

# LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY\*

by August Pieper

## I. The Necessity of Thorough Study of the Lutheran and the Roman Doctrines\*\*

If we wish to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation this year (1917) in spirit and in truth, then it is necessary that we become clear as to what Luther actually attained through his struggle. The "Pure Doctrine" and the "Correct use of the Sacraments" standing alone are in themselves just slogans, formal concepts without content, if we do not have some measure of exact knowledge regarding the substance of the pure doctrine and correct use of the Sacraments. One can truthfully say that by and large the Lutheran people have never at any time had a thoroughgoing understanding of the Gospel for which Luther fought, neither at the time of the Reformation, nor in the times of partial revival of Lutheranism here or abroad. Pietism, the era of Klaus Harms, the free church movement were not based upon a clear or deep understanding of the Gospel on the part of the multitudes who were caught up in these movements. For an understanding of the special character of the Missouri Synod it is significant to see that at the time of her youth, not only in this synod alone, but also in nearby, yes even in hostile circles, there was a relatively thoroughgoing knowledge of the chief teachings of Luther among the larger number of Lutheran Christians, and that many lay people studied Luther himself, in some cases very diligently and with much fruit. Until most recent times there were lay theologians in the Missouri Synod who surpassed many a pastor in knowledge of Luther's teaching. The *People's Library of Luther's Writings*, published in St. Louis, was at one time much read and studied. Those times are, however, past. Luther's *People's Library* is a forgotten book, and the Walch edition of Luther's works can hardly find entrance, admission, or sale among pastors, much less among the people. It is strange how little power the effective battle cry of Walther's time, "Back to Luther," still possesses today. We are, we think, with Luther; what more do we need? It would be a mistake if we thought that our parochial schools and our confirmation instruction, both of which in themselves are thorough, had created in the mass of our people more than an elementary understanding of the way of salvation. It would be a mistake to think they had created a clear and conscious Lutheranism. The search for a thorough understanding of what Luther taught in opposition to the Roman Church, which is infesting everything also in our country, has ceased among our people. Perhaps this alone everyone knows: "Not through works, but through faith," and the other: "The pope is not the vicar of Christ, but rather the antichrist," and the third: "Not tradition, but Scripture alone!"

What is the situation among us pastors with regard to an understanding of Luther's teaching? To be sure, we know the Gospel, and among us this practically amounts to an axiom: "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall now and evermore endure." That means Luther's teaching is the same as the Gospel. But is this much more than a slogan among us? Have we recognized and experienced this fact ourselves? Isn't it idolatry in our mouth? It is *not* to be demanded that every Lutheran pastor or professor read and know all of Luther thoroughly. Luther also wrote much that is insignificant—even incorrect. Some of the things which Luther wrote might well have been left unprinted, and the world after him would not have been any poorer for it. But this demand can properly be made of every public teacher in the Lutheran church, that he have a clear knowledge of the chief teachings which Luther upheld in opposition to the papacy, on account of which he with a heavy heart carried out the separation from the Roman synagogue, with its farreaching consequences; but he was driven by his conscience and he did it with confidence. These teachings the public teacher should know indeed directly from

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\*\* The necessity of a thorough study of the Lutheran and the Roman doctrines is in view of Vatican II as cogent as it was in 1917. No good Lutheran will want to become acquainted with the decrees of this Council without having a clear understanding of the basic differences between the Lutheran and Roman doctrines. Prof. Pieper in this his 400th anniversary of the Reformation article succeeded remarkably well in pointing out the basic differences of both doctrines and thus aiding the reader in comprehending both the Roman and Lutheran doctrines in their "innermost being" and "basic essence."—Ed.

Luther himself and not second or third hand; not from fragmentary Luther quotations, but from his own complete writings. As we as evangelical teachers know the Word of God directly from Scripture, so as Lutheran pastors we must know Luther's teaching directly from Luther himself. This is a special curse of our time, the second, third, and fourth generation after Walther, that we know God's Word and Luther's teaching only second or third hand in fragmentary Luther quotations, and then rest content as though we knew both Scripture and Luther. This creates a false security. It might be enough for confirmands to know a number of chief passages from Scripture. Whoever is to teach God's Word and teach it in public, must be able to draw from the complete fulness of Scripture and must have the logical and historical context of those passages clearly in mind; it is from this that they win their full and exact, intended meaning. This is much more the case with a fallible writer, above all with a Luther, whose speech is often so unsystematic, whose expressions are often free and unrestrained, whose argumentation is so often cut to fit a specific situation, so that the uninitiated can easily draw false generalities from it. With such an original, powerful man, who always confronts the whole, always judges each situation from the essence of the whole, a man who especially in battle swings the sword of Siegfried, one must become "personally" acquainted in order to understand him, and this is possible only through repeated, exact study of his chief writings. For example, his four writings, *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, *The Commentary on Galatians*, *The Bondage of the Will*, *The Papacy at Rome*, outweigh an entire library of books about Luther's teaching.

And now we shall add just one more thing. You can understand a teaching or a position completely and exactly only when you see it in contrast to something else. Thus, too, you first see its full significance. A gray object painted on a gray background provides no sharp contrast. *Immersatt dankt nicht*. Error is the thing which finally brings out the truth in sharp relief. The Gospel would not be so sweet without the Law. One cannot fully understand Luther without knowing something about the antitheses against which he writes. A large portion of historical knowledge is required for a correct understanding of Luther, above all a knowledge of the Roman, Reformed, and enthusiastic teachings against which he turns. This is also not accomplished with a knowledge of the immediate and obvious antitheses. No one can understand why Luther and Zwingli couldn't agree at Marburg regarding the Lord's Supper since both sides recognized the sole authority of Scripture, why up to the present day no union has been reached between the Lutheran and Reformed churches, if he does not recognize the final basic difference between Lutheran and Reformed: on the one hand, the Reformed humanistic rationalistic "this-worldliness" (*Diesseitsgeist*) which wants to effect a realization of the kingdom-of-God-concept on earth; on the other hand, the basic essence of Lutheranism, which in spiritual matters despairs completely of all one's own powers, also of human reason, which completely and exclusively nourishes itself on the milk of the revealed Word of God and wants only to be eternally saved—Martha there, Mary here. It is the same with the contrast between the Lutheran church and the Roman. No one knows the Lutheran teaching precisely, if he doesn't clearly see it in antithesis to Roman teaching. But here too one must look at basic things. As certainly as Luther experienced the fearfulness of sin so that "my fears increased till sheer despair left naught but death to be my share; the pangs of hell I suffered," so certainly he had to step into irreconcilable opposition to the Roman teaching; for Rome may acknowledge a dismal brooding, but no complete despairing under sin. As Luther became ever more certain of the forgiveness of his own sins through the immediate Gospel of the righteousness of faith, so he became ever more certain that he had to separate himself from the pope's realm and members; for the pope's realm knows of no direct-working Gospel nor of any God-given certainty of the forgiveness of sins. These two things, as nothing else, characterize his basic position over against the papacy: the Christian's immediate position under the Word of God on the one hand and the certainty of grace through faith on the other. No priest, no pope, no church stood between him and his God. God spoke to him, with him, immediately through His Word, in the Scriptures of the Apostles and the Prophets. "The Word they still shall let remain." "The Word does it and must do it alone." "Unless I am proved wrong by clear testimonies of Scripture, —for I believe neither pope nor councils alone... , and my conscience is bound in God's Word, I can and will recant nothing, etc." The word that speaks of sin, without official guidance, without priests, had with divine power pierced his heart and driven him to despair. The word of the prophet regarding the righteousness of faith had without priestly mediation unlocked heaven for him and caused him to be reborn.

This word became for him source, power and norm, star and sun of his life in the God-given certainty of faith. His Christianity was personal spiritual life, personal inner power and energy. “This article alone rules in my heart, faith in Christ, from which, through which and to which by day and by night all my theological thoughts flow and return.” In Rome everything is different. The papacy is the representative of mediation and externalism in religion. Nothing, nothing is really internal, spiritual, true, sincere, evangelical; everything is external, material, law, pomp, yes, show and delusion. Whatever of spirit and truth remains in the Roman church is there outside its system, in opposition to its system. External membership in the external church, external faith, blind assent, external obedience to external mediators, external works, performance of prayers, church forms, confessions, communions, acts of repentance, masses—external, glittering piety of works is the essential characteristic of the Roman religion, thus also the principal of mediation. Everything with which the papacy has to do is an untouchable sanctuary, a mystery, sacrament, secret, a *noli me tangere* not only for the unbeliever, but also for the believing laity. All of these things have been given over to a priesthood which is equipped with special holiness, a special call, special power and might, for its sole use, jurisdiction, and dispensation. They are the ones who alone stand in the holy place before God, who are the mediators between Christ, the Savior, and the common Christian. The church itself, the entire institution, especially the church *κατεξοχήν*, the papal, hierarchically ranked priesthood is essentially nothing else but the mediator before God for the individual believing soul. “No one comes to the Father, but through Me,” the Lord Jesus has said; “No one comes to the Lord Jesus Christ, but through me,” says the Roman church, the priesthood, the pope.—Externalism and mediation in religion, this is really Rome’s essence; the inner life and direct approach to God, this is Luther.—It is self-understood, that one can express this in many other ways as well.

Out of these basic differences one gains an understanding of the individual differences between Luther and the papacy. It must be said with all the emphasis possible that this is a matter not only of the outward thing, false doctrine and correct doctrine according to the wording of this or that passage in Scripture. The chief Roman teaching regarding the divine institution of the primacy of Peter, the apostolic hierarchy, the apostolic succession, the ordination of priests, the diaconate, has more outward expressions of Scripture to support it than we have if we should want to prove the specific divine institution or the permanent, legal establishment of the form of the parish pastorate from Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11ff; I Cor. 12:28ff; I Tim. 3; Tit. 1; and I Peter 5:1, 2. The primacy of Peter is an undeniable fact in Scripture; the only question is, whether it is taken in an external legalistic sense or in the inner, natural, free evangelical sense. The very same thing is true of the subdivision of the church offices in Eph. 4; the question is only whether one sees permanent outward *institutions* or spiritual *gifts*. The ruling, the regulating done by individual apostles or by the apostolic college in the church (Acts 15), the appointing or installing of elders, the commissioning of others with the office of preaching, of governing the church, of, for example, Timothy and Titus by Paul, the laying on of hands (Ordination of priests!), etc., are *clear facts*; the question is only whether one is to take these things in the inner or outward sense, legalistically or evangelically, as essential or non-essential, as necessary for the mediation of grace or as freely beneficial in the sense of I Corinthians 3:22 (“All things are yours”). He who wishes to understand Scripture, the Gospel, Paul, Luther, Rome, any great institution, person, or thing, must comprehend it in its innermost being, in its basic essence. From this the individual items win their exact and full meaning. On the other hand, it is just as true that One gets at the kernel only through the outward shell, that one can recognize the innermost being of a man or of a system only from observing the thousands of apparent characteristics. But this stands: the shell is nothing without the kernel; for a correct appraisal of the outward expressions, of the individual teachings of Luther and of the pope, one must have a knowledge of the basic differences that divide them.

Do we know Luther? Do we Lutheran teachers of the church know that institution which we designate as the realm of the Antichrist, and which we hate and oppose as nothing else? This jubilee year (1917) is a special inducement and opportunity to make clear to our people, just what the Reformation actually was all about. It would be unfaithfulness, if we were to neglect this. We must then study Luther, master his chief writings completely in their connection and not be satisfied with selected quotations. But we must also gain a close acquaintance with Rome’s teaching, and know not only this or that individual fragment about its teaching regarding such things as the vicarship of Christ, the Lord’s Supper, the sacrifice of the mass, auricular

confession, the seven sacraments, the one saving church, extreme unction, etc. We should know Rome from its own writings. One doesn't have to know Thomas or Bellarmine, neither Farley nor Ireland nor Gibbons; it is fully sufficient to have at hand the *Decrees of the Council of Trent* and the *Roman Catechism* and perhaps also the *Decrees of the Vatican Council*, the *Encyclical* and the *Syllabus* of Pio Nono for a correct appraisal of Rome. Truthfulness and justice indeed demand that we take the presentation of Roman doctrine not from Protestant sources, also not from Luther, but from Rome's own writings.

We are finished with the introduction. It was long. But from our point of view rightly so. We wish to consider here Luther's Doctrine of Church and Ministry. Not so important is our presentation of this teaching as what we have just carried out. We are not deceiving ourselves. From all our presentations no man may gain a complete and thoroughly clear picture either of Luther's teaching or of the teaching of Rome. What we people write in the *Quartalschrift* is not something perfect, definitive, and decisive, which one may simply accept and upon which one may implicitly rely. Whoever reads church periodicals and theological books in *that* spirit, pays too high a price and is wasting his time. No, our articles should lead into that which is greater, that which is definitive, into the Scriptures, into Luther, into each original source. Their chief purpose is not to teach authoritatively and definitely, and to spare our readers the trouble of thinking and study, but rather to stimulate personal research, study, gathering of information and judging. What Luther said of all his books, that one should simply let them be a scaffold to Scripture, that is the purpose of all our writing. It is far more important, brings a thousand times more benefit, if we through this present article move a number of our brethren to study independently Luther's and the pope's teaching of church and ministry out of their own writings, rather than to have this teaching complete from our pen served up here like a well done meal, ready to eat. The following article can perhaps serve as a guide to the correct understanding of Luther and Rome in this matter, but the correct understanding itself this article cannot produce. One must permit the great prime materials themselves to work upon him.

## II. Rome's Teaching of Church and Ministry

We have said above that the characteristic difference between Luther and Rome is this: inwardness and externalism, immediacy and mediacy in religion. This shows itself everywhere, above all in the teaching of church and ministry, which actually is a comprehensive summing up of all doctrine.

Rome teaches an external, visible, legalistic church, Luther an inner, invisible, evangelical one. Rome places the church between God and the Christian as the dispenser of salvation; with Luther the Church, that is all Christians themselves, are sitting right in God's lap. That is the difference entirely, in *nuce*. Furthermore these two things are always woven together.

Most instructive would be a historical presentation of the Roman doctrine. This teaching is not there right from the start; it developed along with the Roman church, with the papacy itself, and gained its fullest expression only in the declaration of infallibility of the Vatican Council of 1869–70. Its coarse beginnings are already fully defined with Ignatius of Antioch and Clement of Rome. The way the Roman teaching was constituted at the time of Luther was fixed afterward in the Council of Trent. This council and the *Catechismus Romanus*, which came out of the same, are our chief sources.

The doctrine of the church and her office is the one great chief teaching of the Roman church. Compared with it everything else steps into the background. This doctrine is stressed again and again most emphatically and is constantly kept before the eyes of the public. The Roman church is the only true, only saving church. All others are only sham churches, synagogues of Satan. *In ecclesia salus; extra ecclesiam nulla salus!* The first thing which every person has to do is outwardly to enter the pale of the Roman church; his one great concern must be to remain in her midst and to die in her. In this way alone can his final salvation be secured, even if only after many years of purgatory. With the exception of a few special cases, all nonmembers of the Roman Church are lost.

In order to be fair we shall in the following let the Roman church and its official documents speak for themselves.

