

Martin Luther

Luther's Two Catechisms Explained By Himself

Translated by John Lenker

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Luther's Two Catechisms Explained By Himself

In Six Classic Writings

By Prof. John Nicholas Lenker, D.D.

TRANSLATOR; WITH THE HELP OF OTHERS

Minneapolis, Minn.
THE LUTHER PRESS
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Dedication

To parents and teachers, pastors and authors, Sunday schools and young peoples' societies, and all Protestants interested in developing a better system of Christian instruction, supplementary to that of the public schools, this volume is in love, faith and hope prayerfully
Dedicated.

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

Benediction

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this editor and publisher of Luther's works to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

JOHN NICHOLAS LENKER (1858-1929) was educated at Hamma Divinity School (Ohio Synod), and served pastorates in Grand Island, Nebraska, the General Synod's Board of Christian Extension, and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Before moving to Minneapolis he served as professor in the Trinity Seminary of the United Danish Ev. Luth Church. Prof. Lenker founded Luther Press which translated and published affordable, high quality editions of Luther's House and Church Postil sermons, copies of which are still used today.

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Please have patience with us when you come across typos. Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

Thoughts To Help Luther Into English.

IT WAS IN A UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (Erfurt, 1503) that Luther found the Bible, and he dedicated his life to the Bible (or Church), to the School and to the Library.

Examine your library and note what works of Luther you have in English and the date of their translation.

The name Martin Luther is a synonym for Protestantism; for Free Government; for Free Schools, and for Free Libraries.

We need more Lutherism in Lutheranism as well as in Protestantism. The Luther literature is the basis of Lutheran and Protestant literature. We should therefore build on the foundation already laid and not continually dig and dig to lay new foundations.

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[The above dated 1908.]

I. The Law, Faith and Prayer

The three principal parts of the catechism — the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer — held their own throughout the Middle Ages down to the time of the Reformation, as the basis of popular education in the Church. And Luther valued them so highly that he declared these three parts contained in clear and thorough exposition the substance of the Scriptures, all essential homiletic material, and the essentials of Christian knowledge. An explanation of them is found not only in this treatise of 1520, but also in the Small Catechism issued in 1529, for which these three parts form the basis. June, 1516, to Lent, 1517, Luther preached on the Ten Commandments, and during Lent of 1517, he explained the Lord's Prayer.

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 6, 104; Jena, 1, 244; Altenburg, 1, 395; Leipzig, 22, 29; Erlangen, 22, 3; Walch, 10, 182; St. Louis Walch, 10, 148; Kaiser edition, 7, 194.

I. The Ten Commandments.

Grace and peace to all my dear friends and brethren in Christ! Among the many injurious teachings and books by which Christians are misled and deceived, and through which a vast amount of unbelief has arisen, I consider not the least those little prayer books through which a great burden is foisted upon the simple-minded in the form of the confession and enumeration of sins, and much unchristian foolishness in the form of prayers to God and his saints. Indulgences and red titles are the means of puffing these works of high-sounding names. One is called "Hortulus Animae," or "The Little Garden of the Soul"; another, "Paradisus Animae," or "The Soul's Paradise"; and so forth. Such books stand in need of a most thorough revision, or perhaps they should be entirely destroyed. And this, I think, is true likewise of the passional and legendary books, in which we find many sections contributed by the devil.

But I have not the time for such work of revision, and it is too much for me alone. I shall be content, then, with such counsel as is here given until God shall give me time to do otherwise. I will begin with this simple Chris-

tian explanation, which is to be a mirror to enable us to see our sin, and to induce us to pray in harmony with the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

I am sure that a Christian has prayed sufficiently when he has rightly prayed the Lord's Prayer as often as he feels the need of prayer, the object of the prayer being what it may. For a good prayer does not consist in many words, but in the constant and earnest yearning of the soul for the Lord, as Christ teaches us in the sixth chapter of Matthew.

I herewith beg of everyone to put aside the Brigette prayers and all those which are embellished with indulgences, or promises, and to return to this common, simple Christian prayer. The more we practice it, the sweeter and the more delightful it becomes. To this may we be helped by the author of this prayer, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, blessed forever. Amen.

Foreword.

Not without God's special design has it been ordained that the common Christian man who cannot read the Scriptures shall be taught the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. In these three parts assuredly is comprehended everything that is found in the Scriptures, and all necessary material for preaching, as also everything that a Christian should know. And it is so clearly and amply and withal so concisely and intelligibly set forth that nobody can object or excuse himself on the ground that it is too hard to remember what is needful for his salvation.

There are three things which a man must know in order to be saved:

First, he must know what he is to do and what he is to avoid. Second, when he realizes that he cannot of his own power do what is required of him, nor refrain from that which is forbidden, he must know where he should seek and find the power necessary. In the third place, he must know how to seek and find it. The sick man is a case in point. If he would recover he must first know the nature of his illness, and also what he may do and what he may not do. Then he must know where the remedy is to be found that will enable him to do as a healthy man does. Lastly, he must desire, seek and secure that remedy. By a similar process the commandments teach a man to recognize his malady, so that he realizes and experiences what he can do and what he cannot do, what he can avoid and what he cannot avoid, with the result that he recognizes himself as a sinful and wicked man.

Then, secondly, the Creed offers grace as a remedy and he is enabled to be godly and keep the commandments. It reveals God and his mercy, made available and offered through Christ.

Thirdly, the Lord's Prayer teaches him how to desire and seek this grace, and shows how to secure it, by means of regular, humble and comforting prayer. Thus grace shall be given him and he shall be saved through the fulfillment of the commandments. These three things virtually comprise the entire Scriptures.

Accordingly we begin with the commandments, that they may teach us to recognize our sin and wickedness. This is the spiritual malady which prevents us doing, by commission and omission, as we ought.

The First Table of the Law.

The first and principal of Moses' two tables comprises the first three commandments, in which man is taught his duty to God both as to what he should do and what he should avoid. In other words, he is taught how to conduct himself toward God.

The first commandment teaches the right attitude of man's inmost heart toward God. Man's thoughts concerning God, his relations to him, and the reverence he should feel for him, are here set forth. He is taught to look to him for every blessing as to a father or a good friend; to show him fidelity, trust and love, with that constant fear which a child feels for its father, so that he may never be grieved. Even nature teaches us that there is a God who bestows every blessing and sends help in every trouble, which is also confirmed by the idolatry of the heathen. Accordingly we read: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The second commandment teaches that man, in his conversation before others, and in the attitude of his heart as well, is to show honor for the name of God. For no one is able to interpret the divine nature either to himself or to others except by the names of God. Accordingly we read: "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain."

The third commandment teaches man's duty to God as expressed in deeds — in the public service of God. We read: "Thou shalt sanctify the holy day."

These three commandments teach man his obligation to God in thought, word and deed — in his entire life.

The Second Table of the Law.

The second table of Moses comprises the other seven commandments, in which is taught what man is obliged to do and what to avoid in relation to his fellow men and his neighbors.

The first commandment of the second table tells us how we are to conduct ourselves with reference to God's representatives, namely, those in authority. For this reason it is joined immediately to those commandments which have reference to God himself. This commandment refers to father and mother, spiritual and temporal rulers, and others. It reads as follows: "Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother."

The second commandment prescribes man's attitude toward the person of his equal, or to his neighbor. We should not do him injury, but, as necessity requires, befriend and help him. It reads: "Thou shalt not kill."

The third commandment in this group sets forth our relation to that which, after his own person, is the most precious possession of our neighbor, namely, his spouse, child or friend. We are not to destroy their honor, but to safeguard it with all the power at our disposal. This commandment reads: "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

The fourth defines our duty to the temporal possessions of our neighbor. We are not to appropriate them nor to injure them; rather to protect them. It reads: "Thou shalt not steal."

The fifth sets forth our relation to our neighbor's good name and reputation. It should not be marred by us, but be enhanced, defended and safeguarded. It reads: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

We are forbidden, then, to injure any of our neighbor's possessions; and we are enjoined to promote them. The very law of nature convinces us of the justice and equity inherent in every one of these commandments. Not one duty toward God and our neighbor is enjoined here on the fulfillment of which every man would not insist were he God, or in the place of God or his neighbor.

The last two commandments set forth the corruption of our nature; they demand absolute freedom from covetousness and the lusts of the flesh. However, that means war for us and toil, as long as we live. These commandments are: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

A Brief Conclusion of the Ten Commandments.

Christ himself reduces the Ten Commandments to the precept: “All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them; for this is the law and the prophets,” Mt 7:12. No one desires ingratitude in return for his good deeds. No one will permit another to take liberties with his good name. No one desires to be a victim of another’s pride. No one is pleased with the disobedience, anger or unchastity of his spouse. No one desires to be deprived of his property; and everyone objects to being belied, defrauded and slandered. What everyone does demand, however, on the part of his neighbor is love, friendship, gratitude, kindness, truth and loyalty. And that is precisely what the Ten Commandments enjoin.

How The Ten Commandments Are Transgressed.

The First Commandment Transgressors:

He who seeks relief from trouble through sorcery, black art or through an alliance with the devil;

He who works charms through magic formulas, as signs, herbs, spells and incantations; he who handles the divining-rod, lifts treasure by enchantment, practices crystal-gazing or the use of the magic cloaks; also he who deprives cows of their milk by the use of magic;

He who orders his work and life according to lucky and unlucky days, celestial signs and the utterances of fortunetellers;

He who protects and charms himself, his beasts, his house, his children or any possession whatever against wolves, weapons, fire, water or injury of any kind by the use of prayers to which magical powers are attributed;

He who ascribes his troubles and adversities to the devil or to designing men, instead of receiving with love and praise all evil and all good as coming from God alone, and then making requital by showing gratitude and readier submission;

He who tempts God and rushes unnecessarily into peril of body or soul;

He who prides himself upon his godliness, wisdom or other spiritual gifts;

He who honors God and the saints merely for the sake of temporal advantage, forgetting the needs of the soul;

He who does not unfalteringly trust in God nor in all his undertakings put his confidence in divine mercy;

He whose faith wavers, or who doubts God's mercy; He who does not, to the best of his ability, seek to safeguard others against unbelief and doubt, or to help them to attain faith and trust in God's grace.

Every species of unbelief, despair and misbelief belongs to this category of sins.

The Second Commandment Transgressors:

He who swears unnecessarily or frivolously;

He who takes a false oath or breaks his vow;

He who vows or swears to do something wrong;

He who curses by the name of God;

He who indulges in silly talk concerning God or recklessly perverts the words of Scripture;

He who fails to call upon the name of God in the time of trouble and to praise him in evil days and in good days, in adversity and in prosperity;

He who seeks glory, honor and fame through his piety, wisdom or other endowments;

He who engages in a false worship of God, as is done by the heretics and all vain-glorious saints;

He who does not praise the name of the Lord regardless of what comes to pass;

He who does not oppose others who abuse and revile the name of God or use it for evil ends.

The Third Commandment Transgressors:

He who makes the Lord's day an occasion for gluttony, carousing, gambling, dancing, lounging about or whoring;

He who is given to idleness and he who sleeps when he should be at divine service; also he who gads about or gossips instead of attending worship;

He who works or trades without necessity;

He who does not pray and meditate upon the sufferings of Christ, nor repent of his sin and plead for grace, celebrating the day solely by dressing, eating and a formal observance;

He who amid his toils and tribulations is not resigned to the dispensations of Providence;

He who is rather a help than an obstacle to others in living contrary to this commandment.

Also sluggishness in matters pertaining to God*s service comes under this head.

The Fourth Commandment Transgressors:

He who is ashamed of his parents because of their poverty, their infirmity or their humble station;

He who does not supply them with the necessary food and clothing;

Even more grossly disobeys he who curses, strikes, slanders, hates them or refuses to obey;

He who does not reverence them in his heart as God commands;

He who does not honor them even when they act unjustly or harshly;

He who does not give heed to the commandments of the Christian Church in reference to fasts, holy days and other things;

He who fails to respect, slanders or grieves the office of the ministry;

He who does not honor, follow and obey his master or ruler, whether he be good or bad;

Among such transgressors are found all heretics, rebels, apostates, fugitives from justice, the obdurate and others. They transgress it who fail either to promote respect for it or to oppose its enemies.

All pride and disobedience are condemned here.

The Fifth Commandment Transgressors:

He who provokes his neighbor to anger;

He who says “Raca” to his neighbor, which implies all manner of anger and hatred;

He who says “Fatue” — “thou fool.” To this category belong all utterances directed against the neighbor which imply contumely, profane invective, abuse, slander, the imputation of evil motives, the sitting in judgment upon others, ridicule and the like.

He who criticizes the sins and infirmities of a neighbor instead of covering and excusing them;

He who does not forgive an enemy, nor pray for him, befriend and help him.

Here are to be mentioned all sins of anger and hatred, such as murder, war, pillage, arson, strife, contention, envy, malicious joy at the sufferings of others.

Furthermore, he transgresses this commandment who is averse to works of mercy, even though this spirit is manifested only against an enemy;

He who sets people by the ears and stirs up trouble;

He who creates discord among people;

He who does not seek to reconcile those who are estranged;

He who does not oppose and prevent passion and contention wherever possible.

The Sixth Commandment Transgressors:

He who ruins a virgin, commits adultery, incest or any unchaste act;

He who is guilty of the monosexual crime or of any of the nameless crimes against nature;

He who by impure conversation, songs, stories or pictures incites and evinces evil lust;

He who arouses his passions and pollutes himself by unlawful objects of vision or touch, by thought or suggestion.

He who fails to remove the causes of the evil under consideration: intemperate eating and drinking, sluggishness, aversion to work, late rising and undue familiarity between man and woman;

The person who arouses the passions of others by lewd dress or gestures;

He who acts as accessory for others by offering the use of his house or by furnishing shelter, help and opportunity to commit this sin;

He who does not, in word and deed, safeguard the chastity of others.

The Seventh Commandment Transgressors:

He who is a thief, a robber, a miser or a usurer;

He who employs false weights and measures, or misrepresents his goods;

He who acquires a legacy, and he who levies taxes by unrighteous methods.

He who withholds from the laborer his hire, and he who repudiates his debt;

He who refuses to lend a neighbor when he is in need, or exacts interest from such a one;

He who is guilty of avarice and eager for wealth; he who refuses to surrender the property of others, or receives stolen goods;

He who does not seek to avert injury from others;

He who does not warn others against injury;

He who deprives his neighbor of his legitimate profit;

He who looks upon his neighbor's success with envy.

The Eighth Commandment Transgressors:

He who conceals and suppresses the truth before a tribunal of justice;

He who compasses another man's injury by falsehood and deception.

Here belong the vicious flatterers, tale-bearers and the double-faced;

Also those who search the righteous life, deeds and words of a neighbor for occasion to misrepresent and slander him;

He who gives ear to evil tongues and encourages rather than opposes them;

He who does not employ his tongue to protect the good name of his neighbor;

He who does not rebuke the slanderer;

He who does not make it his rule to speak well of everybody and to conceal what is evil;

He who fails to champion the truth but suppresses it.

The Last Two Commandments

are not an element of confession, but the aim and ideal we are to reach, and toward which we are to strive by the help and power of God. For concupis-
cence will not be entirely dead until the flesh has been ground to dust and a
new creation experienced.

The five senses receive attention in the fifth and the sixth command-
ments.

The works of mercy, of which we distinguish six kinds, are found in the
fifth and the seventh commandments.

Of the seven mortal sins, pride is treated in the first and the second; unchastity in the sixth; anger and hatred in the fifth; gluttony in the sixth; laziness in the third and probably in all the others.

The sin of complicity is condemned in every commandment, inasmuch as by directing, advising and abetting others, every commandment may be violated.

The crying and the nameless sins are comprehended in the fifth, the sixth and the seventh commandments.

All doings of this character evince grossest love of self, which seeks its own, takes from God and the neighbor what is theirs, while its possessions, its nature and its powers redound neither to the benefit of God nor to that of men- Augustine may well say, Self-love is the beginning of all sin.

From all this it follows that the commandments enjoin nothing but love, and all they prohibit is love. Only love fulfills the commandments, and only love transgresses them. For this reason Paul says, Love is the fulfilling of every commandment. With equal truth may it be said that a wicked love is the cause of every transgression of a commandment.

The Fulfillment Of The Ten Commandments.

Of the First: The fear and love of God joined to the right faith; absolute reliance upon God in all undertakings; the maintenance of a spirit of perfect resignation whether what betides is good or ill.

All that the Scriptures teach concerning faith, hope and the fear of God is here found in rudimentary form.

Of the Second: Praise, honor, blessing and worship of God's name with absolute abasement of one's own name and honor, only so God is glorified, who is everything and from whom everything comes.

All that the Scriptures teach concerning God's glory and honor, concerning the gratitude which is his due, concerning the name of God and our joy in the Scriptures, pertains to this commandment.

Of the Third: Turning to God and seeking his grace, which is done by prayer, attention to the Sacrament and the Gospel, and meditation upon the passion of Christ. Thus a spiritual preparation for the Sacrament becomes possible; for this commandment requires a soul that is poor in spirit and brings its poverty before God as its sacrifice. Thus he becomes its God, and

his works and name take shape in the soul, as the first two commandments direct.

The requirements of this commandment embrace the whole of our duty in regard to the service of God, the preaching of the Word, good works and the relative importance of soul and body, so that all our works may be God's and not our own.

Of the Fourth: Cheerful obedience, humility, submission to all authority for the sake of God without gainsaying, murmuring and complaint, as the apostle Peter teaches.

All that is taught in reference to patience, meekness, submissiveness and reverence, pertains to this commandment.

Of the Fifth: Patience, meekness, kindness, love of peace, and always and everywhere a sweet and gracious heart which is free from hatred, passion and bitterness against any person whatever, not even enemies excepted.

All that is taught concerning patience, meekness, peace and concord pertains to this commandment.

Of the Sixth: Chastity, self-restraint, the manifestation of modesty in works and words, in thoughts and features, moderation in eating, drinking, in sleep and everything else that conduces to chastity.

To this commandment pertains all that is taught concerning chastity, fasting, sobriety, temperance, prayerfulness, vigilance, industry and all things that tend to purity.

Of the Seventh: Poverty of spirit, charity, willingness to lend and to give, a life free from avarice and greed.

To this commandment pertains all that is taught concerning avarice, unrighteous gain, usury, tricks of trade, fraud and any act whereby loss is caused to others or their welfare menaced.

Of the Eighth: A peaceable, benignant tongue which hurts no one and benefits everyone, which reconciles adversaries, excuses and defends the maligned, in short, a conversation informed by truth and free from subtlety.

Under this head belongs all that is taught concerning our duty to speak or to be silent when the honor of God, the rights, the cause and the salvation of our neighbor are at stake.

Of the Last Two: These enjoin absolute purity and an utter contempt for worldly pleasures and possessions. The perfect fulfillment of their requirements is possible only in the life to come.

All works performed in obedience to these commandments are inspired by love for others, a love which goes beyond self and embraces God and the neighbor. It does not seek its own interests, but those of God and the neighbor, freely offering itself to the service of everybody according to his need and pleasure.

It is evident, then, that in these commandments comprehensive and systematic information is given concerning all duties connected with man's life. An endeavor to perform them would mean to be occupied hour by hour with good works. This would render the performance of other, self-chosen, works and the running hither and thither in search of self-imposed tasks altogether superfluous.

All this is demonstrated by the fact that in these commandments no instruction is given in reference to what man is to do or to abstain from for his own advantage, and in reference to his claims upon others. The instruction given is limited to his obligation, both negative and positive, in relation to God and his neighbor. Thus we cannot but understand that the fulfillment of these commandments does not stand in the love of self, but in the love of others. Man inclines of his own accord to have his own advantage in view in what he does, in what he avoids, in what he plans. That man lives the best life who lives not for himself; that man lives the worst life who lives for himself. Such is the teaching of the Ten Commandments, and in the light of this teaching it is seen how few there are who live as they ought. Yea, it is impossible for any man to live as he ought. Therefore, it behooves us to learn in the next place where the strength for a good life and for the fulfillment of these commandments is to be found.

II. The Apostles' Creed.

Jesus.

The Creed is divided into three parts, treating respectively of the three persons of the Holy Trinity: the first, of the Father; the second, of the Son; the third, of the Holy Spirit. The Creed contains the most important articles of faith. All other articles of belief depend upon them.

Observe that there are two ways of believing. In the first place, I may have a faith concerning God. This is the case when I hold to be true what is

said concerning God. Such faith is on the same level with the assent I give to the statements concerning the Turk, the devil and hell. A faith of this kind should rather be called knowledge or information than faith.

In the second place, there is faith in God. Such faith is mine when I not only hold to be true what is said concerning God, but when I put my trust in him in such a way as to enter into personal relations with him, believing firmly that I shall find him to be and to do as I have been taught. Not in the Turk do I believe thus, nor in any other man, however highly he may be praised. I may be readily induced to believe a man's piety, but that is no reason why I should build upon him. Such faith, which ventures everything upon what it has heard concerning God, be it life or death, constitutes the Christian man, and it receives everything of God it desires. Such a faith can not tolerate a false and wicked heart; it is a living faith, such as the first commandment enjoins, which says: I am thy God; thou shalt have no other gods. The word "in" is well chosen and deserving of due attention. We do not say, I believe God the Father, or. Concerning God the Father; but, In God the Father, In Jesus Christ, In the Holy Spirit. Such faith no one may claim but God alone, and it is a confession of the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit that we believe in these as we believe in the Father. And inasmuch as the faith in one person of the Trinity is identical with that in the other two, it follows that the three persons are one God.

The First Article Of The Creed.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

This means that I renounce the evil spirit, all idolatry, all witchcraft, all false faith.

I place my confidence in no human being upon earth, nor even in myself, nor in my power, art, possessions, piety or anything I may have.

I put my trust in no creature, be it in heaven or upon earth.

I venture to put my trust in the one God, who has created heaven and earth and is above all creatures, although absolutely beyond my sight and ken; and, further, I am not dismayed by all the wickedness of the devil and his associates, for my God is above them all.

Though I should be forsaken and persecuted by all men, nevertheless I shall believe in God.

Although I may be poor and humble, unlearned and despised, ay, bereft of everything, I shall believe none the less in God.

I believe, even though I am a sinner; for far above all things that are and that are not — above all sin, all virtue, above all things, soars my faith, abiding in God pure and unsullied, as the first commandment enjoins upon me.

Nor will I tempt him by asking a sign of him.

No matter how long he tarries, I will trust in him. I will prescribe no bounds for him as to purpose, time, measure and method; in sincere and upright faith I leave all things to his divine will.

Since he is almighty, what can I lack that he is unable to give or perform?

Since he is the Creator of heaven and earth and Lord of all things, who will deprive me of anything or harm me? Indeed, how can all things fail to serve my welfare since I enjoy his favor, and all things are under his authority and control?

Being God, he possesses both the power and the wisdom to secure my highest welfare; being Father, he will surely do that which is best, and delight in doing so.

Inasmuch as I doubt none of these things, and put my trust in him, I am sure of being his child, servant and heir forever; and I shall receive even according to my faith.

The Second Article Of The Creed.

“I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.”

This means: I believe not only that Jesus Christ is eternal and divine by nature, being begotten in eternity as God’s true and only Son, but also that he has received power over all things from the Father in that, according to his human nature, he has been appointed lord over myself and all creatures which, according to his divine nature, he has created with the Father.

I confess that no one can believe in the Father and find access to him through science, works, reason or anything that may be named in heaven and upon earth, except in and through Jesus Christ, his Son — through faith in his name and dominion.

“Conceived by the Holy Spirit.”

I believe firmly that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit for my good, without the agency of man or of the flesh; without a natural father, or seed: and that he was so conceived for the purpose of purifying and making spiritual, through his and the almighty Father's gracious will, the sinful, carnal, impure and damnable conception of all those that believe in him.

“Born of the Virgin Mary.”

I believe that he was born for me from Mary the pure virgin, without defilement of her bodily and spiritual virginity, to the end that he, according to the Father's merciful purpose, might render blessed, harmless and pure my birth, through which I became subject to sin and condemnation.

“Suffered under Pontius Pilate.”

I believe that he has borne his sufferings and cross for my sins and the sins of all believers, whereby he has blessed every tribulation and every cross, thus rendering them beneficial and profitable.

“Was crucified, dead and buried.”

I believe that he suffered death and burial in order to destroy and to bury my sins and those of all believers; and that thereby temporal death has been rendered harmless, profitable and salutary.

“He descended into hell.”

I believe that he descended into hell in order to quench and to crush for my good and that of all believers, the devil and all his might, wiles and wickedness, thus breaking his power henceforth to harm me; and I believe that he has redeemed me from the torments of hell, rendering them harmless and profitable for me.

“The third day he rose again from the dead.”

I believe that on the third day he rose from the dead in order to give me and all believers newness of life, thus awakening me by his grace and Spirit to a life in which I ever shun what is sinful and serve him in every grace and every virtue.

“He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty.”

I believe that he ascended into heaven and has received from the Father power and honor above all angels and creatures; that he accordingly sits at the right hand of God; that is, that he is king and lord over all that belongs to God, whether it be in heaven, in hell or on earth. For this reason he can help me and all believers in every need, in defiance of all our adversaries and enemies.

“From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”

Thence, from heaven, he shall return on the last day, to judge the living that shall then be found on the earth, and the dead who meanwhile have passed away; I believe that all men, all angels and devils shall be haled before his judgment-seat and behold him face to face; and I believe that he shall deliver my body and those of all believers from death and every infirmity, that he shall mete out eternal punishment to our foes and adversaries and deliver us from their power forever.

The Third Article Of The Creed.

“I believe in the Holy Spirit.”

That is, I not only believe that the Holy Spirit, in his union with the Father and the Son, is truly God; I also believe that the coming to the Father through Christ, his life, passion and death, and whatever is related thereto, is rendered possible and obtained only through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Through Christ and in Christ, I am moved, aroused, invited and drawn to God. But the power through which this is done is the Holy Spirit, who restores me to life, holiness and a spiritual existence. Thus he brings me to the Father; for he is the power by which the Father, through and in Christ, works, and gives life.

“The holy Christian Church.”

I believe that there exists on earth, throughout the entire world, but one holy universal Christian church, which is nothing else than the communion of saints — of the righteous and believing people on earth. And it is gathered, preserved and governed by the Holy Spirit, and daily increased by means of the Sacraments and the Word of God.

I believe that no one can be saved unless he is found in this communion, is in hearty fellowship with her and makes her faith, her Word, her Sacrament, her love, his own. I believe that no Jew, no heretic, no heathen or any of her adversaries can find salvation unless he has been reconciled and restored to fellowship and concord with this Church in all things.

“The communion of saints.”

I believe that in this Christian communion all things are in common, and that no one has exclusive possession of his own. For this reason I, and every believer, must be benefited, succored and strengthened by the prayers and

good works of the entire communion at all times, in life and in death. Thus each bears the burdens of the other, as Saint Paul teaches in Galatians 6:2.

“The forgiveness of sins.”

I believe that in this communion, but nowhere else, there is forgiveness of sin; that outside her pale there is no provision for the forgiveness of sin, however numerous and conspicuous good works may be; that the number, the greatness and the frequency of sins within her pale cannot override the provision existing for forgiveness as long as this one communion abides. To her Christ gives the keys, saying: “What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” Mt 18:18. The same in substance is said by Christ to Peter, an individual, as the representative of each true church, “Whatsoever thou shalt bind,” etc. Mt. 16:19.

“The resurrection of the body.”

I believe that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, when, through the same Holy Spirit, there shall be an awakening of all flesh. I believe that all mankind, both the good and the wicked, shall arise in the body; that the very flesh which has died and been buried, which has perished and in many ways been destroyed, shall return and be made alive.

“And the life everlasting.”

I believe that the resurrection shall be succeeded by an everlasting life on the part of believers, and an everlasting death on the part of sinners.

“Amen.”

And in no way do I doubt that the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, and the power of the Holy Spirit, will cause me to experience all these things. This is what is meant by the word “Amen,” which signifies that these things are certain and shall surely come to pass.

III. The Lord’s Prayer.

The Cry of Faith: “Our Father Who art in Heaven.” The Meaning: O Almighty God, through thine endless mercy thou hast permitted us to come to thee, commanding and teaching us, through thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, that we, through his merits and mediatorship, shall call and look upon thee as Father; although thou canst, in all justice, be a severe judge over us sinners, who have sinned so much and so grievously against thy holy and most precious will and have called forth thine anger.

But because of these thy mercies we pray that thou wilt, through the same grace, put into our hearts the comforting assurance of thy paternal love, and permit us to taste the sweetness of that childlike assurance which joyfully calls thee “Father,” and loves thee and calls upon thee in every time of trouble. Guard us that we may remain thy children, and permit not our guilt to change thee, most loving Father, into a terrible judge, and ourselves, thy children, into thy enemies.

Thou desirest us to call thee not only “Father,” but also “Our Father,” and thus in brotherly unity to pray for all thy children. Therefore, give us unity and brotherly love, that we may recognize each other as true brothers and sisters, and pray to thee as our common and dear Father for each of the brotherhood of mankind, as one child pleads with its father in behalf of the other.

Let none among us seek at thy throne his own advantage and forget his neighbor’s good. May we lay aside all hatred, envy and contentions and live with each other as true and righteous children of God, so that in this fellowship we may be able to say not merely “My Father,” but “Our Father.”

