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The Ministry of the Keys - Its Essence

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"THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS - ITS ESSENCE"

Walter Schumann

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against the pastor unless he has admonished him in a Christian manner according to Matt. 18:15-20.

That in Art. XIV — Eigentumsrecht bei Trennung der Gemeinde: the words "die in der Mehrzahl sind" be deleted and the words, "die an dieser Gemeinde-Ordnung halten," be substituted.

That the following be added to the Nebensatzungen under Part II: The Church Council shall never convene to transact business without the pastor's knowledge.

- c) Michigan District
Redeemer Ev. Lutheran Church, Merritt Island, Florida
- d) Minnesota District
Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church, Willmar, Minnesota
- e) Southeastern Wisconsin District
Calvary Ev. Lutheran Church, Libertyville, Illinois
- f) Western Wisconsin District
Faith Ev. Lutheran Church, Reedsburg, Wisconsin
St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Merrill, Wisconsin

We recommend the following changes and additions:

That in Art. I — Name, the words, The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod be substituted for the words, "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States."

That in Art. VII — Pastoral Office — the following be added as paragraph e: In case of a vacancy in the position of the pastor or teacher, the congregation shall notify the president of the local District of the Synod, that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

That in Art. XI the following be added: Art. II shall be unalterable. That the following be added to Art. VIII — Other Officers. The church council shall never convene to transact business without the pastor's knowledge.

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Klondike Corners, near Marshfield, Wisconsin.

We recommend the following changes and additions to the constitution: That the following be added to Art. IV — Membership — as part g: permit themselves to be fraternally admonished and corrected when they have erred.

That the following be added to Art. VII — Pastoral Office: In case of a vacancy in the position of the pastor or teacher, the congregation shall notify the president of the local District of the Synod, that he may assist in temporarily filling the vacancy and in giving his good counsel in regard to the calling of a new pastor or teacher.

That the following be added to Art. VIII: The church council shall never convene to transact business without the pastor's knowledge. That Art. IX be changed to read "adhere to this Constitution" instead of "adhere to the confessions mentioned in Paragraph II."

Elmer Zimmermann, Chairman
Lawrence Lillegard, Secretary

Action by the Convention: The report was adopted.

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ESSAYS

"THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS — ITS ESSENCE"

by Prof. Walter Schumann

Before defining the Essence of the Ministry of the Keys it will be necessary to define the nature of the Church. There are two opposing doctrines: the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran. Protestants in general hold to the Lutheran doctrine.

The Romanists define the Church as the community of those baptized in the name of Christ, united under His vicar, the Pope, the visible head. The Lutheran doctrine states: "the Church is the congregation of saints (i.e., the believers), in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered" (Augsburg Confession, Art. VII).

The Roman Catholic doctrine is based, in part, on Holy Writ, plus historical development and tradition; the Lutheran doctrine on Scripture alone. Luther and his colleagues opened the Bible. Consequently they could say, "It has been written." And that stands for all time. It is durative, for "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." Furthermore, in quoting our Confessions, as presented in the Book of Concord, we accept and firmly hold to them, *because* they agree with the Scriptures. We shall compare the opposing doctrines of the Church for clarification of the theme assigned.

We note that in our Confessions the Church is defined as the assembly of all believers. That is a concise and complete definition of the Church. Article VII also states what is done in the Church by the grace of God, "in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered." These are the marks of the Church. The Church extends from time into eternity. On earth the Church is militant, in heaven, triumphant. This oneness of the Church is very clearly stated in Hebrews 12:22-24, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." In the Church Triumphant there is no baptism, no preaching of the Gospel, no Sacrament of the Altar. To speak of the visible side of the Church *in its essence* is not in accord with Holy Writ or the Lutheran Confessions. The identity of the true believers in Christ is known to God alone.

The word for the Church in the Greek New Testament is *ekklesia*. It is the common word for the assembly of the people in a free state of Greece, summoned by a herald, *keryx*. At times it means a tumultuous assembly (cf. the mob assembly in Ephesus, Acts 19:39). The term *ekklesia* is used by the Greek historians Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Aristotle, and also by some of the poets. It is also used in the Samian assembly and the meeting of the Amphictyons in Delphi. It always connotes a gathering of the people. This same meaning in a religious sense is basic in the Septuagint (LXX). It signifies the gathering of the people in Israel, the community of Israel as a congregation. It is the equivalent of the original Hebrew *qahal*.

In the New Testament *ekklesia* is the community of the redeemed, the New Testament Israel. It is well defined in Hermann Cremer's "Biblico-Theological Lexicon of the New Testament Greek." It denotes the New Testament community of the redeemed in its twofold aspects: first, the entire congregation of all who are called by and to Christ, who are in the fellowship of

His salvation — the Church; and, secondly, the New Testament churches as confined to particular places, "in localer Begrenzung" (I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1; I Thess. 2:14).

That the application of the word to the Church Universal is primary, and to an individual church, secondary, is clear from the Old Testament use of the word and from the fundamental statement of Christ in Matthew 16:18, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The reference "upon this rock" is to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." We shall say more about this passage in connection with the Roman doctrine of the Church. The "Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament" says of Cremer's definition above, s.v. *ekklesia*, "it digs deeper, here as elsewhere, and thus reaches a better lexical conclusion."

A group of Christians small enough to meet in a house can also be called a church. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). Paul writes in Colossians 4:15, "Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house." So also Paul to Philemon, verse 2, "To the church in thy house." In I Corinthians 16:19, "The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house." Here the larger churches of Asia are joined with the house congregation. Paul adds a genitive as attribute to the church. It is the church "of God." It is God's own creation. It is the spiritual body of Christ (Eph. 1:23; 4:12; Rom. 12:4, 5); of this spiritual body Christ is the spiritual Head (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18); it is the temple of God (Eph. 2:21, 22); Jesus is the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20; I Cor. 3:11; I Pet. 2:6); the Church endures into eternity (Matt. 16:18; John 10:27, 28); it is catholic, universal (Eph. 4:3-6; I Cor. 12:13; John 10:16; Rev. 5:9, 10). These are parallel expressions of the Church.

It is significant to note that the Romans used a loan-word in Latin for church. *Ekklesia* is lifted bodily out of the Greek. It is transcribed. They had "comitia" and "contio," public assembly, in their own vocabulary, but it did not connote what *ekklesia* does, those called out by the Gospel. *Ekklesia* could not be translated, so it was simply taken over. The totality of all Christians is called the church. As such it is the fullness of Him, who filleth all in all. It is not a "Platonic civitas," a "Platonic State," merely an idea. "The Church exists, namely, the truly believing and righteous men scattered throughout the whole world" (Apol. Conf. IV, 20; Trig. p. 233). In it every Christian must have communion with Christ. The Christian is and must be a member of the *ekklesia*. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).

Does this apply to the Synod? Is the Synod a Church? We shall quote Dr. C. F. W. Walther, the well-known teacher and leader of the Missouri Synod. Walther was the first president of the Missouri Synod, organized in 1847. He was also the first president of the Synodical Conference, organized in 1872. In 1876, a series of Walther's sermons was published under the title of "Lutherische Brosamen." Prof. John Meyer first called our attention to Walther's first sermon on the occasion of the opening of the Synod. The text was I Corinthians 1:4, 5. Professor Meyer translated the introduction of Walther's sermon. The translation appeared 20 years ago, September 2, 1945, in *The Northwestern Lutheran*, Vol. 32, No. 18, the Convention Number. "By far the most important thing in a Synod is pure doctrine and (spiritual) understanding. A synod is to be part of the church of God on earth. Hence also her distinguishing mark is that 'the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered' (Aug. Conf., Art. VII, 1). Also she shall be built on nothing else than 'upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus

Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone' (Eph. 2:20). Also she shall be a flock of those 'holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd' (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. XII). The order of our Savior which He gave to His church on earth when He ascended into heaven, is addressed to her: 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:20). Also her ultimate purpose is nothing else than the salvation of sinners, which can be achieved only through the Gospel. Also her first prayer must be accordingly not: 'Thy Kingdom Come', but 'Hallowed be Thy Name' . . . Being a church our Synod can comfort herself with the divine promise given to the Church that "she will grow into a fighting force before which hell trembles and against which it rages, but which under the leadership of the King of Truth is 'mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God' (II Cor. 10:4, 5). And thus our Synod will become more and more 'a cloud of witnesses for the Truth against all error, a light of the world against spiritual darkness.'"

In concluding his sermon Walther summarizes: "Our sentiment ("Absicht") in reference to the Synod must be this: May our Synod have friends or enemies, honor or dishonor, increase or decrease, peace or no peace, that is all the same to us, if she only preserves her treasure, true doctrine and understanding; should she, however, become indifferent, should she lose it through ingratitude or sell it as a traitress to the world or to a false church: then may she evermore perish and the name 'Missouri' decay as a name of disgrace." We, too, may well take this admonition to heart.

In the opening of the first meeting of the Synodical Conference in 1872, Walther, as its first president, delivered the sermon on the text I Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." The theme of his sermon was: "How important it is that we above all make the salvation of souls the real purpose of our joint work in the kingdom of Christ" (Brosamen, pp. 567ff.). Walther indeed understood the Synod as Church.

At this point we shall digress to a historical event of great importance. We turn to Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun, who deserve to be better known. Both lived in the fourteenth century at the time of the conflict between the papacy and the empire and the Babylonian Captivity of the Roman Church, 1309-1377. Marsilius wrote the "Defensor Pacis" in 1324, possibly aided by John of Jandun. This writing is correctly described as the "most startling modern treatise that the age produced."

The treatise states that the basis of all power in the state is the people; in the church, the whole power of Christian believers. In reference to the last point the Defensor asserts as follows, "For the attainment of eternal blessedness, it is necessary to believe divine or canonical Scripture alone, and such interpretation of it as follows by necessary sequence and is made by common consent of the people, is true; if duly presented to anyone" and "the observance of the precepts of the divine law no one, according to the evangelical Scripture, can be compelled by penalty or punishment of a temporal sort, or such as belongs to this present world," and "decretals, or decrees of the Roman or any other pontiff, whether taken as a whole or separately, apart from the permission of the human legislator, render no one liable to penalty or punishment of a temporal or secular kind."

Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun were excommunicated by Pope John XVII. In his bull of excommunication of 1327, the Pope referred to them as "reprobates, sons of Belial, plaguey fellows, vain, lying talkers." Here is one

1. *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church*, by B. J. Kidd, p. 192, no. 140. *Mirbt, Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums*, 3rd. Ed., p. 164, No. 311. *The Church Teaches*, by Jesuit Fathers of St. Mary's College, pp. 75-76.

paragraph: "These sons of Belial presume to affirm that the blessed Apostle Peter had no more authority than the other apostles: and, further, that Christ appointed no head of the Church nor made anyone His vicar; which is entirely contrary to evangelical and apostolic truth." Pope Clement VI, in 1343, declared that he had never read a "more heretical book." The book was put on the Index in 1559.

An introductory note in "The Church Teaches" correctly states: "The condemned errors of these men indicate the beginnings of a false notion of the constitution of the Church — that it is a democratic and not a monarchical society; and they undoubtedly influence Wycliff and Huss and the theologians of the Reformation."

Wycliff and Huss of Bohemia were forerunners of the Reformation. Luther acknowledges them as such. Wycliff (1324-1384) translated the Bible from the Latin. It was literal and stiff and did not have wide circulation. Another hundred years passed before John Gutenberg, in 1440-1450, invented metal movable type, giving Luther's writings their wings. Wycliff also wrote on the "Power of the Pope." He considered the Roman Church as the "synagogue of Satan, and the Pope not the next and immediate vicar of Christ and the apostles." Although he estranged many people in his day with his violent language, he was known as "the morningstar of the Reformation." His influence in England was great. In this connection a contemporary of Luther, Tyndale (1494-1536), is chiefly known for his excellent translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek. It is the basis of the Authorized Version of 1611 and the Revised Version in England of 1881-1885. Tyndale insisted on the sole authority of the Bible and, like Luther, on justification by faith. Consequently his influence was inestimably greater than Wycliff's. We mention this in relation to our theme.

Of the five Tudors in England from Henry VI, 1487, to Elizabeth I, 1603, only Bloody Mary, a Catholic, had strong religious convictions. With the other Tudors religion was chiefly a matter of expediency. Religion and politics are closely allied in England. In 1563, "The Thirty-Nine Articles" were adopted. These articles are the doctrinal basis of the Anglican Church — the Church of England. In our country it is known as the Episcopal Church. Numerous groups refused to conform to the doctrine and polity of the established church. These are known as Dissenters, or Non-Conformists: Presbyterians, Puritans, Brownists, Baptists, Separatists, etc. Some of these dissenters compose the largest body of Protestants in the United States.

The Pilgrims believed in "the Community of the Faithful, covenanted together in a single local church for the worship of God. From this their self-government in politics was derived; from this everything was derived." . . . "This basis conception of the church covenant, Anglicized by Robert Brown and made the central principle of all later congregationalism, was never so trenchantly stated as by the Pilgrim preacher, John Robinson: "In what place soever, by what means soever, whether by preaching the Gospel by a true minister, or by a false minister, or by no minister, or by reading, conference, or by any other means of publishing it, two or three faithful people do arise, separating themselves from the world into the fellowship of the Gospel and the covenant of Abraham, they are a church truly gathered, though ever so weak — a house and temple of God rightly founded upon the doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Christ Himself being the Cornerstone."¹

2. Kidd, p. 193, No. 141; Mirbt, p. 165, No. 312; *The Church Speaks*, Introductory Note, p. 76.
1. Robert Ashton, *The Works of J. Robinson*, Boston: Doctrinal Tract and Book Society, 1851, II, pp. 232-233. Cf. also E. S. Bates, *American Faith*, ch. 7, *The Pilgrim Experiment in Separation*, pp. 104-105.

The Roman Catholic Doctrine on the Church

The Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church is paradoxically both immutable and labile, i.e., it is fixed and also open to change and development. In proof of this we quote Dr. Karl Adam, a priest and professor of Dogmatic theology in the Catholic faculty of the University of Tuebingen. His book, "The Spirit of Catholicism," has the "nihil obstat" and the imprimatur of the Roman Catholic officials in England. The quotation follows: "We Catholics acknowledge readily, without any shame, nay with pride, that Catholicism cannot be identified simply and wholly with primitive Christianity, nor even with the Gospel of Christ, in the same way that the great oak cannot be identified with the tiny acorn. There is no mechanical identity, but an organic identity. And we go further and say that thousands of years hence Catholicism will probably be even richer, more luxuriant, more manifold in dogma, morals, law and worship than the Catholicism of the present day. A religious historian of the fifth millenium A.D. will without difficulty discover in Catholicism conceptions and forms and practices which derive from India, China and Japan, and he will have to recognize a far more obvious 'complex of opposites.' It is quite true, Catholicism is a union of contradictions. Wherever there is life, there you must have conflict and contrary."

The immutability of the Roman doctrine of the Church was fixed in the bull "Unam Sanctam" by Boniface VIII. The final 17 words in Latin are considered an "ex cathedra" decision. The translation of these words in English is as follows: "Further, we declare, say, define, and pronounce that it is absolutely necessary for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."²

Prior to "Unam Sanctam", however, the power of the Pope was advanced in the Dictatus (1067) of Hildebrand, known as Gregory VII. The Dictatus was the most famous of all medieval papal decrees. It asserted that "the Roman Church was founded by God alone"; "the Roman pontiff alone can with right be called universal"; that "he alone can depose or reinstate bishops"; that "he alone may use (i.e., dispose of) the imperial insignia"; that "it may be permitted him to depose emperors"; that "he himself may be judged by no one".¹

It is the boldest assertion of papal authority that had ever been made. Henry IV of Germany replied by a fiery letter to Hildebrand, "now no pope, but a false monk" . . . "descend, descend, to be damned throughout all ages." Henry, of course, was excommunicated. The real issue between Emperor and Pope was the Investiture Struggle. Due to unrest in Germany as the result of Henry's excommunication, Henry hurried to Canossa, a palace in the Alps, where the Pope had gone for safety. For three days he sat in sackcloth and ashes in the snow, begging for release from excommunication. On the fourth day it was granted. Such was the power of the Pope, the vicar of Christ, over the souls of men.

The rise and flowering of the papal church continued to 1300, to Boniface VIII. The doctrine of the infallibility had its origin at this time. During the Crusades, 1096-1270, the Pope whipped up universal enthusiasm with the slogan, "It is the will of God." As a result, the power of the papacy and the authority of the church increased, since the popes got the nobles of Europe off their necks. At this time the orders of the Cistercian monks (1095), the Dominicans (1216), and the Franciscans (1210) were founded.

1. *The Church Teaches*, ed. by Jesuit Fathers, par. 154, p. 75 Denziger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, 469.
Mirbt, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums*, 3 ed., p. 164 Bettenson. Documents, 2 ed., p. 161.
2. E. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents*, pp. 366, 367.
2. *ibid.*, pp. 372, 373.

Since the fifth century the increased influence of the Marian theology became evident. This theology became a matter of faith by an *ex cathedra* decision in 1854 in the bull, *Ineffabilis Deus* of Pio Nono, stating that the Virgin Mary was preserved from original sin from her conception. This was followed by an *ex cathedra* decision in 1950, in the bull *Munificentissimus Deus* by Pius XII, stating that the Virgin was "preserved immune from the corruption of the tomb, and like her Son before her, having conquered death, should be carried up, in body and soul, to the celestial glory of heaven, to reign there as queen, at the right hand of her Son, the immortal King of the ages." The infallibility doctrine, also an *ex cathedra* decision, was given in 1870 by Pio Nono, in the bull *Constitutio Dogmatica*. It decreed that when the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* concerning faith and morals, through the divine assistance promised him in blessed Peter, is endowed with that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed that His Church should be equipped."

In 1943 Pope Pius XII issued the important encyclical "Mystici Corporis." It contains some acceptable statements on the Church as the body of Christ. Throughout the encyclical, however, the old Catholic error occurs. "After His glorious ascension into heaven, this Church rests not on Him alone, but on Peter, too, its visible foundation stone. That Christ and His vicar constitute *one only head* is the solemn teaching of our predecessor of immortal memory, Boniface VIII, in the Apostolic Letter, *Unam Sanctam*; and his successors have never ceased to repeat the same." Furthermore, the Marian theology is also evident in the encyclical. As a result the term "mediatrix" is current in Catholic theology today.

The Roman Catholic scholar, Altaner, one of the leading authorities on patristics, points out that there is no Scriptural proof and no legitimate traditional evidence for the doctrine of the Virgin's assumption. The assumption idea appeared first in a legend of Gnostic origin in the fifth century. It was judged apocryphal by the Roman Church of that day and included in a list of forbidden books. After declaring the assumption legend a product of purest fantasy, Altaner hedges and grants that if the teaching office of the church should affirm that the idea of Mary's assumption into heaven is not only a pious opinion but a divinely revealed truth, the theologian must admit that the Holy Spirit through His assistance to the teaching office has conveyed and clarified something which could not have been attained and established on the basis of the scholarly study of the available texts.¹

Erik Persson, professor of systematic theology at the University of Lund, Sweden, states in his stimulating book, *Roman and Evangelical*, that there is a remarkable parallel between the conception of the ministry and the interpretation of the role of Mary in the work of redemption. He writes: "It is said that it is through Mary that salvation becomes available to men. She is the mediatrix between men and Christ. Just as no one comes to the Father but through the Son, so no one comes to the Son but through Mary. . . . All grace comes to men through her intercession and mediation. Like the church Mary is designated as the mother of all the faithful, and through her both Christ and the Spirit are bestowed. In the moment of the Annunciation the whole work of redemption depends on her 'yes' to the angel, she brings Christ by birth into the world, and through her cooperation grace and truth come to men. In his encyclical on the church (1943), Pius XII says that it was Mary who through her prayers brought it about that the Spirit was sent to the apostles on Pentecost. In the same context we are told how Mary brought her Son on Golgotha as a sacrifice to the eternal Father — a direct parallel to the function of the priest in the sacrifice of the Mass. All these ideas may

1. *The Church Teaches*, ed. by Jesuit Fathers, p. 11 cf. B. Altaner, Professor of Patristics at the University of Wuerzburg, *Patrology*, on Mary.

be summarized in the more and more frequent designation of Mary as 'co-redemptrix,' associate in redemption, a designation which occurs even in papal documents. It is these ideas of her cooperation in salvation which constitute the compelling motive behind the dogma of her immaculate conception. Only if she herself was without sin could she actively take part in the work of redemption. It is thus natural that Mary is continually designated as the prototype of the church, *Typus der Kirche*. Just as she is the mediatrix of all grace and the one through whom man comes to Christ, so one comes to Christ and participates in the divine grace through the church and its ministry. Mary, free from sin and mediatrix of all grace, becomes in the last analysis a personification of the church which is infallible and mediates all grace. Mariology is not an incidental outgrowth in Roman theology. It is a clear consequence of its conception of the church and the ministry and therefore also if its view of the meaning of redemption. In the final analysis the Marian dogmas are a dogmatizing of the Roman Church's understanding of herself."

Not to Peter alone, nor to Mary in a special sense, but to the Church, the body of His believers, did the Lord convey the authority of the Keys. We note Luther's remarks on Mary in the following quotation: "We shall first be able to see the holy church in the resurrection kingdom, after the final judgment. On earth the word of the Creed is valid, 'I believe in the holy church.' Faith is convinced that there are sanctified Christians, even though it knows that they look after their vocations 'in the midst of the common throng.' Only the Lord knows those who are his; and according to the Scriptures it happens very often that God's friends and chosen ones are hidden in vocations that are ordinary and little noticed by human eyes. The Bethlehem shepherds went back to their flocks, though they had been the first of all to see the Savior; and, according to Luther, the Virgin Mary doubtless did her housework as usual after the annunciation, without letting her neighbors know anything about it. 'See how purely she bears all things in God, that she claims no works, no honor, and no fame. She acts as she did before, when she had none of this. She does not ask for more honor than before. She does not plume herself, nor vaunt herself, nor proclaim that she has become the Mother of God. She demands no glory, but goes on working in the house as before. She milks the cows, cooks, washes the dishes, cleans, performing the work of a housemaid or housewife in lowly and despised tasks. She is esteemed among other women and her neighbors no more highly than before, nor did she desire to be. She remained a poor townswoman, among the lowly crowd!" (Gustav Wingren, *The Christian's Calling*, pp. 182-3.)

The Ministry of the Keys

In conclusion we return to the Augsburg Confession, Art. VII: "The Church is the congregation of saints (the believers), in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered."

The ministry was established by the Lord (Matt. 28:19, 20), "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." The essence of all preaching is the Gospel by which men dead in trespasses and sins are made alive. Of the Gospel all Christians are ministers. They are servants of the Word, the Gospel of justification by grace through faith alone in Christ. The Ministry of the Keys is given to the Church for its comfort. To say that the climax of the Keys is excommunication is crass papacy.

That the ministry of the New Testament is universal and the service of Christians everywhere we know from the well-known passage, the *locus classi-*

1. E. Persson, *Roman and Evangelical*, pp. 32-34.

cus, I Peter 2:9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." So also Paul in Ephesians 6:14, 15, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." (Cf. Matt. 18:18; John 20:21-23; 15:17; Acts 1:8.)

Indeed we may say that the ministry of the New Testament has its beginning in the earliest chapter of the Old Testament economy. It is as old as the Gospel. Adam was a minister of the Gospel, although we have no Bible passage with a commission for Adam to preach. He did not need a commission. As a believer in the Protevangel, he prayed, gave thanks, preached all functions of Christianity. In Genesis 4:26, "Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord (Jahve)," there is undoubtedly already a reference to public service, "darin," as Luther puts it, "Adam als ein Hoherpriester alles regiert durch das Wort und reine Lehre" (St. L. Ed. Vol. I, p. 399, par 302). From Adam the ministry continued throughout the Old Testament economy. The patriarchs preached the Gospel (Gen. 12:8; 21:33; 33:20); the prophets from Moses to the last one; so too the many Christians throughout the advent expectation of the Old Testament era, in which the prophecies were concentrated and pointed to the coming Messiah in ever increasing clarity and directness.

Consequently, we do not speak of an authorization and permission to preach the Gospel as a special privilege of certain Christians only, of a special class, as little as we speak of prayer or any other function of Christianity in any restricted sense whatsoever. This applies also to the commission of Christ: Preach the Gospel to all nations, teach all the people, make disciples, etc. This is the will of God, not a new commission. God does not wish to leave His Christians in doubt as to His will, namely that the Gospel is to be preached to all mankind. He assures them that the product of the new life, or regeneration, to preach the Gospel of redemption, is in conformity with His will.

Now God has given us no rules, He has instituted no specific, outward forms in which and through which the Gospel is to be preached. That matter is left to the Church according to the peculiar needs of the day and the circumstances in which it lives. The exigencies of the age create, develop and shape the historical form it acquires, needful and peculiar to its time. In the United States we have the pastorate. Pastorate, or "Pfarramt," is not a Biblical term. It must not be identified with the term "ministry" of the New Testament. It has the relation to it of species to genus. It is one of the historically developed forms of the general term, the genus. There are two species of it: the one, the universal priesthood (ministry) of all Christians; the other, the public proclamation of the Word by the commission of the congregation. Of the latter there are subspecies: the pastorate, office of teacher, professorship, etc. (cf. Schaller's Pastorate, Vorwort, Seite V und VI).

This historically developed office of the public ministry is not a continuation of the Apostles' office via "apostolic succession," or of the office of the prophets of the Old Testament. God in His wisdom gave the Church prophets whenever He thought it necessary; and the apostles were directly appointed and commissioned to establish the church, to lay its foundations, in an age in which the needs must be apparent to even a superficial observer. Both Prophets and Apostles had identical functions (Eph. 2:19). The myth of the "apostolic succession" is exploded by careful exegesis of the New Testament, or even careful reading. Furthermore, it cannot bear the scrutiny of historical research. The Apostles' office died with them. "Apostolic succession" is the pious slogan of the Antichrist of Roman Catholicism, through which it bolstered the structure of its church by prostitution of the Lord's Supper (the

Eucharist) and a false interpretation of Matthew 16:18, "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." (Cf. Sohm, *Kirchengeschichte im Grundriss*, par. 10.)

The public ministry is, as Luther says, another use, "ein anderer Brauch," of the New Testament ministry. For the sake of order (I Cor. 14:27) the congregation commissions such persons qualified by faith and training to take this office. This does not signify that there are two offices or ministries. There is one and only one ministry of the New Testament. The "public ministry" is "ein anderer Brauch," or "way of administration," of the same office that the individual Christian has. For this reason the individual Christian in no wise surrenders his prerogatives of the ministry of the New Testament. No one, however, can take upon himself the office of the public ministry, even though he possess superlative qualifications, unless he be rightly called by the Church, that is, in German, "von Gemeinschafts wegen." The proclamation must be "secundum ordinem." Not all can speak, otherwise, as Luther says, "wurde es gleich werden, also wenn die Weiber zum Markt gehen, so will keine der anderen zuhören und wollen alle reden" (W. A. 10, III, 397, 17), and "wie wurde es ein Geplerr durch einander werden, wie jetzt unter den Froschen" (St. L. XI, p. 746). The Lord presents His Church with men who are qualified for this work. Of those who are called we say that they are called by God. They have a divine call to the ministry of the Gospel of Christ in the New Testament Church. Their call is "vocatio rata," it is legal, valid.

This then is the essence of that peculiar authority and glorious privilege which the Lord has bestowed upon His Church, His believers. Its very climax is reached in the proclamation of that Gospel which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." As individuals and as a church body let us treasure it and use it to our own salvation and that of those who hear us.

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 THE MINISTRY OF THE KEYS — ITS POSSESSORS

Madison, Wisconsin
 By PROF. Wm. G. Zell

When we would speak of those who are the possessors of the Keys which Christ Jesus bestowed upon His Church, i.e., the Keys to open and to close the doorway into His Heaven, it is next to self-evident that we should begin by identifying these possessors. We will be content with the self-evident and name these possessors of the Keys, yet do so very briefly and very simply, for we feel sure that none here today is in doubt on this score. Christ's Church of Believers possesses the Keys; and, the believers in Christ's Church possess the Keys. These two statements say much the same thing, yet in different ways. One speaks of a collective possessing by the one body of the members of Jesus Christ; the other speaks of the individual possession by each single member in the great and timeless congregation of believers in the Lamb. Both of these are true, they are not exclusive one of the other; either approach could serve as a beginning for this essay.

However, since our purpose this morning is to center our attention particularly on that doctrine of Holy Scripture, illustrated so aptly in the parable of the pounds, which declares each single child of God a possessor of the Keys, we will devote ourself in this paper entirely to this one fact. We are confident that the other, the joint possession of the Keys by all believers, as it stems from the individual possession, will not be neglected in this series of essays. We are convinced that all of us have a greater need for a review of our individual possession of the Keys, and that we find it too easy to take comfort in our own carelessness over against the Ministry of the Keys in the Church's