The Lord Christ from the very beginning founded the church, which indeed dispenses chiefly spiritual treasures, as an external, visible kingdom. She is the New Testament continuation of the Old Testament kingdom of God, of the Jewish theocracy, of the visible, external rule of God on earth, except that its character is transformed from Jewish to Christian. Instead of the type, she has the antitype, the essence of the heavenly treasures, instead of the ceremonial law, the law, or the laws of Christ. Moses was the old, Christ is the new *law-giver*. The former was limited to the Jewish people, the latter includes all peoples. She is the *res publica Christiana*. Jesus Christ is her one true Prophet, Priest, and King. He presented Himself to the Jewish people as the One promised in the Old Testament, so as to build up in their midst once again the now decadent visible kingdom of Israel. That is all that John the Baptist and He Himself meant with their message: “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand;” only the Lord described the essence, the treasures, and the nature of this kingdom more closely and also laid its foundations by means of new institutions. The Jewish nation rejected its Messiah; only a few accepted Him. These He now in contrast to the Jewish state made to be His state. He taught them the mysteries, the laws, the institutions of His kingdom. But from the very beginning he established in His Church two classes of members of His Kingdom. From the wider circle of believers and followers He chose twelve for Himself for closer association with Him, Mark 3:14. To them He revealed the more hidden portions of the truth, according to Matthew 13:11. They should be the actual bearers and managers of His heavenly treasures, the shepherds, teachers, and priests of His people, His representatives on earth in His prophetic, priestly, and royal office, the church in a special sense. This is the church that is meant in Matthew 18:18. That is why He prays especially for her preservation in faith and protection against the powers of the world. He gives them the Holy Spirit, so that as infallible teachers they may lead the world safely into heaven, as priests possess the true holiness, and as regents have the wisdom and power necessary to lead His flock and to protect it against the world. To them He gives the Sacrament of the Eucharist and with the words, “This do in remembrance of Me,” the sacrifice of the mass for the completion of His Own sacrifice upon the cross. To them He commits the Gospel and Baptism and promises them that the Holy Spirit shall later unfold His teaching to them more fully and lead them into all truth. It must, however, not be forgotten, that the Apostles form a unit, a college, and do not stand alone as individuals. They are “The Twelve,” also where the actual number is only eleven or thirteen (counting Paul). Just as they are of one heart, so also outwardly they are a unit, and that with one visible head, Peter, who was formally and solemnly appointed by Christ for them, Matthew 16; John 21:15–17. The Father honored him with special revelations. He was especially entrusted, Matthew 16, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with the care for the entire flock of Christ, John 21, and Christ made him to be a rock for the church, after He had selected him as Cephas from the very beginning. He should after his reconversion strengthen his colleagues. Yes, with the ministry of the keys he received according to Isaiah 22:22 and Revelations 3:7 the full authority of Christ over the kingdom of heaven. This position as the divinely constituted head of the apostolic college and representative of Christ over the entire flock of Christ is something that Peter now actually carried out wherever we meet him in Scripture. Already before Pentecost he speaks for the others in the apostolic college, especially in important matters and situations. In the listings of the Apostles he is always mentioned first, even as he also was the first to be called. Peter is granted a special report of the resurrection of Christ. After the Ascension he already holds the entire body of disciples together and takes the lead in filling the vacancy in the apostolic college. And after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, Peter really takes his place as the primate of the young church. In the name of the apostolic college, with full assertion of his position he steps before the people with the preaching of Christ. The Holy Spirit works through his word and holds the enemies in check. Accompanied by John he performs the first miracle. He is protected and rescued by a special angel. He accepts the first Gentile Christians into the church upon receiving a special revelation. He protects the congregation at Jerusalem with his own person against the hostilities of the leaders and of the people. Although in all humility, nevertheless with the joyful recognition of his authority, he directs the various matters of the congregation through the other Apostles and the entire group of believers. He gives the decision at the Apostolic Council (Acts 15), and the rest, even the bishop James, are happy to agree. Even Paul sought and obtained the recognition of his apostolic office from Peter, Galatians 1 and 2. Thus Peter is very clearly the head of the church ordained by Christ and gladly recognized as such by the Apostles and all of early Christendom.

But under him and in association with him the entire apostolic college has the position of authority in the church. They do *not* have it from Peter, but directly from the *Lord*. Each has full authority, as far as its content is concerned, but not over the entire church, rather only over his own clergy, and only in association with Peter and under him. He is *primus inter pares*, at the same time apostle and head master of the entire church.

The authority of the church, which the Lord gave to Peter and his brethren in office, includes everything which is necessary for the edification, rule, and sanctification of the church in the wider sense, even the supremacy over the nations of the world, princes, kings, emperors, also over all of creation, over heaven and hell, as far as it is necessary for the guidance of the church; for this is indeed the supremacy of Christ. The authority of the church is divided and comprehended in a threefold power: 1. the *potestas ordinis*, 2. the *potestas magisterii* and 3. the *potestas jurisdictionis*. The first expression — *potestas ordinis* — Smets in his *Con Trid.* and *Cat. Rom.* frequently translates with *Gewalt der Priesterweihe* and then again with *Gewalt der Rangordnung* or also simply with *Gewalt der Weihe*. This is neither a contradiction nor a lack of clarity. According to Roman teaching there are two great *classes* of members in the church which have been established by Christ Himself: the common believers—lay people—and the clergy or those who hold an office. The laity is no *ordo* but simply the people, plebs. Those who hold official positions in the church constitute the *ordines*. Of these there are according to the stipulation of the Council of Trent, Session 23 (*Cat. Rom.* II, 7, q.11.12), which in turn was based upon Peter Lombard, seven, three higher and holy orders: Priest, deacon, subdeacon, and four lesser: acolyte, exorcist, lector, porter (cp *Cat. Rom.* as above, q. 15ff.) The highest *Ordo* is the office of priest, and its authority is usually designated with the term *potestas ordinis*. (Bishop, archbishop, etc., are not considered *ordines* but as dignities of the office of priest.) The *potestas ordinis* is simply the priestly authority and consists in the gift, power, and authority conferred by Christ, to *administer the sacraments* and to *celebrate the sacrifice of the mass*. Concretely and spelled out the matter of the authority of the office of priest is as follows: The Lord has instituted seven sacraments for the church; these are holy acts in which grace is given and sealed to the partakers under outward signs or ceremonies. They are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Ordination, and Matrimony (in this order in the *Cat. Rom.* II, 1 q.15). Among these the Eucharist far exceeds the others in holiness and in the number and greatness of the mysteries (ibid. q.16). While the priest has the authority to carry out the public administration of the Sacrament at all times in the church and the office of servant (priest) is not less necessary for the ministration of the Sacraments as is the matter and form, nevertheless in the Eucharist he attains to the highest work that is at all possible for a human being and which is imparted by God, to this namely, that he can dedicate and consecrate the elements of the Eucharist, the bread and wine, and thereby transform them into the true body and blood, so that of the former only the form remains without the substance, so that it is the body and blood of Christ also without the eating and the drinking even if it is only in the sacred vessels.

However, the Lord's Supper is not only a sacrament; it is also a sacrifice. The Lord Himself in its institution presented His body and His blood to God as a reconciliation for the sins of the world; and in that He said to His disciples, "This do," He made it a continuing institution, a real atoning sacrifice, by which the bloody sacrifice of Christ on the cross should be repeated in an unbloody manner every day. Through consecration, prayer, and elevation of the same to God, Christ Himself is sacrificed to God. This sacrifice, the Sacrifice of the Mass, is the most holy action which can take place on earth. Nothing can be compared with it. Through the same the sins of the person for whom it is offered are expiated, grace is acquired for him, and the torments of purgatory are shortened for the dead. In the presentation of this sacrifice, through the priest, Christ is Himself actually the agent and thus fulfils His high-priestly office on earth. Only He who has himself been chosen and authorized by Christ for this purpose and also ordained by the Church may and can effectively bring this holy sacrifice to God. This is the priest. In connection with the institution of the Holy Lord's Supper as a sacrament and sacrifice, Christ also at the same time appointed the Apostles "to be priests and commanded that they themselves and their successors sacrifice and present His body in the priestly office" (1.c.4, q.72). Woe unto the layperson who would presume to perform the Sacrifice of the Mass! (*C. R.* II, 4 q.65 and 7, 23). To be sure in the Scriptures (Ps. 50.19; I Peter 2:5; Romans 12:1 and Rev. 1:5 and 6) all believers are indeed called priests; but that is only an inner and private priesthood, on the strength of which they "bring spiritual sacrifices

to God through faith on the altar of their own hearts, in which are to be included all good and pious acts which they carry out to the honor of God. But the outward and public priesthood is not given to the entire mass of believers but to certain people who, ordained and dedicated to God through the proper laying on of hands (ordination of priests) and through sacred ceremonies of the church, have been commissioned to a proper and holy service” (ibid. 7, 23). This service consists in this, that he “offer the Sacrifice of the Mass and administer the church’s sacraments” and thereby “is installed as an interpreter and a mediator between God and man—which is to be considered the outstanding function of the priesthood” (ibid. 7, 24). —This is the *potestas ordinis*—the power and authority to consecrate, transubstantiate, sacrifice.

The *potestas magisterii* is the authority to *teach* the people. The Lord personally taught the Gospel of His Kingdom and of its riches and laws to all people without distinction. However, He was especially careful in preparing the apostolic college through the most thorough instruction for the acceptance of His teaching, John 17:1, so that the Apostles might be capable of carrying out the teaching office. But their actual teacher was the Holy Ghost. He is the Spirit of Truth, who should glorify Christ in their hearts, call His teachings into remembrance for them, and lead them into all truth, so that they would be able to recognize and teach the truth with infallible certainty. All of this is found chiefly in John, chapters 14, 15, 16, 17. As He promised them the Spirit, so He also poured out the Same upon them and thereby made them an infallible college of teachers, which the Church would have need of after His departure from the world in order to be led safely along the right path to heaven in the face of the lies and errors of this world. He sent them into all the world as the authoritative teachers of His Gospel and that with the express declaration, “He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me.” For the latter it shall be less tolerable than for Sodom and Gomorrah. Equipped with this full teaching authority, they went out into the world and proclaimed to the world this Gospel with their own lips, and the Lord confirmed the word with signs following and with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with power for the conversion of Jews and heathen. Thereafter some of them, especially Paul, with facile pen, in addition to its oral transmission, formulated the same Gospel of the Kingdom in writing upon the instigation of the Holy Spirit and under His infallible guidance. This was done in order that the Church, but especially the successors of the Apostles, might have an ever-flowing fountain and an infallible rule of the divine truth for themselves and for the believers. This infallible and authoritative teaching office no one in the Church possesses except the Apostles and their successors. The lay Christians may and should also confess their faith before Christians and unbelievers and proclaim the virtues of God by word and way of life, but that is, just as their priesthood, a private matter and in addition also subject to error. In the apostolic era there were, it is true, besides the Apostles also other classes of public teachers, as can be discerned from Ephesians 4; I Corinthians 12:28; 14:26ff., and a few other passages; but, on the one hand, these were *temporary* gifts of the Shepherd, Christ, in order to make for an easier acceptance of His Word at the time when it would be proclaimed in all the world; on the other hand, all of them were under the control of the authoritative Apostles, who are always presented as having a place of preeminence (I Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4), and all of them were governed and held in check by them, as I Corinthians 14 and the entire practice of the Apostles shows.

The *Potestas Jurisdictionis* is the power to govern the Church in the world. This is the exercise of the royal office of Christ, just as the teaching authority is the exercise of His prophetic office, and the authority to administer sacraments and bring sacrifices are the exercise of His priestly office. It is essentially different from the teaching authority. While the latter only expresses and reveals the teaching, the governing power consists in this that it establishes and enforces all laws and regulations which the Church needs for her well-being, exacts obedience, and punishes disobedience with all the authority at its disposal. This was given to the Church on the one hand in Matthew 16:19a with the Ministry of The Keys as explained according to Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7; on the other hand in Matthew 16:19b; John 20:23; and Matthew 18:18ff. It includes the legislative, judicial, and administrative authority. As far as the legislative authority is concerned it is clear that the Apostles carried out this authority everywhere to establish order in the Church. Paul does not give advice in regard to necessary Church regulations, but he “appoints,” “commands” by virtue of his apostolic authority which was given to him by Christ, I Corinthians 11:34 (*diatassomai*); 16:1; Titus 1:5. He ordains, establishes

elders for the newly founded congregations, Acts 14:23, and for Crete. He prescribes that every congregation should have a priest and what qualifications the priests should have, Titus I and I Timothy 3. He pronounces an authoritative judicial verdict upon a sinner—I Corinthians 5:5 and II Corinthians 2:10, and does this without robbing I Corinthians 1:24 (not masters over the faith) of its validity; likewise also upon Hymenaeus and Alexander, I Timothy 1:20. In the same way Peter acts as judge over Ananias and Sapphira, and the Lord Himself carries out his verdict. Acts 5 Paul commands even Timothy to investigate the matter of the elders and to rebuke them before all, I Timothy 5:19ff. All of this is legislative and judicial power and authority, which was given to the Apostles in the same measure as the teaching authority by which Paul (Galatians 1) even curses every angel who teaches differently than he. Every Apostle has this judicial authority in his own area; for the entire Church it is vested in the apostolic college, respectively in Peter (Acts 15). This authority is divided into two parts, internal and external. The internal is that which is applied in the confessional, which hears the sins of the confessor, investigates, pronounces the verdict, absolves, imposes the satisfaction upon the penitent, or withholds the absolution, after which the matter must come to final judgment through the Church according to Matthew 18. (The Church here is the college of Apostles [bishops], respectively the individual bishop.) The external judicial authority is that which has to do with not only a single sinner but with the church as a body or at times with individual parts of the church.

The Apostles, who were given complete governing and royal power by the Lord, organized the church as a hierarchy under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit. Here two points in particular are involved: the installation of the pastor of the local congregation (presbyter, teacher, bishop) and the establishment of the general monarchical episcopate. As far as the installation of the priest or local pastor is concerned, this is clearly a divine arrangement, because it was established by divine power through the Apostles. Indeed in such places as Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12 prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc., are listed next to the apostolate, which is always in first place, as charismatic workings of the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church. Only the apostolate is an “official” office. The prophets exercise or use their gift quite naturally only on occasion, Acts 13:2; 15:23; 21:11; etc. The *charisma* of the teachers, however, was something continuous. So it was also quite natural that their activity was of great importance. As long as the *charismata* lasted, there was no need for the apostolic institution of the local pastorate. As soon as these ended, however, or where they were not present, the Apostles immediately appointed local elders or bishops for the congregation (Titus 1:5–7 makes it clear that bishop and presbyter are synonymous designations, even if they do not match perfectly in every respect). The congregation at Jerusalem had elders very early, Acts 11:30; 15:2; 16:4; 21:18. Paul ordained elders in every congregation that he founded, Acts 14:23. In Crete he personally appointed elders or local bishops and commands Titus with apostolic authority to bring this matter to completion. So it is that in the later letters of Paul we find that the presbyters and local bishops, whom he had evidently appointed himself, are addressed and greeted as the official representatives of the congregation, Philippians 1:1. Already in Thessalonica there are officially appointed elders who “are over,” i.e. who rule the congregation (I Thess. 5:12).

In Acts 20:28 the office of the local bishop is described as a pastoral office, which was created by the Holy Ghost, but naturally instituted by Paul, as in the first congregations which were founded by him. The letters to Timothy and Titus have no other purpose than to organize the local congregations, chiefly to provide them with official local bishops. Thus the office of pastor and teacher, which in Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12 still appears as a direct *charisma*, is instituted as something official by the Apostles, something authorized by their full power. It stems from the office of the Apostles, is an apostolic office. Therefore also the Apostles are the ones who prescribe the functions of this office, endow it with authority, and determine the qualifications, rank and honor of the bearers of this office. While the pastors and teachers mentioned in Ephesians 4 and I Corinthians 12 as *charismata* function without apostolic ordination, we find in later times the apostolic consecration in regular use, as is clear from II Timothy 2:2 and 5:22. Moreover, this laying on of hands is nothing else than the ordination or consecration of priests, by which the grace (*charisma*) for this office is permanently bestowed, II Timothy 1:6. That it is just as permanent a gift as baptismal grace can be seen from the fact that one needs only to “stir up” the gift, in order to be able to carry out the office properly. It is just as clear that the priestly Extreme Unction is also already in use according to James 5:14. As far as the elders of the

Jewish synagogue and the Christian presbytery are concerned, only the name is the same. The former was a secular and temporary office. The latter is spiritual and lasts as long as the individual lives. Presbyter and bishop are not in all cases the same. In many cases the office of the presbyter (elder) was only an honorary one. Only such were official priests and invested with the *charisma* of full official authority as had received the laying on of hands (Ordination). They are the elders who “are over you,” I Thess. 5:12, the leaders (*hegoumenoi*), the presbyter-bishops, the *priest of the local congregation*.

The office of an archbishop, however, is also apostolic and therefore a divine institution, which was made to rule the church at large and was equipped with apostolic authority. Already at the time of the deterioration in the first congregation James, the bishop of Jerusalem, appears as invested with apostolic authority, Acts 12:17; 15:13; Galatians 2:12. In other regions of the church the Apostles themselves at first function as the chief overseers. As soon as they alone are no longer able to oversee an entire field, they create archbishops as their representatives. Thus Timothy is archbishop in Ephesus and Titus in Crete, as appointees of Paul. Timothy has full apostolic authority over the local bishops as over the laity. He is to provide for the purity of doctrine and the ordination of priests. He is to investigate, judge, rebuke, make all sorts of regulations. And the command which the Apostle has given to him, that is, that “good thing which was committed” to him, is permanent, given for life, for he is to keep it “unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” From I Timothy 6:12, 20, etc., just as from I Peter 5:4 (“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear”), it is clear that also the office of the bishop of a local congregation is for life. A commission and an authorization so all-inclusive as that which was given to Timothy applies not only to Timothy, but also to his successors in an office which is to last until the second Advent. At the Council of Chalcedon the congregation at Ephesus enumerated a chain of 27 bishops, of which the first link was Timothy (Eusebius’ *Church Hist.* III, 4, 5). In the Revelation of St. John the office of the archbishop is there for all to see. The expression “angel,” with which the bishops are designated, is synonymous with “apostle.” They are made responsible for the evils of their congregations and admonished to repent. Archippus has according to Colossians 4:17 and Philemon 2 a position and honor which goes beyond that of the common presbyter. And as soon as we step into the period of time immediately after the Apostles, we meet the archepiscopacy as a recognized institution that is taken for granted. Ignatius, the archbishop of Antioch, himself a disciple of the apostles even as Timothy and Titus, repeats again and again that the supremacy of the bishop is of divine institution in the church and of apostolic origin. According to him the bishop takes Christ’s own place. He tells us also incidentally that bishops are to be found in churches in the remotest regions of the earth (Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3).—And now concerning the primacy of Peter in particular, the history of the first church shows us that he set up his see in Rome and ruled the church there as bishop. It is from there that he dates his first Epistle, I Peter 5:12 (Babylon equals Rome, as in Revelation 18:2), there he suffered martyrdom in the year 67, and the line of his successors in office from Linus, Anacletus, Clement on to the present is known. “Thus priests of local congregations and the archbishop are instituted by the Apostles, the papacy the same as the apostolate, directly by God, and together with these offices the church, that is the bishops and the archbishop, is given the authority and the command to transmit all offices to succeeding generations.

Although the church according to her outward and visible form is a well organized and tangible society, she nevertheless is no natural, earthly kingdom, but a spiritual kingdom when you look upon her inner and true nature. The Lord, Who Himself is not of this world, declares: “My Kingdom is not of this world.” The world lies in wickedness, is the kingdom of Satan; the Church is the kingdom of those who have been redeemed through Christ, that is of those who accept the redemption, of those whom Christ has chosen out of this world, John 15:19, of those whom He has bought with His Own blood, Acts 20:28, whom He has rescued from the rule of darkness and has placed into the kingdom of His dear Son, Colossians 1:13. Accordingly Augustine calls the Church the *mundus salvatus*, the saved world. To this spiritual world the Lord has given the means of grace; the light of revealed truth, the sacraments, the constant renewal of the sacrifice on Golgotha. These she dispenses to her members and sanctifies and perfects them and makes them conform to the image of the Son of God. Her inner life consists in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, in faith, in hope, in love. For this reason Scripture applies such well-known metaphors to the Church. She is the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of God.

Every disciple of Christ is a member of Christ, I Corinthians 6:15; together they are His body, Ephesians 4:16. Christ is the head of the body and its Savior. He has organized this body Himself and assigned to each member its place and functions and given each a definite gift; above all, however, to some He has given those gifts by which they are to rule and lead the Church in His name, Ephesians 4:11. By means of these gifts the mystical body of Christ grows within in such a way that each Christian gradually matures into a complete man in Christ. Outwardly it grows in this way that finally the Church fills the earth. She is the fullness of Christ, Ephesians 1:23 and 4:13, as if Christ the Head would not be complete without his body, the Church. Yes, the Church as the body of Christ is directly called Christ, I Corinthians 12:12. In II Corinthians 6:16, the Church is called the Temple of God, of which Jesus Christ is Himself the cornerstone and the Apostles and Prophets are its foundation, Ephesians 2:20ff. In I Corinthians 3:11 Christ is called the foundation and the Apostles are the workers who build the temple upon it. The Christians are the stones that go into this construction, I Peter 2:5. This temple is holy. God dwells in it as He dwelled in the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament temple. Woe to him who harms this temple. God shall destroy him, I Corinthians 3:17. The Church is also the bride of Christ. Christ loves the Church and offered Himself for her. He bought her for Himself; He is one flesh with her, and we are members of His body, of His flesh and bone. Paul says that as the friend of the bridegroom he would bring the Church to Christ as a chaste virgin, II Corinthians 11:2, thus also John the Baptist, John 3:29. These illustrations display the inner nature of the church. Cp *Cat. R. I*, 10 Q. 4.

This church, which is outwardly so founded and organized and so richly appointed within, is the only means to salvation. Christ Himself is in the church, Matthew 18:20; 28:20. To her alone He gave the above-mentioned only means of grace. Outside the church there are neither means of grace nor grace. Whoever is excluded from the church is a heathen and a publican and has no part in the kingdom of God, Matthew 18:18. Every heretic should after one or two admonitions be avoided as one who has condemned himself, Titus 3:10f. Now it is true, this does not mean that one must without exception stand in visible fellowship with the church in order to attain grace. The church has always taught that nothing else is essential to attain justification but an act of complete love and repentance. Whoever (under any circumstances) produces these acts under the impulse of actual grace, receives at once the gift of sanctifying grace. If he dies in this condition, he is saved. Who, however, knows that he should join the church and does not do it, is not saved. But many do not know this. Especially among the sects so many grow up in this ignorance through no fault of their own. Others may be hindered from joining or from giving outward recognition to the means of grace. Such are not absolutely outside the church. They belong to the church *voto*, that is, by virtue of their desire. God worked the beginnings of sanctifying grace in them, in order to draw them into the bosom of the church; but there were outward obstacles present which kept them from carrying out what they had in their hearts. Thus they indeed have lost the treasures of grace which the church dispenses; but because they hold to the rudiments, the church does not deny them salvation. Yet whoever does not want to join the church outwardly cannot be saved. This may seem to be a hard teaching, but it is the teaching of Christ, Who said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," John 8:24.

One of the most important parts of the doctrine of the church is that of her marks. The church is visible; she can be recognized unfailingly by certain marks. This means not only that she makes herself openly perceptible in the world, but that she can be recognized as the kingdom of grace and salvation founded by Christ Himself by every individual who has not deliberately blinded himself. The church has been founded by Christ as an organized community under certified leaders and has the command of Christ to call all people to her bosom, in order that by joining her they may acquire for themselves grace and eternal life. It must then be possible for everyone to recognize her as such, if she is to fulfill her purpose. As such a community she forces herself upon the entire world and does so through her exclusive marks and peculiar characteristics, which no other community on earth possesses. There are four such marks of the church as they are presented in the Apostles' Creed: her *unity*, *sanctity*, *universality*, and *apostolicity*.

The Lord Himself points to the *unity* of the church as a distinguishing characteristic in John 17:11, 20–23. There He guarantees her unity and at the same time says that by this the world shall recognize her as His church. The Song of Solomon says 6:8 "My dove, my undefiled is but one." According to her very nature she is

one, for Paul says Ephesians 4:4–6, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism,” etc. She also has only one leader and ruler, Christ, the invisible One, whom the eternal Father has made to be Head over the entire Church, which is His body, Ephesians 1:22, and also one visible leader and ruler, who as the legitimate successor of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, occupies the Roman see. Thus there can be only one true faith, one baptism, just as there is only one Christ and one Father in and over all. According to I Corinthians 12 there is only one Spirit, Who rules over all Christians, and therefore there can be only one body, that is one Church, which is quickened by the Spirit (*ibid* q. 10 & 12). Only the Roman Church is constituted in this way. The dismemberment of the churches which call themselves protestant or something else, their disunity among themselves, which is increasing hopelessly from day to day, is evident to all and pronounces the verdict upon them that they are false churches. The mark of unity indicates three things: 1. She is an outwardly unified body under one visible *head* recognized by all, namely the pope, who rules the church in unity, and to whom everyone submits. 2. Just as there is only one *faith*, one hope of eternal life for all, so all the church members make the same confession. 3. *All* are united *with each other* by the one common worship, sacraments, and ceremonies. This unity and unanimity is possessed by no other organization on earth. Everyone must recognize her as Christ’s Kingdom and Church.

Likewise the *sanctity* of the church proves her divine and supernatural origin. The church is expressly called holy in Scripture in I Peter 2:9 and in many other passages. She has the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in her. Christ, her Head, is holy. Hence also the dwelling place of the Spirit, the body of Christ is holy, for Their treasures and gifts are poured out upon the church. Now this is the way the Roman Church is constituted. Her doctrine is holy, for it is the truth of Christ, and of the Father and of the Spirit. Her worship is holy, her sacraments, her sacrifice, through which as through powerful instruments of the divine grace God works holiness. And as the Church, being the body of Christ, is sanctified, and through the washing of water by the Word, Ephesians 5:26, 27, is cleansed with the blood of Christ, so at all times she also brings forth the fruits of true holiness in her members, especially in the practice of the three evangelical counsels for perfection: voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and unqualified obedience. This is the *divine* ideal of holiness, exemplified and recommended by Christ. This the sects have rejected. Yes, they have even denied the necessity of good works for salvation. Certainly there are also sinners and evil people in the church, but they are in the church only as chaff amid the wheat, but nevertheless they are also holy at least in this sense, that through the acceptance of faith and baptism they have dedicated themselves to Christ (*C. R.* I, 10, q. 6, 7, 19). For Paul calls also the Corinthians sanctified saints, although there were some among them whom he criticizes sharply as being fleshly, and even with still stronger terms (*ibid.*, q. 13). But in many the Holy Spirit by the means of grace works the true holiness, which cannot be achieved by natural powers. Only in the church are there men of such recognized holiness as Saint Bernard, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Vincent de Paul, and a legion of others.

The *catholicity* or *universality* of the church likewise proves beyond contradiction her divine nature. The concept has first of all only this one characteristic; “all-inclusive.” The church embraces in “the bosom of her love” all nations of the earth and all kinds of people. The concept, however, presupposes this, that the church brings these people together into an inner and outward unity in herself, that is, in her doctrine, means of grace, treasures, in her government and obedience to her and also to a large fellowship of brethren. According to Scripture this is the way the true Church must be constituted. This is what Scripture prophesies, says, and demands: Psalm 2:8, Psalm 86:4, 5, Revelation 5:9, Colossians 3:11. This is also clear from her commission, Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19. She is to bring the grace of God to all nations. Otherwise Christ has redeemed them in vain. If the church did not fulfill this calling, she would not only be unfaithful to her Lord, but also incompetent to fulfill her assignment and no fitting bride and servant of her heavenly spouse. Therefore there is no more dependable mark, “according to which the true and false church can be judged. All believers from Adam down to judgment day must be built up in her upon that cornerstone, Christ, Who has proclaimed peace to those near and far, Ephesians 2:13, 17, and all who wish to reach the eternal goal must hold to and embrace her.”—All of this can be found only in the Roman Church. She alone fulfills in deed and in truth the Lord’s command to preach the Gospel. She declares herself indebted and obligated to carry out the same, and she has carried it out. She spreads her wings over the entire globe and works with her missions among all peoples,

bringing to all the same one divine truth, the one baptism, the one sacrifice (mass), the one divine rule of grace. No other “church” does this. No protestant group can lay claim to a universal mission program, neither has any ever dared to do so. They do not even claim the right to convert the Christianized nations of Europe to their faith. Even in respect to the heathen, mission undertakings were an unknown thing for two hundred years after the so-called Reformation. And as far as their mission work in the past two hundred years is concerned, the results are so pitifully small, that one can clearly see that there is no blessing of God upon it.

Finally there is the mark of *apostolicity*. The genuineness of a thing can finally be derived only from its true source. A son can resemble his father, a daughter her mother in build, habits, even in theft personality ever so closely, but if they were not actually begotten by this father and mother, they are not really their children. The dandelion is very similar to the wheat but is nevertheless a weed that has been sown by the “enemy.” The one true root, source and origin of the church is, after Christ, the apostolic college, with Peter at the head, and in which as its head the church is comprehended. Its connection with Christ is recognized not only by all sects, but by the entire world. No reasonable person, whether he be friend or foe of the church, can deny the *authority* (jurisdiction) of the Apostles on the one hand (Matthew 16:17–19; 18:18ff.; John 20:23; etc.), their *endowment with the Holy Ghost* on the other hand (Matthew 16:17, John 20:22; Acts 2:3, 4; etc.), and in the third place their divine commission (Mark 16; Matthew 28; etc.). Likewise it is also just as clear that even as the apostolic *commission* was intended to endure until the Last Day, so also the Holy Spirit and the apostolic authority with the promise of Christ’s presence until the end of the world were given until that time, Matthew 28:20. Since they did not live and work personally until the end of the world, it is self-evident that the Lord did not endow only the Apostles personally with this entire office, but in them also their successors, who are sent to carry out His work until the time of Christ’s return. The fact that we do not have an express command or authorization given by Christ to His Apostles to transmit their office to their successors becomes the strongest proof in view of the patent fact that the office transmitted to them by Christ is to continue till Doomsday, that the passing of their office on to others was included in their authorization as something absolutely self-understood. Accordingly the Apostles did actually appoint successors to themselves for the church (general bishops such as Timothy and Titus and others), and did this by their own official authority without first consulting the congregations, and they not only advised Timothy and Titus but expressly commanded them to commit the teaching and everything which had been committed to them from the apostles to other faithful, capable, men—men with the ability to teach (II Tim. 2:2; Titus 1:5ff.; I Tim. 5:22; 3:1ff.; 4:6). Through the infallible leading of the Holy Spirit, which was given them, the Apostles transmitted the office given to them to the successors whom they had designated themselves and gave these men command and instruction for passing this office on to their own successors. From this we see that apostolic succession is an indispensable requisite of the true church. An association which does not have it has no apostolic and consequently also no Christ-appointed divine servants in office, in short, does not have that office which alone dispenses salvation. For the office consists in the authority of the order (*ordo*, priestly power, i.e., power to perform sacraments and the sacrifice of the mass) and in the authority of jurisdiction (legislative, judicial, executive power).

Just in this matter the Roman Church is in a position to prove convincingly her connection with the church of the Apostles. The testimonies of the congregation at Ephesus (27 bishops from Timothy until Chalcedon, 451), of Ignatius, of Polycarp, of Clement and a cloud of other witnesses, especially those regarding the apostolicity of the bishopric at Rome and its primacy are so overpowering that in this area any contrary argument appears as willful malice. The Anglican Church also openly recognizes the apostolicity of the Roman Church. If she would deny this, she would rule herself out of existence as a church. However, her own claim to the apostolic succession is null and void because she has completely separated herself from the Roman Church and cut herself off from any connection with the head of the apostolic college appointed by Christ Himself. Without this head there can be no apostolic college, but the Anglican Church has placed herself under the leadership of an earthly king (Henry VIII). Because the Roman Church has the apostolic office with all its powers, she therefore has also the pure teaching of Christ and the genuine sacraments which are able to give salvation. Yes, this church alone has the true Christian, apostolic, infallible teaching office, which Christ bestowed upon the Apostles. In matters of faith and conduct the church cannot err when she officially defines

something as an article of faith to be held by all or as a part of Christian morality to be observed by all. A part of the church can err at times, if it establishes something without her divine head. The entire church can err, when she does not speak officially, or establishes something which goes beyond the limits of universal faith and morals. (Although here it is often difficult to determine the limits.) The entire church, however, cannot err whenever she solemnly proclaims something within the area of universal faith and practice, that is, whenever she does so *ex cathedra*, i.e. officially in her position as possessing the power and commission received from Christ for the proclamation of the saving truth. This, however, is not to be understood as if the church had the power to establish entirely new doctrine which is not contained in Scripture or which might contradict Scripture. Rather she is bound for all time to the doctrine of the Apostles, which is revealed in Scripture. If the present day apostolic teaching office went counter to the teaching of the Apostles as it is contained in Scripture and in tradition, then this office would not be apostolic, because that which is apostolic cannot stand in contradiction to itself. But it must be noted that the apostolic church is the only authorized and infallible interpreter of Scripture because she alone has the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit by virtue of the promise of Christ. The official bearer of infallibility is the *cathedra* of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, which, just as Peter, alone has the care for the entire church. For this it does not need the consent of the other bearers of the apostolic office. For although these do not have their office through Peter and his successors, but rather from Christ directly, nevertheless, the head does not become head through the consent of the members of the body, rather the head rules the members although they too are made not by the head but by the Creator. Whoever then separates himself from the *cathedra* of Peter, as the Greek, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican fellowship, he necessarily loses the Spirit of truth and the truth itself and can of himself teach only error and lead into ruin.

The church cannot be *destroyed*. This means not only that there always has been a church but rather also that the church cannot lose her essential character or change it. She can never become corrupt in faith or in morals, can never lose her apostolic hierarchy or the Sacraments, the means of grace. She has the promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, Matthew 16:18. This promise would become void if the church could perish or change essentially. This quality of indestructibility, however, does not apply to individual parts of the church. These can fall into every kind of heresy or fall away completely. The promise of indestructibility applies only to one particular church, namely, to the holy see at Rome; for it was to Peter and his successors that the Lord gave the commission to strengthen his brothers in faith, Luke 22:32. For this reason Cyprian writes correctly to Cornelius, in his fifty-fifth letter, that unfaithfulness cannot taint her (the church at Rome). Heretics such as Wycliff, Huss, Luther, base their separation from the Roman Church always upon the claim that she has fallen away from Christ and cannot be reformed. By this they contradict the above word and all similar promises and make Christ a liar. The church cannot fall away because of the fact that she is built upon the Rock, Peter. Peter could fall into sin personally, but as spokesman of Christ and the Church he could not err, neither in his writings nor in his oral definitions of doctrines of faith and life which are universally valid. And, just as this gift was inseparably connected with his position as head of the Apostles, so also with his successors upon his throne. There have been some godless popes; but from this it does not follow that they could err in their official proclamation of the will of Christ. This infallibility is the chief source of the indestructibility of the church. She can for a time become very corrupt in the faith and way of life of many of her members, as she often, especially before Luther's time, actually was; but history shows that the Catholic Church has a unique power for reformation within herself. She has again and again reformed herself and again and again given an impetus to preaching and produced men of unusual holiness: Dominicus, Francis of Assisi, Philip Neri, Ignatius Loyala, Paul of the Holy Cross, Alphons Liguori. This proves that the life-giving Holy Spirit lives in her midst. Whenever among the Protestants there have been genuinely virtuous men, this serves to prove that something of the Catholic faith and way of life still remained in them.

The *Membership* of the Church. —Here first of all this must positively be maintained that the Church is external and visible, the visible body of Christ. The Scriptures teach expressly that also our bodies are members of Christ and the temple of the Holy Ghost, I Corinthians 6:15ff. and 19. Furthermore, since both our body and soul are God's, it is His will that both be sanctified, I Corinthians 6:20; I Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 12:1; 6:12, 13. This does not mean that the body of Christ consists only of bodies and is purely external and visible.

The church is the living body of Christ, and as the human soul is the life of the human body, so is the spirit of Christ the life of His visible body, the church. The inner life of the church is spiritual and invisible. The grace of God, the working, sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, the true rebirth which unites all with Christ and with one another in eternity, these are invisible. But this inner being and invisible quality of the Church is not under consideration here. This is a matter for God and Christ, who alone searches and judges the hearts and has reserved this judgment for His own majesty. Here too it is true: *De occultis non judicat ecclesia*. When the Lord founded the Church, He appointed visible human beings for the visible administration of visible means of grace, for the dispensation of invisible treasures and gave them the external, audible, and visible assignment to bring to the world the audible Gospel and the visible Sacraments and also to shepherd those who outwardly, visibly are His sheep; and also gave them the external jurisdiction over the Church. When the Lord in Matthew 18 said, “Tell it unto the church,” he was not stupidly pointing to an invisible body which no one could find, but rather to one that can be found, a visible church. To this visible church He gives the external visible judgment over the external visible sinner and commits to her this external matter, to treat him as a heathen and a publican. As Christ is the invisible foundation and rock of the Church, so He has made the Apostles the external foundation and the visible Peter because of his external confession the external rock of the Church, and this rock has the double inscription: “The Lord knows them that are His” and: “Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Timothy 2:20). Just as the first—the eternal election—is absolutely hidden, invisible, and a mystery, so is the second—the naming of the name of Christ—something external; it is the external confession of Christ, Who has promised His invisible presence to the external church in Matthew 18:20 and is to be found solely in her. Because Christ can be found only in the Catholic Church, because the inner foundation and rock can be found only in the external foundation and rock, because grace can be found only in the external means of grace, because the inner fellowship with the saints can be found only in the external fellowship with them, therefore, the external allegiance to the Catholic Church is the external mark and characteristic of all believers. This allegiance, however, includes three things: 1: All must be baptized and *confess* the *faith* of the church, be it *explicite* or *implicite* in absolutely everything which the church teaches, Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:19. Whoever will not accept this or reject it, even only in part, thereby excludes himself from the Kingdom of God, Titus 3:10f. 2: All must also acknowledge the *authority*, the jurisdiction, the government of the church and of her leaders who have been commissioned by Christ, especially in the matter of obedience to the universal throne of Peter. “He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me,” Luke 10:16; John 13:20; Matthew 10:14ff. The connection with the throne of Peter is the final decisive touch-stone for membership in the church. Whoever is not built upon the rock, Peter, is no stone in the temple of the church. 3: He alone has fellowship with the church and shares her gifts who unites himself with her in Holy Communion, in which all the members partake of the body and blood of Christ and become one body. Yes, here they really become the true body of Christ. Whoever does not partake of Communion is thereby excluded from the church. For this reason those who have been excommunicated, such as the heretics and impenitent sinners, do not belong to the church. They are heathen and publicans, Matthew 18:18. They have been thrown out of the Kingdom of God, I Corinthians 5:5, and given over to Satan, I Timothy 1:20. Excommunication nullifies the efficacy of baptism and of all the means of grace.

The Church is the communion (*coetus*) of all believers (*Cat. R. I, 10, q. 5 part 2*). In spite of this there are two kinds of people in the church: good and bad, as the Gospel clearly teaches, Matthew 13:47 (the net, the good and bad fish), Matthew 13:24f. (the tares in the field); Matthew 13:12 (chaff among the wheat), Matthew 25:1ff. (the ten virgins). This must be held fast at all times; but likewise that with each of them the case is very different. The bad ones are in the church only as chaff among the wheat, which shall finally be burned with eternal fire. They are dead members of the church as at times a body may also have dead members. As the latter nevertheless still belong to the body, so the former still belong to the church. This must be emphasized especially in order that believers may be completely convinced that, even if the leaders of the church should happen to lead a shameful life, they nevertheless are in the church and this in no way detracts from their authority (I.c. q. 8, part 3). The teaching that bad people (*improbi sceleratique homines*) still belong to the militant church on earth does not conflict with the definition that the Church is the communion of believers. For

if one here by faith understands that genuine faith which is worked by the Holy Spirit, which works by love and gives salvation, then we grasp the Church in her ideal form, that is, as she according to the intention of her Redeemer should be; on the other hand, we may depict the Church in her real form as she actually is constituted, as a visible fellowship, which has been given the authority, the gifts and the commission of Christ to seek the salvation of all men and be available for all. Then the believers are understood here to be all those who in external communion with the throne of Peter externally confess the Catholic faith, for *de occultis non judicat ecclesia*.

From this it follows that only three kinds of people are excluded from the Church: First, the unbelievers; then, the heretics and schismatics (*schismatici*); and finally, those who have been excommunicated. The heathen, of course, are excluded because they never have belonged to the Church nor ever recognized her and never took part of any Sacraments in the fellowship of the Christian people. The heretics and schismatics are excluded, however, because they have fallen away from the Church. For these belong to the Church as little as deserters still belong to the army from which they have run away. However, it cannot be denied that they remain under the authority of the Church to be called to judgment, punished and placed under the ban by her. Finally, those who have been excommunicated are also excluded because they have been excluded by the verdict of the Church and do not belong to her fellowship until they have mended their ways (*Cat. R. X. q. 8*).

In regard to these prerequisites for membership certain limitations must be made. Among the heretics who have been reared and baptized in their erroristic faith there are some who hold that the teaching of their sect is divine and who therefore accept it. They are not to be placed on the same level with those who have denied the faith. In all sincerity they wish to do the will of God. By the power of Baptism and by their good intention they can be in the state of grace. Such people belong to the Church by *voto*, i.e., by theft desire. They belong to the soul of the Church, although they are not externally connected with the visible body; they are inner if not external members of the Church. Even among those who have fallen away one must make a distinction. Open and notorious heresy separates from the visible church. Secret heresy does not. The same thing applies to the schismatics. The church permits them to partake of the Sacraments until they through external, notorious rebellion reject the authority of the church. The excommunicated are either *excommunicati tolerati* or *excommunicati vitandi*. Only the latter are completely separated from the church. In all of this the general truth remains: outside the church there is no salvation.

POSTSCRIPT: We have in the above given the Roman teaching on Church and Ministry as completely as possible according to the Roman presentation itself. For that reason it was not possible to avoid repetitions completely. In the following issue Luther's teaching is to appear in equally complete presentation and again the chief differences between him and Rome are to be designated.

[This translation was originally published in three issues – all are included in this online version. – WLS Library Staff]

### III. Luther's Doctrine

#### A. Regarding the Church

We have attempted to present the Roman teaching coherently and according to the spirit that dominates it. We now proceed in like manner with Luther's teaching. Only an understanding of the basic attitude of a teacher explains his grasp of the individual teachings. Luther teaches the very opposite of the Roman Church in almost every point of doctrine that has to do with the dispensation and the appropriation of salvation, while in the doctrines regarding God, the person of Christ, and the work of redemption he remained in essential agreement with her. The reason for this is that he approached the revelation of God with a different basic attitude than that of the Roman Church. Although Scripture, which continued to be source and norm of doctrine also for Rome, speaks clearly and unambiguously in all matters pertaining to salvation, in the articles of doctrine, nevertheless, it leaves hundreds and thousands of things, also doctrinal matters, undetermined, the

right understanding of which comes naturally to every reader who has grasped the Gospel in its deepest roots or in its innermost being. These matters are, however, regularly misinterpreted by one whose basic attitude toward the Gospel has been corrupted. The fact that Luther and Zwingli at Marburg were unable to come to the same understanding of the words of institution in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and the person of Christ, in spite of the fact that both accepted the principle of *sola scriptura*, could happen only because of their different basic approach to the Word. Luther correctly characterized it thus: "You have a different spirit than we," that is, a different basic attitude toward the Word of God, toward the mystery of Christ. Zwingli was primarily an intellectualist, a rationalist, a humanist. For that reason he was not able to bow under the "this is," for by doing so he would have had to deny his deepest conviction, that God does not ask us to believe anything contrary to reason, anything "impossible." Luther had finished with reason, as with "the devil's grandmother," and had "put out her eyes," had "put her to shame and blinded her," and could very well believe what Zwingli simply could not believe—that when God says so, the *finitum* was *capax infiniti*. The clear Word of God stood infinitely higher for him than the apparently undeniable, universally valid principles of human reasoning. Luther was pious and humble enough to crucify even that which ranks highest, the basic principles of reasoning, in his approach to the Gospel; Zwingli was not. This was the difference between the two men. For this reason they were and remained separated as people with a different spirit.

Why does Luther understand Matthew 16:18, 19 (Thou art Peter, etc.); John 20:21–23 (Receive ye the Holy Ghost, etc.); 21:15ff. (Feed my sheep); and the calling and the investing of the Apostles, the entire official position of the officers in the church, etc., in a way entirely different from the Roman theologians? Not only because he departed strongly from Rome in the Scriptural principles. For theoretically the papists did admit the Scripture, though not as the sole, yet still as the highest and essential source of doctrine. The answer lies in the basically different attitude of heart of the two parties toward their God, toward Christ as their Savior, toward the Gospel.

The teaching peculiar to the papacy was not on the part of the papistic theologians a personal attitude of heart in the same sense as was Luther's attitude toward his teaching. Their doctrine was not of the recent past; it had developed gradually in the course of 1500 years (since Clement of Rome and Ignatius). It had grown to maturity in the time from the first to the seventh Gregory. Since his time, it had during centuries of battle made itself the all-governing fundamental concept of all church life and had become securely imbedded tradition, both among the people as well as among the clergy. As such it had taken possession of their minds and of their hearts. The followers of Rome could not speak of a personal divine conviction emanating directly from the Gospel, or—to use a modern theological expression—from an immediate psychological spiritual experience of the traditional teaching of the church (for the most part the people did not know Scripture at all). The Roman conviction of faith was not something that had been worked by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, but rather a transmitted natural conviction. Human reason, human fear, human ambition (the desire to rule) had brought the Roman concept of church and church government into being and had developed it into a system imposing in theory and practice. Human natural conviction and a natural, entirely carnal, attitude of heart clung to it with might and main. With a natural inclination of heart the Roman theologians turned also to Scripture and found in it their entire theory of the Church even to the dot over the "i": the division of the church members into two classes, the ruling and the ruled; the threefold authority of the priesthood: *potestas ordinis, magisterii* and *jurisdictionis*; the entire subdivision of the clergy into priests, bishops, pope; the sacrifice of the mass; the prohibition of clerical marriage, etc.; all the way down to "the dear indulgence" and the meritorious good works. What reasonable person, reared from infancy to adulthood in a concept of the Church whose origin went back so far, and which according to the judgment of natural reason is so complete and which besides is so comfortable and agreeable to the Old Adam of both the clergy and the people, would not hold fast to it and find it taught in the entire Bible! Let us not be deceived in this: the natural man will more readily find the papal doctrinal system, the doctrine of the Church as well as the doctrine of justification through one's own doing, more readily in Scripture than the teaching of Luther. The papal doctrine is not foolishness to the Greeks nor a stumbling block to the Jews. Every honorable, upright, respectable Roman scholar condemns the misuse of the authority of the church, the sins and shameful practices of the priests and popes; with complete conviction he

considers the Roman system divine and Scriptural. For it has proceeded from the natural human reason and the natural human heart, which have made themselves masters over Scripture.

This explains the thorough legalizing and, as a result, externalizing of the whole of Christian doctrine in the papacy. The New Testament church is the continuation of the Old Testament external theocracy, only endowed with a full measure of the gifts of Christ, but yet a legally constituted state. Christ is *novus legislator* in it and for it (cf. p 22). The Gospel, no matter how great its grace may be, is a new law. The Apostles were legally appointed to be overlords. Their being representatives of Christ is a legal matter, and this office is equipped with legal authority. All of their power is legal, statutory power. All Sacraments are laws; all the offices, ordinances, institutions, from the primacy of Peter, from the pope, all the way down to the office of priest, yes, even to the doorkeeper and holy water, all are legal, conscience-binding arrangements, causing sin, under circumstances bringing damnation. Thus it is a matter of course that a person can achieve grace and salvation only through works, that is, through fulfilling all of these legal demands and regulations. It is a matter of course that the commands of the Church as the representative and legally authorized plenipotentiary of Christ are of themselves conscience binding, in short, that the papacy is a unique, vast legal institution and that its doctrine and regulations are a unique, vast mass of work-righteousness. For natural human reason and the law are counterparts, each demanding the other. A religion of natural reason is necessarily a religion of the law, which is rooted so deeply in the human heart that even the most mature Christian never gets rid of it completely. For this reason the papacy in this primary and essential respect corresponds to all heathen non-Christian religions. Like these, it is through and through a religion characterized by law, because it, like these, is the religion of natural depraved carnal reason. Only materially does it differ from these; in essence it is the same (cp *Luther's Galatians*, St. L., Vol. 9:485).

The papacy is, on the one hand, law religion and externalism through and through; on the other hand, it is pure sacramentalism. It speaks everywhere about mysteries. All of its established practices are mystery rites, holy, full of mysterious, magical power, a *noli me tangere*, only to be worshiped. Seven Sacraments! But actually everything is sacrament; the greatest, the holy, mysterious, adorable sacrifice of the mass, besides even the consecrated host—bow down before the monstrance; bow down before the priest, who has been consecrated with holy oil; bow down before the majesty of the bishop; and oh, how much more before the majesty of the Pope! Even the soles of his shoes are worthy of your kisses! Yes, what is there in the papacy that is *not* holy? Even the tonsure and the cowl of the monk! Here again it corresponds to all heathen religion, which makes mystery rites everywhere.

This, too, is not revelation and spirit, but rather human nature, this ignorance regarding God and His essence and His will and His Word, this natural fear of the One Who is faintly surmised, unknown, all-powerful, dangerous to the sinner—nothing but human superstition! In the papacy natural reason, not sure of her own judgment, yes, condemned of sin by her own conscience, possessed of a slavish fear, has applied this to all things Christian, and so has changed what is truly holy into pagan mystery rites and superstitious caricatures. Thus the papal religion as sacramentalism no less than as legalism is a genuine child of natural, unregenerate, depraved human reason.

Not through human reason did Luther arrive at faith and his teaching. If there is anything that Luther rejected and condemned it is human reason in matters of faith and the salvation of souls. He grants her her due, yes, praises her as the greatest natural gift of God (cp *Luther's Discourse on Man*, of the year 1536, St. L., Vol. 19, 1462ff., theses 4–10), but he knows also that since the fall of Adam reason is and remains subject to the power of the devil, to sin, and to death (*ibid.* thesis 22ff.), and that in spiritual matters reason is not only totally blind and darkness, but is also the mortal enemy of faith and the Word of God (*Commentary on Genesis*, St. L., Vol. 3, 148, par. 30), yes, a dyed-in-the-wool blasphemer (Vol. 9, 302, par. 142f.) and that where she is most considerate she has made Christ to be only another Moses (Vol. 8, 305) and a law-giver (Vol. 9, 485, par. 34) so that no one understands even a little word out of all of Scripture unless he has put out the eyes of reason (Vol. 5, 456).

In the early years of his manhood Luther had to experience to the full where natural reason leads one in spiritual matters. He wanted to be saved through the papistic rational doctrine regarding the way of salvation,

that is, through the law, through his own works. But God thoroughly shattered his human reason and put it to shame. Up to the time of his journey to Rome one might say concerning his entire soul life, “My fears increased till sheer despair left naught but death to be my share, the pangs of hell I suffered.” But it was from this that the message of the grace of Christ, the Gospel, rescued him, Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17: “the just shall live by faith.” Then he was, according to his own testimony, born anew. The peace of God encompassed his soul by teaching him to believe the Gospel of the forgiveness of his sin. Just as God for years tortured and killed him with the law—“the real experience and suffering of death”—so now He permitted him to feel, to perceive, to comprehend, to experience deeply grace, forgiveness, and the sonship of God, pouring out through the Gospel the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of peace which surpasseth all understanding, the Spirit of joy, “peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,” into his heart. Luther was filled with the Spirit of the Gospel, with the Spirit of Christ, became a spiritual person. And just as heaven had opened itself to him by this, so now also Scripture, the Gospel, the distinction between law and Gospel, the correct purpose and use of both, God’s plan of salvation, the doctrine of justification and sanctification, the doctrine of faith and good works, of the Kingdom of Christ, of the Church and ministry, all these jointly and successively became lucid and clear to him. And now he taught, preached, and wrote, not what he had learned in the papacy, which had become a part of his flesh and blood, and which, as he often complained, unfortunately did not want to leave him completely, but rather the Gospel of Christ, the precious, certain, eternal Word of God for our salvation.

But what does this mean for the line of thought which we have begun? It means that he now preached the exact opposite of what the papacy taught. The papacy preached nothing but law without a trace of the Gospel. It changed all Gospel, the Gospel as a whole, into pure law, into a unique, great law, namely, that the sinner can be saved only by keeping the law and laws, the commandments and orders of Christ, the new law-giver, and of His legal representatives, of the bishops and priests, who have by law been set up as his legal overlords; by rendering to Christ and them as perfect and voluntary legal obedience as possible and by being subject to them. —What did Luther preach? —He wrote his pamphlet *The Freedom of a Christian* in 1520 (*Luther’s Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 327ff.). This pamphlet contains in the main everything that Luther at any time later taught: that a Christian, through faith in Christ, is a free lord over all things and subject to no one; that a Christian through love is a ministering servant in all things and subject to all men. This writing also fully contains Luther’s fundamental teachings on the Church and her ministry. Only in connection with the freedom of a Christian as carried out here will this doctrine be correctly understood. If there are differences among us in the teaching of Church and ministry, this happens only because we are not agreed in the doctrine of the freedom of a Christian, in its fundamentals. We wish to present Luther’s teaching of Church and Ministry on the basis of this pamphlet and, therefore, sketch it briefly here.

Every Christian has a twofold nature, a spiritual and a physical. No outward thing can make the inward, spiritual man free or God-fearing. Only one thing makes the soul God-fearing and free, that is the Holy Gospel, and in this the soul has everything it needs, “food, joy, peace, light, favor, righteousness, truth, wisdom, freedom, and every good thing in boundless measure.” This Gospel, however, is “the proclamation of Christ, in which God tells you that all your life and works are nothing before God and that you must, with everything that is in you, be lost eternally; that you should, however, in firm faith commit yourself to His dear Son, Jesus Christ, and eagerly rely upon Him, and so all of your sins shall be forgiven for the sake of this same faith, all of your corruption overcome, and you shall be righteous, true, at peace, God-fearing, and all commandments shall be fulfilled, and you shall be free from all things.” This faith one should constantly exercise and strengthen. Faith without works brings this boundless treasure. How does this happen? The Word of Holy Scripture is of two kinds: commands or laws of God, and promises or assurances. The former are given only for this purpose, that a man may see from them his incapacity for good, as one full of evil concupiscence, and learn to despair of himself. To whoever has thus been utterly undone, the other message, the divine promise, says, “If you want to fulfill all commandments, to be rid of your evil desires and sins, then believe in Christ; in Him I promise you all grace, righteousness, peace, and freedom. If you believe, you have. If you do not believe, you do not have.” Thus the promises of God give what the commandments demand. Now these promises, like all Words of God, are holy, true, righteous, peaceful, free, and full of goodness, and faith unites the soul so completely with the

Word that all of the virtues of the Word become also the property of the soul, that is, through the Word the soul becomes holy, righteous, true, peaceful, free, and full of all goodness, a true child of God, just as iron becomes glowing red like fire by being united with the fire. Thus he has no need for works any more and is released from all commands and laws and is free. This is Christian freedom. Furthermore, because faith firmly believes the Word and promise of God, looks upon Him as true and righteous, faith thus does Him the highest honor which can be done. On the other hand, one can show God no greater dishonor than not to believe Him, for thereby one makes Him a liar. However, whoever believes God and looks upon Him as true, such a person God also looks upon as righteous and true, yes, he also is so in fact. —Faith, however, unites the soul not only with the Word, but also with Christ Himself, as a bride with her bridegroom, and indeed so intimately that Christ and the soul (Eph. 5:30) become one body. Thus the possessions, good fortune, misfortune, and all things of either become common to both, so that whatever Christ has is also property of the believing soul, and what the soul has belongs to Christ. Christ has all riches and salvation; these belong to the soul. The soul has every kind of vice and sin upon it; these become Christ's. Thus through her wedding ring, that is, through faith, all sins of the soul are utterly removed, and she is endowed with the eternal righteousness of her bridegroom, Christ. Aren't these gladsome doings, a joyful exchange and victory? —Once again we see here why such great things are ascribed to faith, that it fulfills all commandments and sanctifies without any other works. It fulfills the first commandment, "Thou shalt honor thy God." No good works do that. With the first, faith fulfills all of the other commandments. Not that faith itself is a work that is done, but rather it is the doer, the worker itself which honors God and does the works. Thus faith is the head and the whole essence of righteousness.

In order to see further what a great treasure faith has in Christ, it is necessary to know that just as in the Old Testament authority as lord and priest belonged to the first-born (kingship and priesthood, Gen. 49:3), so Christ as the first-born of the Father from Mary is the true spiritual King and Priest over spiritual treasures, such as truth, wisdom, peace, joy, salvation, without, of course, the exclusion of temporal treasures, for *all things* are subject to Him. His Priesthood consists in this that He without interruption stands before God in behalf of His own, offers Himself and pleads for us. Likewise, He also teaches us inwardly, in our hearts. Just as Christ has the right of the first-born with all its honor and dignity, so He shares this with all His Christians so that, through faith, they too must all be kings and priests together with Christ, I Peter 2:9. Thus through faith the Christian is exalted above all things so that he spiritually becomes lord of all. There is nothing that can harm him. Everything must be subject to him and serve for his salvation. This is no physical but rather a spiritual lordship, which rules also when in a state of physical suppression, even in death. It is a genuine almighty lordship and a spiritual kingdom in which one rules all and still is not in need of anything; but rather my faith is sufficient for me. See what a precious freedom and authority the Christian has! Beyond that we are also (and this is even more than being a king) priests, worthy to step before God and to intercede for others. For the person, however, who does not believe in Christ, there is nothing that serves for his salvation. He is a slave of all things and must feel embittered toward all things. In addition to this, his prayer is not acceptable and also does not come into the presence of God. Who is there who might completely comprehend the honor and exalted position of a Christian! Through his kingship he has power over all things. Through his priesthood he prevails over God. For God does what he asks and wills. It is to this honor that he comes through faith alone and not through any work. From this, one sees clearly that a Christian is free from all things and over all things in this way that he needs no good works in order to become righteous and saved.

You ask, however, "What difference is there in Christendom then between the priests and the laity if all are priests?" The answer is, "It is a misuse of the words, priest, parson, cleric, and the like when they are taken away from the common masses and applied to the little group which one now calls the clergy. The Holy Scriptures make no other distinction than this that they call the educated or ordained people *ministros*, *servos*, *oeconomos*, that is, ministers, servants, and stewards, who are to preach Christ, faith, and Christian freedom to the others. For, although all of us are equally priests, nevertheless, we cannot all serve, officiate, and preach. Thus Saint Paul says, I Corinthians 4:1: We don't want the people to think of us as anything but Christ's ministers and stewards of the Gospel. But now this stewardship has become such a worldly, external, magnificent, fearful lordship and power that the proper worldly might can not be compared to it, just as though

the lay people were something else than Christians. Thereby the entire understanding of Christian grace, freedom, faith, and everything that we have received from Christ as well as Christ Himself is taken away. In their place we have received many human laws and works, and have become completely enslaved to the most unqualified people on earth.”

It is not enough to preach Christ’s life and work superficially as history, or to say nothing about Him and instead proclaim human laws and teaching; rather He must be proclaimed in such a way that in you and me faith is engendered and sustained. This happens when I am told why Christ came, how one is to make use of and enjoy Him, and what He has brought and given to me. This again happens when one correctly explains Christian freedom, which we have received from Him, and how we are kings and priests, possessing all things, and how whatever we do is pleasing and acceptable in the eyes of God. “Whenever a Christian heart hears Christ proclaimed in this way, it must become joyous, receive comfort with the whole heart, and grow fond of Christ and also love Him. To this it can never come by means of laws or works.”

This is the content of the first, more important part of the treatise, *The Freedom of a Christian*. In the second part Luther carries out how a Christian through love is a servant of all things and is subject to every man. Here we can be quite brief. In this section he treats three statements. 1. Because a Christian as yet has not “become completely spiritual and inward through faith, but still has his rebellious flesh, he therefore out of his joyous and free faith must crucify the lusts of his flesh and control well his body, not in order to gain righteousness thereby or to become acceptable, but rather, “freely out of voluntary love, to please God.” 2. Since a Christian is not alone in the world but must live among other people, he should therefore, even as the Lord Christ humbled Himself out of pure voluntary love and became our slave and minister unto salvation, also willingly make himself a servant of every man, help his neighbor, deal with and treat him as God has treated him through Christ—and all of this freely without seeking anything in it except God’s approval, and not as though it were necessary to salvation. “Thus we see what a lofty, noble life the Christian way of life is.” 3. Thus we should also be subject to temporal authority and ready to serve, not in order to become godly, but rather “to serve others thereby and freely to serve the government and to do what the government demands, in love and freedom,” even when tyrants are doing wrong.

“From all of this we conclude that a Christian does not live for himself but for Christ and his neighbor, for Christ through faith, for his neighbor through love... ”

“Behold, this is genuine, spiritual Christian freedom, which frees the heart from all sins, laws, and commandments, a freedom which surpasses all other freedom as far as heaven the earth. May God grant that we rightly understand and keep it. Amen.”

No other writing of Luther so clearly, deeply, and completely expresses his innermost attitude of heart as does this one. Since Paul wrote the Letter to the Galatians, no one in the Church has presented the very essence of Christianity so faithfully and so powerfully in two propositions. This little book is the Galatians letter of the reformation era, the classic synopsis and general application of all Paul’s letters, yes, of all Scripture, the Old and New Testament. It treats the chief and central question of life: What must I do to be saved? It answers: All that I am and do is of no avail, no avail at all, for it is all condemned and lost. Jesus Christ in His work, who is given me freely through the Gospel and who is grasped by the simple trust of the heart, by faith, through this faith with all His riches becomes my possession, and I His. Thereby I am justified, free and godly, a possessor of all heavenly gifts, a Lord over all things, and set free from every divine and human law. In this same faith, however, through love I am a willing servant of God for the crucifying of my flesh and a willing servant of my neighbor. This is true Christianity, the whole of it! This is Christian spirit, divine power, evangelical life! That he had been gripped so deeply, so completely, so purely by this spirit, therein lay Luther’s greatness. And so it was impossible that he should not join in battle for life or death with the contemptible, cheap religion of the papacy, based on natural reason, which had turned the entire Gospel into law and had made it into an endless, external, trifling doctrine of works. It was impossible not to discover the Antichrist *κατ’εσχάτην* therein.

For in the teaching of Luther and of the pope, Christ and Belial opposed one another, each with his most characteristic characteristics: God's Word and the doctrine of men, Gospel and law, grace and merit, faith and works, spirit and flesh, truth and hypocrisy, salvation and ruin.

Is it not striking that Luther, in his doctrine of faith and the freedom of faith, also thinks of the doctrine of Church and Ministry? Luther did not attack the papacy on one individual point of doctrine or on this or that outward abuse. Least of all did he begin with the doctrine of the Church or of the Ministry. After posting the 95 Theses, he was still in many respects a good papist as far as the doctrine of the Church is concerned. As yet in this booklet, on the point that a Christian should be subject also to the government, he says: "Whoever has this understanding can easily adapt himself to the countless commandments and laws of the pope, of the bishops, of the cloisters, of the convents, of the princes and lords, which some mad prelates urge as if they were necessary for salvation and call them laws of the church, although incorrectly... I am willing to submit to pope and bishop and to tolerate these things, as an example and as a service." How, then, does he come to mention the doctrine of the Church and Ministry here? Indeed, he not only makes mention of it here, but presents it complete so that not one essential part is missing. The answer is this: the doctrine of the Church and Ministry is not an isolated doctrine, alongside of, and separated from, the doctrine of the Christian and his freedom and servitude, but rather is this doctrine itself; only now it is applied no longer to a single Christian alone, but to more Christians at one place or to all Christians in the world as one communion. Whatever is the nature of one Christian, the same is the nature of every other Christian, the same is also the nature of Christians in smaller or larger groups or of all Christians as one body. Whatever the Church according to her spiritual nature is, she is this by virtue of the spiritual nature of every single one of her members. The difference consists only in the number—here an individual, there many. What already is present with the individual as such, becomes the joint possession of the body of the Church. Whatever a Christian as an individual possesses, that and nothing else, nothing more, nothing less, also two or three Christians possess, or all Christians taken together, the Church. Whatever an individual Christian as such does, that, exactly that, is what a larger number of Christians or all Christians taken together, the Church, also does. Whoever knows what a Christian is, has and does, and how he comes into being, and adds to this the concept of plurality or totality together with everything that is naturally implied in these concepts, he has the doctrine of the Church and her office correct and complete. He cannot err in this matter, if only he correctly understands the doctrine of what a Christian is. Let us put this to the test!

What is a Christian in respect to his nature and essence? The answer: a believer, a spiritual person, one who has been re-born, one who is justified, one who is loved, holy, saved, a brother of Christ, a child of God, a chosen one, an heir of eternal life, a spiritual king, a priest, a prophet, a bride of Christ, a member of Christ, a temple of God, the fullness of Christ, a sheep of Christ, etc.

What is the Church? —Change all these predicates to the plural and consider these many as a unit, and you have the Church described completely, exactly, and thoroughly according to her essence and her nature. —The Church is, this a child of 7 years can know (*Smalcald Articles*, Part 3, Article 12), "the holy believers and lambs who hear the voice of their Shepherd." In this answer of Luther we have the first and last predicates which we mentioned above joined together. But everyone which lies between is just as correct and good. The Church is: the spiritual people, those who are re-born, the saints, the chosen ones, the spiritual kings, priests, prophets, the bride, the body, the fullness, the flock of Christ, the temple of God, etc.—thought of and regarded as a unit.

The Christian is according to his nature—to select this one item here—a priest. "For a priest, especially in the New Testament, must not be made but born. He is not ordained but created. He is born, however, not through the birth of the flesh, but through the birth of the Spirit, by the water and the Spirit in the washing of regeneration. For this reason indeed all Christians together (one no less than the other) are priests and all priests are Christians. Let it be an accursed statement when one would say that a priest is something different from a Christian; for such things are said without the Word of God only on the authority of human doctrines" (*How One Should Select and Install Servants of the Church*, St. L., Vol. 10, 1570, par. 32).

Luther speaks most exhaustively and simply about the essence and the nature of the Church in his writing, *Concerning Councils and Churches* of the year 1539 (St. L., Vol. 16:2269ff.). Here are a few short

excerpts: “Faith shows us clearly what the Church is, namely, a Communion of Saints, that is, a group or gathering of such people as are Christians and holy, that is, a Christian, holy group or Church.” ... “There are indeed various peoples in the world, but the Christians are an especially called people named not only *ecclesia*, Church, or people, but rather *sancta, catholica, Christiana*, that is, a Christian, holy people which believes in Christ and is therefore called a Christian people and also has the Holy Spirit, who daily sanctifies them not only through the forgiveness of sins, which Christ won for them, but also through the putting away, sweeping out, and putting to death of sin, because of which they are called a holy people. Thus the Holy Christian Church is, one might say, a people that is Christian and holy, or ... the Holy Christendom, that is, all Christendom. In the Old Testament it is called the people of God.”

This is the way Luther teaches about the essence and the nature of the Church in all of his writings which touch on this subject from the first to the last, only that according to circumstances new antitheses are stressed, distinct points are brought to the fore, new and specific statements of Scripture—all of the same mind and spirit—are adduced. Rome does not deny that the Church is also a spiritual kingdom (cf. pp. 33 ff.), but she stresses above all that the Church is also an external, physical, visible institution with external regulations, powers, and characteristics (cf. pp. 22ff. and 36ff.). This is what was taught at that time by Sylvester Prierias, Eck, Emser, Alveld, “*Mainz, und Heinz.*”; Instead of many short individual quotations which are available to everyone (cf. Walther, *Kirche und Amt* and *Rechte Gestalt*) we bring here one detailed quotation out of the writing *Concerning the Papacy at Rome Against Alveld* of the same year 1520, in which the question was whether the Papacy is a divine or a human arrangement.

Luther writes: “I see very well that the poor dreamer intends to say, according to his way of thinking, that the Christian communion is like any other secular community. By this he brings to light the fact that he has not yet learned what Christendom or the Christian communion is. I hadn’t thought that such coarse, blunt, stubborn error and stupidity would be in any man, much less in a clergyman from Leipzig. For this reason I must explain to begin with ... what is really meant by ‘Christendom’ and the ‘head of Christendom’ ... ”

“Scripture speaks about Christendom very simply and in only one way, while they have brought two other ways into use. The first way, according to Scripture, is that Christendom means a gathering of all believing Christians on earth, as we pray in our Creed, ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Communion of Saints.’ This communion, or gathering, includes all those who live in genuine faith, love, and hope so that the essence, life, and nature of Christendom is not a physical gathering, but rather a gathering together of the hearts in one faith, as Paul says, Ephesians 4:5, ‘One baptism, one faith, one Lord.’ Although they may be separated from one another physically by a thousand miles, they nevertheless are one gathering in spirit because each individual preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives as the other.... This is now a real spiritual unity, and the people who belong to it are a Communion of Saints. This unity alone is enough to establish a communion of Christians, and without this no other unity, be it of the place, time, person, work or whatever it may be, can establish it.” After Luther has brought his Scripture proof from John 18:36, “My Kingdom is not of this world,” and from Luke 17:20f., “The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, etc.” he continues, “Isn’t this a horrible error, that the unity of the Christian communion, which Christ Himself has removed from all physical and external cities and places and placed into the spiritual places (in the heart), should be ascribed by these dreamers (Alveld and his kind) to the physical congregation, which must of necessity be bound to place and location? How is it possible, what reasoning mind can grasp that spiritual unity and physical unity should be one thing? There are many among the Christians in the physical gathering and unity who, however, by sin exclude themselves from the inner spiritual unity.

“Therefore, whoever says that an external gathering or unity establishes a communion of Christians is rashly expressing his thoughts without proof; and whoever applies Scripture to it is using the divine truth to prove his own lies and is making God a false witness... For this reason all who consider the Christian unity or communion as physical and external, like other communions, are real Jews. For they are also waiting for their Messiah, who at a specified external place, namely, Jerusalem, should establish an external kingdom and thus abandon the faith which alone makes the kingdom of Christ to be spiritual and inward... —It is evident that Christendom is a spiritual communion, which may not be counted among worldly communions as little as

spirits may be counted among bodies and faith among temporal possessions... Thus Paul says Colossians 3:3 that our life is not on earth but is hidden with Christ in God. For if Christendom were a physical gathering, then one would be able to discern on each person's body whether he is a Christian, a Turk, or a Jew, just as I can from observing the body tell whether a person is a man, woman, or child, black or white. Likewise, in a gathering of this world I can see whether at Wittenberg or Leipzig, whether here or there he is joined together with others, but I cannot see at all whether he believes or not.

“Therefore, whoever does not want to err, let him be certain of this, that Christendom is a spiritual gathering of souls in one faith, and that no one is considered a Christian because of his body, so that he may know that the natural, genuine, correct, essential Christendom exists in the spirit and not in any outward thing, no matter what sort of name one may give it. For a non-Christian may have all other things, which, however, never make him a Christian unless he has the true faith, which alone makes Christians... In this way Holy Scripture speaks about the Holy Church and Christendom and has no other way of speaking.”

“Therefore, if anyone does not wish to err, let him firmly hold to this that Christendom is a spiritual gathering of souls in one faith and that no one is recognized as a Christian for external reasons. Let him firmly hold to this, so that he may know that the natural, genuine, true, essential Christendom consists in things spiritual and not in any external thing, regardless of what one may call it. For all other things a non-Christian may also have, but they never make him a Christian; the true faith alone brings this about... Holy Scripture speaks about the Holy Church and Christendom in this manner and has no other way of speaking.”

Luther says this in contrast to the purely external body which among the Romans is called Church or Christendom. “According to Rome one calls Christendom a gathering in one house or congregation, bishopric, archbishopric, papacy, in which gathering the outward acts such as singing, reading, and wearing of vestments are practiced. And above all here in Rome one calls the bishops, priests, and members of orders the spiritual estate not because of faith, which they perhaps do not have, but because they are blessed (consecrated) with a visible ointment.

“Although one is here doing violence to the little word ‘spiritual’ or ‘church’ by applying them to such externals..., nevertheless, this usage has taken over to no little misleading and erring of many souls, who will then think that such outward glitter is the true spiritual essence of Christendom or the Church. Concerning this church, no matter where she may be, there is no syllable in Holy Scripture stating that she is established by God, and here I challenge everyone... Let anyone show me that one letter of Scripture speaks about this, and I shall retract all that I have said. I know, however, that they will not succeed in doing this... Therefore, for the sake of better understanding and brevity, we intend to call these two churches by different names. The first, which is natural, basic, essential and true, we intend to call a spiritual inner Christendom. The other, which is called forth by man and external, we intend to call a physical external Christendom. However, we do not intend to separate them from one another, but we intend to speak of the church even as we speak about a person whom according to his soul we call a spiritual and according to his body a physical being; or as the apostle has the practice of speaking of the inner and outer man. Thus also the Christian Church viewed spiritually is a congregation united in one common faith; nevertheless, as a body she may not be gathered at one place, although this is the case in regard to each local group. This church in Christendom is governed by ecclesiastical spiritual law and prelates. Here belong all popes, cardinals ... and all such who according to their outward status are considered to be Christians, whether they be true and genuine Christians or not. For although this congregation does not make one a true Christian, since the above mentioned hierarchy can exist without faith, nevertheless, this church is never without some who also in addition are true Christians...! Those, however, who are without faith and consequently outside the church viewed spiritually, yet belong to the outward gathering, are dead before God, hypocrites, and nothing but lifeless imitations of the true Christendom” (St. L. 18, pp. 1002ff.).

That is Luther's definition of the concept, Church. The way he otherwise defines the Church as the congregation of believers, as “the holy Christian people,” and such like is well known. In the last sentences of the above quotation also his definition of the so-called church, *per Synekdochen*, is touched upon.

What does the Christian as such have? Luther answers: the Gospel. And with the Gospel he has all the “virtues” or treasures and powers of the same. In the Gospel he has Christ Himself and everything that Christ as such is and has. He is blessed with the eternal righteousness of his bridegroom, Christ. He has the kingdom and priesthood of Christ, the keys of the kingdom of heaven, rule over all things and has God Himself.

What does the Church have? Exactly the same treasures, possessions, gifts, and powers. “The true treasurer of the Church is (not the indulgence but) the Holy Gospel,” and all possessions, gifts, and powers of the same, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. She has Christ as her bridegroom, she has Christ’s Kingship and Priesthood, God Himself and with Him freedom from every law and the power over all things, for “all things are yours.” We shall select only one of the above mentioned possessions of the individual Christian as also of the Church: “This is clear that no one has the keys except he who has the Holy Spirit... There can be no doubt that no one binds or forgives sin except he alone who has the Holy Spirit so certainly that you and I know it, as these Words of Christ (John 20:22f.) here convince us. This is, however, none other than the Christian Church, that is, the congregation of all Christ’s believers. She alone has these keys, concerning this you should not doubt... Oh, that this passage (Matt. 18:15–20) were not in the Gospel. That would be a good thing for the pope! For here Christ gives the keys to the entire communion and not to Saint Peter. And here belongs also that same passage, Matthew 16:18, 19, where He gave Saint Peter the keys as representing the entire communion. For in this 18th chapter the Lord Himself explains what He meant when in chapter 16 He gave the keys to the person of Saint Peter. They are given to all Christians, not to the person of Saint Peter” (*Concerning Confession*. Vol. 19, pp. 845f., par. 65 & 859, par. 100). “The keys do not belong to the pope as he falsely claims, rather to the Church, that is, to the people of Christ, the people of God, or the holy Christian people, all over the world, or wherever there are Christians. Just as Baptism, the Sacrament, God’s Word do not belong to the pope but to the people of Christ, and they are also called *Claves Ecclesiae*, not *Claves Papae* (*Concerning Councils and Churches*, Vol. 16, pp. 2279, par. 261). Just before this (p. 2277, par 257–259) Luther shows that Baptism, Word, and Lord’s Supper belong to the individual Christian: “For Baptism does not belong to the one who baptizes nor is it given to him, but it belongs to the one being baptized for whom it is established and to whom it is given by God; just as the Word of God does not belong to the preacher ... but to the disciple who hears and believes. To him it is given ... for the Sacrament does not belong to him who administers it, but rather to him to whom it is administered.” It is a common error that the individual Christian receives his spiritual power from the Church (all too often the right of a local congregation to transfer a member to another congregation is falsely based upon this ... while this is really based alone upon brotherly love and good order, however, with the preservation of the “freedom of a Christian man”). The individual Christian does not receive his spiritual powers and rights from the Church nor does the Church receive hers from the individual Christian, but rather all Christians as individuals have their rights and powers from Christ through faith. Because “all or many Christians” are at the same time “Church,” therefore, it is self-understood that the Church does have these her rights and powers. If one insists on deriving these rights, then one must say that the Church has hers from the individual Christians since the individual Christian exists before the Church. But the Church is indeed only the gathering together of the individual Christians in a unity of such who are all the same. Because here the many individuals have the same possessions, powers, characteristics, activities, etc., therefore, they are congregation or Church.

Just as Luther in this writing ascribes everything that Christ Himself is and has to the individual Christian because of his being united with Christ as bride and groom, through faith, so he affirms the same regarding the Church in many places. We quote from his *Exposition of Psalm 45* of the year 1533: “Nothing greater can be said of the Church than that she has everything that Christ has, and the two have become one body so that what the Church has, Christ has and again what Christ has belongs to the Church... Thus she is absolutely a tremendously powerful mistress and queen over death, sin, fear, and all that belongs to the devil and as a queen possesses with full authority in Christ life, righteousness, grace, and salvation... But what does Christ have? Indeed eternal righteousness, wisdom, might, truth, life, joy, and grace. The Church is, therefore, the sovereign and queen of mercy, of life, and of salvation and all things” (St. L. Vol. 5, pp. 420, 421). In the same way he ascribes this again also to the individual Christian: “To assert this, I say, is not arrogance, but

claim for yourself everything that Christ has and accustom yourself to possess your right, and you will see how difficult that is. For we are, in truth, kings over these evils and lords over all treasures which are in Christ, and we all wear golden crowns, but in faith” (Ibid. p. 425).

“He is a king over all kings to Whom all power is given in heaven and on earth and, as Psalm 8 says, all things are placed under His feet. As He is a Lord, so am I a lord and you also. Whatever He has, that I have and you have too, for through Him we are God’s children and heirs, His brothers and joint heirs,” Romans 8:17 (*Sermon on I Peter 2:9*. St. L., Vol. 9, p. 1185).

What does the individual Christian do as a Christian? ... He administers all the goods and gifts and rights and powers which he has received from Christ through faith. This is his office: these are his functions. These Scripture sums up also in the royal, priestly, and prophetic office. The latter Luther in this writing often includes under the priestly office, cp *II Exposition of 110th Psalm*, St. L., Vol. 5, p. 1021, par. 214ff.: “From this you see that essentially the real office of priest is to preach the Gospel, etc.... so also are the other two, namely to bring sacrifice and to pray.”

This then is also the activity and the office of all Christians of the entire Church. “Do you, however, ask wherein the priesthood of Christians consists or what their functions as priests are? The answer is: the very same as those spoken of above, namely, to teach, to bring sacrifice, and to pray... For from Him (Christ) we have the doctrine and preaching as He brought it from heaven... But just as we became Christians through this Priest and His priestly office and through faith have been embodied in Him, thus we also receive the right and the power to teach and confess the Word which we have received from Him ... each according to his own call and station.

“Now Christ is the great High Priest, who was anointed by God and has also offered His own body for us, which is the highest office of a priest. After that He prayed for us on the cross. In addition to this He also proclaimed the Gospel and taught all people to know God and themselves. He has given these three offices also to all of us. For this reason, since He is Priest and we are His brothers, all Christians have the power and the command and are in duty bound to preach, to come before God, to bring petitions for one another and to sacrifice themselves to God. What defiance! that anyone should begin to preach or to speak the Word of God unless he be a priest” (*Sermon on I Peter 2:5*. St. L., Vol. 9, p. 1013).

“But let us continue and prove from the priestly offices, as they call them, that all Christians are equally priests... These are almost all the priestly offices: to teach, preach, and proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to bless or to administer the Sacrament of the Altar, to bind and to loose people from their sins, to make intercession for others, to bring sacrifice, and to judge every other doctrine and spirit. Indeed, these are great, mighty, and royal things” (*How One Chooses Servants of the Church*. St. L., Vol. 10, p. 1572, par. 37). From the further discussion of these individual things we select the following: “Peter gives them not only the right but also the command that they are to show forth the praises of God, which, indeed, is nothing less than to preach the Word of God. This office, which deals in the Word of God, is common to all Christians” (pp. 1572–73, par. 39. 40. 41). Regarding baptism: “The women, therefore, when they baptize carry out the true office of priest and this is not done as one’s own special work but as a general and universal office of the Church, which, therefore, belongs to a priest alone” (p. 1575, par. 42). “The 3rd office is to bless or to administer the sacred bread and wine..., and we say that this office is also common to all Christians just as the priesthood ... what there (in the institution) has been imparted, has been imparted to all ... just as the greatest is given to all, that is, the Word and Baptism, so also one cannot properly deny anyone the least, that is, to bless the Sacrament” (pp. 1576f., par. 45.47). Concerning the office of the keys: “But all of us, as many of us as are Christians, have this power of the keys in common ... for here is the Word of Christ (Matt. 18:15) ... and soon after vss. 17, 18” (p. 1578, par. 49). “Here I don’t let the hypocrites and their hypocritical spewings bother me who with regard to this passage invent a difference as though the right and power of the keys were one thing and the use of the keys another; for they do such things out of their own arrogance and without any Scripture... They go about with their fabricated

distinction and deceit: the Church has indeed the right and the power of the keys but the use belongs to the bishops. That is speaking in a shallow way and needs no refutation. Here (Matt. 18:15–18) Christ gives every individual Christian the power and the use of the keys when He says, let him be to thee as a heathen. To whom does ‘let him be to thee’ refer? Whom does Christ address with the little word ‘thee,’ the pope? Indeed, he is addressing every Christian individually. When He then says, ‘Let him be unto thee,’ He is giving not only the right or power but He commands and urges upon him the use and the exercise of the office” (p. 1579, par. 50). “This is confirmed also by that which follows verse 18: Whatever you bind shall be bound. Whom is He addressing in this way? Isn’t it all Christians, isn’t it the Christian congregation?” (p. 1579, par. 50, 51). “Therefore, this human lie is null and void. For the keys belong to the entire congregation of all Christians and to each individual who is a member of the same. And this is true not only in respect to the power but also *in respect to the use and in every other respect that there may be*. I should also like to use this passage: ‘To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven’ ... *item* the one in Matthew 18:19, ‘Where two are agreed on earth,’ *item* verse 20, ‘Where two are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them’ ... to make this even stronger. In these passages the most complete right and the *use* are given over and authorized in a most complete way so that they may bind and loose” (p. 1580, par. 52). “We have also said above that the office of the Word is common to all. The binding and loosing is really nothing else than to preach the Gospel and to put the same to use. For what else does ‘loose’ mean than to proclaim that the sins are remitted before God; what does ‘bind’ mean than to take away the Gospel and proclaim that the sins are retained? Therefore, whether they wish it so or not, we maintain that the keys are common to all without exception, since they are nothing else than the office by which one puts the Word to use and practice” (pp. 1580–81, par. 53).

In the same way each Christian and the Church are to judge all doctrine. After Luther has carried out that the entire papacy would never have amounted to anything, if the pseudo priests (*Priesterlarven*) had not taken this right of judgment away from the Christians, he bases this office of the Christians upon John 10:5; Matthew 7:15; 16:6; 23:2, 3 and says: “What else does Christ teach us than this that each one should for himself be concerned about his own redemption and salvation so that he may know and be sure as to what he is to believe and whom he is to follow, that he is also a free, fully empowered judge of all who wish to teach him and that inwardly he is taught only by God, John 6:45” (pp. 1586–87, par. 65ff).

What Luther says of the individual Christian in the second part of his essay “*Concerning the Freedom*, etc.” also belongs to the sphere of the Church’s activity. Just as the Christian so the Church also still has her flesh in this life—in all her individual members—and is accordingly a servant of all things and subject to every man just as in spirit she is a queen and a ruler over all things. Although she is perfect in spirit, she errs and stumbles according to the flesh (St. L. 19, p. 1294; 5, p. 1093), but by the faith and spirit and power of God she disciplines herself just as every Christian subdues and disciplines his body, just as all Christians crucify their flesh together with the lusts and desires. Just as every Christian, she is under the Law according to the flesh and promotes the death of that which is to die, removes, however, from herself whatever is irreclaimably evil. Thus she offers herself to God as a pure sacrifice, as a pure virgin. Thus also she serves people in love and makes herself to be a servant just as the individual Christian. She does good to every man especially to her own members. Wherever her service is needed and is possible, she takes hold. She also does no evil to her enemies but rather only good and every good. Patiently she suffers without vengeance all injustice; patiently she bears the storms that come her way. —And all of this out of willing love. Just as the individual Christian, so also the Church is subject to all human ordinances, to all authority, to all temporal rulers, even to the unjust tyrants. She recognizes every natural ordinance of God as properly existing and reaches into no sphere outside her own, does not take the sword. And all of this with all her heart. Because inwardly she is, has, can do and rules everything, she gladly sacrifices whatever of this world still clings to her.

And how does the individual Christian come into being? By what means is he sustained, strengthened, made perfect? Through the Word alone. “In accordance with the nature of the Word, the soul also receives its form and life from it, just as the iron becomes a glowing red, like fire, from its union with it” (p. 993, par. 15). “The soul has nothing wherein she lives, is righteous, is free and is Christian, neither in heaven nor on earth but the Holy Gospel” (p. 990, par. 6; p. 1005, par. 48).

The very same is true also of the Church “for the Church arises from the Word of promise through faith and is nourished and sustained through the very same Word of promise” (St. L. 19, p. 108). “For since the Church is born, nourished, sustained and strengthened through the Word, it is therefore evident that she cannot do without the Word” (St. L. 10, p. 1593, par. 76; cp Vol. 5, p. 992, par. 149). The emphasis upon the Word (and also upon Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) as the only means of grace in opposition to not only the Roman Church but also the Reformed and the crude enthusiasts of his day is indeed a striking characteristic of Luther and of the Church which is named after him, and this emphasis is generally known. We refer here only to his *Smalcald Articles* Part III, Article 8: “... we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit to no one, except through or with the preceding outward Word... It is the devil himself whatsoever is extolled as Spirit without the Word and Sacraments” (Con. Trigl. p. 495f. cp St. L. 19, p. 37). Luther’s battle against the pope and the enthusiasts was indeed essentially nothing but a battle for the exclusive validity of the Gospel in the Church and against the chaos of human doctrine, especially in the papacy. Already in the year 1522 he published a booklet, *Concerning Human Doctrines Which Are to Be Avoided*, in which he on the basis of Deuteronomy 4:2; Isaiah 29:13; (Matt. 15:8); Matthew 15:11; I Timothy 4:1ff; Colossians 2:16ff; Galatians 1:8, 9; Titus 1:14; II Peter 2:1ff; Matthew 24:23f; Luke 17:20; and Proverbs 30:5 proves that all human doctrines, ordinances, and commandments insofar as they are to serve for salvation are not alone of no value at all, but are also contrary to God and the Gospel, destructive of faith and righteousness, are entirely godless, have been drawn into the Church by the devil and are therefore damnable and are to be avoided by all Christians above everything else as blasphemous (St. L. 19, pp. 598–621). Concerning the Law of God, its essence, power, effect, purpose and use in the Church, Luther writes clearly in all his writings. “Not through the works of the law but alone through faith” has become the Lutheran shiboleth. The Law is the Word of God’s anger over sin, which does not give life but rather kills, damns, only increases sin, makes hypocrites, blasphemers, and causes despair, and casts a person into hell, if the Gospel does not arrest it. It is to work awareness of sin, contrition—“*Contritio passiva*, true sorrow of heart, suffering and sensation of death” (S.A., Part III, Art. III, p. 479)—and is also to become a schoolmaster unto Christ. Where, however, faith rules, the office of the Law is at an end. But even in the life of a Christian and in the Church one cannot do without the Law because of the Old Adam, which still sticks to us, but it is only to the Old Adam that the Law applies; it is the lesser word in comparison to the Gospel, or a servant girl and not the mistress in the house of God. Where the Law rules a person, he remains unregenerate, under the curse, and is lost. —With regard to Luther’s teaching on the Law one should compare above all other writings his *Extensive Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians* of the year 1535, his two sermons on Galatians 3:23f and I Timothy 1:3–11, (St. L. 9, pp. 1ff; pp. 798 and 858ff.) and also the writing against the Antinomians (St. L. 16, pp. 1610ff.).

Only one more point must be added here: the Church is not one Christian but many Christians and yet a unity in the plurality. For therein and in the form and manner of this unity lies her essential difference from the individual Christian. She is an organization of individuals, one body, the body of Christ, Who is her head. Although all members who are united with Christ through faith have the same life, nevertheless each member also has his individual position, characteristic, gifts and functions (I Cor. 12; Eph. 4). One member should serve the other also with his special gift for the edification of the entire body. The Church as a whole is the fullness of Him Who fills all in all. It is for this reason that Luther, from time to time, says that the Church is more than an individual Christian “because the entire Church has more gifts than the individual Christian” (Ps. 45, St. L. 5, p. 426; Ps. 68, pp. 1367ff). From this follows the need for a public or joint exercising of the common office of Christians in spite of the spiritual priest-hood of the individual.

## **B. Regarding the Ministry**

Luther’s Doctrine of the public ministry is built up in part of the following elements:

1. There is one office in the Church, the office of the spiritual priesthood. The public ministry is only another phase of this same priesthood.

Naturally Luther also places this point in opposition to the false teachings of the papacy. The Roman Church declares that her external public priesthood is essentially something different from the private inner spiritual priesthood of the laity. The lay people can by the power of their priesthood pray privately and also offer spiritual sacrifice, good works and penance to God. The external public priesthood, however, which Christ has especially established for the rule and care of the Church, has the power to offer the Mass, to hear confession, to forgive sins, etc.... Against this deceit Luther writes: "Let us now speak with the papistic priests and ask them to show us whether their priesthood has other offices than these offices (those of the spiritual priesthood: 'to teach, to preach, and to proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to bless or to dispense the Sacrament of the Altar, to bind or loose from sin, etc. ' (St. L.10, p. 1572, par. 37). If it has, then their priesthood would not be a Christian priesthood. If it has the very same which we enumerated, then it cannot be a special priesthood. Thus we have blocked their way no matter which way they wish to turn. Either they have no priesthood which is any different from that which is common to all Christians, or if they have a different one, it must be Satan's priesthood. For Christ has taught us Matthew 7:20 that we should learn to recognize each tree according to its fruit. We have already seen the fruits of our common priesthood. Let them now show us other fruits than these or confess that they are not priests. For the fact that these fruits are borne in a special way or publicly does not prove the existence of a different priesthood, but rather a different phase of the same priesthood... We maintain firmly that there is no other Word of God than that alone which all Christians are told to proclaim; that there is no Baptism than that which all Christians may administer; that there is no other observance of the Lord's Supper than that which belongs to every Christian and was instituted by Christ to be kept; also that there is no other kind of sin than that which every Christian may bind or loose, etc.... These are, however, always the priestly and the royal offices' (*To The People At Prague*, St. L. 10, p. 1589f.). When Dr. Walther then says in his first thesis on the Office of the Ministry: "The holy office of the ministry or pastoral office is a different office from the priestly office which all Christians have," this dare not be misunderstood in this way as if it should have other functions than the spiritual priesthood; its difference rather lies merely in "a different use" of the same priestly office, solely in this that it is carried out in the name of, or with the consent of all the other priests that are involved. Incidentally, one should mention here that we do not consider Walther's identification of the public preaching office with the pastoral office as a happy one. From this some people who have not thought or studied independently have drawn the conclusion that the public office, that is the office of the Word which is transmitted from the church to an individual person, and the pastoral office are equal and exchangeable concepts and that therefore only that form of the public preaching office which we call the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) is of divine origin. It would be false, however, if one would declare the distinctive pastoral office to be a human arrangement. What is human in every species of the public ministry is only the form, the outward arrangement. The content, the command, the commission, the power directed to the Church to preach the Gospel through capable men as also to dispense the Sacraments in an orderly way is and remains divine.

It is necessary, however, to differentiate between the public office and the individual priesthood if there is not to be complete confusion in the Church. The public ministry has indeed the very same functions as the individual priesthood, but the "use" is an entirely different one. The individual priesthood is carried out by each Christian in Christ's and his own name alone ... wherever he is alone and where he alone comes into consideration. As soon as others are present with him who are priests the same as he, immediately the congregational right goes into effect and curtails the outward exercise of the individual priesthood to a certain degree, to that degree, namely, where the exercise would negate the same rights of the other spiritual priests. However, we will have more to say about this below.

"Therefore we firmly conclude on the basis of the Holy Scripture that there is no other office than to preach God's Word; that it is held in common by all Christians; that each one may speak, preach, and judge, and all the others are bound to give heed. Since Scripture knows of no other office of the Word of God, etc." (St. L. 14, p. 1090).

2. This office (the command and authority to preach the Gospel) is not an official rank which from the very beginning has been established by Christ for public dispensation (“use ... *Brauch*”), but rather it is the common possession of all Christians, who are reborn and ordained priests by God, yes, even so far as the use or practice is concerned.

The first half of this thesis denies what Rome maintains with all her might. A spiritual estate which has been established by Christ from the very start as the spokesman for the Church and to which all spiritual authority (to say nothing of the claim to authority also over all temporal things) has been transmitted for the care of the Church—this is the one great and fundamental teaching of the Roman Church. It is against this that Luther testified all his life. In regard to I Peter 2:5 he writes: “We have debated a great deal to this effect that those who are now called priests are not priests before God and have established it from this passage of Peter. Therefore, don’t fail to comprehend this passage. And when someone concerns himself with this passage and wishes to interpret it thus (as some ... Emser ... have done) that he speaks of two kinds of priesthood, namely, of outward and of spiritual priests, then tell him to put on a pair of glasses so that he may be able to see and also to take some sneezing powder to clear his brain. St. Peter speaks thus, ‘You should become a spiritual or a holy priesthood.’ ... We continue to ask whether he makes a difference between the spiritual and the secular as one now calls the priests spiritual and the other Christians secular.... Thus it is a proven fact that they are lying, and that St. Peter says nothing about their kind of priesthood, which they have dreamed up and then apply only to themselves. For this reason our, i.e. the Roman, bishops are nothing but such who play at being bishops....” (St. L. 9, p. 1012f.).

“In the New Testament priests should properly wear no tonsure. Not that it is anything evil in itself even if one would want to have himself completely shorn. It rather should be divided so as not to make a distinction between them and the common Christian man, which is something that faith cannot permit.... Now they have set up an estate of their own as if it were from God and have acquired such liberty that there is almost a greater difference right among the Christians than there is between us and the Turks” (St. L. 10, pp. 1012ff.).

“For Scripture knows nothing of those whom one now calls priests” (p. 1272).

“We would permit it to stand that those who are ordained by bishops and the pope are called priests but only in so far as they do not call themselves God’s priests, for they are not able to bring a word about this matter from Scripture for their own defense” (pp. 1022, 1183). Cp *Concerning The Misuses of The Mass* (St. L. 19, pp. 1074–1082, 1257–1259). In regard to the second part of this point that the preaching office is common to all Christians as God’s true priests Luther writes among other things in the last writing mentioned: “And in order that it might be known and clear to everyone I wish first of all to prove with irrefutable Scripture that the one proper, true preaching office is common to all Christians as are the priesthood and sacrifice. Paul says II Corinthians 3:6: ‘Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit.’ St. Paul spoke these words to all Christians so as to make all of them servants of the Spirit.... And Peter says to all Christians ‘that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light’ (I Peter 2:9)... This indeed we grant that many of them are not to preach at the same time, although all of them have this authority. For when Paul spoke, Barnabas remained silent, Acts 14:12. Does this mean that Barnabas did not have the right to preach? All things should be done decently and according to a certain order, I Corinthians 14:40. By this the preaching office common to all is not nullified, but rather is confirmed thereby. For if all people did not have the right to preach, and only one had the authority to speak, what then would be the need of maintaining or commanding a definite order? But just because all have the authority and the power to preach it is necessary to maintain a certain order.” After Luther then has referred to the conditions in the congregation in Corinth, I Corinthians 14:27–30 (which he moreover applies to the called servants of the Word in his writing *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers*, such as the prophets), he calls to Pelagius, “Out, you scoundrel! All Christians have the right and authority to read from Scripture and to preach, even if you should split asunder at the thought” (St. L. 19, pp. 1085ff.), and a little further on he adds,

“Therefore, we conclude firmly as based upon Holy Scripture that there is no more than one office to preach God’s Word, common to all Christians, and that everyone may speak, preach, judge and the others are bound to give heed. For since Scripture knows of no other office of the Word, we then ask the idols of the pope, from whom and whence they have this office which according to their claim is meant for them alone and is not be common to all” (p. 1090). Very clear also is that which he writes in *Concerning The Babylonian Captivity*: “Therefore, everyone who wishes to be a Christian should be certain and have considered well for himself that all of us are equally priests, that is, that we have equal authority as regards the Word of God and the Sacraments, but that it nevertheless is not proper for each one to administer the same except when this is done with the consent of the congregation or through the call of the leaders” (p. 117).

In regard to the expression “also according to the use” Luther writes to the Bohemians: “Here I don’t let the hypocritical talk disturb me when they boldly say that the Church indeed has the right and authority of the keys, but the use belongs to the bishops. That is being said without much thought and needs no refutation. Christ gives to each Christian the authority and the use of the keys when He says, Let him be unto you as a heathen. Who is the ‘let him be unto you’? Whom is Christ addressing in the little word ‘you’? The pope? Indeed He is speaking to each Christian individually. When He, however, says, ‘let him be unto you’, He not only gives the right and authority, but commands or urges upon him the use and the exercising of the same. For what does it mean when He says, ‘let him be unto you as a heathen,’ or you are to consider him such? Is this not as much as if He would say you are not to live with him and you should have no communion or fellowship with him? Now this is in truth nothing different than to place under the ban, to bind and to lock up heaven. This is supported also by that which follows verse 18, ‘whatever ye shall bind shall be bound.’ Who are they whom He addresses thus? Are they not all Christians? Is it not the Christian congregation? If they say that He here did not give the Church the use, but only the power and the right of the keys, then we would also say that He in Matthew 16:19 gave the use of the keys to no one at all, also not to St. Peter. For the Words with which Christ transmits this office are in every place the same. If in one place or to one person the words mean to convey authority, then they mean to do the same thing everywhere. Again, if they in one place mean to convey the use, then they mean the same everywhere, namely, to convey the use. For it is not right when the Words of God which are the same everywhere are given one meaning in one place and immediately explained differently in another place, as these hypocrites are bold to do and thus with their fabrication deride the mysteries of God. For this reason this lie of men is absolutely nothing, for the keys belong to the entire Communion of all Christians and to each member of the same and this is the case not alone as to authority, but also as to the use, and as to every possible manner, so that we may not do violence to the Words of Christ, who directly and universally speaks to all ‘let him be unto you.’ Also: You have won your brother, etc.; also: ‘Whatever ye shall bind, etc.’ For further support I should also like to treat this passage, ‘Unto thee will I give the keys to the kingdom of heaven’ which Christ spoke to Peter alone; also the Matthew 18:19 passage, ‘Where two agree on earth’; also verse 20, ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’ In these passages the most complete right and use are fully granted, confirming that they may bind and loose, otherwise we would be denying Christ Himself the right and use of the keys when He dwells among the two. But I have treated these passages more than enough in other places.

“Above we have also said that the office of the Word is common to all. The ‘bind’ and ‘loose’ is surely nothing less than to preach the Gospel and to apply the same in practice. For what does loose mean besides proclaiming that the sins are remitted before God? What does bind mean except to take the Gospel away and to proclaim that the sins are retained? Therefore, whether they wish it so or not, we maintain that the keys are the common property of all, since they are nothing less than the office whereby one puts the Word into use and into practice” (*To The People at Prague*, St. L. 10, pp. 1579ff.).

One should know that Luther says this not in regard to the private but rather the public office of the Word which is to be carried out jointly. He uses as an example and proof Matthew 18, where each Christian should and can take part in the discipline against the sinful brother without doing violence to the command for order and the fact of special gifts. The very same public or joint exercise (“use”) of the one office takes place in the joint singing, confession of faith, in the choir, in the speaking, in the congregational meetings, in the

answers of the children in their Christian instruction. The fact that the public exercise of this office, however, is also limited and is subject to certain stipulations in its chief functions is taught by Luther just as clearly and expressly. This is shown in the next point.

3. The rights of the entire communion and the command to good order demand that within the congregation such functions of the ministry as cannot be carried out by all at the same time without disorder and also such functions for which all Christians are not equally capable be relinquished and turned over to capable persons so that they may carry them out in the name of the congregation.

We wish here first of all to note that we prefer to avoid the terminology “public ministry” and “private ministry” because with these terms the false concept so easily slips in as if the public ministry were something entirely different from the private. Indeed, Luther teaches clearly enough that there is only one office or ministry common to all Christians and that the public office is only another use of the very same office as that which the individual Christian uses or puts into practice. We prefer to say, “public or common discharge or administration,” “private discharge or administration of the office.” Luther says with regard to point 3 in the same writing directed to the Bohemians: “We have, indeed, said all of this only about the common right and authority of all Christians. For since all things which we have mentioned so far are to be common to all Christians (to teach, to preach and to proclaim the Word of God, to baptize, to bless or administer the Sacrament of the Altar, to bind and to loose sins, to make intercession for others, to sacrifice and to judge all other teachings and spirits) and since we have also verified and proved this, it is, therefore, not proper for anyone to exalt himself and to appropriate to himself alone that which belongs to all of us. Let him assume this right and also put it into practice provided there is no one else present who also has received the same right. However, the right of the communion does demand that one or as many as the congregation desires be chosen and appointed, who in the place and in the name of all those who have the right practice these offices publicly, in order that there be no horrible disorder among the people of God and the Church in which certainly all things are to be done decently and in order as the Apostle Paul has taught I Corinthians 14:40 become a Babel” (St. L. 10, pp. 1572 and 1589). Thus Luther logically establishes the necessity of assigning the public or common practice of the office which has been founded and commanded by God to individual capable persons, on the one hand, because of the equal right that they all have to this office; secondly, because of the moral command for order; thirdly, because of the unequal gifts for the public administration of the office (see the next point).

In order not to accumulate quotations unnecessarily, we refer to the following selected passages *ad libitum*: St. L. Vols. 5, pp. 1036–1040, esp. par. 250, 253, 260; 10, p. 272, par. 10; 19, p. 1086, esp. par. 38; p. 1089, par. 44–47; 16, p. 2279, par. 262; p. 2281, par. 265, in which Luther again and again emphasizes: for the sake of good order, so that all things are carried on decently and orderly, so that no disorder and unruly practice appears, in order that the child might not be drowned when many grab it at the same time and want to baptize it, etc.... Throughout all of this the divine institution of the ministry (procured through the blood of Christ, planted by the Holy Spirit, and expressly commanded to all Christians by the Lord, Mark 16; Matt. 28; John 21) which is to be carried out publicly or privately remains firm as the foundation of the entire doctrine. But, as to its origin, this ministry is always either the private or the public administration of the priesthood which is established in the individuals, which these personally carry out together with other Christians so long as good order is not thereby disturbed. The practice of this office, however, must immediately be given over to individuals through the consensus of everyone involved as soon as good order would be destroyed when many carry out the functions at the same time. According to Luther, the public administration of the office of the Word is as follows: if all Christians were capable of carrying out the public ministry and if they all could do so at the same time without creating disorder, then there would be no reason to give this over to individual persons.

Also in regard to the form of assignment Luther is in no way legalistic. It does not depend upon a formal vote or roll call, if only the congregation agrees, in any way consents that this one or that one should administer the office of the ministry among them publicly. He points to the fact that Apollos, Philip, and Stephen conducted the office of the ministry in a God-pleasing way, although they were not Apostles and had not been

called either by God or the congregation in a formal manner. Christian love was the thing that moved them to preach (St. L. 10, p. 1544, par. 15–17).

4. The Lord gives the Church special gifts for the public administration of the ministry, that is, capable people, and it is only to such that this office should be entrusted.

“Some must be chosen from among the entire body of Christians, some who should officiate and whom God has given special gifts and abilities that they might be qualified for the ministry. As Saint Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:11, 12: Some He has given to be apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, in order that the Saints (that is, those who in truth already are Christians and baptized priests) might be equipped for the work of the ministry or service by which the Body of Christ (that is, the Christian congregation or Church) is edified” (*II Explanation of 110th Psalm*, St. L. 5, p. 1037, par. 2552). “For that reason one must select and ordain some who are able to preach and also become proficient in the Scripture so that they can teach and defend doctrine” (p. 1040, par. 260). “For, although every man has authority to preach, no one should be used for it nor should anyone assume it for himself unless he is more capable for this than others. To such a person the others should then also give place and grant him his position so that proper honor, discipline, and order is maintained. For it is in this way that Paul instructs Timothy that he command those to teach the Word who are fit for it and are able to teach and instruct others, I Timothy 3:2ff; Titus 1:9. For whoever feels himself called to preach needs to have a good voice, a good way of expressing himself, a good memory and other natural gifts. Whoever does not have these should properly remain silent and let someone else speak” (*Concerning the Misuse of the Mass*, St. L. 19, p. 1089, par. 44). —In this connection Luther bases also the prohibition, which forbids women to preach, first of all on the required ability and then also on the command that the woman is to be subject to the man. “When however, no man preaches, then it would be necessary that the woman preach” (p. 1090, par. 44–46).

5. Whoever is called to the public ministry by a congregation of spiritual priests in a Christian way is called by God, and the faithful administrator of the office of the ministry should be granted the honor prescribed by God.

In order to save space we shall only refer to the passages which come into consideration for this point which is self-evident and well known to us. Cp for the first part, St. L. Vols. 12, pp. 55f, 436f; 1, p. 763; 3, p. 721f; 17, p. 1152; for the second part, St. L. Vols. 10, pp. 1548, 427, 439; 1, p. 1624; 7, pp. 82, 600, 1783; 14, p. 1787.

6. Not only the one species, the local pastorate, but the public ministry of the Word *in genere* is a divine institution. It takes its specific forms according to circumstance.

When Luther speaks of the divine establishment of the local pastorate (cp his writing *One Cannot Depose Pastors Because They Condemn Public Evils*, St. L. 10, pp. 1625ff., par. 10) as he does so often, people have, in the course of time, drawn the erroneous meaning that only this particular form of the public ministry is of divine institution which he and we, according to historical usage, call the office of the local pastor, that is, the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments as it is carried on in a common local congregation by one man (at times with assistants). One claims that the office of local pastors has its express and its specific institution and that all other forms of the office of the ministry of the Word, such as the office of our theological professors, college professors, missionaries, circuit preachers, presidents, visitors, etc., established by the synod (always in so far as they teach the Word) are not of divine origin because they have not been created by a local congregation, which alone is of divine order, but rather by the synod, a “human thing,” which is not of divine order. Only in so far as they are derived from the local pastorate or can be considered auxiliary offices to the same could they lay claim to divine institution. While one could refer to Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3; Titus I and I Peter 5:2 and similar passages for the express establishment of the local pastorate, it is asserted that there are no express words of institution in Scripture for the other public offices of the Word which were mentioned above.

This is not the place to go in upon the various erroneous views which are the basis for this argumentation. The question here is what Luther's view in this matter was. Luther also is enlisted to support this interpretation because people usually know him only from passages torn out of context. A more thorough knowledge of his writings teaches us something else. Luther speaks much about the divine institution of the local pastorate, but on the one hand it is clear from many passages that he does not declare this particular species, the local pastorate, to be divinely instituted in contrast to other species of the public preaching ministry or the ministry of the Word, but that rather he declares this species to be divine *together with* the other species. Since he usually speaks concretely in the figure of speech known as species *pro genere*, he calls the local pastorate at the same time also the ministry of the Word, or the ministry of the Gospel, or by some similar name. On the other hand, he characterizes other species of the public ministry (even the office of visitor, St. L. 17, p. 1155) as being instituted by God. In the third place, he declares in a long explanation that the form of the office of local pastor does not matter as long as the Word is used in an "orderly" manner. For the sake of brevity we quote only the most necessary words. Let each one read further for himself (the St. Louis edition is cited).

St. L. 20, p. 1098, par. 521: "The holy orders and proper estates which are instituted by God are these three: the office of priest, matrimony, and temporal government. All those who are in the local pastorate, or *the ministry of the Word*..., such as those who preach, administer the Sacrament, are in charge of the common treasury, serve as sextons, and messengers or servants to such persons, such are all holy works before God."

St. L. 5, p. 1036, par. 250: "It is, however, something different (than the spiritual priesthood) when one speaks of those who have an office in Christendom, such as sextons, preachers, pastors, or ministers." Notice the classification!

St. L. 9, p. 1274: "Thus the bishops are servants of Christ who are to tend and pasture His flock. To pasture is, however, nothing else, as we have said, than to preach the Gospel. ... Those who perform these duties are elders, or bishops, even if they are simple village pastors; those, however, who do not perform them are not bishops before God."

St. L. 10, p. 1599, par. 87: "For by the Apostle Paul a person to whom the Word has been committed is considered a bishop."

St. L. 10, pp. 1624–25, par. 2: "I hope, indeed, that you will have this much Christian understanding that the office of the ministry and the Gospel do not belong to us but rather to God our Lord alone, Who has won this for us with His blood, has bestowed and established it for our salvation ... , lest you should wrong the highest minister and bishop, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, etc."

St. L. 1, p. 1116: "For the preaching ministry, or office of bishop, is the highest which the Son of God Himself exercised as did the Apostles, Prophets, and Patriarchs, for God's Word and faith are supreme, above everything else, above all gifts and persons. The word 'elder,' in Greek presbyter, is first of all a designation of age as one says an elderly man, but here it is the name of an office, because the elderly and experienced were chosen for the office. Today we call them 'ministers' and 'preachers' or 'pastors.'" Cp pp. 1148–1157, *Of the Office of the Ministry and the Episcopacy*. In regard to the office of visitor, it is mentioned incidentally on p. 1155: "In the third place, this is also God's command to watch constantly over the ministers and preachers to see that they teach and administer properly. It is chiefly for this purpose that visitations were held long ago and continue to be very necessary at present."—A question: If we insist so rigidly upon the divine institution of the office of local pastor because Luther teaches this, why then do we not insist equally upon the divine command that visitors constantly keep watch over the pastors and preachers? This is something which Luther emphasizes not only in this passage but again and again and, indeed, with God-given right. Luther teaches also the necessity of synods in this same writing, p. 1155f. —and he calls the universities *custodes doctrinae* which are to

preserve Christian doctrine and should be witnesses from whence the doctrine comes which they impart to the churches, p. 1156.

St. L. 19, p. 1269, par. 110: “Thus nothing remains in the office of the ministry, or the preaching office, except this single work, namely, to give, or dispense the Gospel, which Christ has commanded to be preached.”

St. L. 19, p. 1283, par. 137: “Hear indeed how simply St. Paul speaks about ordination in II Timothy 2:2: ‘And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.’ Here there is neither chrism nor butter. There is only the command to teach God’s Word. Whoever has this, Paul holds to be a minister, bishop, and pope. For everything depends upon the Word of God as the highest office, which Christ wants to be His very own and the highest.” Cp St. L. 10, p. 1590, par. 72–75; p. 1560, p. 13, *Ministry of the Word*.

St. L. 10, p. 423, par. 2ff.: “I hope, indeed, that the believers ... know well that the spiritual estate has been established and instituted by God not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood and bitter death of His Son, Jesus Christ ... and has truly and clearly earned it so that there is such an office or ministry in the whole world to preach, baptize, forgive, withhold forgiveness, administer the Sacrament, comfort, warn, admonish with the Word of God and whatever else belongs to the office of a pastor.” (With the word “estate” Luther here does not mean a class, cast, nobility or any such thing, for he often refutes this very thing; rather he uses the word here as a name for all those who have been called into public service by the church.) “I do not mean, however, the present spiritual estate in the cloisters and institutions..., rather, I mean that estate which has the preaching office and ministry of the Word and Sacraments which confers the Spirit and all salvation. ... Such are: the office of pastor, teacher, preacher, reader, priest, those who are called chaplains, sextons, school masters and whatever else belongs to such offices and persons. This estate Scripture, indeed, honors and praises highly. Paul calls them God’s stewards and servants, bishops, doctors, prophets and, in addition, God’s messengers to reconcile the world with God, II Corinthians 5:20. Joel calls them saviors. David calls them kings and princes, Psalm 68:13. In chapter 1:13 Haggai calls them angels, etc.”

From all of these testimonies it is clear that Luther considered the local pastorate to be instituted by God, not because it is “local,” but because it is an “office,” that is, the public ministry of the Word. It does not depend upon the name, but rather upon the essence of the thing. The essence of the public ministry consists in this 1) that it preaches God’s Word and 2) that it preaches in behalf of the Church. All offices in the Church which have these two essential characteristics are of divine institution whatever they may be called: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, school masters, missionaries, circuit preachers, presidents, visitors, professors; even doctors, such as Luther was, can take pride in the divine institution not of their title, but of their office (*The Ministry of the Word, Augustana V*).

The designation *Pfarramt* (the local pastorate), as a title stems not from Scripture, but rather comes from the papacy. (Πάροικος in the Scripture, I Peter 2:11, means stranger.) *Parochus*, *Pfarrherr* and *Pfarrer*, designates in the Roman Church that chief priest who is to care for the area which surrounds the church and the priest’s residence and who then also has the right to collect the fees that are paid for this service, goods and the other emoluments. The Lutheran meaning of the word in the German territorial churches is very similar to the Roman (the word is, moreover, not commonly used in some territorial churches). The thought is always that the *Pfarrer* really is the one (as head pastor) upon whom all of the functions of the ministry are conferred, and that he really is entitled to all of the income of the *Pfarre* (parish). Besides him there can be no other pastor, but rather only assistants, deacons, etc., who really only carry out the functions that have been given to the pastor in his place. They are then salaried out of his income and stand under his supervision. The concept, *Pfarramt* (local pastorate), *Pfarrer* (pastor) is thus really monarchical.

Among us this concept has received a somewhat different connotation. But all of this only shows that it is an historical and not a Scriptural concept. It has, however, helped to lead to the false conceptions that only the

*Pfarrgemeinde*, local congregation, is Church in the real sense of the Word and that only this visible organization which is so constituted has the office (“Amt”) and can extend a divine call, whereas a synod cannot bestow a divine office of the Word, because it is not a local congregation or *Pfarrgemeinde*! This opinion rests upon the error that the Lord did not give all Church authority to the Communion of Saints as such, but rather to the local congregation because of a definite visible organization or quality. Our Confessions (especially in Melancthon’s *Tractatus*), Luther, and Walther (cp his fourth Thesis regarding the Church in *Church and Ministry*) so strongly warded off this error that it can only disturb the Church temporarily. Luther and Melancthon (*Tractatus*) have taken their definition of the visible church especially from Matthew 18:20: “Where two or three are gathered, etc.” and emphasized on the basis of this word that every gathering of Christians of only two or three has everything which Christ has won and given to the Church and so under certain conditions (if, thereby, good order and love are not transgressed) could also carry out the right of extending a call. The idea that a synod is not Church in the true sense of the word is an un-Scriptural and un-Lutheran illusion. All of the offices of the Word which are created by a Christian synod, no matter what they may be called, are of equal divine institution with those that are established by a local congregation.

We wish to cite here still another passage from Luther’s writing, *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers*, concerning the freedom of the forms of the public ministry. In this treatise he refers to the congregation in Corinth, which did not have our usual form of the pastoral office but rather carried out the public ministry in a way that this one or that one from among the large number of prophets that God had given the congregation would stand up and speak. Luther says: “Although this system has been lost that the prophets, or preachers, sit in the church and speak back and forth as St. Paul here says, nevertheless, a small trace and footprint of the same has remained, namely, that in the choir we sing responsively, and lections are read successively, and then everyone sings antiphonal hymns or responses. If one preacher would translate the lection of another, and still another would explain it or preach on it, this would be the right method of teaching in the Church, described here by Paul. For one would sing or read in tongues, another would prophesy or translate it, the third explain it, and another again would substantiate or improve it with passages and examples as St. James did, Acts 15, and Paul, Acts 13... That such a method should be re-instituted and the pulpit done away with is something that I would not advise, but rather help prevent. For the people today are too wild and impertinent so that a devil might fix himself in among the pastors, preachers, and chaplains, so that one would want to be above the other, and they would thus quarrel and attack one another before the people, and each would want to be the best. For this reason it is better to keep the pulpit, for in this way, as Paul here teaches, everything proceeds in good order. It is enough that in one parish the preachers preach on successive days or, if they wish, at different places, and that one explains afternoons or forenoons what the other has sung and read in the mass, as is done from time to time with the Gospel and the Epistle. For St. Paul does not insist so much upon this that one must observe such customs but, rather, insists upon this that things should be done in order and decently and gives examples of it. Now, because our way of doing things in preaching is more orderly for our mad people than the other, we should keep it. At the time of the Apostles such a custom of having ”seated“ prophets was a good thing to follow, for it was an old accustomed thing which was practiced daily among the well-trained people of the Levitical priesthood and had been observed since Moses, but it is not anything to bring into practice now among such wild, undisciplined and arrogant people” (St. L. 20, p. 1675, par. 24–28). Luther could not have expressed more clearly that he considered this form of the public preaching ministry established by Christ, commonly called the local pastorate among us, a form which is a human historical development. So far as we know, the congregation at Corinth had at that time neither bishop nor pastor, but a number of “seated” prophets, who carried out the office of the congregation in that they took turns speaking, and Paul does not insist that they must do away with the alternate speaking as something ungodly, but rather insists on this that within this way of doing things everything must proceed honorably and in order. Together with Luther we consider the office of local pastor to be a form which is “more orderly” for our people; but if anyone would force this upon us as a legalistic demand, then we would have to get rid of it and introduce the Corinthian form or some other in its place—that is, if God were to give us the necessary gifts for this—so that we would not become the servants of men and so that the freedom of the Gospel might be maintained among us.

These are in the main the new great thoughts with which Luther confronted the current Roman teaching of a visible outward Church and outward special priestly estate. In these there was a complete reversal, not only of the doctrine, but also of the outward Church organization. Where Luther's thoughts prevailed, there the papacy and the priestly estate collapsed with all of their tyranny. The new form of the Church had to proceed from the equal rights of all, from the spiritual priesthood, and from the necessity of administering the same publicly. Out of the autocracy a republic had to come forth.