Thou art not an earthly father to us, one who is in this world. Thou art in heaven, a spiritual Father. Thou canst never die. Thou art never perplexed and helpless, as is our father according to the flesh here below. Thou dost thus show us that thou art an immeasurably better father, thus teaching us to despise, in comparison with thee, earthly fatherhood, homeland, friends, possessions and whatever is flesh and blood.

Grant us, then, O Father, that we likewise may be thy heavenly children. Teach us to care only for our souls and our heavenly inheritance. May we not become children of this world in that our earthly homeland and inheritance deceive, infatuate or hinder us. Thus shall we be able in truth to say: “Our heavenly Father.” Then shall we truly be thy heavenly children.

The First Petition: “Hallowed be Thy Name.”

The Meaning: O Almighty God, dear heavenly Father, we deplore the fact that thy holy name is often profaned, blasphemed and dishonored in this wretched vale of tears. It is put to many uses where thy honor has no part. It is abused in many ways in sin. A shameless life is truly a disgrace and a dishonor to thy holy name.

Bestow upon us, then, thy divine grace, that we may guard against all things which do not tend to the honor and praise of thy holy name. Grant that all witchcraft and false blessings may be put away. Grant that thy name may cease to be used to conjure the devil's or any creature's help. Grant that all unbelief and superstition may be rooted out; that heresy and false doctrine parading in thy name may come to naught. Grant that falsehood, when decked as truth, piety or holiness, may deceive no one.

Grant that none may curse, lie or deceive by thy name. Protect us against false comfort devised in thy name. Protect us against all spiritual pride and the empty honor of earthly glory and fame. Teach us, in our every need and affliction, to call upon thy holy name. Teach us, in the anguish of conscience and in the hour of death, not to forget thy name. Grant that all our possessions, words and deeds may be used alone to thy praise and honor. May we use none of these things for ourselves; for they all are thine. Guard us against the shameful vice of ingratitude.

Grant that through our good works and life all others may be induced to praise, not us, but thee in us, and to honor thy name. Grant that our evil deeds or infirmities may cause no one to take offense, to the dishonor of thy name or to the neglect of thy praise. Let us desire nothing, either for time or for eternity, which is not consistent with the praise and glory of thy name; and if we should pray for these things, then heed not our folly. Grant that our lives may be such as to prove that we are the true children of God, so that thy fatherly name may not be falsely or in vain proclaimed to us. Amen.

All psalms and prayers to God's praise, all songs of thanksgiving and the entire Hallelujah are forms of this petition.

The Second Petition: "Thy Kingdom Come."

The Meaning; This wretched life is a kingdom of all sin and wickedness. Its master is the evil spirit, the source and chief contriver of every kind of wickedness and sin. But thy kingdom is a kingdom of all grace and of all virtues. The Lord Jesus Christ, thy dear Son, in whom is found, and by whom is given, every grace and virtue, is its ruler. Grant us, then, above all things a true and abiding faith in Christ and an unshaken hope in thy mercy, so that we may overcome the dread of our sinful consciences. Work in us a

devoted love for thee and for all men. Guard us against unbelief and despair, and against being possessed of envy.

Protect us against the filthy desires of unchastity, and help us to preserve the virginity and purity of our souls and bodies. Deliver us from contentions, from war and discord, and grant us the blessings of thy kingdom: peace, concord and unbroken quiet. May, by thy help, neither anger nor any other kind of bitterness cause the downfall of this kingdom within us, but may, through thy grace, unmixed sweetness and brotherly devotion, kindness, moderation and meekness rule in us. Let not our hearts be surcharged with grief and sorrow, but let joy and pleasure in thy grace fill our souls.

Finally, grant us deliverance from all sin; may we, strong in thy grace, in virtue and good works, become thy kingdom; thus shall our hearts, minds and thoughts, and all our powers, inwardly and outwardly, most humbly submit to thy commandments, and do thy will; and, being governed by thee alone, we shall cease following the flesh, the world and the devil.

Cause thy kingdom which has begun in us to grow, and daily to strengthen its hold upon us, to the end that we may be safe from the deceptions of wickedness, from indifference to thy service and from backsliding. Grant that we may be influenced by the serious purpose not only to make a start in godliness, but to persevere therein, and to attain its consummation, as the prophet has said: "Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; lest mine adversaries rejoice when I am moved." Ps 13:3 ff.

Grant that we may remain steadfast, and that thy kingdom which is to come may perfect and complete thy kingdom here begun in us. Deliver us from this sinful life, so full of perils. Arouse in us the longing for the life to come and scorn for the life that now is. Help us not to fear death, but to welcome it. Release us from the fetters and love which bind us to the present life, that we may realize the fulness of thy kingdom.

The psalms, hymns and prayers in which we ask God for grace and virtue may be classed with this petition.

The Third Petition: "Thy Will be Done, as in Heaven, so on Earth."

The Meaning: Our will as opposed to thy will is never good. It is at all times wicked. Thy will is always the best. It is to be loved and to be desired

above all things. Therefore, have mercy upon us, O loving Father, and never give us our will in anything. Grant and teach us perfect and complete patience when our will is defeated or hindered. When one crosses our will by anything that he may say or leave unsaid, by anything that he may do or leave undone, help us not to become enraged and angered, and, in that state of mind, to curse, complain, scold, judge, condemn or strive. When our will is opposed or hindered by others, may we, by thy help, humbly yield to them, and, instead of resisting them, praise, bless and favor them as those who carry out thy divine will over against our own.

Give us grace cheerfully to bear disease, poverty, reproach, suffering and adversity, and help us to recognize that these things are sent because it is thy divine will that we therein crucify our own will. Make us willing to endure injustice, and restrain us from taking vengeance. Suffer us not to repay evil with evil, to oppose violence with violence, but rather to find our pleasure in thy will which sends the trials, and thus praise and thank thee. Let us not place that which befalls us contrary to thy will at the door of Satan or wicked men, but recognize in it thy divine will which directs all things for the purpose of increasing our happiness in thy kingdom by hindering our will.

Grant that we may willingly and cheerfully enter into death, accepting it as thy will; so that we may not disobey thee by impatience and despair. Restrain the desire of our members — our eyes, our tongues, our hearts, our hands and feet. Suffer them not to have their own will. Make them subject to thy will, firmly held and subdued therein. Protect us against all wicked, rebellious, hard-hearted, stiff-necked and stubborn self-will.

Give us true obedience, perfect and unquestioning submission in all things, spiritual and terrestrial, eternal and temporal. Preserve us from the abominable vices of backbiting, slandering, gossiping, unmercifully judging, condemning others, or striving with them. Save us from the calamity and the evil of such a tongue. When we see or hear anything on the part of others which arouses our censure or indignation, teach us to be silent, to cover it, to bring our complaints before thee alone and to leave everything to thy will, thus manifesting forgiveness and sympathy toward those who sin against us.

Teach us that no one can harm us without harming himself at the same time a thousand times more in thy sight. Thus may we be rather moved to mercy than to anger; to pity than to resentment. Help us not to rejoice at the

misfortune of those who do not as we approve or who have done us harm, or have, by something in their lives, given us displeasure. Help us, on the other hand, never to begrudge them success.

Under this petition may be classed those psalms and prayers in which we ask help against the secret sins and enemies in our hearts.

The Fourth Petition: “Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread.”

The Meaning: This bread is our Lord Jesus Christ, who feeds and comforts our souls. Therefore, O heavenly Father, grant us thy grace that the life of Christ, his Word, work and passion may be proclaimed to us and all the world; yea, that we and all the world may appropriate and ever keep these blessings. Let his Word and work be throughout our lives a powerful example and a mirror of all virtues. Grant that in suffering and adversity we may find strength and comfort in his suffering and cross. Through his death may we in firm faith vanquish our death and thus fearlessly follow our beloved leader into the life beyond.

Grant that by thy grace all preachers may proclaim Christ and thy Word with power and blessing in all the world. Enable all hearers of thy Word to learn to know Christ and truly thereby to amend their lives. Graciously expel from thy holy Church every alien message and doctrine in which Christ is not taught. Show thy mercy to all bishops, priests, ministers and rulers, that they, enlightened by thy grace, may rightly instruct and guide us by word and example. And should the example of any ruler be evil, safeguard those of weak faith against offense.

Protect us from heretical and apostate teachers, so that the bread of the unalloyed doctrine and Word of Christ may be preserved to us. May we, by thy grace, rightly contemplate the sufferings of Christ, lay hold of them in sincerity, and experience their blessing in our lives. Let us not be deprived, in our last hour, of the blessings of Christ’s death. Grant that all pastors may administer the blessed Sacraments worthily, to the end that all Christendom may grow stronger thereby. Grant that we and all Christians, when our time has come, may, by thy grace, receive the holy Sacrament unto salvation. And, finally, give us our daily bread, that Christ may remain in us and we in him, and that the name “Christians,” which we have received from him, may not be borne by us to our shame.

Under this petition come all prayers or psalms uttered in behalf of rulers, and especially those asking deliverance from false teachers, Jews, heretics and any who err in teaching of any kind; and also those uttered in behalf of the troubled and disconsolate.

The Fifth Petition: “And Forgive Us Our Debts, as We also Have Forgiven Our Debtors.”

The Meaning: To this petition the condition is attached that we are first to forgive our debtors. When we have done this, then we can say, “Forgive us our debts.” Above, in the third petition, we prayed that God’s will be done; for it is his purpose that we should suffer all things patiently, not return evil for evil, nor seek to avenge ourselves, but should return good for evil after the manner of our Father in heaven, who causes his sun to rise over the good and the wicked and sends his rain upon those who thank him and those who do not. Mt 5:45. Hence we pray thus: O Father, now and in our last hour give comfort to our consciences, dismayed as they are and shall be by our sins and by thy judgment. Grant to our hearts thy peace; so shall we await thy judgment with joy. Do not judge us with severity, for in thy judgment no man shall be justified. Ps 143:2. Teach us, dear Father, not to trust in ourselves nor to seek comfort in ourselves by looking to our own work or merit, but in sincerity and with firm resolve to consign ourselves to thy mercy and to build upon that alone. Likewise, let us not despair on account of our blameworthy, sinful life; let us value thy mercy as higher, wider and stronger than all our life.

Help all men who are in mortal danger and in the distress of despair, especially our particular friend N. or N. Forgive them and us all our debts; comfort them and let them be acceptable unto thee according to thy mercy.

Return thy grace for our wickedness, as thou hast commanded us to do. Now and in our last hour, and in all anguish of conscience, silence the evil spirit, our vile slanderer, accuser and exaggerator of our sins. Likewise, we shall give due heed lest we slander others and exaggerate their sins. Do not judge us according to the accusations of the devil and of a wretched conscience. Do not listen to the voice of our accusers, who accuse us before thee day and night, as we shall not listen to those who slander and accuse others.

Relieve us from the heavy burden of sin and an evil conscience; so, trusting in thy mercy, we shall live and die, suffer and labor, with light and joyful hearts.

Under this petition come all psalms, hymns and prayers in which we appeal to God for mercy upon our sins.

The Sixth Petition: “And Bring Us Not into Temptation.”

The Meaning: There is a three-fold source of temptation, or trial; the flesh, the world, the devil. For this reason we pray: Dear Father, grant us grace that we may conquer the lusts of our flesh. Help us in our efforts to exercise moderation in reference to eating and drinking, and also in the enjoyment of sleep, leisure and diversion. Help us to train and discipline the flesh for good works through fasting, moderation in food, dress and recreation, by industry, by watching and prayer. The evil propensity of the flesh toward unchastity, all its desires and promptings may we destroy, nailing them to the cross with Christ; so we shall withstand and spurn its temptation. When we behold beauty in the shape of a human form, of a painting or of any creature whatever, may we not experience temptation, but make use of the occasion to prize purity and to behold thy praise in thy creatures. When anything sweet comes to our ears, or anything pleasant to our senses, may we see therein not the opportunity of desire, but an occasion of singing thy praise and glory.

Protect us against the great evil of avarice and against the desire for the riches of this world. Save us from seeking worldly honor and power, yea, from the very desire for them. May the world’s duplicity, her false show and blandishments, never beguile us. May the troubles and adversities in the world not provoke us to impatience, revenge, anger or other faults. Let us, by thy aid, renounce and forsake the lies and deceptions of the world, her promises, her falseness, her good things and evil things; let us do this with a determination that shall grow stronger day by day.

Guard us against all suggestions of the devil, that we may not despise thee by pride, self-complacency or like faults, in consequence of wealth, noble descent, accomplishments, personal beauty or other blessings which thou hast bestowed. Let us not, from any cause whatever, fall victims to hate and envy. And, when our faith is tried, now and in our last hour, let us not fall into despair.

We commend to thee, heavenly Father, all those who struggle against temptation, no matter in what form it makes its assault. Come to the rescue of those who are still standing. Raise once more those prostrate from their fall. Grant us thy grace, that in this wretched and uncertain life, in which numerous foes ceaselessly surround us, we may bravely fight, nerved by a strong, valiant faith, and thus obtain the eternal crown.

The Seventh Petition: “But Deliver Us from Evil.”

The Meaning: This petition is first of all an entreaty for deliverance from evil in the form of pain or penalty. The holy Church voices it in her litanies: Deliver us, O Father, from thine eternal wrath and the torments of hell. In death and on the last day, deliver us from the severity of thy judgment. From a cruel, sudden death, deliver us. Protect us against flood and fire, lightning and hail. Protect us against famine and want. Protect us against war and bloodshed, against plague and pestilence; against the French and all other evils protect us. Protect us against all bodily ills and distress whenever such favor accords with the honor of thy name, the growth of thy kingdom and with thy divine will.

“Amen.”

Grant us, O God, the sure fulfillment of all our petitions. Permit us not to doubt that thou hast heard us and shalt hear us again, since our petitions are yea with thee, and not nay or uncertain. Therefore we say cheerfully, Amen; this is true and certain: Amen.

2. The Three Universal Creeds

These confessions of the universal Christian Church Luther translated into the German language and explained them for the purpose of proving that he belonged to the true and not to a false church. The Nicene Creed he placed at the end and the other three at the beginning of this treatise. Four editions were printed at Wittenberg in 1538.

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 6:122; Jena, 6:572; Altenburg, 6:1255; Leipzig, 22:102; Erlangen, 23:250; Walch, 10:1195; St. Louis Walch, 10:992.

ALTHOUGH I HAVE, in previous writings on the subject of faith, described at length both its nature and its power, and have not failed to make known my faith and the position I intend to maintain, the devil continues to seek new intrigues against me. For this reason I have decided, as a matter of supererogation, to issue conjointly the three Symbols, or Creeds, which have been received, read and chanted throughout the Church. I do this for the purpose of affirming once more that I am at one with the true Christian Church which has maintained these Symbols, or Confessions, to this day, and not with the false, vainglorious church, which is the worst enemy of the true Church, having added to such beautiful confessions any amount of idolatry. Likewise, Israel joined in olden times to the beautiful, divinely-instituted worship in the temple a great amount of idolatrous worship, conducted in valleys, upon mountains and in groves. Notwithstanding it claimed to be the true people of God, a claim which did not prevent them from killing and persecuting the prophets, and finally even Christ the Lord himself.

The first Symbol, that of the apostles, is clearly entitled to precedence. Briefly and concisely it gives expression to the elements of the Christian faith, for which reason children and the uninstructed can apprehend it with ease.

The second, the Athanasian Creed, is longer. On account of the Arians, it gives particular prominence to the article on Jesus Christ, and shows that he is the only Son of God and our Lord, who claims the same faith from us as

the Father in accordance with the words of the first Symbol: I believe in God... and in Jesus.

This is the truth which St. Athanasius deals with and establishes in his Symbol, which is to all intents and purposes an apology of the first Creed.

The third Symbol is ascribed to Augustine and Ambrose and is said to have been chanted after St. Augustine's baptism. Be that as it may, it hurts no one to believe it; in either case it is a splendid Symbol or Confession, regardless of its author. Its form is that of a chant, whereby it is adapted not only to the purpose of a confession of the true faith, but also to that of praising and thanking God.

May no one judge me too severely for rendering the words "increated, immensus" by "uncreated, infinite" (ungeschaffen, unermesslich). I was quite aware that in our language such words seem inelegant. This is true especially of the meaning which our highlanders attach to the term "ungeschaffen." But necessity compelled the adoption of such terms; and the fact that such words as "ungeschaffen" may have been misused, shall not divert me from my purpose. Whoever can do better may try his hand; let him see whether he can escape the censor and critic.

The First Creed Or Confession

Is that general confession of the apostles in which is laid down the foundation of the Christian faith. It is:

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Christian Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Second Creed Or Confession

Is called the Creed of Athanasius, because it was drawn up by him to oppose the Arian heretics. It is:

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the true Christian faith.

Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.

And the true Christian faith is this: that we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity.

Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit.

But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.

The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

The Father incomprehensible¹ the Son incomprehensible and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.

The Father eternal, the Son eternal and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three Eternals, but one Eternal.

As also there are not three incomprehensibles nor three uncreated;² but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty and the Holy Spirit almighty.

And yet they are not three Almighty's, but one Almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God.

And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord and the Holy Spirit is Lord.

And yet not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by the Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord,

So are we forbidden by the true Christian religion to say there be three Gods, or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten.

The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in the Trinity none is before or after the other; none is greater or less than another.

But the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal:

So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the unity in trinity, and the trinity in unity, is to be worshiped.

He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.

Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man.

God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world;

Perfect God and perfect Man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.

Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood.

Who, although he be God and man, yet he is not two, but one Christ.

One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God.

One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of person.

For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead.

He ascended into heaven; he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty; from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works.

And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire.

This is the true Christian faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

The Third Creed Or Confession,

Which is ascribed to Ambrose and Augustine, is that well-known hymn, "Te Deum."

We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

All the earth doth worship thee, the Father everlasting.

To thee all angels cry aloud; the heavens, and all the powers therein.

To thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry.

Holy, holy, holy. Lord God of Sabaoth;

Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles praise thee.

The goodly fellowship of the Prophets praise thee.

The noble army of Martyrs praise thee.

The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee;

The Father of an infinite Majesty.

Thine adorable, true and only Son;

Also the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.

When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man, thou didst humble thyself to be born of a Virgin.

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father.

We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge.

We therefore pray thee. Help thy servants whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage.

Govern them and lift them up for ever.

Day by day we magnify thee.

And we worship thy name ever, world without end.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.

O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us.

O Lord, let thy mercy be upon us, as our trust is in thee.

O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded.

1. The Central Article

The history of the Church Universal has confirmed in me the conviction that those who have had and maintained the central article in its integrity, that of Jesus Christ, have remained safely entrenched in their Christian faith.

They may, in other matters, not have been free from error and sin, — they were finally preserved, nevertheless. He who steadfastly holds to the doctrine that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, who died and rose again for us, will acquiesce in and heartily assent to all the other articles of the Christian faith. Paul's saying in Ephesians 1:22, is true — that Christ is the chief treasure, the basis, the foundation, the sum total, to whom all are drawn and under whom all are gathered. And in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Col 2:3. Christ himself says in John 15:5: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." And in Luke 11:23: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." It is decreed, says Paul (Col 2:9), that in Christ Jesus should dwell all the fullness of the Godhead bodily or personally. So, he who does not find or receive God in Christ will never find him. He will not find God outside of Christ, even should he mount up above the heavens or

descend below hell itself, or go beyond the limits of the world. God declares that here, in Christ's human nature, which he assumed through his birth of the Virgin Mary, shall be his dwelling-place. If thou believest this, it is well for thee; but if not, do what thou wilt, thine unbelief shall change nothing in this respect, and Christ with his believers will be quite safe from thee; as he has been safe all this time from the very powers of the devil and the world.

2. All Errors Arise From A Disregard Of This Article

On the other hand, I have also observed that all errors, heresies, idolatries, offenses, abuses and ungodliness in the Church have arisen primarily because this article, or part, of the Christian faith concerning Jesus Christ, has been either disregarded or abandoned. Clearly and rightly viewed, it is plain that all heresies militate against this precious article concerning Jesus Christ. Simeon says of Christ in Luke 2:34, that he is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and for a sign which is spoken against. And Isaiah (8:14) long before preached Christ as "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." He who takes offense will surely be offended at this stone, which, as Christ himself testifies in Psalm 118:22, lies in the way of everyone and is rejected of the builders. Also John in his epistle (2 Jn 7) gives no other nor surer sign by which to identify false and antichristian spirits than denial of Jesus Christ. All these have attempted to gain honor for themselves from coping with Christ, and shame is what they have reaped.

3. Attack on Christ's Divinity

Some have attacked Christ's divinity. They have led the attack in various ways. To some he is no more than any other man, and in no sense God. Others have identified him with the Father, holding that the Father suffered for us. There have been those who believed that he may be called God in view of his superiority to all angels, and of the fact that all creatures came into being through him; denying, however, that in essence, nature and eternal existence he is divine equally with the Father.

It is passing strange how those wiseacres have racked their heads in the attempt to obviate the necessity of believing in Christ as God, endeavoring to make reason the rule, measure and master both of this article and the Scriptures. The article, however, has stood immovable, while they all have perished. It is true, however, that the devil has always sowed his seed in the hearts of his children, the unbelievers, until finally Mohammed came, who led the whole eastern world away from Christ.

4. Attack on Christ's Humanity

Others have made his humanity the object of their attack, and wonderful are their performances. The Manicheans claimed that a shadow passed through Mary like a specter, which possesses neither a true body nor a true soul. Others taught that Christ was without soul, and that the Deity controlled his body in the place of the soul. Still others maintain that he was not Mary's true son according to the process of nature. And the Jews lay claim to special wisdom for contending that he was begotten by Joseph, some among them upholding their views with arguments of unutterable turpitude. These whittle the matter down to a fine point when they argue the impossibility of three persons existing in the Godhead. The three cannot be brothers or kinsmen, they say, and on no other known ground can they be reckoned as equal persons. What acute people who would make the nature of mortal men or of dogs the standard by which they judge the inscrutable, eternal nature of God. The gist of the matter is that the devil's rage never ceases where the love of Christ is preached in harmony with the Apostles' Creed, namely, that he, true God and true man, died for us and rose again; that Christ is the seed of the woman, who bruises the serpent's head and into whose heel the serpent in turn thrusts his venomous fang. Hence enmity continues until the final judgment.

5. Christ's Resurrection

And what have we under the papacy served up, the greatest and most recent saints? We have confessed that Christ is God and man. But that he as our Saviour died and rose from the dead for us — this and like truths we have

denied and opposed with all our might; and we have not ceased to deny them unto this day. Some have taught that Christ died only for original sin, leaving us to make satisfaction for other sins ourselves. Others have affirmed that if we sin after baptism Christ will be of no benefit to us after that. Thus have been invented intercession of saints, pilgrimages, purgatory, masses, monasteries and numberless similar enormities, in the endeavor to reconcile Christ; as if he were not already our mediator before God, but rather our judge. And today they who aspire to be the best Christians and who boast the name of the Church, make a practice of burning at the stake their fellow men and bathing themselves in innocent blood, claiming that to be true doctrine which teaches grace and salvation through man's own works. Thus we ascribe to Christ only the honor of instituting the work of salvation. We are the heroes who complete it with glory to ourselves. Christ died for us, it is admitted, to begin the work and to effect the forgiveness of sins, but we are able to effect salvation by our works.

6. This Is The Devil's Way

Such is the way the devil does his work. In three storm-columns he makes attack upon Christ. The first storms his divinity, the second his humanity, the third his work. Each of the three endeavors to destroy Christ. What avails it to confess that Christ is God if one does not believe him to be man? Such partial faith has not the whole true Christ but a phantom of the devil. What avails it to confess Christ is man if one believes not he is God. What advantage to confess Christ both God and man if one does not further believe that he has become and done everything for us? Just so they performed a fruitless task who confessed that Christ died for them, etc., and yet did not believe him God, as the Arians; or did not believe him man, as the Manicheans. Truly, all three truths must be believed; that he is God, that he is man, and that he became man for us, as the Apostles' Creed teaches, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, was crucified, died, rose again, etc. If a single one of the constituent parts be lacking, the others also must fall. The faith must be completely rounded out. It may be feeble and subject to trial, but it must exist in its integrity, without admixture of falsehood. Feebleness of faith is not the source of ruin, but to have a false faith — that is eternal death.

7. Those Who Refuse to Believe

The third column is likely to send forth many who refuse to believe the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and his sitting on the right hand of God, and those other declarations of our Creed which follow. That means to knock the bottom out of the barrel and to wind up the game in a grand finish, indeed. For thereby Christ sinks out of sight; and the world will despise the future life when Christ is despised. He who does not hope for a future life has as little need of Christ as the animals have need of paradise, since Christ's kingdom necessarily is not upon earth. He himself confesses before Pilate, in John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world," etc. This false faith originated at Rome in the pope's court, and the same leaven has leavened all the spiritual orders from the cardinals down to the altarists. Romanists indeed say that Christ is God and man, and that he suffered; they even denounce the old heretics; all this is the source of their income, honor and power. But the utter lack of faith in the resurrection and eternal life proves that they are not sincere.

8. Epicureans

Such individuals were by the heathen called Epicureans. The poets consider them swine and so term them. The same kind of saints Christ found among his people when he came upon earth, and he called them in the Gospel "Sadducees." Much more will he find the world filled with them when he comes again from heaven. They will not be sleek, tame swine, but wholly wild ones, who shall not only despise God, but also be utterly devoid of reason and humanity. He shall come at midnight when the darkness shall have attained its blackest hue and men's wickedness its utmost height— signs characteristic of the end of the world. Thus he came in the flood, thus he came upon Egypt, thus upon Babylon.

9. Confusing the Gospel With The Errors of the Church

There are despicable malcontents who mockingly upbraid the holy Christian Church on account of the strife, the sects, the errors, the heresies and the offenses to be found therein, as if the failure of the Church of Christ to be united and harmonious rendered the doctrine of the Gospel false and vicious. Very wise and wonderful people are these who would teach the Holy Spirit how to rule his Church. Yes, my friend, if the devil were not always eager to fasten his teeth into the heel of Christ or were compelled to desist, such a tranquil, harmonious Church would be easily forthcoming. But since he is Christ's enemy, provoking war, sects and disorder incessantly, great injustice is done the dear Church when the blame for such discord and confusion is laid at her door; for it is plain that she is not the author of them, but the victim. Why are we Christians not also blamed for the unrest and bloodshed between us Germans and the Turks?

The proverb says that one can keep peace no longer than his neighbor is willing. The dear Church cannot be at peace so long as she refuses to listen to the enemy of her Lord Jesus Christ. What else is she to do? The heel-biter, the devil, will not rest nor permit the bruiser of his head to have peace. Likewise the head-bruiser, our Lord, will never tolerate this heel-biter. Just deem yourself wise and play the role of censor in this quarrel! What will you effect?

You will fare like the man who wants to separate those who have come to blows. Christ will condemn you, and the devil will tear you to pieces. Hence let the matter go! Do not get pinched between the hinge and the door; you will be able to please neither Christ nor Belial. The sworn enmity between them is extreme; the one must finally succumb and the other triumph. This is the only alternative possible.

10. The Supposed Peace Under the Papacy

There was indeed remarkable peace and quiet under the Papacy when there was beautiful harmony of doctrine, but now the complaint is, so many sects and contending spirits having arisen, the people are utterly confused and harmony is impossible. In God's name, who is restraining another? Who asks you to stay? Stay with the pope or return to him! Our doctrine has not arisen through you; and we shall, God willing, be able to get along without you. Christ himself declares in Luke 11:21-22 that where he is not, there the

devil is quiet and leaves the people in peace. Christ says: “When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him,” there is no doubt that peace is at an end. A tumult ensues until he is conquered, when he must surrender his armor and spoil.

11. The Idolatry Before Christ

Before Christ came, the world was as full of idolatrous practices as a dog of fleas on St. John’s day. Every place swarmed and teemed with idols. No devil cast out another, none stood upon another’s head, none fastened his fangs in another’s heel. The peace and fellowship among them was altogether perfect. The Romans gathered idols from every part of the world and built a church, calling it the Pantheon, the church of all the gods; for the worldly-wise lords desired to have all the gods in their city. But when the true God, Jesus Christ, came they would not tolerate him. Is it not a remarkable thing to welcome all the other gods and exclude and persecute just this one? Those gods are quiet and at peace among themselves, but with the advent of this one the play begins and discord arises; all the gods rage and with them their servants, the Romans. These put to death apostles, martyrs and all who call upon the name of Christ.

The other gods receive no injury from them but only honor and homage.

12. If Christ Had Been a Devil, He Would Have Been Widely Adored

Had Christ been a devil as the other gods, how gladly and gloriously would they have permitted him equal welcome and adoration! But now that they rage and foam against him, they confess him necessarily to be the true and the only God, who bruises their heads and storms their palaces, conquers their armies and distributes their treasure. They groan and bite his heel; they blame him for disturbing the peace of Rome and of the whole world, and think to do God a great service when they oppose him with their relentless persecutions and bloodshed. Yes, to be sure, if we do the devil’s bidding

and dismiss Christ, we have perfect peace with the former. He will permit all kinds of idolatry and error, but this, his head-bruise, he cannot tolerate.

13. Fanatics and Sects Under the Papacy and Heathendom

Likewise, under the Papacy the world was as full of fanatics and sects as in the past when the heathen ruled. The orders, institutions, churches, pilgrimages, brotherhoods, etc., instituted were innumerable. All these enjoyed peace among themselves and increased daily. None devoured another, although some were at loggerheads with each other. The pope confirmed them all, and they must be called the holy orders, the holy estates, the holy pillars, the holy lights of Christendom. But now comes the Gospel, proclaiming that the whole kingdom of Christ constitutes one universal order, one body in Christ, without sects; for here, says Paul (Gal 3:28), there is no Jew, no Greek, no barbarian, no Carthusian, etc., but all are one, and in one, Christ. Thereupon the holy orders rage and foam against this one order of Christ. But that is a confession that they are the church of sectaries and the order of the devil, and that the only true order is that established by Christ.

14. If The Reformation Had Been Like These

Had we instituted an order like theirs it would never have been called an innovation. The pope would have at once ratified it, and his other orders would have given it joyful and honorable welcome and promoted its interests alongside of their own in perfect quietness and peace. But since we give praise to Christ's universal order as the highest and holiest, yea, the only true holy order, we tread upon the serpent's head. That situation he cannot endure. He endeavors to bruise Christ's heel, crying out, through the holy fathers among his sects, that we disturb the peace and provoke trouble and rebellion. Yes, to be sure! had we been ready to renounce the universal order of Christ and to consult the pleasure of the king of rats and of sects in what we teach, and that of his parties, we should have maintained peace with honor.

15. Peace and Quiet Is The Worst State for The Church

Saint Bernard says, on Isaiah 38:17, “Behold, it was for my peace that I had great bitterness.” “Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.” The Church is never in a worse state than when it has peace and quiet, and it is anything but a good sign when Christians are not at war with the devil, the heel-biter; for it indicates that the latter has peace and his way. But rage and restlessness on the part of the heel-biter shows that Christ is storming his palace and defeat is imminent. Therefore, he who will not see and recognize the Christian Church, except where the cross, heresies and parties are never found, but tranquil peace ever, shall never see it or mistakes the false church of the devil for the true Church. Christ declares: “It must needs be that occasions of stumbling come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh,” Mt 18:7. And Paul says: “For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you,” 1 Cor 11:19.

Indeed, if the Church is to be always without disturbance, we must do away with the Lord’s Prayer, in which we pray that his name be hallowed, his kingdom come, his will be done, and that we be not led into temptation, etc. When blasphemous doctrine is no longer palmed off under God’s name, then it is time to cease praying: “Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,” etc.

16. People Refuse to Listen

But such people refuse to listen. They continue to fret and persist in the effort to create a church after their own hearts, peaceable and tranquil. And God, in turn, does not consult their fretful moods. He lets them fret and continues to build the Church according to his own design, until their church suffers complete destruction, and no window remains nor stone nor mortar. This is the experience the Jews had with their temple in Jerusalem. Hence the Lord’s Prayer of the hypocrites must run: Thy name has already been hallowed; thy kingdom has come; thy will is done. In other words: We are holy and perfect; we need no longer forgiveness of sin and protection from

temptation. Their church must be free from sects, offenses and discord. There must be no serpent in their paradise and the devil must find access barred to the children of God. Job 1:6. Such persons are left to wander according to the darkness of their own hearts, as Psalm 81:12, declares. We will now return to our Creeds and not digress from our subject.

17. Christians are Not Fools For Believing The Trinity

We Christians are not so utterly devoid of common sense and altogether without reason as the Jews think. Considering us fools for being unable to see the impossibility of God being man, and the existence of three distinct persons in the unity of the Godhead, they put us upon the same mental plane with geese and ducks. No, God be praised, we clearly perceive such doctrine to be beyond the reason of man. No acute Jewish intellects are needed to demonstrate that to us; with full knowledge we consent to such assertion. Upon the strength of our own experience we confess that wherever the light of reason is not supplemented by that of the Holy Spirit, it will be impossible to apprehend, believe and maintain this article of faith. In the absence of such clearer light, reason is bound to be the proud, supercilious specimen exhibited by the Jews when they make this article of faith an object of mirth and ridicule. Although it has never beheld the divine Being and is unable to behold him; although it is incapable of understanding that upon which it passes judgment and with which it deals in thought and word— for “God dwells in light unapproachable” (1 Tim 6:16), and must come to us, though as light concealed in a lantern; and “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son of the Father he hath declared him” (John 1:18); and as Moses said long ago: “Man shall not see me and live” (Ex 33:20) — still such reason dares to sit in judgment upon Deity.

18. Scripture Defense of the Trinity

Let us, then, cite passages of Scripture to confirm this article, especially that part of it where Athanasius distinguishes the three persons in the Godhead, thus; “The Father is made of none; neither created nor begotten. The Son is

of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.” The Scriptures describe the Son as begotten of the Father. “Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” Ps 2:7. And Christ describes the Holy Spirit thus: “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me,” Jn 15:26. This Scripture testifies that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent by the Son. He who is sent also proceeds. Now, as the Son is begotten of the Father and yet does not leave the Godhead, but remains in the one same Godhead with the Father and is one God with him, so also does the Holy Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son by whom he is sent; yet he does not leave the Godhead, but remains with the Father and the Son in the same Godhead, and with them both is one God.

19. The Birth of Christ Differs From Every Other Human Birth

For this reason, the birth of Christ is vastly different from the birth of any human being, and no human being proceeds after the manner of the Holy Spirit. A man, born of another human being, not only becomes a separate person from his father but also a distinct individual in respect of substance. His substance does not remain merged in that of the father, nor does the father's remain merged in that of the son. In this case, however, the Son becomes a distinct person by birth; notwithstanding his substance remains identical with that of the Father and that of the Father with the Son's. Distinct as to person, they are inseparable and indissoluble as to substance.

Similarly, when one man proceeds from the other and is sent forth by him, there is a separation not only of the persons but also of their substance. The Holy Spirit, however, proceeds from the Father and the Son, and he is also sent by the Father and the Son, and assumes a distinct personality of his own; yet he remains merged in the substance of the Father and the Son, and the Father and the Son remain merged in the substance of the Holy Spirit. In other words: All three persons remain in the unity of the same Godhead.

20. The Godhead Was Not Relinquished in Christ's Birth

Accordingly, theologians term such nativity of the Son an immanent (Innebleibend) nativity, for the combined reasons that thereby the Godhead is not relinquished, that it comes from the Father alone, and that immanence in the Godhead is maintained. Likewise, the procession of the Holy Spirit is termed an immanent procession in that it does not issue from the Godhead as such but from the Father and the Son alone and implies immanence in the Godhead. Such a relation is altogether a matter of faith. Even the angels, who unceasingly behold it with joy, cannot fathom it. The attempts of men in this direction have resulted in their complete discomfiture. It is enough to know that in faith we are able to catch a glimpse of three distinct persons; that the Father is begotten of no one, that the Son is begotten of the Father and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. By “proceeding” is meant a “sending,” as an ambassador is sent; just as the birth of the Son means a being born, as a son is born of a father.

21. The Distinction Between The Son and the Holy Ghost is Maintained

The distinction between the Son and the Holy Spirit is also maintained and expressed in their names whenever they reveal themselves apart from the Godhead through creatures. The Son is born also bodily of his mother, and in this connection birth and sonship are predicated of him, likewise, though he is the Son of God in the one birth as much as in the other. The Holy Spirit, also, proceeds bodily, for instance, in the form of a dove, of fiery tongues, of a mighty wind. In this connection, likewise, it is predicated of him that he goes forth and is sent, but either procession is that of the Holy Spirit, not that of the Father or of the Son.

22. Harmony With The Nature of Things

Therefore it is altogether in harmony with the nature of things that the second person of the Godhead, born before in eternity and therefore Son, should also undergo a bodily birth and become a son, and that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit should be born bodily and become a son. Likewise, that the Holy Spirit should proceed bodily who proceeded before in eternity, but was not born and is not Son. The Father, then, is self-existent, while the divine majesty is shared by all three persons. Let it be understood, however, that the Son has once received his divine nature from the Father through his eternal immanent birth, and not through that which followed; that the Holy Spirit has received his divine nature from the Father and the Son through his eternal, immanent procession. Thus the Son reveals his eternal birth through the bodily birth, and the Holy Spirit his eternal procession through his bodily procession. The inner substance of each is reflected in a corresponding outward symbol, or image.

23. These Distinctions In The Three Persons Warranted

These are the distinctions in the three persons of the Godhead which are warranted by the Scriptures. 'Whoever so desires may indulge in further reflections upon the subject, but he is not likely to find other distinctions belonging to the sphere of certainty. For this reason let us cling in singleness of heart to those we know and be content with them until we shall arrive where these things are no longer a matter of faith based upon what we hear but of knowledge based upon sight.

The Epistle to the Hebrews also finely illustrates the distinction between the Father and the Son in the words: "Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance," Heb 1:3. But this one passage does not cover all the facts; it does not show the second person in the Godhead as a Son and as born, although it very beautifully expresses the fact that this second person is one divine substance with the first person and not a creature distinct and separate. The passage is doubtless meant as an illustration borrowed from the sun and its effulgence. Nearly all the great scholars of the Church have compared the Father to the sun, Christ to its effulgence and the Holy Spirit to its heat. In order that the plain Christian might have a simple, tangible and visible object lesson to aid him in apprehending

this article of faith, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews uses the words; “Christ is an effulgence of the Father’s glory.” The Scriptures ascribe no other origin to created light than its coming out of the darkness, that is, out of nothing. Genesis 1:2-3, says that when darkness was upon the waters there sprang light out of the darkness, or out of nothing, through a divine utterance. Also Paul (2 Cor 4:6) declares: “It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness.” Therefore light is, as it were, a certain effulgence or glow, out of darkness, for the darkness bodied forth the light through God’s Word; but darkness itself is nothing.

Here, however, it is said that Christ is an effulgence — not from darkness, since it is not darkness that has given him forth; nor does he shine forth from nothingness; he shines forth and glows from the very glory of the Father, namely, from his inner divine substance and nature. Thus the origin of this effulgence, or light, is the divine substance itself. Accordingly, Christ cannot possibly be a creature; for of no creature do the Scriptures declare that it is the effulgence of the divine nature and glory.

24. Effulgence

The word effulgence implies that Christ is truly God, begotten of the Father; for effulgence here means the divine majesty and glory itself. But the effulgence, or brightness, of the divine majesty and glory is nothing less than actual divinity. If Christ were not the effulgence of the undivided majesty but merely of a part, he could not be the effulgence of divine glory. God’s glory and majesty are an indivisible unity and must be Christ’s wholly or not at all. Now, if Christ be the effulgence of the divine glory, or nature, he is, of necessity, the effulgence of the undivided divine nature, and in glory or divinity equal to the Father, being like him in all respects. Not from nothingness, not out of darkness like other created beings, did he rise, but out of the true, eternal substance of the Father. It follows, then, of necessity, that he is truly and essentially God, one with the Father, instead of being outside of and apart from God, like the other and created beings. These words, then, teach most powerfully that Christ is one God with the Father and in all respects like him. And there is no exception but this, that he has his being from the Father, and not the Father from him. For the efful-

gence derives its being from the glory of the divine nature, and not conversely.

25.

25. So, in the next clause of the verse, “and the very image of his substance (person),” is most effectually proven that Christ must be truly and essentially God, but that, notwithstanding this fact, there are not many gods, but only one God. Nowadays we call that an image (contrafei) which is a perfect likeness of what it represents. But all likenesses are deficient in one point: their substance is not the same as that which they represent, but different. The painter, engraver or sculptor may produce on canvas, in wood or stone, a likeness of a prince, king or ordinary man, so faithfully perfect as to compel all admiring beholders to exclaim, Behold, that is King, Prince or Mr. So and So. While such a production is an image or facsimile of a king, prince or ordinary man, it is not the substance of the person so represented; it is merely a common picture, outline or counterpart of him. Its true substance is altogether different for its nature or substance is respectively that of stone, wood, canvas or paper. He who views or handles it does not view or handle the substance, nature or essence of a man, and everyone will agree: This is a facsimile of wood, stone or canvas, but it is not alive and its essence is not human. For its nature is that of wood, stone, canvas; it possesses nothing of the substance of a king, prince or ordinary man. Hence it cannot be, in name or in reality, the image of a man’s nature. Though it be, in name and in reality, the image or facsimile of a man, it cannot be the image of his essence, or nature; nor has it been produced, or bodied forth, by his nature. Hence it is and must remain the mere picture of a man, its nature, or essence, being altogether different from the person.

26. Christ Is The Image Of The Father’s Substance

But when Christ is called the image of the Father it is in a different sense. His nature being the same as the Father's, he is the image of his substance. He is the divine image which has come forth from God and has divinity in itself and of itself. A crucifix is termed a wooden image of Christ inasmuch as it is composed of wood, and every man and angel has been created a divine image, but none of these is the image of God's nature, or substance — none of them is constituted of divine substance, nor has any of them been bodied forth from the same. But Christ has his origin in the divine nature from eternity; he images the divine substance, an image which is not artificial; neither is it made nor created. It bears within itself the complete divine nature, and is itself divine. It is not made or created of anything else, just as the divine essence itself is not made or created of anything else. If Christ did not bear in himself the undivided divinity of the Father; were he not himself God in every respect, he could not be the image of his substance nor could he be so termed. In that case, there would be something in the Father in which the Son would not share; hence there would be some point in which the Son would be dissimilar to and unlike the Father. In consequence, he would, in the last analysis, be totally unlike the Father and be anything but the image of his substance. For the divine Being is the absolute Being and indivisible. In consequence, wherever there is Deity it must be there in an absolute sense or it is not Deity.

27. The Father and the Son Are Two Distinct Persons And One Inseparable Substance

These two words, “image” and “substance,” declare the Father and the Son to be two distinct persons but one inseparable substance. The word “image” shows that the Son is not the Father, but the image of the Father, and a distinct person. The words “of his substance” indicate that in essence he is not distinct from the Father, but in the one same Godhead and of the same substance with the Father. Thus he is the very image of the Father's substance; not made, without beginning in time, begotten and existing from eternity; even as the divine essence was not made nor began to exist, but existed from eternity. If Christ, according to the divine substance, had had a beginning, even before time itself, he could not be the image of the divine substance. The divine substance, in that case, would have been there before

Christ from all eternity, and, therefore, to be like it, or to be its image, would have been an impossibility. The divine substance is eternal, but whatever has a beginning of existence is temporal. Now, the temporal and the eternal infinitely differ and the one cannot be the very image of the other; much less is it possible for the one to be the very image of the other's substance.

28. Jesus Christ Is Eternal God

The conclusion from this passage of the Hebrews and its ultimate meaning is, that Jesus Christ is truly and essentially God eternal; not made, not created, but existing, assuming personality, or whatever expression we may choose, from eternity. While, as a person, he is distinct from the Father, he is not distinct from the Father as God, but equal to him in the one eternal, divine essence. This is the faith; this is its teaching; here it takes its stand. Of course, I speak of the Christian faith, which is founded upon Scripture. He who refuses to believe Scripture and prefers to race after reason, let him have his way. But if he is still amenable to counsel, he will follow the example of Abraham and leave the ass and the servants at the foot of the mountain; for Moses says: "Whoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death." The issue is: "Believe or perish." This Abraham first experienced, and likewise all since his day.

29. The Prophets of the Old Testament Clearly Understood and Believed

The prophets of the Old Testament believed and clearly understood this article of faith. Because of the obstinate, unbelieving, wicked people, they did not declare it so clearly as the New Testament does, yet they set it forth quite forcibly. Moses, the first prophet, begins his writings, "In the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth," Gen 1:1. The word "Elohim" has evidently the significance of the plural, and hence signifies more than one person. Strictly according to grammar, the passage should be rendered: In the beginning "the Gods" created the heavens and the earth. The fact that the verb is not in the plural but in the singular, also clearly

demonstrates that there is only one God and Creator, while the plural of the noun (Elohim) points to a larger number than one in the divine essence. Thus our faith is maintained, according to which we believe in the one eternal God alone; but notwithstanding Moses would have us learn that the one Deity is more than one person. Henceforth God is termed throughout Scripture “Elohim,” which expresses a plurality of persons. This name was later given to creatures who sit in God’s place, as in Exodus 22:20; and in Psalm 82:1: “God standeth in the congregation of God; he judgeth among the gods;” again, verse 6: “I said, Ye are gods.”

30. “We Will Make Man”

Again, in the same first book of the Bible, chapter one, verse twenty-six, we read: “And God said. Let us [we will] make man in our image, after our likeness.” Here God designates himself by “we” and “us.” He does not say, “I will make,” as if he were only one, in the way he ordinarily speaks, and as he does shortly after in Genesis 2:18, where he says, “I will make him [man] a help meet for him.” There he does not say, “We will make him a help meet for him.” And again, verse 21: “Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man,” etc. The Scriptures thus continually speak of God as one being, who creates, makes, and does all things unaided; and yet they also speak of him in the plural sense. When referring to himself God says “we” and “our,” in connection with the creation of man, etc. He would show believers that there is only one God, but in that one Godhead a plurality of persons. Further, in Genesis 3:22, after Adam’s fall, Jehovah God said, speaking as one alone: “The man is become as one of us;” “us” designating a plurality.

31. God Was Not Talking With The Angels

As to the malicious contention of the Jews that God was talking with the angels when he said, “Let us make man in our image,” it is absurd and to no purpose. The Scriptures nowhere support the view of the angels having created us and of their being our gods; or that we were made in their image; or that we should adore and worship them as gods, or be called their creatures.

There is only one God and one Creator. Still more absurd is their strained effort to maintain the figment that because we were made from the earth, God spoke to the earth when he said, “Let us make man.” No, O blind Jews, the earth did not make us. It is written, “we will make man;” and surely we have not been made in the image of the earth, for the earth is subjected to the service of man.

32. It’s Not the “Royal We”

Finding themselves convicted by such texts, the Jews go to still greater lengths and contend that God uses the plural in speaking of himself to convey the thought of honor, as sovereigns today refer to themselves by the pronouns “we” and “us.” But this is a modern way of speaking and was never used in the Scriptures by any king, nor has it been employed by heathen kings. It is true, however, that, speaking of himself, God uses at times the personal pronoun in the singular, referring to himself as “I” instead of “We.” Now, even if such nonsensical and silly usages as the Plural of Majesty finds favor among men, should I believe the Jews when they affirm that this is the sense of Scripture in respect of God? Having before my eyes Scripture passages so strong, and words so clear and plain, as to hold my conscience captive, so that I should be compelled to resist even an angel from heaven — should I relinquish the impregnable text of Scripture and let my heart and conscience lean upon mere Jewish babbling, and this in view of the fact that Moses himself charges them with having been from the beginning throughout their career a disobedient, stiff-necked and wicked people, always averse to hearing and heeding their rightful prophets? Should they now teach me to acknowledge them and to interpret the Scriptures and the prophets according to their vagaries? But more of this at another time, for it is my purpose to show the difference between our faith and Jewish folly, if it be God*s will. Some of them may possibly be won. Here I must break off, for the present, to turn my attention to the subject of the Council at which the pope has exhibited his lies to a sufficient extent to defeat it. Just now, I shall confine myself to the mere groundwork and outline of the matter as a precaution against forgetting it.

33. The Appearance Before Abraham

Moses writes in Genesis 18:1-4: “And Jehovah appeared unto Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood over against him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let now a little water be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.”

The conversation between God and Abraham on this occasion is characterized by the use of the pronoun in both the singular and the plural. Abraham addresses God as “thou” and as “you,” implying both one and several. And the text clearly states that this appearance, or manifestation, was God himself, appearing at his gate. The two angels who afterward go to Sodom, as described in the nineteenth chapter, are by no means identical with these Three who speak and eat with Abraham as one God. All the mental gymnastics of the Jews are quite unavailing in the premises. The text of Scripture points out that the Lord appeared to him as three persons and received homage from him as one God. It is quite evident that Abraham recognized the Holy Trinity; for Christ states: “Abraham saw my day,” John 8:56.

34. Deuteronomy 6:4. “The Shema”

Again, Moses writes: “Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God [Gods] is one Jehovah,” Deut 6:4. This, too, is a perfectly clear text; the one Jehovah — ^which name in the Scriptures is given to no one, as the Jews well know, except to the one true God — is “our Elohim,” or Gods. Here God is proven one God in substance and yet three distinct persons, as stated. “And Joshua said unto the people. Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God [Gods],” Josh 24:19. Here is written not merely Elohim (Gods), but also “holy” (heilige); the plural adjective signifies more than one, and yet Joshua speaks of Jehovah the one God. And David in his prayer to God (2 Sam 7:23) makes plain the same thing: “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem unto himself for a people?” etc. Here David calls God “Gods” and says “they went,” meaning more than one. In the text immediately following he adds “to redeem unto himself for a people,” implying that it was one who went to redeem to himself a people out of Egypt. Again, in Genesis 19:24: “Then Jehovah rained

upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Jehovah out of heaven.” And Zechariah 3:2: “And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan.” In these quotations Jehovah is raining from Jehovah, and Jehovah is speaking of Jehovah; always one and yet several. Based upon these passages is David’s fearless prophecy: “Jehovah saith unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand,” Ps 110:1. Again: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee,” Ps 2:7. He does not say, This day have I created thee. And there are many passages in Isaiah and the other prophets where Christ’s kingdom is described as identical with God’s kingdom.

35. Text and Scripture Cannot Be Overthrown

That the Jews pervert and refuse to heed these Scripture passages, showing a spirit of incomprehensible virulence, is absolutely without significance. Their attempts at refutation are mere fancies of their own, conceived without regard for Scripture whatsoever, and merely for the purpose of evasion. But here stand text and Scripture; they cannot be overthrown by the fancies of men. When the Jews exhibit their highest wisdom they teach the doctrine of only one God; the Turks teach likewise. But we confess and teach the very same doctrine; yea, as firmly and persistently as they. No Christian confesses otherwise; he knows no other than the one God, the only Creator of the heavens and the earth. What can the Jews teach that surpasses this doctrine, or what more can they expect from us? Here is written our Christian faith: There is but one God; besides him there is no other God; all others are creatures and not Gods.

36. Christians Are Accused of Believing In More Than One God

Why is it that both Jews and Turks, either in great malice or in dense ignorance, charge us Christians with being believers in more than one God? They surely ought to know that they tell these manifest and shameless lies merely for the purpose of treacherously and venomously maligning us before their hearers, thus confirming them in their error and discrediting the

truth we teach. God, in his wrath, has stricken them with blindness, and their sin is without repentance.

37. The Doctrine of the Trinity is Not Made Up

In order to become better grounded in knowledge and faith as regards the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead, ourselves and they ought to unite in the study of the Scriptures. We have not invented this doctrine nor could we have done so. The Scriptures have left no choice in the matter, especially the New Testament, which they refuse to believe, though it is rooted and proclaimed in the Old. Just now, we have no time to prove this matter, however. Believing that God is three persons, is in no wise doing violence to the one true God, so long as we believe that these three persons are one God. The oneness of God, the one Godhead, remains inviolate.

38. Reason Claims Only One Person Constitutes the Godhead

To be so proud and presumptuous as to conclude under the influence of reason that but one person constitutes the Godhead, though this matter is beyond our vision and that of all men; and to form such a conclusion in spite of the testimony of Scripture that there are three persons in the one Godhead — what uncouth louts are we to prize our poor, blind reason more highly than the testimony of Scripture. The Scriptures are God's testimony concerning himself; reason can know nothing of Deity itself, and yet it ventures to judge what is beyond its ken! That, surely, means to make a blind man the judge of color.

39. The Scriptures Furnish Strong Proof Of Multiple Persons In the Godhead

If the Jews contend that the Scriptures testify to only one God, we contend that they furnish equally strong proof of the existence of more than one person in the one Godhead. Our passages are as incontrovertible as theirs,

since no letter of the Scripture was written for naught. That they should interpret our passages we will by no means permit; and they have neither the power nor the right to do so, for these are God's Scriptures and God's Word, which no man is able or authorized to interpret.

40. Christians Have As Much Right To Interpret Scriptures As Do Jewish People

When the Jews contend that the Scriptures teach the existence of but one God, we simply receive the statement without attempt at interpretation. But when we contend that the Scriptures teach as we set forth above, that there are more than one person in the unity of the Godhead, they attempt to interpret the Scripture instead of simply accepting it as true. What devil has commanded them to come with their interpretations since these passages belong to God's Word precisely as much as those teaching the oneness of God? They claim the right to interpret the Scripture passages which are cited by us, while they deny us the right to interpret those cited by them. Better spare both classes of Scripture passages our interpretations, and simply confess that in the unity of the Godhead there is a plurality of persons. It is quite clear that the Scriptures teach both. For the present, however, this is sufficient.

41. The Nicene Creed

We will append the Nicene Creed, which, like that of Athanasius, was written to refute the Arians, and is chanted every Lord's Day by the minister. ^{3 4}

The Nicene Creed.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God; begotten of his Father before all worlds; God of God; light of light; very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And I believe one holy Christian* and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen. I shall advance here no arguments from the New Testament for the present, since its testimonies concerning the holy divine Trinity are clear and strong, whereas those of the Old Testament are not equal to the former in clearness, though by no means lacking in strength.

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1. Unlimited (unermesslich), whose substance and power are immeasurable. — Luther's marginal note.↩
 2. Uncreated (ungeschaffen), whose substance has neither beginning nor end, and is no creature. — Luther's marginal note.↩
 3. Incarnate: Bodily conceived, or took a human body, in plain, good German, became incarnate, embodied in flesh. — Luther's marginal note.↩
 4. Catholic is best expressed in German by Christian, as in early times, that is, where there are Christians in the whole world. The pope rages against this, claiming that his party is the only Christian Church; but like his idol, the devil, he does not tell the truth. — Luther's marginal note.↩

3. The Lord's Prayer Explained

Early in 1517 Luther completed a series of sermons on the Ten Commandments. During Lent of the same year, he gave a continuous exposition of the Lord's Prayer in lectures, which were taken down in Latin by a student named John Schneider, of Eisleben, afterwards known as Agricola, and published at Leipzig, by him, without Luther's knowledge, in German, in 1518. Three new editions followed in Leipzig the same year. Luther was not altogether pleased, and, therefore, prepared his exposition of the Lord's Prayer for the press himself. With that end in view he again lectured on the Lord's Prayer, to children and the unlearned, at the evening services, beginning in December, 1518. By April 5th, 1519, the book had been issued from the press, when Luther sent a complete copy to Spalatin. The Erlangen edition of Luther's Works incorrectly dates this work 1518. This Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, "for plain laymen, not for the learned," became very popular.

Six new editions appeared in the same year, 1519; two at Leipzig, two at Augsburg and two at Basel. Four editions followed in 1520; one at Wittenberg, two at Augsburg and one at Leipzig. It was soon translated into other languages. Mathesius says in his 15 sermons on the Life of Luther that it was translated into the Italian language and printed at Venice; but Luther's name was omitted. The one from whom permission had to be secured to print it remarked:

"Blessed are the hands that have written this book, blessed are the eyes that read it, and blessed are the hearts that believe it, and thus pray to God."

February 3, 1521, Luther wrote to Spalatin that it had been translated into the Bohemian language. As early as 1520 it appeared in Latin at Leipzig, and Michael Hillenius in Antwerp printed two editions from it. The German edition appeared in "Martin Luther's Miscellaneous Booklets and Tracts," and in the complete editions of Luther's Works. Cole published an English translation in his "Luther's Select Works," 1824. Mr. Thomas Nunn writes:

“While reading it with much comfort and satisfaction, the Lord enlightened my understanding... I felt an earnest desire in my soul that others might have the same privilege; especially as it sweetly accords with the faithful ministry it has been my mercy to hear, which has established my soul in the important truths Luther preached in his day; and I found a most sweet spirit of prayer, that if it were the Lord’s will, he would put it in my power to get it reprinted as a small pocket companion to such as fear his name, and are desirous of a nearer acquaintance with the divine Author of this prayer, who only is able to guide us into all truth... I believe there are very few who understand our Lord’s Prayer so as to attain to a saving knowledge of its worth and preciousness, and to get the spiritual comfort from it that God our Savior intended for his people’s stability in faith, hope and love; and I have never found it so sweetly and profitably explained in any works as in Luther’s. I hoped, therefore, that this act would be ‘sowing light for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart.’... God has been pleased to accomplish my desire in a way I did not expect, enabling me by the kindness of friends to obtain a new translation containing parts not before published in English.”

His edition appeared in 1844. Its popularity in England and its real value prompt us to promise “a small pocket companion” edition for America. Our new translation of this early document from Luther’s pen here offered, is made from the text in the Kaiser edition of Luther’s works, compared with the text of the Erlangen edition.

Three editions, collected by John Sneider, were printed in 1518; and twelve editions, edited by Luther, were issued during 1518 and 1519.

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 6:32; Jena, 1:69; Altenburg, 1:76; Leipzig, 9:346; Erlangen, 21:159; Walch, 7:1086; St. Louis Walch, 7:752; Kaiser edition, 9:124.

Preface.

THERE IS NO NEED to misrepresent my words and teaching in the country. There are other books, which are worthy and useful to be taught to the people. I know not by what divine providence I am so drawn into the game that some from friendship, some also from enmity, catch up and circulate my words. Therefore, I find occasion to issue again this meditation on the Lord’s Prayer, which was previously published by my good friends, in order to explain myself further, and, if it is possible, also to render a service to my opponents; for it is ever my desire to be useful to all and injurious to none.

[1.] When the disciples of Christ asked him to teach them to pray, he said: “In praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask

him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,” etc. Mt 6:7-9.

[2.] From these words of Christ, we learn both the words and manner; that is, how and what we should pray; and it is necessary to know both.

First, the Manner: How we should Pray.

[3.] The manner is to use few words, but to express by them many and deep thoughts, or desires. The fewer words, the better the prayer; the more words, the poorer the prayer. Few words and much meaning is Christian; many words and little meaning is heathenish. Therefore, he says: “In praying, use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do.” And, again, to the Samaritan woman he said (Jn 4:24): They that worship God must worship in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshipers.

[4.] Now, praying in the spirit, or praying spiritually, is so named in distinction from that prayer which is merely a bodily exercise; and praying in truth is so named in distinction from formal prayer. For the formal prayer, in which alone the body is exercised, is the mechanical mumbling and chattering with the mouth, without thought. This is a mere show before men, done with the lips and not in truth. But the spiritual and true prayer is the inward desire, sighing and yearning from the depths of the heart. The former makes hypocrites and presumptuous spirits. The latter makes holy and reverent children of God.

[5.] However, a distinction is to be observed here, for outward prayer is offered in three different ways.

First, prayer may be the expression of mere obedience. This is the case with priests and ministers who sing and read and those also who read appointed prayers of a penitential or votive character. The obedience is quite the best feature of these prayers, and it is much like any other bodily work of obedience, provided it be done from real obedience and not for the sake of money, honor or praise. There is such inexpressible grace in the Word of God that, even when it is spoken without devotion, from a sense of obedience, it is not quite devoid of fruit; it is painful to the devil.

[6.] Secondly, in the absence of obedience, prayers may be spoken unwillingly and reluctantly, or for the sake of money, honor or praise. Such prayers were better omitted. Nevertheless, they who so pray receive their

reward for it here — temporal gain or honor — even as God pays off his servants and not his children.

[7.] Thirdly, prayer may express the devotion of the heart. Here the form is joined to truth and the outward to the inward; ay, the inward truth breaks forth and shines through the external form. But it is not possible for him who prays spiritually and deeply to use many words. When the soul observes what it speaks, and reflects upon the words and the meaning they are intended to convey, it necessarily lets the words go and fastens to the thought; otherwise it drops the thought and thinks of the words. Therefore, oral prayers as such have no further significance than that they serve as a stimulus and impulse to the soul to dwell upon the thoughts and desires for which the words stand. Many psalms have as superscription and title: “Ad victoriam,” “ad invitatorium,” “of victory,” “Praise ye Jehovah;” that is, these prayers, although of few words, nevertheless are a stimulus and impulse to the heart to dwell upon something good in thought and desire. Some psalms are also marked by the word “Selah,” that is “Pause,” which is not read or sung; it is an admonition to pause and rest at some special point in the prayer, to contemplate the thought well and meantime to be silent.

Second, The Words: What We Should Pray.

[8.] The words are: “Our Father who art,” etc. Since this prayer originated with our Lord, it is without doubt the highest, noblest, best prayer; for if he, the good, faithful Teacher, had had a better one, he would not have failed to give it to us.

This prayer is not to be understood as condemnatory of all prayers differently worded. Before the birth of Christ many saints, who had not these words, prayed. But all other prayers are to be suspected which do not imply or contain the substance and meaning of this prayer. The psalms are also good prayers, but they do not so clearly express the peculiar character of this prayer, although they possess it.

[9.] Therefore it is an error to compare other prayers with this and even to prefer them, especially those supplied with superscriptions in red type, which have for their only object that God may grant to us here health and long life, riches and honor, or that one may by them purchase indulgence from torment, and the like. In such prayers, our will and honor are more sought than the will and honor of God. In this way the fifteen prayers of

St. Bridget, rosaries, crown prayers, the psalter, etc., have crowded out the Lord's Prayer and, in a measure, supplanted it in popular favor. Not that I reject them, but that too much confidence is placed in the oral element of prayer and thereby the truly spiritual, inward, real Lord's Prayer is despised. For every indulgence, every benefit, every blessing, in short everything that man has need of in body and soul, here and yonder, is abundantly comprehended in this prayer. It would be better for you to pray the Lord's Prayer once with heartfelt desire and genuine comprehension of its words with resultant amendment of life, than that you should gain the indulgence of all other prayers.

[10.] Now, this prayer is divided into two parts: first, a preface, beginning and preparation; secondly, seven petitions.

The Beginning And Preparation.

“Our Father who art in heaven.”

[11.] The best beginning and preface of a prayer is to know how to address, how to honor and treat him to whom one wishes to pray, and how to so conduct one's self toward him as to make him gracious and disposed to hear. Now, of all names, none puts us into a better relation to God than “Father.” This is a truly friendly, loving, profound and cordial address. To say “Lord” or “God” or “Judge” would not be nearly so precious and comforting. For the name “Father” is by nature born in us and naturally has a sweet sound. For this reason it pleases God best, and it, more than any other name, moves him to hear us. At the same time in using it we confess our consciousness of being children of God and thereby it exerts a powerful influence upon him; for there is no lovelier voice for the father than that of his child.

[12.] The effect of these words is enhanced by those following: “Who art in heaven.” By these words we proclaim our lamentable need and misery; and they supply a powerful motive both for us to pray and for God to show mercy.

For he who begins to pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven,” and does so from the depths of his heart, confesses that he has a Father, and that, too, in heaven. He knows that he is in exile, and forlorn, on earth. Hence a heartfelt longing necessarily arises in him, like that which comes over a child far

away from its father's country, among strangers, in exile and misery. It is as if he said: "O Father, who art in heaven! I, thy wretched child upon earth, in exile, far from thee, in all perils, in distress and need, among devils and surrounded by the greatest enemies and manifold dangers."

[13.] He who prays in this manner stands before God with a right and uplifted heart, and is prepared to pray and to stir God's pity. This is so lofty a word that it cannot be spoken out of the nature of man, unless the spirit of Christ is in the heart. For, if a thorough examination is made into the matter, it shall be found that no man is so perfect that he can truthfully say he has no father here; that he has nothing, he is altogether a stranger and God alone is his father. Our nature is so evil that it always seeks something on earth and is not content with God in heaven.

[14.] Yet, these words set forth the kind of trust we should have in God and in none but him. For no one but the Father can help us into heaven. It is written, "No one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man," Jn 3:13. To be arrayed in him and to be borne on his shoulders is the only way to ascend thither.

[15.] Therefore, this is a prayer for all those that labor; and even for those who have not grasped the meaning of the words. The latter I consider the best prayer, for then rather the heart speaks than the mouth.

[16.] Meanwhile, another stands in church and turns over the leaves, counts the rosary beads until they rattle, and with his heart thinks of something which has no bearing whatever upon what he is confessing with his lips. This is no prayer. To such God speaks through the prophet Isaiah (29:13): "This people draw nigh unto me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me."

So there are priests and ministers who rush through the established hours of prayer without a trace of devotion. Then they shamelessly say: Now I am happy; I have now rendered our Lord his due. They think they have thus satisfied God.

[17.] But I tell you, though I concede that they perhaps satisfy the requirements of the Church, that God shall say to them: "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me," Mt 15:8. And it is to be feared that, relying upon such prayers, they never get a prayer to God. So they pray least who appear to pray most, and, conversely, they who appear to pray least, pray most.

[18.] Now we place our comfort and confidence in much wailing, much shouting and sing-song, which Christ has forbidden when he says that no one shall be heard for his much speaking. The cause of this is the wretched sermons. In these, those that guide the people, departing from the example of the fathers, do not lead them with toil and effort to the true foundation and to inward prayer, but only to external forms and lip-prayers, with their own advantage as the chief aim.

[19.] They may say: It is written (Lk 18:1), “Ye ought always to pray.” I answer: Look closely at the words. He does not say. Ye ought always to turn leaves, count rosary beads, make many words and the like, but. Ye ought always to pray. But what praying is, has been sufficiently explained above.

There were once certain heretics, called Euchites, that is, supplicants. They wished to observe the Word of Christ and they prayed (that is, they chattered with their mouths; day and night and did nothing else. Nor did they perceive their folly; for when they ate, drank or slept, it was evident that their supplications had to be interrupted. Therefore, the word of Christ refers to spiritual prayer. This can be offered without ceasing, even when at physical labor; although no one accomplishes it perfectly, for who is able at all times to lift up his heart to God? Therefore, this word sets up a standard by which we are to be directed; and when we see that we come short of it, we are to recognize what weak, frail men we are, and to humble ourselves and ask pardon for our frailty.

[20.] All teachers of the Scriptures conclude that the nature and essence of prayer is the uplifting of the mind, or heart, to God. But if the uplifting of the heart determines the nature and character of prayer, it follows that everything which is not an uplifting of the heart is not prayer. Therefore, singing, speaking, piping, when there is no uplifting of the heart, are just as far from being prayer as the scarecrows in the gardens are from being men. The essence is not there, only the form and name.

This statement is confirmed by Saint Jerome, who tells of a holy father, named Agathon, who, for thirty years carried a stone in his mouth in the desert, because he wished to learn silence. How, then, did he pray? No doubt inwardly, in his heart — the prayer which God cares most for and which alone he accepts and requires. But to hear the words and so to be induced to reflect and to pray aright is helpful. For, as we said above (§ 7), the words spoken by the lips are to be regarded no more than the sound of a

trumpet, drum, organ or other instrument, by which the heart is moved and lifted up to God.

[21.] Indeed, no one should depend upon his heart in prayer and dispense with words until he is so well disciplined in spirit and experience as to expel foreign thoughts; otherwise the devil will utterly lead him astray and soon make heart prayer impossible. Therefore, we ought to hold fast to the words and by means of them climb until our wings are grown and we can soar without words. I do not reject — nor should anyone — the oral part of prayer — the words. They are rather to be accepted with thanks as a special and great favor from God. What is rejected is the practice of divorcing the words from their proper office and effect, which is to stir the heart, and presumptuously to take credit for mumbling or babbling them without good results and amendment of life, and indeed as an injury to the heart.

[22.] Let everyone also be on his guard when, with or without words, his heart is kindled and he feels the spirit of devotion, lest he yield to the poison of the old serpent; that is, murderous pride, which speaks thus: Ah, now I pray with heart and mouth, and have such fervor that I suppose there is hardly anybody who prays as well as I. These thoughts are inspired by the devil, and through them one becomes worse than those who do not pray; ay, such thoughts are not far from profanity and blasphemy. For in all the good which you experience and possess, you ought to praise not yourself, but God.

[23.] Finally, observe the order in which Christ has arranged this prayer. He does not allow one to pray only for himself, but for all mankind. For he teaches us to say, not “My Father,” but “Our Father.” The prayer is a common spiritual possession; therefore nobody is to be deprived of it, not even an enemy. For, if he is the Father of us all, it is his will that we should be brethren, loving one another and praying for one another as well as for ourselves.

Division Of The Lord's Prayer.

In this prayer there are seven petitions: The first: Hallowed be thy name. The second: Thy kingdom come. The third: Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. The fourth: Give us this day our daily bread. The fifth: And for-

give us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. The sixth: And bring us not into temptation. The seventh: But deliver us from evil. Amen.

[24.] These seven parts may also be called seven good lessons or admonitions; for, as the holy bishop and martyr Saint Cyprian suggests, they are a sevenfold disclosure of our misery and need, by which man, led to a knowledge of himself, is enabled to recognize the perils and wretchedness that fill up his life on earth. His life is nothing but blasphemy of the name of God, disobedience to the will of God and a rejection of his kingdom. Life is a hungry land without bread, a state of sin, a journey surrounded by perils, and the abode of every evil, according to Christ's own teaching in this prayer. Of this more anon.

The First Petition.

“Hallowed be thy name.”

[25.] A great prayer of unfathomable depth, if spoken from the heart, although of few words! Among the seven petitions, none is greater than that where we pray: “Hallowed be thy name.”

[26.] Observe that God's name is holy in itself and is not made holy by us. Indeed, it hallows all things, even us. But, as Saint Cyprian says, it is to be hallowed in us; thereby God becomes everything and man becomes nothing. The hallowing of God's name is the designed purpose subserved by the other six petitions. When this is done all is well, as we shall hear.

[27.] But, in order to see how the name of God is hallowed, we shall first observe how it is profaned and dishonored in us. To speak of it clearly and plainly, it is dishonored in us in two ways:

First, when we misuse it for sin; secondly, when we commit theft and robbery in regard to it; just as a sacred vessel of the Church is desecrated in two ways: first, when it is used, not for God's service, but for carnal purposes; secondly, when it is taken by theft and robbery.

[28.] First, then, God's name is profaned in us by a misuse of it. This is when we apply it not for our souls' welfare and betterment, but for debauching and injuring them. We do this in many ways — with witchcraft, lying, swearing, cursing and deceiving.

The second commandment of God recognizes such misuse, “Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain,” Ex 20:7. In a word, God's

name is profaned when we do not live as the children of God.

The Nature of the Children of God.

[29.] We call that a pious child which is born of pious, honest parents and which follows and emulates them in every respect. Such a child properly possesses by inheritance all the property and titles of its parents. So we Christians have been born anew by baptism and become the children of God, and, if we imitate our Father and his nature, then all his riches and attributes are our eternal inheritance. Now, our Father is called merciful and kind because he possesses these attributes, as Christ says, “Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful,” Lk 6:36; again, “Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart,” Mt 11:29. So, also, God is righteous, pure, true, mighty, sincere, unchanging, wise, etc. These are all names of God, comprehended in the term “thy name”; for the names of all virtues are names of God. Since we have been baptized into these names and by them have been consecrated and sanctified, thus appropriating them as our own, it follows that all of God’s children are called to be kind, merciful, chaste, just, true, sincere, loving, peaceable and gentle towards everybody, even their enemies. For God’s name, into which they have been baptized, produces such qualities in them; or at least they ought always to pray that the name of God may effectively dwell and be sanctified in them.

[30.] But whoever is angry, quarrelsome, jealous, bitter, unkind, unmerciful and unchaste; whoever curses, lies, swears, deceives and slanders — whoever does these things dishonors, blasphemes and profanes the divine name, in which he was blessed and baptized, or called and numbered among the Christians and gathered to the people of God. That person honors, while professedly bearing the divine name, the devil’s name; for the devil is a liar, impure, a backbiter, and full of hatred. They who are of his kindred and on his side, follow him, says the wise man (Wisdom 2:24). Observe that such followers of Satan are equally blasphemous with the priest who would let swine drink from the consecrated cup or dip filth with it. Similarly do those who take their souls and bodies, which have been sanctified by the name of God dwelling in them, and use them in the devil’s service. All this brings dishonor upon the holy, divine name with which they have been consecrated.

[31.] Now, you understand what hallowing is, what holy means; it is nothing but separation from misuse for divine use, as a church is consecrated and set apart for the sole purpose of divine service. So we are to be hallowed in all our lives, that nothing may have vogue in us but the name of God— kindness, truth, righteousness, etc. Accordingly the name of God is hallowed or profaned not only with the lips, but also with every member of the body and soul.

[32.] Secondly, God's name is profaned by committing theft and robbery in regard to it. To a clear thinker, this is comprehended under the first head, but the identity is too subtle for plain minds to perceive. This second head relates to the proud, who imagine themselves to be pious and holy in themselves, and do not think that they blaspheme the name of God, like the first class, but give themselves the name of being righteous, holy and true, and thereby insolently steal the name of God without any fear. Just now this class is very numerous, being strongly represented among those especially who appear to be pious and spiritual. For these are conceited. They ascribe their words, works, wisdom and ability to do good to themselves. They desire to be renowned and honored for these things. And if they are not so regarded they become furious and fly into rage. These are called in the Scriptures, "profundi corde," with hearts too deep to be fathomed. God alone must judge and unmask them, and greatly do they grieve him. For they know so well how to adorn everything that they are secure in the assurance that all is supremely well with them. And this their self-complacency and inward boasting, vaunting and self-praise is their greatest and most dangerous fault. In order that they may be recognized and that everyone may be put on his guard against a similar course we will pursue this matter further.

The Worst and Most Dangerous People in all Christendom.

[33.] First, they constantly have words of self-praise on their lips and boastingly say: Oh, I have such good intentions. I mean well from my heart. This one and that one will not heed me. I would gladly share my very heart with him. Beware, beware, of these wolves who go about in such sheep's clothing! They are thorns. No figs grow there; nothing but spines. As Christ says: "By their fruits ye shall know them," Mt 7:16. But what are their fruits? Thorns, pricks, scratching, tearing, wounds, but no good words and works. How does this come about? Observe: When they have come to the

conclusion that they are pious, have good intentions, and discover in their lives that they pray, fast and do good works more than other people and have more understanding and grace from God, they are not able to institute a comparison between themselves and those who are better and superior. They compare themselves with those who appear worse and inferior. They soon forget that all they have is God's gift. Therefore they cannot but directly fall into judging, condemning, backbiting, and slandering, and into contempt for others and self-laudation at the expense of others. They give themselves over to pride and become hardened in the absence of all fear of God; and eventually they befoul their hearts and lips with the sins of others constantly carried around with them.

[34.] Behold the thistles and thorns in fruitage and the jaws of wolves beneath the sheep's clothing! These figures of speech apply to those who steal the name and honor of God and ascribe it to themselves. God has the right alone to judge. Christ says: "Judge not, that ye be not judged," Mt 7:1. To be holy, righteous and good is also God's alone. We all are alike sinners before God, one as well as the other; there is no difference. If one has any advance of another, it is not his own, and those who are God's own will let him have the divine name, will let him take pride in it, will let him glory in it, will let him pass judgment upon others. Accordingly, he who uses these things, not to serve his neighbor, but to despise him, is a thief of God's honor, and arrogates to himself divinity and divine privilege, which are not his own.

[35.] The world is now full of these offensive, bold, frivolous, irreverent spirits, who by their good lives profane God's name more blasphemously than all others with their wicked lives. These I call the proud saints and the devil's martyrs, who are not as the rest of men, like the hypocrite in the Gospel, Lk 18:11. These, just as if they were not sinners and evil, will not tolerate the wicked and unrighteous and will have no dealings with them, so that, forsooth, nobody can say: Ah, does he associate with such people? I thought he was much too good. They do not recognize that God has granted them more grace in order that thereby they may serve others, and distribute and invest this grace for interest. In other words, they see not that they should pray for, assist and advise others and do for them as they have received from God, who gave them his grace freely and neither despised nor judged them. But they go on and not only produce no fruit with the grace received, but employ it to persecute those whom they should assist with it.

The Scriptures call these the perverse: “With the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward,” Ps 18:26.

[36.] Secondly, when they hear all this, that to God alone are due praise and honor, they put on a fine appearance and deceive themselves with even greater pretensions. They say that in all they do they are only seeking the honor of God; and they even presume to swear that they are not seeking their own honor, so completely and profoundly evil of spirit are they.

But observe their fruits and works, and you shall find that, if their projects do not succeed, there arises such lamentation and peevishness that nobody can get along with them. Then they cry out that those who hinder them are not doing right, and this injury they cannot forget. They pretend that God’s honor has been hindered and the good which they sought and intended has been resisted. When they cannot refrain from their accursed judging and backbiting, their real thoughts become manifest, and it is seen that they are angry, not because the cause and honor of God are hindered, but because their own opinions and intentions have miscarried. They proceed as if their opinions could not be bad and must be so good that God himself could not reject them. For if they did not ascribe such excellence to themselves, they would easily endure the hindering of their purposes. But overweening pride does not permit its victim to consider himself wicked or foolish; therefore everybody else must be wicked or foolish. Behold, how deeply the blasphemy against God is hidden in these spirits, who always want to have what is God’s alone, to-wit, wisdom, righteousness, praise and honor.

[37.] Thirdly, when it is contended or proclaimed that honor and praise belong to God because he creates all things and all things are his own, then these self-righteous are wiser than all the preachers, ay, even than the Holy Spirit himself. They are able to teach everybody and will no longer be pupils. They say: Who does not know that? They think they understand it all thoroughly. But when it comes to a test, and their honor is touched; when they are slighted or despised, deprived of anything, or anything goes against them; then their learning is soon forgotten and the thornbush brings forth its fruit — spines and prickles. Then the ass with his ears looks out from the lion’s skin. Then they exclaim: O God in heaven, look down and see what a great wrong is done to me. They plunge into the great folly of presuming to say that even God does them injustice.

[38.] Where is now that great understanding of yours which prompted you to say: All things are God's and from God? Poor man! If it is God's alone, why should he not take it from you unhindered, give and toss it hither and thither? If it is his, you should stand still and let him do with it as he wills. If he takes what is his own, no wrong is done to you. As Job the saint spoke, when he lost all his riches and children: "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away," as it pleased God, so it happened; "blessed be the name of Jehovah," Job 1:21, Behold, he was a true man, from whom nobody could take anything; for he had nothing that was his own. God says (Job 41:11): "Whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine." I created it. Why, then, do you boast of what is yours and of the wrong that is done you? If your honor, reputation, property, or whatever you have, is assailed, not your possession, but Christ's, is assailed. And, in order to teach you this, he brings it about that what you think is your own, is taken from you, so that you may recognize that it is not yours, but his. Behold, so one finds everywhere that men do not seek the honor and name of God sincerely, and especially the proud saints always profess to be and to have something to which only God can lay claim.

[39.] You say: If this is true, it follows that nobody on earth properly hallows the name of God. Moreover, all they who go to court for the sake of their property, their honor or other objects, are in the wrong.

[40.] First, I answer: For this reason, I said above that this petition is most pregnant and the greatest, comprehending all others. For if one properly hallowed the name of God he would not need to pray the Lord's Prayer any more. And if one were so pure as to be unconcerned about anything, even his honor, he would be perfectly holy and the name of God would be perfectly hallowed in him. However, such a condition is found not in this life, but in heaven.

[41.] Therefore, as long as we live, we need to pray and earnestly strive that God may hallow his name in us. For every man is found to be a blasphemer of the divine name, the one excelling the other in blasphemy; although the proud saints are unwilling to believe it.

[42.] I also said that this prayer is not only a petition, but also a salutary lesson and a disclosure of the wretchedness and guilt of our lives upon earth, to teach man to know himself and to be humble. For when we pray that God's name may be hallowed in us, it follows and is implied that it is not yet holy in us. If it were holy, we should have no need to pray that it

may become so. From this it further follows that so long as we live, we disgrace, blaspheme, dishonor, profane and desecrate the name of God, and testify with our own prayers and mouths that we are blasphemers.

[43.] Now, in all Scripture I know no doctrine which more completely discredits and reduces to naught our whole life than this prayer. Who that loves the name of God would not rather die and break with this whole life when he considers from the heart that his life is the occasion for blaspheming God's name and honor? Even if one understood nothing else well than the Lord's Prayer, he would have doctrine enough against all vices, especially pride. For how can he be gay or proud who confesses in the Lord's Prayer that he commits the great, dreadful crime of dishonoring daily the name of God and of acting daily contrary to the second commandment by using God's name in vain?

[44.] Secondly, I answer, that it is not the best that lawsuits exist. It would be better if there were none. But to avoid greater evils they are to be conceded on account of the weak, who are not yet able to surrender all things and dedicate themselves again to God.

[45.] Nevertheless, a goal is set before us toward which we should strive; that is, that from day to day we learn and practice the art of hallowing God's name, and return to him the honor, riches and everything we alienated from him, and thus become entirely sanctified.

For a sustained effort of this character this prayer has been given to us; so that without ceasing we may desire in our hearts that God's name be hallowed.

And, if a Christian should be deprived of everything, property, honor, friends, health, wisdom, etc., it would be nothing surprising. Ay, finally it must come even to this, that all his own becomes nothing and he be sundered from all things; then he is sanctified and hallows the name of God. As long as we have anything of our own there will still be a claim to praise. Therefore nothing can remain, in order that God may become our one and all, and that no one may lay claim to glory but him. Then what the Scriptures say of the righteous will be realized, namely, that they are poor and orphaned, fatherless and comfortless.

[46.] But you say: If we all fail to honor the name of God sufficiently, are we therefore in mortal sins and condemned? I answer: All sins would be mortal and condemn us if God dealt with us in severity. For God can endure no sin, however small. But there are two classes of people. Some recognize,

and themselves lament, that they do not sufficiently hallow the name of God, and earnestly pray that they may do so, and they make much of their unhappy condition. To these God grants what they pray; and because they judge and condemn themselves, he absolves them and remits what they fail to do. Others, however, self-willed and frivolous spirits, make light of their faults, take no account of them, are quite blind to them, and in addition prayerless. These shall find out in the end how great the sin was which they regarded as nothing, and they shall be condemned for what they thought would most of all save them. Christ says to the hypocrites that they shall receive greater condemnation for their long prayers, Mt 23:14.

[47.] So the Lord's Prayer teaches you first to recognize your great misery and corruption, to recognize that you are a blasphemer; you must even be frightened at your own prayer, if you consider what you are praying. For it is certainly true that you have not yet hallowed the name of God; and it is also true that he who does not hallow the name of God, profanes it. Then, further, it is true that dishonoring the name of God is a grievous sin and worthy of eternal death, if God's righteousness should judge. Whither will you flee? Your own prayer convicts you and is against you, testifies against you, accuses you. There you lie; who will help you?

[48.] Behold now, when you have thus earnestly come to yourself and in the knowledge of your misery humbled yourself, there comes a doctrine of comfort which lifts you up again; that is, the prayer teaches you not to despair, but to seek God's grace and help. For you are certain and you ought firmly to believe this, that he taught you to pray thus because he will hear you. And so the prayer brings it about that God does not impute your sin to you nor deal with you in severity. Those alone God regards as good who earnestly confess that they dishonor God's name and constantly desire that it may be hallowed.

[49.] But they who plead a good conscience and think they have not dishonored God's name, are beyond rescue; for they are yet too self-willed, secure, proud and irreverent. They are not yet in the company of those to whom Christ says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Mt 11:28. For they do not understand the Lord's Prayer, and know not what they pray.

Conclusion of the Petition.

[50.] Now, the sum and substance of this petition is: O dear Father, thy name be hallowed in us; for I confess that I have, alas! often dishonored thy name. And I do so still. Through pride and through seeking mine own honor and the glory of my name, I blaspheme thy name. Therefore help me by thy grace! May my name cease to be anything to me; may I recognize my nothingness, so that thou alone and thy name and honor may be in me.

[51.] I hope that you have sufficiently understood that the words “thy name” signify “thy honor and praise.” For a good name has in the Scripture the same significance as honor and praise, and a bad name means the same as dishonor and evil reputation. This prayer, then, aims at nothing else than that the honor of God may be sought before all, above all, and in all things, and that our whole lives may redound to the honor of God forever; not to our profit nor our salvation nor any advantage, temporal or eternal, unless it be ordained ultimately for the honor and praise of God.

[52.] Therefore is this the first petition. God’s honor is the first, supreme, highest tribute which we can render to him, and he himself seeks and demands nothing more. Nor can we give him anything else, for he gives all other possessions to us; but honor he reserves for himself. Whatever we know, say, sing, live, work, do and suffer, proves that all things are God’s, so that the verse of the psalm may stand: “His work is honor and majesty; and his righteousness endureth for ever,” Ps 111:3. That is to say: In whomsoever God dwells and lives, the works of that man serve only to render praise and honor to God and to ascribe all to him. Such a man is proof against dishonor and contempt, for he knows that this should be. If nobody will despise and dishonor him, he will do so himself, and will not endure his own praise and honor. And he is righteous for the reason that he renders to God what is God’s and to himself what is his own, to God the honor and everything else, to himself the dishonor and nothing besides. Here, then, is the righteousness which abides forever. It is pleasing, not merely to men on earth, like the lamps of the foolish virgins and the piety of those seeming to be saints, but to the eternal God; wherefore it also abides in his sight forever.

[53.] Now you observe that this prayer contends against hateful pride, which is the head, life and whole essence of sin. Just as no virtue lives or has merit when joined to pride, so, on the other hand, no sin lives or does its work of injury where pride is dead. As a serpent has all its life in its head, and if that is dead can do no harm; so, if pride were dead, all sins would be

harmless, indeed, powers for ultimate good. Since therefore nobody is free from pride and greed for his own name and honor, there is nobody to whom this prayer is not highly necessary and useful.

The Second Petition.

“Thy kingdom come.”

[54.] This second petition, like the others, has two effects: it casts us down and lifts us up. It humbles us by compelling us to confess with our own mouth our great, lamentable misery; it exalts us by showing us how to conduct ourselves in our humiliation. So every word of God has this quality, that it terrifies and comforts, wounds and heals, destroys and builds, tears up and plants, humbles and exalts.

[55.] First, it humbles us, because we publicly confess that the kingdom of God has not yet come to us. This, if it is earnestly considered and truly prayed, is awful and ought to sadden every pious heart. For from this confession it follows that we are still rejected, and are in exile and among cruel enemies, and denied the dear Father’s country.

[56.] This, then, is a double, pitiable, lamentable loss. First, God the Father is deprived of his kingdom in us, and he that is and should be Lord of all things is by us alone circumscribed in his power and title; which redounds not a little to his dishonor, as if he were a Lord without a land and his title to omnipotence had become an object of mockery in our hearts. This doubtless is painful to all who love God and desire his glory; it is a dreadful thing that we are they who restrict and hinder the kingdom of God. If God would judge us in severity, he would have just reason to condemn us as enemies and robbers in regard to his kingdom.

[57.] The other loss is ours, to lie captive in misery and in a strange country among such great enemies. For, if it be a terrible and lamentable circumstance that a child of an earthly prince or an entire country were conquered under the heel of the Turk and had to undergo much indignity and suffering, and finally the most disgraceful death, how much more reason have we, grief-stricken, to deplore the fact that in our exile we are among evil spirits, in perpetual danger of injury to body and soul, with eternal death as the final object of our expectation. If we only considered the matter

rightly, we should dread our own lives more than we dread a hundred deaths.

[58.] Secondly, when such reflections have humbled us and have revealed to us our misery, then follows the comfort. The kind Master, our Lord Christ, teaches us to pray and to seek to escape from our exile and not to despair. For they who confess that they hinder the kingdom of God, and humbly pray for its coming, shall, on account of this their sorrow and prayer, obtain pardon from God for what otherwise he would justly punish. But the self-willed spirits, who care little for the welfare of the kingdom of God and do not pray from the heart for it, shall be surely judged in severity with the tyrants and destroyers of his kingdom.

[59.] Since this prayer must be offered by all, it follows that nobody is without guilt toward the kingdom of God. To understand this, it is necessary to know that there are two kingdoms.

The First Kingdom.

The one is the kingdom of the devil, whom the Lord in the Gospel (Jn 16:11) calls the prince, or king, of this world. This is a wicked and rebellious kingdom. To the pious it ought to be a great exile and prison, as was typified ages ago by the children of Israel in Egypt, who had to promote that country's prosperity with much toil and affliction, with no reward but the prospect to be destroyed by this expedient. So he who serves the devil by sin must suffer much, especially in his conscience, only to earn eternal death as his final reward.

[60.] Now, we are all in this kingdom until the kingdom of God comes, yet with a difference. The pious are in it, daily contending against sin, and steadfastly and firmly resisting the lust of the flesh, the allurements of the world and the suggestions of the devil. For, however pious we may be, evil lust ever seeks to reign in us and to reign alone and supreme. Therefore, the kingdom of God wages unceasing warfare with the kingdom of the devil. The godly are preserved and saved through contending against the kingdom of the devil within for the sake of the kingdom of God, which is thus advanced. These are they who pray the petition with words, heart and deeds. So the holy apostle Paul says: "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey the lusts thereof," Rom 6:12. It is as if he said: You will indeed feel and have evil desires, inclination to wrath and love for it, also for

covetousness, unchastity and the like, all which tend to draw you into the devil's kingdom, that is, into sin; for it is from the devil's kingdom that all sins derive their source and character. But you must not yield to them. You must fight and subdue and suppress what remains of these traitors in the kingdom of the old devil, as the children of Israel did to the Jebusites and Amorites, and so increase the kingdom of God in yourselves, for the true promised land is there.

[61.] In a different manner are they in the devil's kingdom who fail to do this. They are therein with their own approval, yielding to all the desires of the flesh, the world and the devil; and if they could they would remain in it always. These make way for the devil, and retard and injure the kingdom of God. They accumulate property, build magnificently and strive for all that the world offers, just as if they fain would live here forever. They do not remember that we have here no abiding city, as Saint Paul says, Heb 13:14. These utter the petition with their lips, but in the heart they contradict it. They are like metallic organ pipes, which toot and sound through the whole church and yet are devoid of both words and understanding; and perhaps the organs are the models and guides of such singers and supplicants.

The Second Kingdom.

[62.] The other kingdom is God's kingdom. This is a kingdom of righteousness and truth, of which Christ says: "Seek ye first God's kingdom and his righteousness," Mt. 6:33. What is the righteousness of God or of his kingdom? When there is no sin in us any more, but all our members, powers and faculties are subject to God and in his service, so that we can say with Paul: "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me," Gal 2:20; and: "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body," 1 Cor 6:19-20. As if he said: Christ has bought you through himself; therefore, you are to be his own and to allow him to live and reign in you. But this is accomplished when no sin rules in us, when Christ alone rules with his grace. Accordingly, God's kingdom is nothing else than peace, soberness, humility, chastity, love and every virtue; or the absence of all wrath, hate, bitterness, unchastity and the like.

[63.] Now, let every one prove himself to see which way he is inclined, and he will realize in which kingdom he is. There is no man who does not find something of the devil's kingdom in himself. Therefore, he needs to

pray: “Thy kingdom come.” God’s kingdom has its beginning and growth here, but it is consummated in the life beyond.

[64.] This, then, is in brief the meaning of the second petition: Thy kingdom come. Dear Father, let us not live long here, so that thy kingdom may be perfected in us and we may be entirely delivered from Satan’s kingdom. Or, if it pleases thee to leave us longer in this land of exile, grant us thy grace, that we may begin thy kingdom in us and unceasingly increase it, and destroy the devil’s kingdom.

[65.] Let me call attention to a double error in this connection. First, the evil of those who run hither and thither to become righteous and to attain to the kingdom of God and to salvation — one to Rome, another to St James. This one builds a chapel, that one founds this, another that. But the real point they will not take hold of, namely, that they surrender themselves inwardly to God and become his kingdom. They do many such external works and present a fine show, but inwardly they remain full of evil devices, wrath, hate, pride, impatience, unchastity, etc.

Christ spoke against these. Being asked when the kingdom of God should come he replied: “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:... for lo, the kingdom of God is within you,” Lk 17:20-21. So he also said: “And if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or Here, believe it not for there shall arise false prophets,” Mt 24:23. As if he said: If you wish to know the kingdom of God, you need not seek it far off, nor race across the country. It is near to you, if you will; ay, it is not only near you, it is in you. For soberness, humility, truth, chastity and every virtue (these are the true kingdom of God) cannot be brought over land and sea; they must spring up in the heart.

[66.] Therefore, we do not pray: Dear Father, let us come to thy kingdom, as if we had to go after it; but. Thy kingdom come to us. For God’s grace and kingdom, together with all virtues, must come to us if we are to receive them; we can never come to them. Just as Christ came from heaven to us upon earth; we did not ascend from earth to him in heaven.

[67.] The other error is that of many who, though they utter this prayer, are concerned only about their salvation, and by the kingdom of God they understand nothing else than joy and gladness in heaven as they are able to conceive it with a sensual mind. Such thoughts prompt them only to fear hell and to seek heaven merely for their own gain and advantage.

[68.] These do not know that God's kingdom consists alone in being pious, sober, pure, gentle, meek, and in being filled with every virtue and grace, so that God may have his work in us and he alone may be, live and rule in us. This should be our first and supreme desire. For, to be saved means that God rules in us and we are his kingdom. But the joy and gladness and all else that we crave need not be sought nor asked nor desired; it will all come of itself as the result of the kingdom of God. As joy and gladness follow the drinking of good wine without being especially sought for, so much more, when the graces and virtues which constitute the kingdom of God are perfected, there naturally must needs follow, without our activity, joy, peace, blessedness and every delight. Therefore, in order to cause us to turn aside the false and self-seeking eye, Christ bids us to pray for and seek, not the fruit of the kingdom, but the kingdom of God itself. But they who err seek what comes afterward, the last first; that which is first, they esteem not, or they esteem it only on account of that which is last. Therefore they will attain neither. Not really desiring what must come first, they will not obtain that which follows.

The Third Petition.

“Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth.”

[69.] This petition also teaches the two things which were mentioned in the former petition: it humbles and exalts; it is a test for the sinner and for the righteous. For on these two principles, judgment and righteousness, the Word of God acts everywhere, as it is written: "Blessed are they that keep justice, and he that doeth righteousness at all times, Ps 106:3.

Judgment obtains when a man knows, judges and condemns himself; and this is true humility and self-abasement.

Righteousness obtains when a man, having this self-knowledge, asks and seeks that grace and help from God which exalts him in his sight. These two principles we will now examine in this petition.

[70.] First, we become our own accusers and judges, charging ourselves with disobedience to God and indifference to his will. For, if it were true that we did God's will, this petition would be to no purpose. Therefore we utter momentous words when we say: “Thy will be done.” For what can be more dreadful than that the will of God is not done and his commandments

are despised? And is not this prayer virtually a confession that such failure has been ours? It must be true that we neither do nor have done the will of God, since we are compelled first to pray for it. For in God's sight neither hypocrisy nor pretense will avail; if anything, prayer reflects conditions as they are.

[71.] Since we must pray this petition until our end, it follows that until our death we shall also be found and pronounced guilty of being disobedient to the will of God. Who, then, can be proud or who can prevail in view of his own prayer, which is evidence that if he were dealt with by God according to justice, the result would be constant condemnation and reprobation; and this in perfect equity, inasmuch as he stands self-confessed and self-convicted for disobedience. So this prayer works deep humility and fear of God and his judgment, so that a man is glad if only he escapes the judgment of God, and is saved by pure grace and mercy. When this result is accomplished we have met the condition of this petition, namely, that in the presence of God we judge ourselves and pronounce sentence, that we know ourselves well and grieve over our wretched state.

[72.] Secondly, righteousness consists in this, that when we have attained to the required self-knowledge and self-condemnation, we do not despair on account of the judgment of God, to which we bow when we utter this petition; but that we take refuge in God's grace and firmly trust him and pray him to deliver us from disobedience and the disregard of his will.

[73.] For righteous before God is he who humbly confesses his disobedience and sin and the justice of his condemnation, and therefore heartily prays for grace, without doubting that it shall be granted to him. The apostle teaches (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11) that a righteous man prevails solely through his faith and trust in God, and therefore his comfort and trust are not his works, but the mercy of God alone.

[74.] Behold, then, how our wretched, transient life reels as from a blow when this prayer discloses it as sheer disobedience toward God's will and therefore surely leading to everlasting condemnation, unless salvation is grasped through self-knowledge, repentance and prayer. Whoever rightly considers this petition and the others, will truly have little pleasure in this life. He that has pleasure in it proves that he does not understand the Lord's Prayer nor the perils to which life is subject.

What It Means To Do or Not To Do God's Will.

[75.] Without doubt the doing of God's will is nothing but the keeping of his commandments; for his will is revealed by his commandments.

[76.] We can not understand this petition unless we know and understand what God has commanded. This is a broad subject. Most briefly stated, what God has commanded is nothing but the slaying of the "old Adam" in us, as the apostle teaches in many places. The "old Adam" is solely our inward evil inclinations to anger, hatred, unchastity, covetousness, ambition, pride and the like. Such evil disposition and attributes have been inherited by us from Adam and are inborn in us. From these result evil works of every kind — murder, adultery, robbery, and similar transgressions of God's commandments. Therefore, God's will is not done through disobedience.

The Twofold Method of Slaying the Old Adam and Thus Doing God's Will.

[77.] First, we slay the old Adam ourselves, when we suppress and restrain our evil inclinations; when we by fasting, watching, prayer and industry subdue unchastity; when we by alms and kind services to our neighbor overcome hatred and malice; when, in short, we conquer our own wills in every possible way. If a man has no master or teacher, he must learn and practice the lesson of examining himself; he must never do what he has a will to do, and must always do what he has no inclination to do. Let him always act against his own will. He must freely believe that his will is never good, however reasonable it may seem, unless it be constrained and be impelled to what, by nature, is repulsive to it. As was said (§ 70), if there were a good will in us, we would have no need of this prayer.

[78.] Therefore a man should see to it that the dominant will in him is superior to his natural will, and brook no indecision. Then he shall find that in reality there is but one will in him instead of two conflicting ones, and he will habituate himself to follow the higher will rather than his own. For he who is the servant of his own will, is surely opposed to God's will. Now, there is nothing which is so dear to man and so hard to give up as his own will. Many do great, good works, but they follow entirely their own will and inclinations; and yet they think they are right and that they do nothing wrong. For they think their will is good and right, and they have no need of this prayer. So they are altogether without fear of God.

[79.] Secondly, the old Adam is slain by others, who oppose us, try us, disturb us, and in everything resist our will, not only in reference to temporal objects, but even when the work we do is good and spiritual. They misrepresent and belittle us when we pray, when we fast and when we carry on benevolent work — in short, they refuse to leave us in peace, no matter what we do. Ah, this annoyance is an inestimably precious thing! Such adversaries ought to be purchased at any cost. For these are they who bring this prayer to pass in us — through whom God breaks our will, so that his will may be done. Therefore Christ says: “Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art with him in the way,” Mt 5:25. That is, we are to give up our wills and let the adversary’s will be right; thus shall our own be broken. But in the breaking of our will, God’s will is done, for it is his pleasure that ours shall be hindered and brought to naught. Therefore, when a person opposes you and endeavors to treat you as a fool, do not offer resistance, but consent to it and let it pass for right, as indeed in God’s sight it is right. When anyone wishes to deprive you of anything and to injure you, suffer it as if you were served rightly, for without doubt it is right in God’s sight. Although the offender does wrong, you are nevertheless not wronged. For what you possess is God’s, and he has a right to take it, whether he uses a bad man or a good man as his agent. Your will shall not resist, but shall say: “Thy will be done.” So in everything, bodily and spiritual: “If any man would... take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also,” says Christ, Mt 5:40.

[80.] But you say: If the doing of God’s will means this, who can be saved? Who can keep a commandment as majestic as this, and give up everything, having his own will in nothing? I answer: That is the very reason you should learn how great and necessary is this prayer, and with what earnestness of heart it is to be prayed, and how sublime a thing it is that our will is mortified and God’s will alone is done. And so you must confess that you are a sinner, unable to do God’s will, and must pray for help and grace that God may forgive your shortcomings and enable you to do his will. For it is necessary, if God’s will is to be done, that our will should perish, for it is antagonistic to that of God. Learn this from Christ our Lord. When he prayed to his heavenly Father in the garden that he should remove the cup from him he said: Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done," Lk 22:42. If Christ had to give up his will, which, without doubt, was good, yea, always the very best, in order that the divine will might be done, why should

we poor worms insist on our will, which is never free from evil and always deserving of being hindered?

[81.] To understand this, note that our will is bad in two respects.

First, the will is evil quite manifestly and without attempt at disguise when we have the will and inclination to do what is regarded by everybody as evil — being angry, lying, deceiving, injuring one's neighbor, being unchaste and the like. Such will and inclination are found in everybody, especially when he is incited to these things. Now, to oppose this will we must pray that God's will be done. He wills that there be peace, truth, purity, gentleness.

Secondly, when its evil character is hidden and disguised by a good appearance. When Saint John and Saint James prayed against the Samaritans who would not receive Christ; "Lord wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" He answered: "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them," Lk 9:54-56.

[82.] Of this class are all they who, in view of the unjust or foolish treatment to which they or others have been subjected, will have their way and insist on carrying out whatever they undertake. They will exclaim and lament: Oh, I meant well from my heart. I would have helped a whole city, but the devil will not allow it. Then they think they are justly and rightly angry and fretful. They disturb their own peace and that of other people and at once make a great ado because their good intentions have been obstructed. But if they examined the matter by daylight, they would find that it was all show and that with their good intentions they had in reality sought their own interest and honor, or their own will and preference. For it is not possible that a righteous will, if it is indeed righteous, should be angry and contentious when it is hindered.

[83.] And be it observed, it is a sure sign of a bad will, if it chafes under opposition. Impatience is the very fruit by which you are to recognize the will whose righteousness is merely a matter of show, hypocrisy, deception. A truly righteous will, if it be hindered, speaks thus: O God, I thought this was the way of doing good: but if it is not, I am content; thy will be done. Where there is inward strife and chafing, there is nothing good, though it may appear so.

[84.] Besides this twofold evil will, there is another will which, while quite righteous, must be resisted, likewise. Such was the will of David,

when he proposed to build God a temple and was commended by God for it; and yet God willed that it was not to be. Such, also, was the will of Christ in the garden when he shrank from the cup, and his will, though righteous, had to yield.

So even if you wished to convert the whole world, raise the dead, bring yourself and everybody to heaven, and do all kinds of marvelous things, you must nevertheless not desire to do any of these things unless you have preferred the will of God, subduing and routing your own, and said: My dear God, this and that seems good to me; if it please thee, let it be done; if it please thee not, let it remain undone.

[85.] And such a righteous will God very often frustrates in his saints, in order that under the appearance of good, there may not creep in a will which appears to be righteous but in reality is evil because false and sanctimonious. Likewise, that we may learn that our will, however good, is infinitely inferior to God's will. Therefore, an inferior will, though righteous, ought justly to give way or in complete abandonment disappear before the infinitely good will of God.

Thirdly, the good will in us is also to be hindered so that it may be made better; for surely God hinders a good will only that it may become better. But it becomes better when it is subjected and conformed to the very will of God by which it is hindered, in order that finally man may become altogether resigned, free and submissive, with no thought but to wait upon the will of God.

[86.] Behold, this is true obedience, but in our times, alas! it is altogether unknown. Now, the useless babblers arise, who have filled all Christendom with their noise and have misled the people with their doctrine. They have cried out from the pulpit that one must form and possess a good will, good purpose, good intention; and that when these have been acquired a person may rest secure that all he does is good. By this teaching they produce nothing better than self-willed and perverse men, independent and presumptuous spirits, who are ever found in conflict with God's will, while their own remains unsubdued and unbroken. For they think that, because their purposes are good and worth being carried out, everything that withstands them must be of the devil and not of God. Behold, thus arise the wolves in sheep's clothing, the proud saints, the most injurious men on earth. Thence it comes that bishops, churches, priests, monks and nuns, fight, quarrel and wage war against one another. Strife abounds everywhere, and every party

claims its will is righteous, its motive good, its purpose divine, pretending that the devilish work it does redounds to the praise and glory of God.

[87.] However, they ought to be correctly taught that the fear of God should abide also in the will, and that they should be suspicious of their own will and motives; ay, that they should cast far from them the accursed presumption of entertaining the notion that their own will or motive can be good as long as it is of their own making. All a person can do is to despair of possessing or producing of himself a will, motive or purpose which is righteous. For, as was said above (§77 ff.), the will is good when there is no will; inasmuch as God's will is to be found only where there is no will of one's own, and God's will is the very best. Therefore it is evident that these bawlers know neither what an evil nor what a righteous will is. They come with prodigious assurance and lead us to say with our mouths, "Thy will be done," but with our hearts, "my will be done," and so to mock both God and ourselves.

[88.] But someone may say: Ah, but God has given us a free will. The answer is: Yes certainly! God has given you a free will. Why, then, will you rob it of its freedom by becoming self-willed? If you do with it what you please, it is not free, but your slave. God has given, neither to you nor to anybody, an independent will. For self-will comes from the devil and Adam. These two were endowed by God with a free will, but out of a free will they made a captive will. A free will is one which has no independent desires but constantly looks to the will of God. This is the one and only condition of remaining free, being attached and restricted nowhere.

Conclusion of the Petition.

[89.] Now, you observe that in this petition God bids us to pray against ourselves, thereby teaching us that we have no greater enemy than ourselves. Our will is the greatest thing in us, and, opposing it, we must pray: Father, let me not so fall as to do according to my own will. Break my will, restrain my will; it matters not how I fare, only let it be done with me not according to my will, but according to thy will. For so it is in heaven. There is no self-will there; let it be so also upon earth. The working out of the answer to this prayer is painful to nature. For self-will is the deepest and greatest evil in us, and nothing is dearer to us than our own will.

[90.] So, then, in this petition nothing else is sought than the cross, pain, adversity and suffering of every kind, which is conducive to the destruction of our will. If the self-willed rightly understood how, by its use, they pray that their own will may be opposed all along the line, the prayer would be hateful to them or a source of dread.

[91.] Now, let us consider these first three petitions in their mutual relations. The first is that God's name may be honored, and his name and honor may be in us. But nobody can attain this unless he is pious and in the kingdom of God. For the dead and sinners cannot praise God, as David says in the sixth psalm. Now, nobody can be pious unless he is freed from sins; but we become free from sins when our will is rooted up and God's will implanted instead. When the will, which is the chief and highest of all faculties, is no longer ours, is no longer evil, then all the members are no longer ours, are no longer evil. Therefore, this petition is directed at the very head of wickedness, as it were, not at its hands or feet. It is directed at our will, which is the source of wickedness — wickedness in action.

The Fourth Petition.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

[92.] Hitherto we have used the word “thy, thy.” Now we say further “our, our, us.” We will try to find the reason for this. When God hears our first three petitions and hallows his name in us, he transfers us into his kingdom and infuses his grace into us, which begins to make us pious. This grace manifests itself at once in doing God's will, but it encounters an opposing Adam. Saint Paul laments (Rom 7:19) that he does not do as he would. For self-will, innate from Adam, together with all the members, contends against the good inclination; whereupon grace in the heart cries out to God against this Adam and speaks: “Thy will be done.” For man finds himself heavily burdened with himself.

[93.] Now, when God hears this cry, he comes to the aid of his dear grace and in order to strengthen the kingdom which he has begun he earnestly and mightily resists the chief villain, the old Adam. He inflicts every woe upon him, baffles all his purposes and confounds and humiliates him on every side. This is done when he sends upon man suffering and adversity of every kind; to this end must contribute malignant tongues, evil,

treacherous men, and if men do not suffice the very devils are laid under contribution. God's design is that man's will may ever be slain, with all its evil inclinations, and the will of God so done that grace may possess the kingdom, and the praise and honor of God alone be upheld.

[94.] When, now, this takes place, man is in great tribulation and anxiety, and he little thinks that it all means the doing of God's will. Rather, he supposes that he is forsaken and given over to devils and wicked men; that there is no longer any God in heaven, willing to know or hear him. This is the true hunger and thirst of the soul, in which it longs for comfort and help; and this hunger is much harder to bear than bodily hunger. Here is where the "our" comes in. Our needs clamor for recognition, and we say: "Give us this day our daily bread." How is this done?

[95.] God has left us much trouble upon earth and no other comfort in it than his holy Word. Christ has promised us (Jn 16:33): "In the world ye have tribulation, but in me peace." Therefore, if anyone wishes to surrender himself to God's kingdom, so that it may come to him, and to God's will, so that it may be done by him, let him not squirm and think to escape, for it must be even so. When your own will is foiled, God's will is done; that is, the more adversity you suffer, the more is God's will done, especially in death. It has been so determined, and nobody shall alter the fact, that there shall be tribulations for us in the world, but peace in Christ. In these straits the evil and the good part.

[96.] The evil, those who soon fall from grace and the kingdom already begun in them, neither understand God's will nor the purpose of such tribulations; nor do they know how to order themselves in reference to them. Therefore, they permit their self-will to regain the upper hand and to cast out grace, like bad stomachs which cannot retain food. Some become impatient, murmur, curse, blaspheme, being all but consumed by rage. Others run to and fro, seeking human comfort and counsel, bent upon nothing but escape from their troubles and the defeat and suppression of their adversaries. In short, they want to be their own helpers and deliverers, instead of waiting until God delivers them from their crosses. All these do themselves unspeakable injury; for when God takes hold of them to slay their own will, to erect the kingdom of his grace in them, to establish the glory and honor of his name in them, and to implant there his will, they are unwilling to suffer his divine, salutary hand; they fall back, and their own will, the wretched knave, remains in authority. Like the Jews, they release the robber

Barabbas and kill the grace of God, the innocent Son of God, who had begun to grow in them. The Psalm (106:13) speaks of them: “They waited not for his counsel,” that is, they would not suffer what God purposed to do with them.

[97.] The pious are wise and well understand of what use the divine will — that is, trouble of every kind — is, and also know well how they ought to receive it and act in it. They know that no enemy has ever been put to flight by one who runs. Therefore, no suffering or distress can be overcome by impatience, flight, and the desire for ease. It is to be conquered only by pluck and steadfastness; yea, by boldly meeting trouble and death. The proverb is true: “He who is afraid of hell rushes into it.” So he who is afraid of death shall be devoured by death eternally. He who fears suffering, shall be overcome. Nothing good comes of fear. Therefore, one must be plucky and bold, and always stand undismayed. But who can do this?

[98.] This prayer teaches you where to seek comfort and to find peace in such tribulation. You must say; Father, give us this day our daily bread. That is, Father, comfort and strengthen me, a poor, suffering man, with thy divine Word. I cannot endure thy hand, and yet I shall be condemned if I do not bear it. Therefore, strengthen me, Father, that I may not despair. Accordingly, God wills that in our suffering, which is the expression of his will, we should turn and flee nowhere but to him. We should not desire to escape. That would result in our own injury and the erection of an obstacle to God’s will and our welfare. We should flee to him in order to gain the strength we need, so that we may suffer his will to the end. Suffering and death on our part are God’s will, but it is impossible for anyone to submit to them without fear, unless the necessary strength is given. But no creature can strengthen him for it. Nay, all creatures, and especially man, if comfort and strength are sought from them, only make one more feeble, unsteady and yielding. Therefore, our strength must come from God’s Word alone as our daily bread. God speaks through Isaiah (50:4): “The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of them that are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him that is weary;” and through Mat. (11:28): “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” and by David (Ps 119:28): “Strengthen thou me according unto thy word;” and (Ps 130:5): “My soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.” And all the Scriptures are full, full, full of this doctrine. Now, when and through whom does this word come?

[99.] The Word comes in two ways. In the first place, through men. This is the case when God lets a comforting, strengthening word be sounded through a minister in church, or elsewhere through a fellow Christian, so that he feels in his heart something which prompts him to arouse himself and to take courage. For the Word of God, if it; comes rightly, surely produces such an echo in the heart. Therefore, foolish women should be driven away from the sick and dying, when they utter foolish talk such as this: Dear cousin, or dear John, it is not so bad; you will get well and be happy and rich again. With such words hearts are made timid, weak and unsteady; whereas, it is written God's Word is "Bread that strengtheneth man's heart" (Ps 104:15). Therefore my reply is; Dear cousin, eat your stale broth yourself. I wait for the daily bread, which strengthens me. So the sick ought to be resolutely strengthened for death, and those who suffer to be encouraged for greater sufferings. And when they say they have no strength to endure, then let this prayer be held up to them that they may beseech God for strength, whose will it is to be asked.

[100.] Secondly, the Word comes of itself, as when God pours his Word into a person through suffering, by which he becomes strong to endure all things. For God's Word is all-powerful. Rom 1:6. But what is this word, as God has uttered so many words.

[101.] Answer: No one can tell this exactly. As there are manifold infirmities and sufferings, so there are manifold words of God. For the timid need one word and the obstinate need another; the former must be strengthened the latter must be terrified. We are now speaking of those in whom God's will is done, that is, those who are in suffering and distress. For these, words should be selected which strengthen, as Paul selects for the Hebrews (chapter 12). But since the fruitful utterance and effect of God's Word are not in man's power, but alone in God's, it is necessary for us to pray that he may give us his holy Word, either direct or through man,

[102.] Now, it is true that he who has never been tried by suffering, and has not experienced how mighty to strengthen is the power of the Word of God, has no knowledge at all of what this petition aims at. Nor can it be palatable to him, for he knows and has tasted only the comfort and help that are in creatures and in himself, and has never gone through suffering nor been bereft of solace.

We will now consider this prayer word by word and try to thoroughly understand it, for it contains profound thoughts. (The order in the German

is, "Our Daily Bread Give Us Today.)

The First Word is "Our."

[103.] This word expresses the thought that it is not principally common bread for which we pray, which also the heathen eat and God gives to all men unasked, but for our bread, the bread for us, the children of the heavenly Father. The Father whom we ask is not an earthly but a heavenly and spiritual father; the bread for which we pray is not earthly but heavenly and spiritual bread; it is ours, it belongs to and is needed by us, the children of heaven. Otherwise there would be no need to say, "our daily bread"; for material bread would be sufficiently indicated by the words, Give us this day daily bread. But God wishes to teach his children to be more concerned about the food of the soul; yea, he forbids them to worry about the meat and drink for the body.

The Second Word Is "Daily."

[104.] The Greek for this word "daily" is "epiousion." It has been variously explained. Some say it means an immaterial bread; some a select and special bread; some, following the Hebrew language, a bread for the morrow — not what we Germans call a morning and evening bread, but what is prepared for the next day, in Latin "crastinum." This variety should confuse nobody, for there is no substantial difference of meaning, only so the quality and nature of this bread are properly stated.

[105.] First, it is called an immaterial bread, because the Word of God feeds man, not in relation to his body and the natural and mortal life. The state for which it feeds him is an immortal, spiritual and eternal state, far excelling this present one, as Christ says, "He that eateth this bread shall live forever" (Jn 6:58). Therefore, it is equivalent to saying: Father, give us the immortal, eternal bread.

[106.] Secondly, it is called a select, pleasing, sweet bread, delightful and of pleasant taste, like the heavenly bread mentioned in Wisdom 16:20: "Agreeing to every taste." Accordingly our heavenly bread is noble, pleasing, attractive and replete with power and grace far above the bread of nature. One might also understand it to mean select bread, that is, a bread belonging especially to and suited for us children of God. For the words, "egregius," "peculiaris," "proprius," mean this also. The apostle says to the

Hebrews (13:10) that we have a special altar, of which nobody may eat but we alone. And so we have a special, peculiar bread.

[107.] Thirdly, according to the Hebrew, it is bread for the morrow. Now, the Hebrew tongue has the peculiarity of predicating of tomorrow what we Germans predicate of today. In German “daily” means what we daily have at hand and in readiness, although we may not constantly use it. As we say, this or that I must have today or tomorrow and daily. Not knowing when we may need it, we would thus have it at hand. This is expressed by the Hebrew language through a word signifying “eras or crastinus,” tomorrow. So Jacob says to Laban (Gen 30:33): “So shall my righteousness answer for me hereafter;” that is, today or tomorrow, or whenever required, my righteousness shall be my answer and defense.

[108.] Now, the meaning is, we pray that God would so give us the immaterial bread — our special, peculiar, daily bread — that we may have it daily at hand and in supply. Then, when the need and suffering, which we must expect daily, occur, we may strengthen ourselves with it; thus we shall not be taken unprepared and, for the want of it, despair, perish and die eternally.

[109.] Here observe that we Christians ought to be rich and to have a large supply of this bread, and to be so disciplined and trained as daily to have God’s Word ready at hand in all temptations to strengthen ourselves and others. That the dear, holy fathers did this, we see in the epistles and their writings. But it is our fault that we have nothing; we do not pray to God for it. For this reason we cannot but have unlearned bishops, priests and monks, who are able to give us nothing. And we proceed to make evil worse by hating, disparaging and despising them. Behold, the wrath of God brings us to this. This prayer ought to be properly considered, for in it God teaches us to pray above all for spiritual prelates, especially for those who should give us the Word of God. For it shall not be given to them unless we are worthy of it and pray God for it. Therefore, when you see unlearned and unfit bishops, priests or monks, you must not curse, condemn and disparage them, but regard them in no other light than as a dreadful plague of God, wherewith he punishes you and us all because we have not prayed the Lord’s Prayer and besought God for our daily bread. For had we done so God would surely have heard us and granted to us good, capable, learned prelates. The fault is ours much more than theirs. But now men are to be found whom God has so severely smitten and hardened that they not only

fail to regard an unlearned priesthood as a plague, but even take pleasure in despising it and getting sport out of a condign retribution at the hands of God, whereas they ought to shed tears of blood, if they can, because God has inflicted upon us so serious and grievous a plague.

[110.] For, be it known, the severest punishment God ever sent upon the world has taken the form of blind and unlearned rulers, because of whom the Word of God and our daily bread are necessarily withheld with the result that we perish. Let Turks be Turks; this plague is greater. And woe to us that do not perceive and deprecate it.

[111.] On the other hand, God was never more merciful to the world than when he granted it learned and open-eyed priests, through whom his Word was provided for daily use in generous proportions. The kingdom of Christ and every Christian soul are born in and through the Word of God. Therefore, they must also be nourished, preserved and protected by it, otherwise they must perish more lamentably than the body perishes when it does not partake of the bread appropriate to it.

The Third Word of the Petition Is “Bread.”

[112.] The holy Word of God has many names in Scripture on account of its innumerable powers and activities, for it is truly everything and all-powerful. It is called a spiritual sword with which the devil and all spiritual foes are resisted. It is called a light, a morning rain, an evening rain, a heavenly dew, gold, silver, a medicine, a raiment, a gem, and many similar things. So also it is called bread, because the soul is fed, strengthened, made large and fat by it. And not only mere bread is meant by the word. As the Scriptures designate by “material bread” all kinds of bodily food, even that of finer quality, so also by spiritual bread is meant the infinite variety of spiritual food. There are many kinds of souls on earth and each has its own peculiar need; yet the Word of God makes abundant provision for every soul against its every need. For if the food of all kings that ever were or shall be, were gathered in a heap, it could not in anywise compare to the least word of God. Therefore, the Lord Christ in the Gospel calls the latter a royal feast, and through Isaiah, a precious, choice and magnificent banquet.

Now, What Is the Bread or Word of God?

[113.] The bread, the Word and food are Jesus Christ alone, our Lord himself, as he says: “I am the living bread which came down out of heaven... for the life of the world,” Jn 6:51. Therefore let no man be deceived with words or pretexts. All preaching and doctrine which do not offer and present to us Jesus Christ, are not the daily bread and nourishment of our souls. Nor can they avail in any need or trial.

The Fourth Word is “Give.”

[114.] The bread, Jesus Christ, nobody can obtain by himself, either by searching or hearing, or asking or seeking. To know Christ, all books are insufficient, all teachers inadequate, all reason too dull. The Father himself must reveal him and give him to us, as he says: “No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him,” Jn 6:44. Again (v. 65): “No man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father.” Again (v. 45): “Every one that hath heard from the Father... cometh unto me.” Therefore he teaches to pray for the blessed bread; “Give us this day.”

[115.] Now, Christ, our bread, is given to us in two ways. First, through external instrumentality, as through priests and teachers. And this, again, is accomplished in two ways: First, by words; secondly, in the sacrament of the altar. Much could be said of this, but, to be brief, it is of his wonderful grace that God grants us the privilege of hearing Christ preached and taught. But in all places there should be nothing but the preaching of Christ and the distribution of this daily bread.

[116.] In the sacrament Christ is received, but this would be quite in vain if he were not offered and set forth in the Word also. For the Word brings Christ home to the people and enables their hearts to understand him as the sacraments never could. It is a grievous thing that in our times masses are multiplied, and that zeal runs to the endowment of masses, while the very purpose which led to their institution, namely preaching, is neglected. Christ says and commands: “This do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me,” 1 Cor 11:25. And when there is preaching, the mass is concerning Christ and the sermon concerning Theodoric of Verona or some other fiction. This is God’s retribution because we do not pray for our daily bread, and finally the most worthy sacrament sinks not only into a vain, unfruitful use, but even into contempt. For of what use is it that he is present and bread is prepared for us, if it is not given to us and we cannot enjoy it?

It is as if a costly banquet were prepared and nobody were present to distribute the bread, to serve the viands or to pour out the drink, and the hungry ones had to be satisfied with smell and sight alone. Therefore, one should preach Christ alone, show all things in their relation to him, point him out in all the Scriptures — why he came, what he brought us, how we are to believe in and how to conduct ourselves toward him; so that the people may lay hold of Christ through the Word and know him, instead of coming away from the mass empty, knowing neither Christ nor themselves.

[117.] Secondly, Christ, our bread, is given to us inwardly, through direct teaching from God. And this inward work must attend the external teaching or the external is in vain. But, if the external is properly attended to, the inward will not be lacking. For God never permits his Word to remain without fruit. He is present and himself teaches inwardly what he imparts through the external medium of the priest; as he speaks through Isaiah (55:11): “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it,” as the rain watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth. Thereby true Christians are made, who know and taste Christ as a matter of experience.

[118.] You say: What is such knowledge of Christ or what is its effect? Answer: To learn and to know Christ is to understand what the apostle says: “Christ... was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,” 1 Cor 1:30. This you understand when you recognize that all your wisdom is damnable folly, your righteousness damnable unrighteousness, your holiness damnable impurity, your own redemption a miserable condemnation — you understand it when you recognize this and so realize that before God and all creatures you are veritably a fool, a sinner, an impure and condemned man; when you confess this not with mere words, but from your whole heart and with your works, finding no salvation, no comfort in anything but this — that Christ has been given to you by God, in whom you are to believe and whom you are so to enjoy that his righteousness, which you have invoked and in which you put your trust, alone upholds you. Faith is nothing else than eating this bread, as he says, “My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven.” Jn 6:32.

[119.] You say: Who does not know that we are sinners, that we are nothing, and are saved alone through Christ? Answer: It is a great mercy to know this fact, and that it can be proclaimed and heard through the spoken

word. But few are they who understand it and express it in the heart. Observation proves this to be true. Some there are who cannot endure the ignominy of being rated as fools and sinners, and quickly discover some wisdom and righteousness apart from Christ which is their own. Particularly, however, when in life or in death their conscience rebukes them, they no longer know that Christ is their righteousness but, in order to comfort and support their consciences with good works of their own doing, they search everywhere, and if this will not avail, as it cannot avail, they despair.

[120.] Much might be said about this, and every sermon ought to treat of this matter. For when Christ is preached and the precious bread distributed as we have shown, souls lay hold of it and find it a means of strength in the sufferings the divine will lays upon them. So they become strong and full of faith, and henceforth fear neither their sins, their consciences, the devil nor death. Now, you recognize the truth in reference to this bread. It is Christ. But he is of no use to you nor can you enjoy him unless God conveys him to you by words, so that you can hear and so know him. For what benefit is it to you that he is in heaven or in the form of bread? He must be distributed, prepared and reduced to words through the inward and outward Word. Behold, this, then, is truly God's Word: Christ is the bread, God's Word is the bread; and yet both are one and the same, one bread. For he is in the Word and the Word in him. To believe this same Word is to eat the bread; and he to whom God gives this, has eternal life.

The Fifth Word of the Petition to be Discussed is "Us."

[121.] It urges everyone to let his heart go out into the whole Christian world; to pray for himself and for all mankind, especially for the ministry, which is to administer the Word of God. As in the first three petitions we seek the things pertaining to God, that he may come into his own, in us; so now we pray for all Christendom. Of all things, nothing is more necessary and useful to Christendom than daily bread; that is, nothing is more essential than that God create a learned ministry and cause his Word to be preached and heard in all the world. For if the ministerial order and the Word of God have proper vogue, the kingdom of Christ grows and flourishes. This he has commanded us to pray for when he said: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest, Mt 9:38.

[122.] Therefore, according to the true order of love, we ought to pray most of all for the kingdom of Christ; thereby we do more than when we pray for ourselves. For, as Chrysostom says, he who prays for all Christendom shall be prayed for by all Christendom. Indeed, in the very same prayer he joins the kingdom of Christ to the petition for himself. Nor is it a good prayer when one prays only for himself. God grant that I may not err when I am not greatly pleased with the manifold brotherhoods, especially with those so devoted to themselves, as if they desired to go to heaven alone and leave us behind. But remember and note that it is not without purpose that Christ has taught none shall pray: “My Father,” but “Our Father”; not “Give me this day my daily bread,” but “Give us this day our daily bread,” “Our debts,” and so forth — us, us. He desires to hear the multitude, not me nor you, nor an exclusive, separate Pharisee. Therefore, sing with the multitude and you will sing well; or if you sing badly, it will pass with the multitude. If you sing alone, you will not escape condemnation. The Sixth Word is “This Day.”

[123.] This word, as has been said in paragraph 101, teaches that The Word of God is not in our power. Therefore, all false trust in wit, reason, knowledge and wisdom must fall. In the time of temptation God himself must console us and cheer and sustain us with his Word. For although there be a great abundance of Scripture, so that one might teach the whole world as long as he is in peace, if in times of storm God himself does not come and speak to us inwardly or through human agency, it is all soon forgotten and the ship will sink in spite of it. It is written: “They reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits’ end,” Ps 107:27. All their wisdom is swallowed up at once and they henceforth know nothing.

[124.] Therefore, since we live in perils and must be in constant expectation of suffering of every kind, and of the terror of death and the pains of hell, we must fear and pray that God will not long withhold his Word, but that he will today, now and daily, be present with us, give us our bread, and, as St. Paul says to the Ephesians (3:16), cause Christ to appear in us and to dwell in our inner man. Therefore, the prayer is not for tomorrow or the day after, as if we were secure and without fear today, but it is for today. And one learns all the better to say “today” and not “tomorrow” when God’s will begins to be done in us and our will perishes amid tribulations. Then, surely, one wishes that not only today, but in this very hour, the bread be given.

The word “today” in the Scriptures implies this whole life on earth, but I let that pass for the present.

Conclusion of the Petition.

[125.] The meaning, then, of this petition is: “O heavenly Father, since nobody loves thy will and we are too weak to endure the slaying of our will and the old Adam, we pray that thou wouldst feed, strengthen and comfort us with thy holy Word. Grant us thy grace, that we may hear the heavenly bread, Jesus Christ, preached through the whole world and may know him with the heart. Grant that all hurtful, heretical, erroneous and merely human doctrines may cease, and thy Word alone, which is our true bread of life, may be distributed.”

[126.] Do we not then also pray for the bread of the body? Answer: Yes, bread for the body may very well be understood here, but especially is meant spiritual bread, the bread for souls, which is Christ. Therefore, Christ teaches us not to be anxious about temporal food and clothing, but to confine our care to the need of the day. He says: “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof: be not, therefore, anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself,” Mt 6:34. And it would be a good exercise of faith if one learned to pray God only for the bread of today, that afterwards he might trust in a greater God. Not that one should not work for temporal possessions and food, but that one should not be anxious, as if we could not be fed unless we worried and were anxious. Work should be done rather to serve God thereby, to avoid idleness, and to satisfy his commandment, which he spoke to Adam: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,” Gen 3:19. It is not meant that we should worry and be anxious how we are to live. That matter may well be left to God, provided that in singleness of heart we work according to his commandment.

The Fifth Petition.

“And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”

[127.] Who believes that this petition applies to so many people and makes them all debtors? In the first place, for what will the great saints of our times pray, who regard themselves as very pious, especially when they have

confessed, been absolved and made satisfaction for their sins, and then live as if they did not need to pray for the forgiveness of their sins, as the true saints of old did, of whom David says (Ps 32:6): “For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee.” But they only accumulate great merits and build with their many good works a costly palace in heaven quite near to Saint Peter. With the help of God, we will try whether or no we can make sinners of them and include them in our poor sinful company, so that they may learn with us to pray this petition, not only before confession and penance, but also after the great absolution from penalty and debt, and to say with us after the remission of all debts: “Lord, forgive us our debts.”

[128.] Since one dare not lie nor jest before God, there must truly, truly be serious guilt, aye, much more serious than any indulgence has remitted or can remit. Therefore indulgences and this prayer are not the same; if all debt is removed by indulgences, then blot out this petition and do not pray before God for a debt which does not exist, so that you may not mock him and bring every evil upon yourself. But if this petition is true, then God help the poor indulgences which leave a debt so great that God justly condemns a man for it if he does not pray for grace. However, I will not say too much, for I am well aware of the subtle glosses whereby one is wont to make a nose of wax of the Scriptures.

[129.] This petition can be understood in two ways. First, that God forgives sin secretly, without our being sensible of it; just as he imputes and retains sin to many men who neither perceive nor regard it. Secondly, God forgives sin publicly and so that we feel it; just as he imputes sin to some so that they feel it; for instance, in the form of penalties and terrors felt by conscience. The first forgiveness is always necessary. The other is necessary at times as a safeguard against despair.

[130.] What is the meaning of this? I say that God is gracious to many men and heartily forgives all guilt, and yet tells them nothing of it, but so deals with them outwardly and inwardly that it seems to them that they have an unreconciled God, who will condemn them in time and eternity. Outwardly he afflicts them; inwardly he terrifies them. Such was the case with David when he said: “O Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger,” Ps 6:1. On the other hand, he secretly retains the guilt of some and is their enemy, though he tells them nothing about it, but so treats them that they think they are his beloved children. Outwardly it is well with them: inwardly they are joyful and sure of heaven. These are described in Psalm 10:6: “He saith in

his heart, I shall not be moved; to all generations I shall not be in adversity.” So, likewise, he sometimes vouchsafes to the conscience a solace and lets it feel a joyful confidence in his grace, in order that a man may be strengthened thereby and trust in God even when his conscience is terror-stricken. On the other hand he sometimes fills the conscience with fear and grief in order that man may not forget the fear of God even in prosperity.

[131.] The first form of forgiveness is bitter and grievous to us, but it is the noblest and best. The second is more agreeable, but in consequence less precious. The Lord Christ exhibits both in the case of Mary Magdalene. The first, when he turned his back upon her, but said to Simon, nevertheless: “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven,” Lk 7:47. Thereby she had not yet peace. The second, when he turned to her and said (vs. 48-50): “Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace.” Then she had peace. So, then, the first makes for purity, the second makes for peace. The former is a manifestation of God’s power and blessing, the latter of rest and riches in the heart. Immeasurable is the difference between the two. The first is a matter of faith alone and invites great reward; the second is a matter of feeling and appropriates the reward. The first is used with advanced Christians, the second with the weak and beginners.

[132.] Now, let us behold the mightiest letter of indulgence which ever came upon earth, and which, moreover, is not sold for money but is freely given to everybody. Other teachers locate the satisfaction in the bag and chest. But Christ locates it in the heart, so that it cannot be brought nearer. Therefore, you need not travel to Rome nor Jerusalem nor Saint James, neither here nor there, for indulgence. The poor can purchase it as well as the rich, the sick as well as the healthy, the layman as well as the priest, the servant as well as the master. And this indulgence is expressed in these plain words: “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses,” Mt 6:14-15.

[133.] This letter, sealed with the wounds of Christ himself and confirmed by his death, has almost faded and perished under the heavy torrents of indulgences from Rome.

[134.] Now, nobody can excuse himself for the fact that his sins are not forgiven or that his conscience remains disturbed. Christ does not say, you must fast, pray, give so much, do this or that for your sins. But, if you desire to make satisfaction, to pay your debt and to cancel your sins, hear my

counsel; ay, my commandment: Do nothing more than forgive all and change your heart — for there nobody can interfere with you — and be kind to him that has offended you; only forgive and all is right.

[135.] Why is this indulgence not also preached? Is not the word, counsel and promise of Christ worth as much as that of a preacher of dreams? True, such indulgence would not build Saint Peter's church (which the devil may easily suffer), but it builds Christ's church (which the devil cannot at all endure). For wood and stone do not trouble him much, but pious, united hearts cause him grief. Therefore, this indulgence without cost is not desired; the other, people refuse to tire of, no matter what the cost. Not that I reject the Roman indulgences,¹ but that I desire everything to be valued according to its true worth; and where good gold can be had for nothing, that copper be not valued more highly than gold. Beware of mere color and show.

[136.] There are two classes of men who cannot pray this petition and purchase this great indulgence. The first class grossly err. They forget their own debt and magnify that of their neighbors, so that they have the audacity say: I cannot and never will forgive him for that; I will never be reconciled to him. These carry a beam, ay, many beams, in their eyes and do not see them; but the little ^linter or mote in the eye of their neighbor they cannot forget. That is to say, their own sin which they have committed against God, they regard not, though they exaggerate the debt of their neighbor; and yet they desire that God will remit their great debt, whereas they will not perm.it small debts to pass unavenged. If they had committed no other sin or incurred no other debt, great enough would be this beam in their eyes, that they are disobedient to the commandment of God in being unwilling to forgive, and in exercising vengeance, which nobody may do but God alone. And God is truly strange in his justice and judgment; he who does not forgive has greater guilt than he who has done the harm and injury.

[137.] Therefore, this prayer becomes a sin to them, as Psalm 109:7, says: "Let his prayer be turned into sin." So such a man curses himself and completely subverts his prayer. By that through which he should obtain grace, he merits disfavor. For what else is really said, when you declare, I will not forgive, and stand before God with the precious prayer of our Lord, and with your mouth blab, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" — what else do you say than this: O God, I am your debtor, and I also have a debtor. Now, I will not forgive him, and do not thou forgive me either. I

will not obey thee, although thou commandest me to forgive. I will rather give up thee, thy heaven and everything and eternally go to the devil.

[138.] You poor man, have you or could you even endure an enemy who curses you before men as you curse yourself before God and all saints by your own prayer? And what has your enemy done to you? Rendered you a temporal injury. Why will you, on account of a trifling, temporal injury draw upon yourself one which is eternal? Beware, O man! Not he that grieves you, but you yourself, who do not forgive, inflict real harm upon yourself—a harm greater than any which the whole world could do to you.

[139.] The second class is more subtle. They feel spiritually injured by their neighbors. No material wrong is done to them, but they are displeased in their hearts through their great love (as they imagine) of righteousness and wisdom. Sin and folly these tender and delicate saints cannot endure. And these are they who, in the Scriptures, are called vipers and venomous serpents; who are so thoroughly blind that they never perceive the fact, nor are open to conviction in regard to it (as is possible with the coarser transgressors of the previous class), that they are those who do not forgive their neighbor, ay, who regard it a merit and good work to be at variance with their neighbor. These are known by this token, that they criticize, judge and condemn everything that another does, and will not be silent as long as they know anything about their neighbor. These are called in German, “afterreder” (slanderers); in Greek, devils; in Latin, calumniators; in Hebrew, Satans; in short, this accursed crew asperse, contemn and malign everybody, and withal under a show of righteousness. This devilish, infernal, accursed plague prevails now, alas! in all Christendom, more fearfully than any pestilence, and poisons almost all tongues. And God have mercy! no one has an eye for this wretched condition. These are they who have no mercy with a wrong-doer; they never pray for him, as becomes Christians, nor kindly instruct or fraternally rebuke him. Whereas, according to both divine and human law, a criminal is confined to one judge, one trial, one condemnation, by these venomous, hellish tongues one must suffer as many judges, trials and accusations as the ears he meets, though they should be a thousand a day. These are the miserable saints who cannot forgive and forget their neighbor’s fault. Their manner is never to be kindly disposed to any man from their hearts; so they indeed deserve the fate that God not only does not remit their debt, but also shows them the disfavor of not permitting them ever to recognize their guilt.

[140.] Thereupon they adorn themselves and say: Truly I do not say this to injure him nor with an evil intent; I wish him everything good. Behold, what soft fur the kitten has! Who would suppose that the tongue and claw lurking under such smooth fur could be so sharp? O hypocrite and false man! if you were his friend you would keep silence and not circulate with such pleasure and delight the misfortune of your neighbor. Ay, you would change your accursed displeasure into pity and mercy; would excuse him, shield him, beg others to hold their peace, pray God for him, give him brotherly counsel and help him to rise again and finally, also, take counsel and warning to think of your own frailty with fear. Saint Paul says: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor 10:12. Speak with the saint of old: "Yesterday he, today I."

[141.] Consider, also, how would it please you if God should do to you as you do to your neighbor, and, according to the language of this petition, should store up your sin and spread it through all the world? Or, how would you take it if another proclaimed your wickedness in the same way? No doubt you would wish everybody to keep silence, to excuse you, screen you and pray for you. But now you act contrary to nature and her law, which says. Do unto another as you would have another do unto you, Mt 7:12.

[142.] And do not think that a backbiter, a slanderer, a presumptuous judge, shall receive the forgiveness of his sins, either the least or the greatest, or that he is able to do a single good work until he changes his evil tongue. For Saint James says (1:26): "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain."

[143.] But if, when your neighbor sins, you really wish to do something, then keep the noble, precious. Golden Rule of Christ, where he says: "If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone," Mt 18:15. Observe, do not tell it to others, but let it be between you and him alone. It is as if he said: If you are not willing to tell him alone, then hold your peace and let it die and be buried in your heart, for, as Ecclesiasticus (19:10) says, "It will not burst thee."

[144.] Oh, if only one would diligently pursue this noble work, how easily could he do penance for his sins, even if he did not do much besides! For if in turn he should sin, God will say: This man covered and forgave his neighbor's guilt; let all creatures approve and cover him in turn, and his sin shall nevermore be stored up against him. But now satisfaction and

penances for sin are sought in every way and manner, and eyes and ears are closed to our daily prayer, which teaches that the best way to do penance, to make satisfaction for sins and obtain indulgence, is to forgive our debtors. Into this forgetful and careless mood have we been led by the great pomp of indulgence, and the worry over the penances imposed in the confessional.

[145.] But the slanderers come and paint the devil over their doors, whitewash themselves and say: But it is true; why should I not tell it if it is true? I saw it and certainly know it.

[146.] Answer: It is also true that you have sinned. Why do you not tell your own wickedness, if you are commanded to tell all that is true? But if you wish to be silent with reference to yourself, then, according to the law of nature, do the same also to another.

[147.] Furthermore, even if it is true, you are doing nothing better than traitors and those who inform on others to obtain the prize set upon their heads, for what they say of many a poor wretch is often only too true.

[148.] Moreover, you also act contrary to the rule of Christ, which forbids your telling it except to the offender alone. Only if he is unwilling to hear you, you are to take two witnesses and tell it to him again. And if he will still not hear you, then with these witnesses you are to accuse him in the presence of the whole Church. But this rule is now obsolete. Therefore, the consequence is such as must inevitably follow indifference to God's Word.

[149.] The widespread vice of backbiting and harping upon the sins of others is well-nigh the most accursed sin on earth. For all other sins defile and destroy only the person who commits them; but the miserable, accursed tattler is defiled with and destroyed by the sins of others. Observe this: The greater the pleasure and delight in sin, the greater the sin itself. Just when the guilty person often blames himself for the sin he has done, humbles and reproves himself, and desires it to be hid from general knowledge, thus gaining the upper hand over his sin, the tattler comes along and falls into the same filth, and, like a sow, he devours it and wallows in it. He is far from wishing that it had never been committed; he takes pleasure in it, making it a subject for conversation, censure and mirth. Hence I said (§139) whoever likes to tattle and backbite is no man's friend; nay, he is a common enemy of the human race, like the devil. For he knows no greater pleasure than to hear, tell and discuss the sins and the shame of men, and to rejoice in the mischief done. He who is fond of such conduct cannot wish men

good but only harm, and this is precisely the reward that shall be meted out to him in the end.

[150.] For our warning, then, let us learn that, before God, every man is a sinner, and that there is someone who occupies the same relation toward each of us.

[151.] In the first place, we are sinners in respect of coarse wrong-doing; for few are they who have never fallen into great and grievous transgressions. But even if a man were so righteous that he had never fallen into shocking transgressions, he still fails to satisfy the divine commandment in a most important respect. He has received many favors above other men, but he has never offered adequate gratitude and requital for the smallest gift; nay, he fails to thank God sufficiently for the coat or cloak which he wears day by day. Such gifts of God as life, health, honor, property, friends, reason and countless others, we do not even mention. Therefore, if God should hold him to a strict account, it would be as Job says (9:3), he could not answer God one of a thousand; and he would be happy if he had a merciful Judge to implore. So, also, David says to the Lord: Enter not into judgment with thy servant. We are sinners for the additional reason that no one is so righteous as never to exhibit any longer the odor and the traces of the old Adam. These are sufficient in themselves to warrant condemnation on the part of God. Therefore, even those who live in grace can be preserved alone by humility. Their guilt is not imputed to them since they judge themselves, implore grace and forgive their debtors.

[152.] In the second place, we also have debtors. For God ever so ordains that somebody does us harm in property, honor or whatever it may be. His design is to give us occasion to repent of our sins and to forgive our debtors. And even if one does not need to suffer much from others (which is not a good sign), he surely finds in himself a dislike of others. He may harbor suspicion against the one or a grudge against the other. It is clearly true, then, what St. Augustine says: Everyone is a debtor to God and, in turn, someone is a debtor to him. The man who does not recognize this is surely blind and devoid of self-knowledge.

[153.] Now, behold, what a wretched thing this miserable life is. In itself it has no food, no solace, no staff for our souls, as is shown in the former petition. Moreover, it is a state of sin in which we would be justly condemned if, in answer to this petition, salvation were not vouchsafed through the pure grace and mercy of God. So the Lord's Prayer resolves this life al-

together into sin and shame in order that we may be filled with weariness and disgust. Now look, you tattler. Judge yourself. Speak of yourself. See who you are. Put your hand into your own bosom. Then you will forget the shame of your neighbor, for you have both your hands full — and much more — of yourself.

The Sixth Petition.

“And lead us not into temptation.”

[154.] If the word “temptation” or “allurement” were not so much in vogue it would be better and clearer to say: And lead us not into trials. But in this petition we learn to realize the wretchedness of our life upon earth. For it is all trial; no man who is wise will look for peace and security here; he can never attain to such a condition. And though we all should desire it, it is still in vain. A life of trial it is and remains.

[155.] Therefore we do not say. Take the temptation from me, but, Lead us not into it. What the supplicant means to say is. We are surrounded with temptations on all sides and cannot escape them, but, O our Father, help us not to enter into them, that is, not to consent to yield to them and so be overcome and overthrown. He who yields to temptation sins and becomes a captive of sin, as Saint Paul says, Rom 7,23.

[156.] Therefore, this life is, as Job says (7:1), nothing but a warfare and a perpetual conflict with sin. And the dragon, the devil, continually assaults us and endeavors to draw us into his jaws. Saint Peter says: Dear brethren, “be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,” 1 Pet 5:8. Behold, Saint Peter, our dear father and faithful bishop, says that our adversary seeks us, not at any particular place, but everywhere and at every point. He incites, stirs and troubles all our members and senses from within and without. From within, by evil suggestions; from without, by wicked images, words and acts. Men and every creature are his agents. Unchastity, wrath, pride, covetousness and other sins are the objects of his temptations, and he uses every cunning device to induce us to yield. As soon as we feel so inclined let us swiftly raise our eyes to God in prayer; O God, Father, see how I am moved and tempted to this or that vice; see how I am hindered in this or that good work. Guard me, dear Father, and help me; let me not succumb and yield to

it. How blessed would he be who would rise and apply this petition faithfully! There are many who know not when they are tempted nor what they should do in temptation.

[157.] What is temptation? It is of two kinds. On the one hand, that which incites to anger, hate, bitterness, displeasure, impatience; such as sickness, poverty, dishonor and everything painful, especially the annoyance of having one's will or purpose, one's opinion, counsel, word or work rejected and despised. These things are of daily occurrence in this life, and God inflicts them through evil men or devils.

[158.] If one feels a wrong impulse, he ought to be wise and not be taken by surprise, for such is the course of this life. He ought to draw forth this petition as a true bead in the rosary of prayer, and say: O Father, here is certainly a temptation, which is come upon me; help me, that it may not result in my seduction and overthrow.

[159.] When temptation assumes this form two kinds of foolish conduct are possible. First, when we say: Indeed, I would be pious and not get angry if I had peace. And some give our Lord God and his saints no rest until he takes the temptation from them. He must heal this man's leg, make that man rich, let this man secure justice. And they do whatever they can by their own efforts and the efforts of others to extricate themselves, and so they remain lazy and cowardly knights, unwilling to sustain attack, or to fight. Therefore, they are not crowned; ay, they fall into the opposite temptation, as we shall hear. But the proper course is not to slip by the temptation nor to escape it, but in knightly valor to conquer it. This is the sentiment which Job expresses when he says (7:1): "Is there not a warfare to man upon earth?"

[160.] The others, who neither overcome the temptation nor are relieved of it, plunge into anger, hate, impatience; give themselves entirely to the devil; work evil by word and work; become murderers, robbers, slanderers, perjurers, backbiters, and makers of all kinds of mischief. The temptation has conquered them and they yield to every evil impulse. The devil has them altogether in his power and they are his captives. They invoke neither God nor his saints. But inasmuch as our life is called a temptation by God himself, and it is unavoidable that we are subjected to offenses and injustice in body, property and honor, we ought to look forward to trials with unruffled minds, receive them in a spirit of wisdom when they come, and say: Ah, such is the nature of life, what am I to do? It is and remains a tempta-

tion. It cannot be otherwise. God help me that I may not be moved and overthrown.

[161.] Thus you see that temptation can be avoided by no one; but resistance may be made and» with prayer and recourse to divine aid, we can put ourselves in readiness to meet such designs. In the book of an old father we read that a young brother expressed a desire to be rid of his thoughts. Thereupon the old father said: Dear brother, you cannot prevent the birds from flying in the air over your head, but you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair. So, as St. Augustine says, we cannot prevent offenses and temptations, but by prayer and invocation of the help of God we can prevent them from overcoming us.

[162.] On the other hand the temptation is that which incites to unchastity, lasciviousness, pride, avarice, vainglory and everything that pleases. Especially does this kind of temptation come when one is permitted to have his way; when his words, counsel and deeds are praised; and when he receives much honor and appreciation.

[163.] This is the most dangerous temptation, characteristic of the time of the Antichrist. So David says in the Psalm (91:7): “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand.” Its spread at the present time is alarming. For the world strives only for wealth, honor and pleasure. In particular is it true that the young acquire no training for the fight against temptation and carnal lust. They fall without an effort. Nothing is considered disgraceful any more. The whole world is full of lecherous songs and stories, as if this were the proper thing. In all this we witness the fearful wrath of God, who permits the world thus to fall into temptation because nobody calls upon him.

[164.] It is indeed a sore temptation for a young person when the devil fans his flesh into a flame, sets marrow, bone and every member on fire, and, at the same time, incites him from without by seductive objects in the form of gestures, dances, clothes, words and attractive pictures of women or men. As Job says (41:21): “His breath kindleth coals.” The world is now altogether mad in its devotion to dress and jewelry. But it is not impossible for us to overcome all this, provided we are in the habit of calling upon God and praying: “Father, lead us not into temptation.” This should be our prayer also when tempted to pride in consequence of receiving praise and honor; like- Wise when wealth or any worldly boon falls to our lot.

[165.] Why does God permit men thus to be tempted to sin? Answer: That man may learn to know himself and God. To know himself — that he can do nothing but sin and evil. To know God — that God's grace is mightier than all creatures. Thus man shall learn to despise himself and to praise and glorify God's grace. For there have been those who have tried to withstand unchastity by their own powers, by fasting and work. They have broken down their bodies thereby and yet have accomplished nothing. For evil desire is extinguished by nothing except the heavenly dew and rain of God's grace. Fasting, work and watching must indeed accompany it; but they are not sufficient.

Conclusion of the Petition.

[166.] Now, when God has forgiven us our debts, nothing is so much to be guarded against as the danger of falling again. For, as David says (Ps 104:25), in the sea of this world are creeping things innumerable; that is, many temptations and stumbling-blocks, which would draw us back into guilt. It is necessary that, without ceasing, we speak from our hearts: Father, lead us not into temptation. I do not ask to be altogether free from temptation, for that would be disastrous and worse than ten temptations like those first mentioned; but I ask that I may not fall and sin against my neighbor or thee. St. James says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation," Ja 1:12. Why? Because temptations exercise a man, and perfect him in humility and patience, and make him acceptable to God, as his dearest children are. Blessed is he who takes this to heart. Now, alas! everybody seeks rest, peace, pleasure, and comfort in this life. Therefore, the reign of Antichrist is approaching, if indeed it is not already here.

The Seventh And Last Petition.

"But deliver us from evil. Amen."

[167.] Note carefully that evil is deprecated, and should be deprecated, last of all; that is, strife, famine, war, pestilence, plagues, and also hell and purgatory, and all ills which cause pain to body and soul.

[168.] While these things are objects of prayer, they should come in their proper order, and last of all.

Why? Some, indeed many, honor and pray to God and his saints, but only that they may escape evil; and they seek nothing else. They do not even think of the first petition, by which priority is assigned to the honor, name and will of God. They seek their own will and reverse this prayer completely, beginning at the end and never coming to the first part. They wish to be free from their ills, whether it be to the honor of God or not, whether it be his will or not.

[169.] But an upright man speaks thus: Dear Father, evil and pain press upon me and I suffer much adversity and affliction, and I fear hell. Deliver me from all this, but so that thy honor, praise and will are served. If it be thy will not to deliver me, then not my will but thine be done; for thy divine honor and will are dearer to me than all my peace and comfort now and forever. Behold, this is an acceptable, good prayer, and is surely heard in heaven; but if it is not uttered in this sense, it is unacceptable and will not even be heard. Inasmuch, then, as this life is nothing but a wretched, evil state, which renders temptation inevitable, we should pray for deliverance from evil for the purpose that through the cessation of temptation and sin, God*s will be done and his kingdom come, to the praise and honor of his holy name.

The Word “Amen.”

[170.] “Amen” is a Hebrew or Jewish word, meaning “truly” or “verily,” and it is well to remember that it expresses the faith we should have in all petitions. Christ has said: “Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive,” Mt 21:22. So in another place: “All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them,” Mk 11:24. So the Gentile woman received what she asked when she did not desist but firmly believed, so that even the Lord said to her: “O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt,” Mt 15:28. So Saint James also speaks (1:6-7): “Let him that asketh of God ask in faith, nothing doubting. For let not the man that doubteth think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” Therefore, as the wise man says (Eccles 7:9), the end of prayer is better than the beginning. For at the end, when you say “Amen” with heartfelt confidence and faith, your prayer is certainly confirmed and heard. When it is not so ended, beginning and continuation are profitless.

[171.] Accordingly, a man who wishes to pray, should examine and prove himself, whether he believes or doubts that he will be heard. If he finds himself doubting or prays with a feeling of uncertainty and ventures it as a chance, the prayer is nothing. For he does not hold his heart steady, but wavers and rocks to and fro. Therefore, God can put nothing into it for a certainty, just as you can put little into a man's hand if he does not hold it steady. And consider, how would it please you if somebody had come to you with an urgent request, but had closed with the statement: However, I do not believe that you will give it to me — this when you had promised it to him for certain? You would regard his request as a mockery, and would revoke all that you had promised, and perhaps chastise him in addition. How, then, can it please God — who has given a sure promise that if we pray we shall have what we ask — if, through our doubts, we charge him with falsehood and in our prayer violate the very principle of prayer, casting reproach upon his truthfulness, though, in our prayer, we make our appeal to it.

[172.] Therefore, the word “Amen” means “truly,” “verily,” “certainly”; it is a word of firm, heartfelt faith. To use it is as if you said: O God, Father, the things which I have prayed for, I doubt not, are certainly right and will be granted, not because I have prayed for them, but because thou hast commanded us to pray for them, and hast surely promised to give them. I am certain that thou, God, art true and canst not lie, and therefore, not the worthiness of my prayer, but the certainty of thy truth, makes me firmly believe, with every doubt removed, that it shall become an Amen and be an Amen.

[173.] There are some people who, in this respect, err beyond measure. Praying much with their lips but never with their hearts, they render their own prayers ineffective by refusing to trust that they have been heard until convinced of having prayed worthily and well. Thus they build upon themselves, that is, upon sand. These shall all be rejected; for a prayer sufficient in itself and worthy to be heard before God is not possible. It must rest upon the truth and promise of God. For if God had not commanded to pray and promised to hear, all creation could not obtain one grain with all its prayers. Therefore, look to it: That prayer is not good and right which is full, devout, sweet and long, whether it entreats temporal or eternal possessions. But that is right which absolutely trusts that it shall be heard (however insignificant and unworthy in itself it may be) for the sake of the faithful vow and prom-

ise of God. God's word and promise make your prayer effective, not your devotion. For faith, grounded upon his word, is true devotion, without which all devotion is illusion and error.

Brief View And Order Of All Seven Prescribed Petitions.

A Dialog Between the Soul and God.

[1.] The Soul. O our Father, who art in heaven, we, thy children upon earth, are separated from thee in exile. What a great gulf is between thee and us! How shall we ever get home to thee in our fatherland?

[2.] God. A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master. If, then, I am your father, where is mine honor? And if I am your master, where is my fear and reverence (Mal 1:6)? For my holy name is blasphemed and dishonored in and through you (Is 52:5).

[3.] The First Petition. The Soul. O Father, it is, alas! true. We recognize our guilt. Be thou a gracious Father and enter not into judgment with us, but grant thy grace that we may so live that thy holy name may be sanctified in us. Let us think, speak, do, possess or undertake nothing unless it redound to thy honor and praise; that before all things thy honor and name, and not our own vain honor and name, may be sought in us. Grant that we may love, fear and honor thee as children do a father.

[4.] God. How can my honor and name be sanctified in you (Is 52:5), seeing that all your heart and thoughts are inclined to evil and are captive in sin (Gen 8:21), and that nobody can sing my praise in a foreign land (Ps 137:4)?

[5.] The Second Petition. The Soul. O Father, it is true. We feel that our members are inclined to sin, and that the world, the flesh and the devil would reign in us, and so banish thy honor and name. Therefore we pray, deliver us from our exile. Let thy kingdom come, that sin may be cast out and we may become righteous and acceptable to thee; that thou alone mayest rule in us, and in the submission of all our powers, both of soul and body, we may become thy kingdom.

[6.] God. Whom I will help, him I destroy; and whom I will make alive, blessed, rich and righteous, him I kill, reject, make poor and destroy (Deut 32:39). But this my counsel and doing ye will not endure (Ps 78:10). How can I help you and what more shall I do (Is 5:4)?

[7.] The Third Petition. The Soul. We are sorry that we cannot bear thy healing hand and understand its purpose. O Father, grant us grace, and help us that we may suffer thy divine will to be done in us. Even if it be painful to us, do thou continue to chastise, pierce, strike and burn; do whatever thou wilt, only that thy will and not ours may be done. Restrain, dear Father, and suffer us to undertake and accomplish nothing under the guidance of our own opinion, desire and purpose. For our will is adverse to thine. Thy will alone is good, although it does not appear so, while ours is evil, although it may seem good.

[8.] God. It is true that men have often loved me with the lips while the heart has been far from me (Is 29:13), and when I have laid my hands upon them for their good, they have turned back and fallen from me in the midst of my work, as you read (Ps 78:9): “Turned back in the day of battle.” Those who began well and moved me to deal with them, have turned from me and have again fallen into sin, to dishonor me.

[9.] The Fourth Petition. The Soul. O Father, it is indeed true: “By strength shall no man prevail” (1 Sam 2:9). And who can abide before thy hand unless thou, thyself, dost strengthen and comfort him? Therefore, dear Father, lay hold of us; work thy will, that we may become thy kingdom, to thy praise and honor. But, dear Father, in dealing thus with us, strengthen us with thy holy Word; give us our daily bread. Give into our hearts thy dear Son Jesus Christ, the true bread from heaven, that, strengthened by him, we may joyfully bear and suffer that thy will be done, while our will is defeated and mortified. Ay, give grace also to the w^hole kingdom of Christ; send us well-taught pastors and preachers who will not seek to comfort us by sowing worthless fancies, but who will teach us thy holy Gospel and Jesus Christ.

[10.] God. It is not good to cast that which is holy (Mt 7:6) and the children’s bread (Mt 15:26) to the dogs. Ye sin daily, and, though I cause much preaching among you day and night (Jer 5:1), ye obey and hear not, and my Word is despised (Is 42:20).

[11.] The Fifth Petition. The Soul. O Father, have mercy and deny us not the precious bread on that account. But it grieves us that we do not do as thou hast commanded, and we pray that thou wouldst have patience with us poor children, remit us this our guilt and not enter into judgment with us; for in thy sight no one is justified. Behold thy promise to forgive those who have forgiven their debtors. Not that by such forgiveness we become wor-

thy of thy forgiveness, but thou art true and hast graciously promised forgiveness to all who forgive their neighbors. In thy promise we put our trust.

[12.] God. I have forgiven and delivered you often, and ye do not remain steadfast and faithful (Ps 78:8). Ye are of little faith (Mt 8:26). Ye are not able to watch and wait with me even a little while; quickly ye fall into temptation again (Mt 26:40).

[13.] The Sixth Petition. The Soul. We are weak and sick, O Father, and the temptations of the flesh and the world are great and manifold. O dear Father, hold us and let us not fall into temptation and sin again; but grant us grace, that we may remain steadfast and fight bravely until our end, for without thy grace and help we can do nothing.

[14.] God. I am righteous and my judgment is right (Ps 11:7). Therefore, sin cannot go unpunished. Accordingly, ye must bear the evil. It is for your sin that you are tempted, which I am compelled to punish and hinder.

[15.] The Seventh Petition. The Soul. Inasmuch as evil means trials for us and temptations, deliver us from evil, dear Father; so that, delivered from all sin and evil in accordance with thy will, we may be thy kingdom, to praise, honor and hallow thee for all eternity. Amen. And since thou hast taught and commanded us so to pray and promised to hear us, we trust and are assured, dearest Father, that thou wilt, to the honor of thy truth, graciously and mercifully grant us all this.

[16.] Finally, someone may say: What, then, if I am not able to believe that I am heard? Answer: Then do as the father of the possessed child did (Mk 9:24) when Christ said to him: Canst thou believe? All things are possible to him that believeth. With weeping eyes that same father cried: O Lord, I believe; help thou my faith where it is too weak!

To God Alone Be the Honor and the Glory.

1. Remember this was written at the very beginning of Luther's reformatory work.↩

4. Sermon on Holy Baptism

In this sermon Luther distinguishes between the sign and the significance of Baptism and faith in it. The sign consists in being placed under the water in the name of the Father, and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Its significance is the dying or destruction of sin as typified by Noah's flood, and the resurrection of the new man in righteousness before God. But baptism in itself neither forces a man from sin nor makes him righteous before God, if he does not believe in its power and acknowledge in it a covenant with God, which obligates him to battle against sin through his whole life. In spite of this struggle he can hope that God is gracious to him, and his sins, from which he can never be free here, God does not judge according to the demands of justice, but because of his baptism and faith he forgives them.

Ten editions appeared during 1519 and 1520, seven at Wittenberg and three at Leipzig.

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 6, 131; Jena, 1, 186; Altenburg, 1, 310; Leipzig, 22, 139; Erlangen, 21, 229; Walch, 10, 2593; St. Louis Walch, 10, 2112.

1. "Baptismus"

First, Baptism is called in Greek "Baptismus" and in Latin "Mersio"; that is, to so place in water that the water covers. Although it is hardly ever the custom to place children under water in Baptism, but to pour the water over them from the hand, still such custom would by no means be improper; and if the sound of the little word "Baptism" were to govern the ordinance, the child or anyone else receiving baptism should properly be plunged into the water and drawn forth again. For without doubt the word "Taufe" is derived from the word "tief," meaning to place deep in the water that which is baptized. Such mode would also express the meaning of Baptism, which is that the old man and the sinful birth of flesh and blood are to be completely drowned by the grace of God, as we shall hear. This significance might well be expressed by the more appropriate sign.¹

2. An Outward Sign

Secondly, Baptism is an outward sign or emblem distinguishing us from unbaptized people; thereby we are identified as the people of Christ our Lord, under whose banner, the holy cross, we continually battle against sin. Hence we must consider three things in this holy sacrament: the sign, the signification and faith. The sign consists in thrusting the person into the water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. But he is not left in the water; he is drawn forth again. Hence we say, “aus der Taufe gehoben” (lifted from the baptismal dip). Both features should be found in the sign — the plunge and the lift.

3. Death and Resurrection

Thirdly, the signification is a blessed death of sin and a resurrection in the grace of God; the old man, conceived and born in sin, is born in grace when he is drowned and raised a new man. Hence Paul, in Titus 3:5, calls Baptism “the washing of regeneration,” a washing in which a person is regenerated and renewed. Likewise Christ says in John 3:5: “Except one be born of water and the Spirit [of grace], he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Just as a child, lifted forth and born from the mother’s body, is by virtue of that birth of the flesh a sinful being and a child of wrath; so, by virtue of being lifted forth and born from Baptism man is spiritual, and by reason of such birth, a justified child of grace. Thus his sins are drowned in Baptism and righteousness arises in their stead.

4. Not Fully Realized In This Life

Point four: The signification, the death or drowning of sin, is not fully realized in this life, not until man dies bodily and is resolved into dust. The sacramental ceremony or sign of Baptism is soon performed and is evident to our eyes; but the spiritual significance of Baptism, the drowning of sin, continues as long as we live, and will be accomplished only at death. Then will man be truly buried in Baptism and not until then will the meaning of Baptism be fully realized. Therefore one’s life is nothing but a spiritual Baptism continuing until death. He who is baptized is condemned to death; as if the officiating minister had said: Behold, thou art sinful flesh; therefore I baptize thee in God’s name and in this name I condemn thee to death so that you and all your sins may sink and perish. As Paul says in Romans 6:4:

“We were buried therefore with him [Christ] through baptism into death.” And the sooner one dies after his Baptism, the sooner will his Baptism be realized. For sin does not entirely cease so long as the body lives; the body is so completely conceived in sin that sin has become its nature. As the prophet says: “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Ps 51:5. There is no possible help for sinful nature until it dies and, together with all its sins, is destroyed. A Christian’s life, then, is in reality a blessed dying, begun at his Baptism and ended in the grave, for he shall be made completely new by God on the last day.

5. What Baptism Signifies Continues Through Life

Point five: The act of lifting one forth from the baptismal water is likewise speedily accomplished. That, however, which such baptismal ceremony is to signify — the spiritual birth, grace and righteousness which are first imparted at Baptism — these continue in an increasing measure until death, aye, until the last day. Then shall be realized fully what it means to be lifted forth from the baptismal plunge. Pure in body and soul, we shall rise from death, sin and all evil unto eternal life. Then we shall be completely raised from the baptismal waters; and at last truly born, we shall put on the true chrisom; eternal life in heaven. If the sponsors wished to express these sentiments, they would say: Behold, thy sins are now drowned; in the name of God we receive thee into the new life of innocence. Thus the angels shall lift forth all Christians, all baptized, godly people, on the last day. They shall usher in the reality to which Baptism and the sponsors point; as Christ says in Mt 24:31: “He shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

6. Prefigured by the Deluge

Point six: Baptism was prefigured by the deluge, when the whole world was drowned except Noah and his three sons and their wives, eight persons, who were saved in the ark. The drowning of the inhabitants of the world signifies that the sins of the world are drowned in Baptism, but the saving of eight persons in the ark with all the animals signifies that man is saved through Baptism; as 1 Peter 3:20-21, explains. Now, Baptism is the greater

flood of the two. For the deluge in the days of Noah drowned only one generation of people. Baptism, however, is flooding still the whole world; from Christ's birth on to the day of judgment it drowns many people, but it is a deluge of grace, while the former was one of wrath. Accordingly, Psalm 29:10, declares: "Jehovah sat as King at the flood; yea, Jehovah sitteth as King forever." Undoubtedly more people receive Baptism than were drowned in the flood.

7. Baptism Leaves One Perfectly Guiltless

Point seven: It is then necessarily true that as one comes from Baptism he is clean and without sin, perfectly guiltless. But many do not understand this aright. Thinking that no sin at all remains, they become listless and indifferent about slaying their sinful nature; this is precisely the attitude of some toward confession. Therefore, as said above, we should rightly recognize that our flesh, so long as it lives here, is by nature evil and sinful. As a remedy God has devised another creation whereby it is completely renewed. Thus, Jeremiah (18:4-6) declares that when a vessel is marred in the hands of a potter, he throws the clay back into the pile, kneads it and makes of it another vessel, as seems good to him. So, God says, you are in my hands. In the first birth we were marred; therefore he casts us again into the earth by means of death and so fashions us at the day of judgment that we are without defect and without sin.

8. Resurrection Awaits

This counsel begins to go into effect at Baptism, which, as was said, is a figure of death and the resurrection at the day of judgment. Therefore, as far as the Sacrament signifies, or symbolizes, anything, man is already dead with all his sin, and he is already risen, and the Sacrament is completed. But the effect of the Sacrament is not yet complete — death and the resurrection on the last day still remain to be looked for.

9. Sacramentally Clean

Point eight: Thus, man is altogether clean and guiltless, sacramentally. This means that, in Baptism, he has received a sign from God by which he has

been assured that his sins shall die, that God's grace shall be with him in death, and that he shall rise on the last day, pure, free from sin, guiltless, meet for eternal life. On the strength of the Sacrament it is true, then, that he is free from sin and guilt; but inasmuch as this state is not a present reality and his life is still that in the flesh, he is neither free from sin nor altogether pure, but he has entered upon freedom from sin and impurity.

10. Desires Of The Fallen Nature Will Stir Throughout Life

With maturity, the promptings of our fallen nature begin to manifest themselves — anger, unchastity, carnal love, avarice, pride and the like. None of these would be in existence had all sin been drowned and killed in the Sacrament. At present, we have nothing more than a sign that, on the last day, they shall be drowned through death and resurrection. Thus, Paul, in Rom 7:18, and all the saints, lament that they are sinners and that they bear sin in their nature notwithstanding Baptism and sainthood. The explanation is that the desires of our fallen nature will stir throughout life.

11. Of What Advantage Is Baptism?

Point nine; Do you ask, of what advantage is Baptism if it does not blot out and remove sin altogether? Now we come to the correct understanding and conception of Baptism. The benefit of the Sacrament of Baptism is this, that therein God unites himself with you and becomes one with you in a gracious, comforting covenant.

12. Renewing Work Begins

In the first place, you desire, in accordance with the purpose and meaning of Baptism, to die with your sins and to be renewed on the last day, a hope inspired by the Sacrament, as has been explained. On the strength of such desire on your part, God admits you to Baptism. The renewing work begins from that hour; he imparts to you his grace and Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit begins to kill the sin in your nature and to prepare the latter for death and for the resurrection on the last day.

13. You Pledge Yourself

In the second place, you pledge yourself to remain in this state and, throughout your life, to the moment of death, to destroy sin more and more thoroughly. God, accepting your pledge, on his part exercises you during your whole life by imposing many good works, and sufferings not a few. Thereby he fulfills the desire expressed by you at Baptism, by dying and arising to a new life to attain to a full realization of Baptism. We see and read, then, that God subjected his saints to many sufferings and severe torments, that they should meet a speedy end, fulfill the conditions of Baptism, and, after death, be made new. Wherever this course is not followed — wherever a man is not subjected to sufferings and discipline, his evil nature will triumph in that he vitiates his Baptism, falls into sin and remains the same unrenewed being as before.

14. God Covenants With You Not To Impute Sin

Point ten: Since such is your pledge to God, God in turn shows you grace, and covenants with you that he will not impute to you the sins remaining in your nature after Baptism and will not regard them nor condemn you because of them. He is contented and pleased with your effort to destroy them and your desire to be rid of them through death. Consequently, though evil thoughts and desires may stir, although at times you sin and fall, yet, if you arise and renew your covenant, your sins are already forgiven by virtue of the covenant based upon the Sacrament of Baptism. As Paul teaches in Romans 8:1, the evil, sinful inclination of our nature condemns no one who believes in Christ and refuses to sanction and yield to it. And John says: “If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” 1 Jn 1:1-2. This comes to pass in Baptism where Christ is given to us, as we shall hear in the following sermon.

15. If Not For This Covenant, Every Sin Would Condemn Us

Point eleven: If it were not for this covenant and God did not in mercy overlook our sin, every sin, however small, would condemn us. For God's judgment can endure no sin. Hence there is no greater comfort on earth than Baptism, in which we pass under the jurisdiction of God's grace and mercy. These do not visit judgment upon sin, but, by a variety of discipline, drive it out of our hearts. As Augustine says in well chosen words: "Sin is fully forgiven in Baptism; not that it is no longer there, but it is not imputed." His meaning is: Sin, indeed, will remain in our flesh until death, and its promptings will not cease; but inasmuch as we do not sanction it nor live in it, it has been deprived through Baptism of its power to condemn and injure us, and is doomed to gradual extinction and final death.

16. Do Not Despair

Therefore one should not be terrified when he feels evil lust or love; he should not despair even when he falls. But he should call to mind his Baptism and joyfully comfort himself with the fact that God there covenanted to slay his sins and not to impute them unto condemnation, provided he refuses to consent to them and remain in them. Also when one's thoughts and desires burn with passion; yea, even when one falls from grace, there is still no ground for despair. It is rather a reminder from God to remember the baptismal pledge; to call upon him for grace in order to make self-discipline possible; to battle against sin; ay, even to long for death as a release from one's sins.

17. Faith

Point twelve: The third feature requiring attention in connection with this Sacrament, is faith. We are firmly to believe not only that the Sacrament is an emblem of death and resurrection, whereby we shall be renewed into a sinless and eternal life on the last day, but also that it begins and effects life; binding us in covenant with God that we will contend against and destroy sin to the death, and that God, for his part, will deal with us according to his longsuffering and mercy and not judge us in severity because, sinful throughout life, we shall become sinless only through death. Thus you understand how a man becomes guiltless and clean through Baptism and yet remains full of evil propensities; he is clean only in the sense that he has

made a beginning therein, that he has signified and covenanted to be clean, and placed himself under obligation to grow purer continually. On the strength of this God will not impute to him his remaining infirmities; wherefore his righteousness consists rather in what God imputes than in inherent goodness. As the prophet (Ps 32:1-2) says: “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity.” Such faith is most necessary, for it is the foundation of all consolation. He who lacks that must despair in his sin. It is because of the sin remaining after Baptism that all good works are unclean before God. Consequently, we must without fear and faltering cling to Baptism, hold it up in the face of all sin and terror of conscience, and humbly say: I know very well that no work of my own is clean, but my Baptism holds ever good, wherein God, who cannot lie, has covenanted not to impute my sins to me but to destroy and blot them out.

18. The Mercy of God

We understand, then, that our freedom from guilt resulting from Baptism is due altogether to the mercy of God. Mercy has begun to free us from guilt; owing to his mercy God is long-suffering toward sin and deals with us as sinless. It is apparent, therefore, why Christians in the Scriptures are called children of mercy, a people of grace, men of the gracious will of God: they began to be clean through Baptism and through God*s mercy they will not be condemned with the sin that remains in them, but through death, at the last day, they will become entirely pure, as signified by their Baptism.

19. Persisting In Sin Renders Baptism Destitute of Effect

Hence, a great mistake is made by those who, convinced that they have become perfectly clean through Baptism, go on in their folly and never mortify their sin. Instead of admitting that they commit sin, they persist in the same, thus rendering their Baptism destitute of effect. They cling merely to some outward performance, beneath which pride, hatred and other disregarded iniquities of human nature only increase and grow. No, our wicked, evil desire must rather be acknowledged to be really sin. That it cannot injure us is to be ascribed alone to the grace of God which will not impute it, provided we battle against it through self-discipline, toil and suffering, and

at last,-in death, destroy it. To them who fail in this it shall not be remitted. They do not heed their Baptism nor comply with its covenanted requirements. Instead of that they hinder the work of God and the effect of the Sacrament.

20. Those Who Disregard Baptism Altogether

Point fourteen: Among these may be numbered those people also who think that they can blot out and overcome their sins by making satisfaction for them. They stray so far as to disregard Baptism altogether, as if the blessing of the Sacrament had ceased with its performance. They do not know that Baptism is in force throughout life — even on the day of judgment. Accordingly, they purpose to find something else that will blot out sin, namely, works. What they effect for themselves and others, is a guilty, frightened, unstable conscience. They have no assurance as to their relation to God and deem their Baptism profitless on account of sin.

21. Make the Most of Baptism

For the sake of your life beware! We repeat, the fact of his fall into sin should induce man to make the most of Baptism. There God has covenanted with him to forgive him all his sins, provided he will battle against them to the death. Upon this fact, this pledge of God, we must joyfully take our stand. Then Baptism will once more be in force and operation. Once more the heart will be content and at ease. It has found rest, not in its own works, not in the satisfaction rendered by itself, but in the mercy of God which, in Baptism, has been pledged forever. Though all creatures and all sins should fall upon us, we must hold fast to this faith. Should one permit himself to be deprived of it, he would make God a liar in view of the covenant made in the Sacrament of Baptism.

22. The Devil Directs His Main Attack Against Faith

Point fifteen: The devil directs his main attack against faith. When that has been overthrown he has won. The Sacrament of Repentance,² also, of which mention was made before, is based upon this Sacrament. No others receive forgiveness of sin but those who are baptized, that is, those who have re-

ceived the promise from God that their sin shall be forgiven. The Sacrament of Repentance points back to the Sacrament of Baptism and confirms it. It would be quite in order for the minister to say when pronouncing absolution: “Behold, God has now forgiven thy sin according to the promise made before in Baptism, a forgiveness which I have been empowered to pronounce by virtue of the office of the keys. Now you are once more in possession of Baptism, its power and life. If you believe, it is true in respect of you. If you do not believe, you perish.” You will find, then, that sin will hinder Baptism in working its appropriate effects: the forgiveness and destruction of sin. Unbelief alone, however, with reference to these effects will render Baptism absolutely destitute of all power. Hence everything depends upon faith.

23. Faith Obtains Forgiveness of Sins

To express myself clearly on the subject, I would say that to have forgiveness of sin is a vastly different thing from overcoming and casting out sin. Faith obtains the forgiveness of sins, although they are by no means cast out altogether. But to cast out sin means application and finally death, whereby sin shall be totally destroyed. However, both are the effect of Baptism. So the apostle writes to the Hebrews (12:1), who were baptized and forgiven, that they should lay aside the sin that so easily besets them. Because I believe that God will not impute sin to me. Baptism is effective and my sins are forgiven, although verily a great part of them still remain. Then follows the casting out of sin by means of suffering and death. This is that article of faith which we confess in the words: “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the forgiveness of sin,” etc. Here Baptism especially is meant, in which God covenants to forgive us. Therefore we must have no doubt concerning this forgiveness.

24. Baptism Makes Suffering And Death Beneficial and Profitable

Point sixteen: It also follows that Baptism makes all suffering, and especially death, beneficial and profitable. Even these must be instrumental in bringing about the appropriate effect of Baptism — the mortification of sin. He who would satisfy the requirements of Baptism and be delivered from

sin, must die. It cannot be otherwise. But sin is not willing to die; it is that which makes death so bitter and terrible. God is gracious and mighty, and sin which brought death will be cast out by its own work, death.

25. Baptism, Suffering, And Death Are The Way To Godliness

There are people whose aspiration in life is godliness and who make bold to express this as their desire. Now, there is no speedier method, no shorter way, than Baptism with what it effects: suffering and death. If they recoil from these it is evident that godliness is far from their knowledge as well as their purpose. In order to furnish us an opportunity for discipline and suffering, God has instituted a variety of conditions. For some he has ordained the matrimonial state; for others the clerical and for still others the governing state. And upon each one he has enjoined toil and labor, so that the flesh may be mortified and prepared for death. For everyone who has been baptized. Baptism has turned this life's rest, ease and comfort into sheer poison and a hindrance to activity. Through those no one acquires readiness for death, aversion for sin and compliance with the conditions of Baptism, but only love for the present life and dread of life eternal; fear of death and flight from the destructive battle with sin.

26. Mortify One's Faults

Point seventeen: See, now, how men live. There are many who fast, pray, make pilgrimages and the like, by which they expect to accumulate merit and to gain an exalted seat in heaven; but they never learn to mortify their faults. We should fast and direct all our energies to conquering the old Adam, the sinful nature, and we should accustom ourselves to dispense with all gaiety in life and thus daily make greater preparation for death; so that we may satisfy the requirements of Baptism and the activities and toils in keeping with it. These should be measured, not according to number and magnitude, but according to the requirements of Baptism. Everyone should exercise himself, both as to manner and amount, with the purpose in view of suppressing his sinful nature and preparing it for death. When sin increases or decreases he should adjust himself accordingly. But men rush and shoulder now this, then that. Their methods are equally unstable, since

they are merely after creating certain impressions and representing a certain appearance in all they do. Then again, they cast their undertakings suddenly aside, so that they become quite fickle. And some become mentally so unbalanced and morally so perverted as to be useless to themselves and others.

27. We Are Not Without Sin After Repentance or Baptism

All this is the fruit of the doctrine that has taken possession of us, that we are without sin after repentance or Baptism, and are to amass good works, not for the purpose of blotting out sin, but for the sake of the works themselves or of making satisfaction for the sins committed. For this condition of affairs those preachers are, in part, responsible who discourse in a misleading manner upon the legends concerning the dear saints and their works, enjoining upon all to follow their example. Thoughtless people become victims of such error and the example of the saints becomes the source of their ruin. No, God has appointed for each man a way of his own, together with the necessary grace to fulfill the requirements of his Baptism. Baptism with what it implies is the common standard established for all. Let everyone in his particular station ask himself in what way he is best able to satisfy the requirements of his Baptism, that is, to mortify sin and die. Thus Christ's burden will be light and mild and we shall be free from anxiety and care. Solomon says of such persons as described above, in Ecclesiastes 10:15: "The labor of fools wearieth every one of them; for he knoweth not how to go to the city." Just as those who wish to go to the city and cannot find the way are in anxiety, so it is with these persons; all their life and activity is toilsome and they accomplish nothing after all.

28. One Station Is Not Higher Than Another

Point eighteen: Here arises the frequent question if Baptism and the vows made in connection with it are more exalted and important than, for instance, the vow of celibacy and those taken by members of the priesthood and of the religious orders. The point of the question is that Baptism is common to all Christians, while the clerics have the reputation among the people of having something better and higher. The answer is easy from what we have said. In Baptism we all alike vow one thing, to mortify sin and become holy by means of the work and grace of God. We there surrender and

sacrifice ourselves as clay to the potter, and no one is better than another. But to enable us to fulfill the requirements of Baptism one particular station and method is not sufficient. For this reason I have stated that each one must find out for himself in which station he shall be best able to mortify sin and subdue his nature. It is true, then, that there is no higher, greater, better vow than the baptismal vow. Or could anything greater be vowed than to cast out all sin, to die, to hate this life and to become holy?

29. One May Bind Himself To A Station

However, beyond this vow one may indeed bind himself to any particular station which he deems appropriate and helpful to him in fulfilling his Baptismal covenant. In going to a city, one may take a footpath and another the public road, as each thinks best. So, he who binds himself to the marriage state travels amid the toils and troubles of that state. Amid these he will constrain his nature to experience joy and grief, to eschew sin and to prepare himself for death; objects he could not accomplish so well apart from the marriage state. But should one seek more suffering and choose to exercise himself variously as a more direct way to death, let him vow celibacy or join himself to some religious order. For a spiritual calling, if it is what it ought to be, is likely to be so full of vexations and sufferings as to afford a better exercise of baptismal obligations than the marriage state. The effect of such sufferings should be a glad looking forward to death and consequent attainment of the end of Baptism. Higher than this estate is another, the governing power of the spiritual realm, the office of a bishop, pastor, etc. Such as these should be prepared for death at all hours, since they should exercise themselves at all hours with objects of toil and suffering. Not only for their own sake, but for the sake of those subject to them, should they be prepared for death.

30. We Have Forgotten Baptism

However, in all these callings the right measure is to be applied. Not the number and magnitude of our performances is to be the measure of our activity, but the purpose of casting out sin. But alas! we have forgotten Baptism and its significance; we have forgotten what we promised in connection with it; we have forgotten how to walk in its strength and how to attain

its end. Equally indifferent we have become to our ways and calling, having forgotten the purpose of the several callings and the deportment necessary in them to attain the end of Baptism. They have degenerated to mere pageantry, and all that is left of them is a mere worldly show; as Isaiah 1:22, says: “Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water.” For this have mercy upon us, O God! Amen.

31. Always Thank God For Our Baptism

Point nineteen: Since the holy Sacrament of Baptism is so great, so full of grace and comfort, we should take earnest heed to always heartily and joyfully thank, praise and magnify God. I fear it is due to our ingratitude that, blinded, we have become unworthy to recognize the grace of God thus bestowed. The whole world has been full of Baptism and divine grace, and they have not departed yet; we, however, have been seduced into the anxious performance of self-devised works, indulgences and other sources of deceptive comfort. And we thought that trust in God was impossible until we had become godly and had made satisfaction for our sins, just as if his grace called for purchase or compensation.

It is a solemn truth that he who does not recognize that God’s grace will serve a sinner and save him, but travels alone to the judgment, will never rejoice in God, nor can he either love or praise him. But when we hear that God receives us sinners in the baptismal covenant, that therein he spares us and cleanses us from day to day, the heart cannot but rejoice, love and praise God, if we firmly believe it. Thus he says in the prophecy of Malachi (3:17): “I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Hence it is meet and right that we praise the blessed majesty which manifests such grace and mercy toward us poor condemned worms of the dust, and magnify and recognize the work for what it is in itself.

32. Guard Against False Security

Point twenty: It is necessary, however, to guard against false security which says: If Baptism is such a source of grace and power that God will not impute to us our sins, but everything is settled by virtue of Baptism the moment we turn from sin, I shall in the meantime, live and act to suit myself,

and at a later day or at death remember my Baptism, remind God of his covenant and then comply with the requirements of Baptism.

33. Walk With Care And In Fear

Yes, verily there is something marvelous in Baptism — when you turn from sin and plead your Baptismal covenant your sins are forgiven. Beware, however, when you sin so wantonly and willfully against grace, lest judgment lay hold of you and prevent your return; and lest, as a measure of divine retribution, the trial should be too severe for your faith, in spite of your willingness to place your faith, or trust, in your Baptism. For if they scarcely stand who do not sin or if they are brought to their fall through mere infirmity, what will become of you with your blasphemy in which you tempt and mock grace? 1 Pet 4:18. Therefore, let us walk with care and in fear, that we may hold fast the riches of divine grace with a firm faith and joyfully thank God's mercy always and forever. Amen.

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1. This treatise has been drawn upon by Baptists for quotations to prove their sectarian immersion theory. What Luther thought of the Baptists of his day the following treatise shows. All that Luther conceded to the Baptists we are willing to concede today. Baptism being the means of identifying the sinner with his Saviour, is called in Scripture a burial into the death of Christ. This is what Baptism is to Lutherans, not a mere sign. But as the mode might well express the essence, Luther admits, and so do all Lutherans, that a plunge into water is an apt symbol of the burial of sin into the death of Christ, and the subsequent resurrection of a new creature. But never for a moment did Luther hold that Baptism could not be administered by sprinkling. Had he done so, the man who faced pope and emperor alone would not have feared to augment his reformatory work in this respect. Luther and Lutherans are liberal where God's Word is not disobeyed, and acknowledge the validity of Baptism by immersion. They prefer to maintain Baptism by sprinkling, however, for the simple reasons that, in general, immersion is not practicable for infants — nor, in many instances, for adults; that sprinkling fitly symbolizes the shedding of the Holy Spirit upon the

candidate for Baptism; and that Lutherans deem their liberty in Christ too precious to surrender it at any point whatever at the dictation of men.↵

2. Now no longer called and considered a Sacrament among Lutherans.↵

5. Instructions on Confession

A Christian, in confession, should place his greatest confidence in the mercy of God and confess his sins to God before he does to the pastor; firmly resolve to amend his life in the future; be assured he does not know all his mortal sins; and finally examine himself in the light of the Ten Commandments.

Five editions appeared in 1519 and 1520.

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 4:135; Jena, 1:186; Altenburg, 1:310; Leipzig Supplement, 118; Erlangen, 21:245; Walch, 10:2649; St. Louis Walch, 10:2158.

[1.] First, every Christian who wishes to make confession of his sins should place his confidence without reserve in the merciful promises and invitations of God, firmly believing that the almighty God will graciously forgive him his sins. For the holy prophet says in Psalm 25:7: “Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to thy lovingkindness remember thou me, for thy goodness’ sake, O Jehovah.” Further instruction on this point may be found by everyone in the prayer of Manasses, King of Judah. This prayer being an excellent aid to confession, every Christian may say it before confession. For this reason I append it to this treatise.

[2.] Secondly, before a Christian confesses his sins to the confessor, let him, with due diligence, make confession to the Lord God himself. Let him enumerate and make known to the divine Majesty all his sins and infirmities; his conversation, deeds and manner of life, without extenuating and concealing anything, just as if he dealt with a very familiar friend. His sinful and wicked thoughts also, so far as they can be recalled, should be confessed.

[3.] Thirdly, every Christian who would confess his sins should possess the honest intention and determination to amend his life and to forsake every manner of open, mortal sin; as adultery, murder, theft, slander, usury, unchastity, robbery and the like. Yes, this must be his purpose whenever he finds himself guilty of one of the sins mentioned. A confession without this

purpose would be a dangerous and unpromising undertaking. When, however, one discovers that he lacks the steady purpose to amend his life, he should fall upon his knees and pray to God for it, saying: O my God and Lord, I am altogether lacking in that which I owe thee, and it is not within my own power to secure it; therefore I pray thee that thou wouldst graciously work in me the fulfillment of what thou commandest and command what thou wilt.

[4.] Fourthly, when confession is to be made of the sins of the heart which are known to God alone for the reason that they are secret, those secret sins should be confessed which were committed with a fixed purpose in the very face of the divine commandments. For a resolve to remain free from such sins as beset everyone, aims at the impossible. And the unceasing desire of man and woman for each other, together with the restless activity of the devil, render our whole nature altogether sinful.

[5.] Fifthly, one must consider that it is impossible to call to mind and confess all his mortal sins; he should remember that after applying all diligence he confesses only the smallest part of his sins. The prophet says: "Who can discern his errors? Clear thou me from hidden faults." Ps 19:12. And again, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight." Ps 51:4. The sins to be confessed, therefore, are the manifestly mortal sins and such as press upon a man's conscience at the time of confession. The others require no attention. It is quite impossible to confess all mortal sins in view of the fact that, when God sits in judgment and passes sentence upon them, not according to his gracious mercy, but his stern justice, even our good works render us guilty of death and condemnation. But if a person is determined to confess all his mortal sins, confession may be made in the following brief words: Yea, my whole life, all my deeds, actions, words and thoughts, are such as to merit death and condemnation. For if a person should be of opinion that he is free from mortal sin — that itself were the deadliest mortal sin.

[6.] In the sixth place, the person who desires to confess his sins should not bother with the tiresome and endless distinctions made in reference to sin and the circumstances involved. He should occupy himself solely with the commandments of God. By examining and putting his mind upon them, he should make them the basis of his confession. For a survey of the divine commandments will show that God has been betrayed, despised and angered by us through all sorts of sin.

[7.] In the seventh place, one should recognize that there is a vast difference between the commandments of God and the commandments and ordinances of men. Without the former no person can be saved; but human ordinances are by no means essential to salvation.

[8.] In the eighth place, when one would go to confession he should successively consider the ten commandments and mention how he has sinned against each.

As sins against the first commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” he may mention:

[9.] Failure to love, honor and fear God aright; seeking counsel from wizards and witches; tempting God by placing body and soul in needless jeopardy; faith in the signs and counsels of astrologers with reference to private and public affairs; sorcery; to be an observer of days; making a covenant with Satan; ascribing adversity to the devil or hostile men; faith in magic signs, spells and potions as remedies against danger and adversity; unwillingness to look to God for every favor and blessing; failure to look to God as the only helper in adversity; invocation of the saints for temporal blessings and well-being in disregard of the soul’s welfare; entertaining greater love and fear for the creature or things made than for God himself; self-complacency by reason of magnifying one’s own righteousness, wisdom or any virtue whatever; sins of pride; grieving the Holy Spirit by one’s wrong doings.

As sins against the second commandment, “Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain,” he may mention:

[10.] Blasphemy against God and his dear saints; the perpetual seeking of one’s own honor, praise and glory, not those of God; habitual and thoughtless swearing; false swearing; the making of wrong vows and the breaking of right ones; contemptuous remarks concerning God, his saints and Word; failure to call upon the name of God in adversity and to praise it in prosperity; vaunting the gifts received from God for the purpose of gaining honor

among men. Sins of pride, also, may be brought under the head of this commandment.

As sins against the third commandment of God, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” [Thou shalt sanctify the holy day. — Luther], he may mention:

[11.] Refusal to make room for God in the heart through prayer, attendance upon the sacrament and the preached Word; dancing and gaming on holy days, and also frivolous conduct together with intemperance and gluttony or idleness; mischievous performances out of keeping with the occasion, such as silly conversation, gadding about, aimless roving and traveling, disregard of the injunctions of the Church by engaging in work or trade not required by necessity; a celebration in which stress is laid solely upon meat, drink and dress without considering the welfare of souls; indolence in regard to the service of God, a sin which violates every divine commandment.

As sins against the fourth commandment, “Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother,” may be mentioned:

[12.] Lack of obedience, respect and love toward parents; indifference to the weakness, need and poverty of one’s parents, or, for such reasons to be ashamed of them; to cause them grief, to do them violence or to slander them; failure to heed the precepts of the Church; lack of respect for the ministry; failure to give due honor to princes, masters, counselors and all that are in authority; heresy and other acts of disobedience toward the Church.

As sins against the fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” he may mention:

[13.] Actual murder or complicity in it by counsel or command; bearing malice against a neighbor and every expression of deadly anger; slander, calumny, detraction, insult offered to a neighbor, also subjecting him to unjust suspicion; the bearing of a violent grudge; anger, strife and contention; provoking and waging war; robbery; indifference to works of

mercy; lack of love for enemies; refusal to forgive an enemy and to do him good.

As sins against the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” may be mentioned:

[14.] The commission or practice of adultery or impurity of any kind; pleasure in lascivious, lewd and unchaste words, songs, stories and pictures; to be the cause of unchastity in others through unchaste gestures, glances, signs; the seduction of one’s self or others to impurity by voluptuous apparel; to concur at heart in the commission of unchastity; failure to avoid unchastity by shunning such causes as intemperance, gluttony, slothfulness and the like; failure to safeguard and preserve the virginity and purity of others; the pervasion of the five senses and all the members by lust; the commission of nameless sins.

As sins against the seventh commandment, “Thou shalt not steal,” may be mentioned:

[15.] Actual theft; robbery; dishonesty in public life; laying sacrilegious hands upon church property; the enticement of the neighbor’s servant; the purloining of his cattle; usury; fraud; the use of false weights and measures; dishonesty in keeping or acquiring an inheritance; stinginess; indifference to works of mercy.

As sins against the eighth commandment, “Thou shalt not bear false witness,” may be mentioned:

[16.] The suppression of the truth in court; unscrupulous lying; servility and flattery; the arousing of discord and strife between others; the placing of a bad construction upon the words, life and acts of a neighbor; giving encouragement and aid to slanderous tongues; failure to defend the neighbor; lack of uncompromising firmness against the slanderous tongue.

[17.] In the ninth place: The last two commandments, the ninth, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife,” and the tenth, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s possessions,” are explanatory of the preceding command-

ments in that they command us to overcome sin in so far as it has been inherited. In the present life this cannot be accomplished. Therefore St. Paul says to the Romans (7:15): “What I hate that I do;” and to the Galatians (5:12): “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit;” for no person is in this perishable life perfectly free from unclean lust and from avarice.

[18.] In the tenth place: The sum of the matter is this, that those persons are saved who place their trust solely in God, not in their works nor in any creature. Consequently, man should learn to have greater confidence in God’s mercy than in the zeal with which he makes confession. One cannot be too active, determined and guarded against the accursed evil of confiding in one’s own works. Therefore, we should accustom our consciences to trust in God, provided it is done with the understanding that to believe and trust in God is pleasing to him in the highest degree, and that unreserved trust in God is his highest glory.

The Prayer Of King Manasses When Held Captive In Babylon, Which Is Very Helpful In Confession.

“O Lord, Almighty God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of their righteous seed; who hast made heaven and earth, with all the ornament thereof; who hast bound the sea by the word of thy commandment; who hast shut up the deep, and sealed it by thy terrible and glorious name; whom all men fear, and tremble before thy power; for the majesty of thy glory cannot be borne, and thine angry threatening toward sinners cannot be endured; but thy merciful promise is unmeasurable and unsearchable; for thou art the most high Lord, of great compassion, longsuffering, very merciful, and repentest of the evils of men. Thou, O Lord, according to thy great goodness hast promised repentance and forgiveness to them that have sinned against thee: and of thine infinite mercies hast appointed repentance unto sinners, that they may be saved. Thou, therefore, O Lord, that art the God of the just, hast not appointed repentance to the just, as to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, which have not sinned against thee; but thou hast appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. My transgressions, O Lord, are multiplied: my trans-

gressions are multiplied, and I am not worthy to behold and see the height of heaven for the multitude of mine iniquities. I am bowed down with many iron bands, that I cannot lift up mine head, neither have any release: for I have provoked thy wrath, and done evil before thee: I did not thy will, neither kept I thy commandments: I have set up abominations, and have multiplied offenses. Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart, beseeching thee of grace. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge mine iniquities: wherefore, I humbly beseech thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities. Be not angry with me forever, by reserving evil for me; neither condemn me into the lower parts of the earth. For thou art the God, even the God of them that repent; and in me thou wilt show all thy goodness: for thou wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy. Therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life: for all the powers of the heavens do praise thee, and thine is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Readings in Luther and the Bible on Confirmation.

At confirmation, after being properly instructed, we promise all that our God-parents promised for us at our baptism. What we promised then before the whole congregation we are to promise God by renewing our baptismal vows every day. Confirmation was not instituted by Christ, but appointed by the Church, to make sure that all her children receive the necessary Christian instruction (Mt 28:20) and thus be able to rightly examine themselves (1 Cor 11:28-29) before going to the Lord's Supper. The instruction, examination, sorrow of sin, confession of faith and the laying on of hands should never be forgotten. 1 Tim 6:12; Rev 2:10; Is 41:10; Lk 17:5.

Readings in Luther and the Bible on Confession of Sin and the Office of the Keys.

Vol. 11, 195-202; 235-237. Vol. 12, 384; Vol. 14, 208. Day of St. Peter and St. Paul, 2 Sermon. Short Admonition for Confession, 1529; Short instruction how to confess, 1519. House Postil, 1 Sun. after Easter, 2 Sermon. Writings against auricular confession. Dogmatical-Polemical writings against the Papists, second part. Writings on the office of the keys.

A. Confession is a sacred act, but it is not a sacrament as baptism, because it was not expressly instituted by Christ and it lacks the external element.

I. Confession embraces two parts, (a) One, that we confess our sins; (b) the other, that we receive forgiveness of our sins from the pastor (or confessor) as from God himself. The forgiveness is declared in the name and by command of God, Jn 20:22-23; 1 Cor 4:1; 2 Cor 5:20. It is also the office of the New Testament ministry to exclude manifest and impenitent sinners from the Christian congregation, and to restore those who repent (Mt. 18:15-17).

II. Before God we should acknowledge ourselves guilty of all sins, even of those which we do not discern, as we do in the Lord's Prayer. But before the pastor we should confess those sins only which we know and feel in our hearts. With him they are sacredly confidential. Ps 32:5; Prov 28:13; 1 Jn 1:8-9; Ps 19-12; Ps 51; 2 Sam 12:13; Mk 1:5.

III. Here consider your station in the light of the Ten Commandments, whether you be a father, mother, son, daughter, master, mistress, servant; whether in these relations you have been disobedient, unfaithful, slothful; whether you have wronged anyone by word or deed; whether you have stolen, neglected, wasted aught, or done any harm. This is a mirror into which to look before confessing. Rom 3:20; Ps 139:23-24.

B. The Office of the Keys is the peculiar Church authority Christ has delegated to his Church on earth, (1) to forgive penitent sinners their sins (Loosing Key, absolution), and (2) to retain the sins of the impenitent, so long as they do not repent (Binding Key, the ban). Mt 18:17-20; 16:19; Rom 1:16; Lk 24:46-47; Jn 20:22-23. According to the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers any member of the Church can make the declaration of grace to all who make penitent confession of sin (Jas 5:16; Rom 12:6-7; 1 Cor chapters 12 and 14. It is not man but God through his Church who forgives sins (Mk 2:7; 16:19; 2 Cor 2:10).

6. Benefits of The Lord's Supper.

This treatise on the Lord's Supper Luther wrote either while he was at Coburg or immediately upon his return to Wittenberg. It was printed twice at Wittenberg in 1530 and twice in 1531, and once at Leipzig in 1531. Rambach issued it in 1723, with an extract of the "Sermon on the Worthy Reception of the Lord's Supper."

German Text: Wittenberg edition, 4, 394; Jena, 5, 184; Altenburg, 5, 318; Leipzig, 20, 248; Erlangen, 23, 163; Walch, 10, 2664; St. Louis Walch, 10, 2170.

Admonition to Receive the Body and Blood of Our Lord.

[1.] The universal custom prevalent throughout Christendom of administering Baptism in childhood, not deferring the rite until maturity and the age of reason have been reached, is, in my judgment, the ordering of a divine providence. I am sure were it to become the rule now to baptize only the mature and the aged, not a tenth part of these would receive the rite. Indeed, it is my positive conviction that, had it not been for our early Baptism, we Christians should long since have become as Turks pure and simple. The unbaptized would not attend Christian worship; they would despise Christian doctrine and morals, designed to promote true holiness and godliness in man. Even as it is, they despise these, notwithstanding their Baptism and Christian profession. With a rabble of such unbaptized predominating, what could result but a condition equal to that prevailing among Turks and heathen? While some few might attend upon the services of Christians, they would, nevertheless, defer Baptism to the last hour, as they now defer repentance and amendment of their lives.

[2.] And I would be willing to wager anything that it is the devil's purpose to effect just such a condition through the separatists and Anabaptists,

by whom he would abolish infant baptism, admitting to the rite only at maturity and thereafter. He evidently reasons: With infant Baptism, abolished, I should have no difficulty in inducing men to postpone the rite until they shall have sown their wild oats, or even to the final hour of life. Such delay being assured, I should certainly be able to keep them from divine service and consequently in ignorance and indifference concerning either Baptism or Christ. Then the mass of the world being in my power, including such grand specimens as Turks, Persians, Tartars, Jews and heathen, the unbaptized would finally execrate Baptism and say: "What of Baptism! What of Christians! I go with the multitude. Think you that God, for the sake of three or four Christians, will condemn the whole world? Why should I remain with a few despised beggars and wretched people?"

[3.] St. Augustine states concerning himself that his mother and other good friends, fearing that he might fall into sin, delayed his Baptism, withholding the Sacrament until, having passed his youth, he should be able the better to keep his pledge. This good intention resulted in an ever widening separation between St. Augustine and Christ. Finally he fell into the Manichaeian heresy and made a mock of Christ and his Baptism until his thirtieth year. His mother shed many scalding tears on account of her son, before he returned from heresy to Christ. Thus she suffered for her error in helping to bring about the postponement of her son's Baptism, notwithstanding her devotion and good intention.

[4.] Full well the devil realizes that the people are so callous and ungodly that not a tenth part of them inquire the meaning of Baptism, let alone accepting it and conducting themselves in a manner worthy of it. Considering the present difficulty of maintaining a Christian life, even with the advantage of doctrine, exhortation and Baptism, what would be the case with those who should neglect Baptism and attendance upon the preaching of the Word? Surely, Baptism and instruction are unquestionably a blessing and a powerful influence. Necessarily some will be moved thereby to think farther than does an unbaptized pagan.

[5.] All this every person can readily see and understand from the fact that, at present, people make light of the Holy Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, as if they could dispense with the Holy Supper more easily than with anything else on earth. Notwithstanding, they desire to be called Christians, and fancy that deliverance from papal coercion justifies them in neglecting this Sacrament and in entertaining the notion that they

can guiltlessly dispense with and freely despise it. Should the Sacrament be universally abolished, should it utterly perish from the earth, they would remain unconcerned. Their present conduct is evidence and confession of the devotion and desire that were theirs when they went to the Lord's Supper in the past, driven by the pope, and of the excellent Christianity in those days. Their conduct also demonstrates what good Christians can be made by coercion. The object of the pope's laws were compulsory Christianity, and absolute hypocrites and unwilling, craven Christians were the result. What a glad and welcome guest in the kingdom of heaven, is the coerced Christian, to be sure! an object of special attention from God! He will, we may depend upon it, receive a place in the front rank of angels — where hell is deepest.

[6.] But I fear and believe that, to a large extent, the responsibility rests upon us preachers, pastors, bishops and shepherds. We permit the people to go on in their own fashion. We do not admonish and urge them — are not persistent, as our office requires. We slumber as forgetfully and as securely as they. We think: Let him come who will; and let him who will, stay away. Thus there is error on both sides, which is to be deplored.

We know that Satan from hell, the prince of this world, untiringly goes about with his angels day and night to test, vex and hinder both ourselves and our people, and to deprive us of any interest in and desire for God's service. In this way, he endeavors at least to restrict the influence of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, of the Gospel and every divine ordinance, even if he may not suppress them altogether. Therefore, we, opposing him, should not fail to consider ourselves angels and guardians in the place of our Lord Christ. As such, we should every day guard the people against the angels of the devil. We should zealously urge, teach, exhort and invite, as Paul enjoins upon his dear Timothy, that we may offer some little resistance to the effrontery wherewith the devil makes mischief among Christians.

[7.] Therefore, I would address to all pastors and preachers, myself included, this fraternal request to give diligent heed to the people whom God has won for himself through the blood of his Son; whom, through Baptism, he has called and brought into his kingdom; whom he has committed to us and for whom a strict account shall be required. Acts 20:28. Of this we are all aware. If we who are in office and under command should be indifferent and indolent in the matter of the Lord's Supper, we should have to wait a long time for the people to approach in obedience to their own prompting. Indeed, they come under protest now, notwithstanding our insistent exhorta-

tions. For the devil, as previously explained, is there with his angels to hinder. In any event, the people should look to us and hear our word, not we to them. If the people could instruct and exhort themselves, what were the use of the ministerial and pastoral office? Christ might have retained it for himself instead of establishing it at such sacrifice. For what purpose have we our office if we do not desire to apply ourselves to instructing and exhorting the people? Otherwise, we should not be better, but even worse, than popes, bishops, pastors and monks have been hitherto, who have resolutely refrained from caring for the people either by instruction or exhortation.

[8.] True, some people, as I well know, are so base and hardened that in their case all instructions and exhortations are useless. What, then, are we to do? We are not likely to meet with better conditions than Christ and his apostles, and likewise the prophets. In Matthew 11:17, Christ tells us that his Jews would neither dance nor mourn, unconcerned whether appeal was made by piping or tears. And Paul (2 Tim 4:3) tells us: "The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine." However, Paul does not, for that reason, call upon us to cease our efforts, but bravely to persist whether our authority is recognized or not. We are well aware that the divine office. Word and command enjoin us to instruct and to exhort. Such efforts cannot remain fruitless, according to Isaiah 55:11, even though only a Zaccheus or a publican or a malefactor upon the cross be won. