord and bloodshed in the world between us and the Turks. The proverb says, ‘No one can have peace any longer than his neighbor wants it.’ I suppose that the dear church must be without peace, if she does not want to obey the enemy of our Lord Jesus Christ? What else can she do? The heel-bruise, the devil, will not rest, nor will he let him, who bruises his head, live in peace; so also the headcrusher, our Lord, will not suffer such a heel-bruise. If you want to be so clever and smart, go ahead and throw yourself into the breach. What’s the payoff? You will get the arbitrator’s wages out of it, — Christ will damn you and the devil will tear you to pieces. Therefore let it go as it pleases, don’t put yourself between the door and the hinge; you will never make peace between Christ and Belial, — they are too strongly committed to enmity, and one must finally go down to defeat and the other be victorious. Oh, yes, there was a fine peace and quiet all right under the papacy, and there was a fine unity of doctrine, but now so many mobs and all kinds of spirits have arisen, so that the poor people are confused and can’t have peace. For God’s sake! Who is fencing anyone in? Who asked you about it? Stay with the pope, or run back to him. Our doctrine did not arise for your sake, and, with God’s help, we will get along without you. Christ Himself tells us, Luke 11,21, that where He is absent, there the devil rests quietly and lets the people have a fine peace.”<sup>xiv</sup>

It is just because the oneness of the Church is exclusive, so that there is one and only one, that we cannot find outward peace and unity. If truth were not intolerant, if Christ could suffer the devil to have equal standing with him, and if the doctrines of devils could be given equal rights with the doctrines of the Word, then, to paraphrase Luther, there could be as many heresies and as many different opinions as there are fleas on a dog in August, and they could all get along in peace and quietness. No one asks us to give up our doctrine, — they tell us with flattering words instead that they admire our loyalty to God’s Word, — they only ask us not to attack their doctrine. But will this be loyalty to the Word for which they say that they admire us? Will this be peace, this calm of dead consciences and silent confessors? We could decree, if we want to, that the brethren in

Germany must cease their apologetics against the Ekid, and frighten them with a veiled threat that we may run short of money, but would this be the peace which pleases God, is this the oneness of the Church made visibly manifest?

Brethren, let us not forget what we teach our children, that it is the Holy Ghost who gathers the Church. He is wise and good and all-powerful. He will do his work well, of that we may be sure. The Good Shepherd will bring his sheep into one sheepfold. To us he has given the command to preach his gospel, to be faithful stewards of his mysteries, to preach the Word in season and out of season. He will do the regenerating, he will convert men when and where it pleases him, and he will build the one holy Christian Church, the holy temple of the Lord, he will guard it and protect it and finally bring us all to that perfect peace and harmony and concord which shall be ours through the precious blood and redemption of our dear Lord Jesus.

And when we have put our trust in God and in his strength, then we will have heard the last of that fleshly argument which calls for union so that we might present a united front against communism. That crisis will never pass. When and if communism is conquered, then we will be called upon to present a united front against Rome, our late brother in the conflict. And when that is settled we shall be called upon to present a united front against modernism, and then a united Lutheran front against Protestantism. And so it will go on. Since when has God been on the side of the biggest battalions, since when is the victory to the strong and the race to the swift in the kingdom of God. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."<sup>xv</sup> Whenever we hear the argument, "I would rather see us get together than to have the communists get us all," we cannot help but think of Gideon and his 300. "There is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."<sup>xvi</sup> Brethren, perhaps we have fallen into this trap at times and repeated this argument without thinking; but it is a devil's temptation, which promises that we will be like gods, and if Isaiah were here and heard it, he would say, we imagine, "Woe unto them that go to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord . . . The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh and not spirit."<sup>xvii</sup> What we need in our day far more than we need united church bodies, is stouthearted men who will fight for the God they adore, loyal soldiers willing to endure hardness for their dear Savior who bore the cross and the lance for them.

Luther had to hear this same argument, and he replied, "We are perhaps angry and ill-disposed to the Turk, as though he were the arch-enemy of the Christian Church, and we call upon the prelates, the emperor, kings, princes, lords, and all the estates of Christendom for help to fight against the Turks. We want to protect and guard the Church against his assaults, and we do not see that we are worse and more furious enemies of the Lord Christ than the Turks."<sup>xviii</sup> And again, "This argument, that the multitude and the great crowd are not the Church, is strong enough. And one ought also not to look to see how holy is the origin, who are their ancestors, what they had and what God gave them in the past. To the Word alone we ought to look and according to it we should judge. For those who receive the Word, they are the ones who will remain as Mt. Zion, even if they be few and the most despised people on earth. . . . Our enemies pound away with this argument, for they let the Word go, and look alone to numbers, appearances, and persons. . . He who does not cling to the Word and judges with respect of persons, he will no longer remain in the Church, and will be blinded, and neither numbers nor power will help him any. So also those who keep the Word, like Noah and his children, they are the Church even though their number be very small, perhaps only eight souls."<sup>xix</sup>

If all this be true, how shall the oneness of the holy Christian Church become visibly manifest in the "true visible church"? Baier, in his Compendium, quotes Carpozov; "No particular church can say of itself that it is that one Church; for it is one thing *to be* the one Church, and another thing to be of the one Church. The whole Church is one; our church is of the one."<sup>xx</sup>

## **THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH**

Concerning the catholicity of universality of the Church we need not say much, for we believe that the impossibility of a visible manifestation of the catholicity of the church will immediately be clear to everyone.

By the catholicity of the Church we mean that all believers of every time, past, present, and future; of all places in earth and in heaven, of all races, tongues, tribes, and peoples, belong to this one Church. The catholicity of the church is the corollary of its oneness. It is one because it is catholic. It is catholic just because it is one. Hollaz says, "The Christian Church committed to the unaltered Augsburg Confession is true end embraces the catholic doctrine, but in respect to its numbers or size it is not catholic, nor universal, but particular."<sup>xxi</sup>

### THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH

With the holiness of the church, it may seem to some, we shall have difficulty in maintaining our theses. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works," says the Lord Jesus himself. Such passages are quoted by Bellarmine against the Lutheran position on the holiness of the Church, and if someone thinks that the passages apply here, he need only read Gerhard's answer to the Romanists in his *Loci*.<sup>xxii</sup> But how far these passages apply and whether the holiness of the Church can ever become visibly manifest, we shall understand when we know clearly in what the holiness of the church consists.

The Church is holy because and only because the righteousness of the Lord Jesus is imputed to her, because she has been cleansed from every spot and stain by the Savior, because she has washed her robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Through faith in the suffering, dying, and risen Savior, she has become clean every whit. "Christ loved the Church," says St. Paul, "And gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." The members of the Church are no saints in themselves, or by virtue of their own goodness, but they are called to be saints, and through the faith which is in them by the operation of God, they are saints, clothed with the garments of salvation and with the robe of righteousness. This is known to us from so many Scripture passages and is so clear to us, that surely on this point we shall not need to go into greater detail. And that this righteousness will never in this world be visibly manifest, that it will always remain something to be accepted by faith and by faith alone, and thus must remain invisible, is certainly agreed to by all of us. But it might be mentioned that it is here that the doctrine of justification by faith is most intimately and directly connected with the doctrine of the invisibility of the Church. He who will not let the church be invisible vitiates this doctrine of justification and shows that he does not understand it clearly.

But what of the holy works which are done by the saints? That such works are done by them, and that the Savior expects such good works and sanctification of life, we need not stress in this connection at the present time. We are dealing only with the question whether the holiness of the church becomes "visibly" manifest in the holy works of the Christian. The theses do not say that the holiness of the Church should manifest itself, should give some evidence of itself in the life of the individual Christian. To this we would give our unqualified approval. But they say that the "*true visible church*" to become *the visible manifestation* of the *Una Sancta*." It is important here that we remember in what the holiness of the works of the Christian consists. Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." There are no good works which are not done in faith. Before we can determine, therefore, whether what appears to be a manifest, visible good work, is truly a good work or not, we shall have to ask this question and answer it, "Was it done unto Christ?" But this shall never be known, or visible, or manifest until judgment day, when the sheep are separated from the goats.

Moreover, these works are never holy works because of what they are outwardly. St. Peter tells us that these sacrifices are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We condemn the Masonic order because in their ritual they simply ignore that "by Jesus Christ", but we dare never forget it ourselves. This "by Jesus Christ" means that our good works, our righteousnesses, which are only filthy rags in the sight of God, which are still besmirched with all manner of weakness, of sin, which are never perfect nor truly good in themselves, nevertheless are accepted by God because they are covered up by the blood of Jesus. If this is understood, then how can we speak of the holiness of the church being "visibly manifest" in its good works?

That some work may appear to be great and good and yet be totally valueless is made abundantly clear by St. Paul, when he says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be

burned, and have not charity, I am nothing.” While we are on the subject of charity, and Christian love, which certainly belongs here, we must guard ourselves especially today against judging this love by outward appearances. There are those who speak endlessly of love and of charity with the tongues of angels, but who do not know what real Christian love is. Them too only God can judge. We know that not everything that looks like love is love, and not everything that looks like hate is hate. We may call one man a rascal and another a saint, and do them both an injustice. Would we not be in a sad case in our personal life if this were not the case? When the arrows of the Almighty are in us, when God has hidden his face from us, when our heart and our soul cries out in anguish, “The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me,” when all the devils of hell howl, “death, and sin, and damnation,” where would we be then if we had to judge by what appears “visibly manifest,” what is left to us then but only the Word and the promise of God which enables us to say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

Again it might be in place to quote some of the fathers to show that we are presenting nothing new. Gerhard, in discussing the holiness of the church, says, “Who are the regenerated and elect does not appear externally, neither is it to be comprehended by the sense of sight. God knows who are His, but to us this is invisible. For although the effects of faith and piety in the regenerated appear outwardly according to the sayings, ‘Let your light shine before men’, and ‘Show me faith by works’, nevertheless by this we shall not be able to render an apodictic and infallible judgment concerning the faith of men, because hypocrites, to all appearances, are able to perform and do perform like works. According to the law of love, we consider them all to be regenerated and elect who gather themselves into the assembly of the church, hear the Word, use the sacraments, and refrain from gross sins; meanwhile, however, only God is able to examine the source of all good works, namely, the heart, to see whether it is truly right. There is no truly good work which does not proceed out of true faith in Christ and out of sincere love; for certainly the hypocrites can imitate the works of faith and love. ‘Greater love hath no man than that he give his life for his friends.’ On the other hand, the apostle expressly says, ‘Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing.’ Therefore a man is able to do what appears outwardly to be the greatest work of love without having love in his heart.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

Luther is full of like sentiments. We shall quote only a few. In his exposition of Isaiah, he says, “This mark of the church, or the kingdom of Christ, cannot deceive you . . . The outward good works can deceive, since they are also found among the heathen. Therefore the papacy errs when it holds that there are other marks of the Church than the Word.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

In his notes on Matthew, he writes, “Outwardly, according to external appearances, the Church of the devil appears to be holy, and wants to be looked upon as being for Christ against the devil. On the other hand, the Church of Christ appears to be heretical and as though it were for the devil against Christ. . . . Even Christ Himself had to experience this, that he was looked upon as being for the devil against God, and that the Pharisees were for God against the devil.”

In his exposition of Ps. 45, he deals with the holiness of the Church again, and says, “One must know and believe that the Church is holy, but one should not see her as holy, for the article of the creed says, ‘I believe a holy Church’, not, ‘I see a holy church’. If you want to judge by what you see, then you will see that she has many and countless offensive things in her, you will see brethren who have violent emotions, so that one is moved by impatience, another by anger, and so on.”<sup>xxv</sup> This shall suffice.

Where men fail to remember in what the true holiness of the church consists, we often find that there is an overemphasis of sanctification at the expense of justification. Have we perhaps long since passed the point where we are in danger of overemphasizing justification, as we have heard it said that we were in the past, and reached the point where we are in danger of overemphasizing sanctification? A layman said a few weeks ago, “There seems to be a difference in our preaching today. It used to be that a person got a lift from going to church, but nowadays so often it makes a person feel bad because you always hear that if you do this or don’t do that, you are not a Christian. Now I know that I am not such a Christian. It is getting so hard to be a Christian.” Dr. Streufert at one time publicly complained that often when he sat in the pews of our congregations, he felt like Mary Magdalene, who said, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where

they have laid Him.” One of our pastors said not so long ago, “The saddest thing about the funeral of my father was the funeral sermon. My father gave every evidence that he loved the Lord. But he was not the kind of man that was described in the eulogy, which is what the sermon was, and the forgiveness of sins, which, after all, is the foundation of our hopes was scarcely mentioned.” There was a time when we had a horror of “morality sermons”, but not so long ago we read a sermon officially published by our church in which there was not one word of sin or grace. Not so long ago, a fine Christian girl, who had been attracted to our church by some of the things she saw in it, told one of the authors of this paper, “I have decided not to join the Lutheran Church. I attended services in one of your churches for six Sundays in a row, and did not hear a single real gospel sermon. Christ was mentioned, but his Saviorhood was not stressed even once.”

Brethren, don't you think that it is high time that we examine ourselves? These complaints which we hear are becoming too frequent. Is it perhaps due to this that we are concerned less with the real, true attributes of the Church than we are with outward appearances? There is only one real visible mark of the Church, the pure teaching of the Word of God, and the correct administration of the sacraments, and real orthodoxy can never be dead. Are we perhaps anxious to reform the world and to solve its social problems, and in this process forgetting that we are gospel preachers — that our highest task is to bring men peace of heart and soul and conscience peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? If we know the doctrine of the Church well, if we know what its invisibility, its oneness, its catholicity, its holiness really is, we will find in this a strong defense against forgetting what our task is. Brethren, as we said before, this is a serious and important matter, which we cannot dismiss with a shrug of the shoulders. Our church is sick, sick unto death, we need to repent in sackcloth and ashes, lest our candlestick be removed from its place. May the Lord Jesus, who loved us and gave himself for us, be merciful and not let the “Platzregen” pass over never to return, We may go on to greater outward glories and increase in numbers and appear in the eye's of men as a fine, peaceful, united, holy, catholic church, but if we lose the gospel, then over the gates of our church there will be written, “Ichabod, the glory has departed.” Brethren, cursed be that union, cursed be that peace, cursed be that love to the very depths of hell which will be maintained and fostered with compromise of the pure doctrine of our Lord.

## CONCLUSION

We have spoken with great vehemence on this matter. Now, we know that the brethren responsible for the theses on the church do not intend to teach all that we have belabored so fiercely. We do not mean to say that the attributes of the church should be without personal application in our lives, that the church, the whole church, and not only the true visible church, should aim at a vital, living Christianity, that our faith should not express itself in works of love and in deeds of service of God and to men. And that the brethren responsible do not intend to teach all the things that we have denounced we think is clear from the warning which is expressed earlier in the theses against externalizing the church. We sincerely hope that they will contradict nothing that we have said. But we would say to them, “Dear brethren, we are sure that you love the Lord Jesus and his Word, but we are afraid that, even if you do not teach this, all this can be hidden under this sentence to which we object. If “visible manifestation” means what it says, then the devil will here find a foothold by which he can establish some of these heresies in our midst. We beg you therefore, in all earnestness, to remove this sentence from the theses. Or show us from Scripture that this terminology must stand. In theology nothing should be taught but what can be supported by Scripture. That does not mean that we must always repeat the words of Scripture verbatim, in speaking of such matters; but it does mean that when we do make a statement, that statement should be supported in every detail by a Scriptural statement or a combination of Scriptural statements. We do not want to play with words or phrases. We do not want high-sounding metaphysical concepts. We want a vital, living faith, a theology which breathes spirit and life.” This will be our plea. This will be our admonition.

And if this sentence is removed, then we are sure that we will also have no difficulty in removing the other sentence to which objections have been raised, namely, “the attributes of the church can be ascribed to the local congregation only by a figure of speech.” We believe that our beloved president saw the inadequacy of

this sentence when he wrote in the accompanying letter, that it should be remembered that not everything that can be said of the invisible church can be said of the visible church. But this does not lie within the scope of this paper, and we are sure that this sentence can be made acceptable by a few changes, if only the sentence which called forth this paper is removed.

## ENDNOTES

1. Cf. Pieper, p. 471, note.
2. St. Louis, XVIII, 1652; Cp. Gerhard, Loci, XXII: *Vera ecclesia est regnum Dei*.
3. St. L., XIV, 317ff.
4. Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 72: *Neque enim humanis oculis manifestum est in quorum cordibus per fidem Christus habitet et per gratiam in illis regnet.*
5. St. L., XVIII, 1017.
6. St. L., IV, 968.
7. St. L., VIII, 610 ff.
8. St. L. IV, 1109
9. St. L., XI, 822
10. St. L., XVIII, 1013 f.
11. St. L., St. L., XVII, 667
12. Walch, XIII, 248; (St. L. XIII, 94)
13. St. L., IV, 2106-2108
14. St. L., X. 1003f.
15. Zech. 4:6.
16. 1 Sam. 14:6.
17. Isaiah 31: 1,3.
18. St. L., VII, 1623
19. St. L., 1, 554
20. Bair-Walther, IIIb, 645
21. Op. Cit., 645
22. J. Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 79ff
23. Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 70
24. St. L., VI, 30.
25. St. L., V, 387f.

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<sup>i</sup>Cf. Pieper, p. 471, note.

<sup>ii</sup>St. Louis, XVIII, 1652; Cp. Gerhard, Loci, XXII: *Vera ecclesia est regnum Dei*.

<sup>iii</sup>St. L., XIV, 317ff.

<sup>iv</sup>Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 72: *Neque enim humanis oculis manifestum est in quorum cordibus per fidem Christus habitet et per gratiam in illis regnet.*

<sup>v</sup>St. L., XVIII, 1017.

<sup>vi</sup>St. L., IV, 968.

<sup>vii</sup>St. L., VIII, 610 ff.

<sup>viii</sup>St. L. IV, 1109

<sup>ix</sup>St. L., XI, 822

<sup>x</sup> St. L., XVIII, 1013 f.

<sup>xi</sup>St. L., St. L., XVII, 667

<sup>xii</sup>Walch, XIII, 248; (St. L. XIII, 94)

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<sup>xiii</sup>St. L., IV, 2106-2108

<sup>xiv</sup>St. L., X, 1003f.

<sup>xv</sup>Zech. 4:6.

<sup>xvi</sup>1 Sam. 14:6.

<sup>xvii</sup>Isaiah 31: 1,3.

<sup>xviii</sup>St. L., VII, 1623

<sup>xix</sup>St. L., 1, 554

<sup>xx</sup>Bair-Walther, IIIb, 645

<sup>xxi</sup>Op. Cit., 645

<sup>xxii</sup>J. Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 79ff

<sup>xxiii</sup>Gerhard, Loci, XXII, 70

<sup>xxiv</sup>St. L., VI, 30.

<sup>xxv</sup>St. L., V, 387f.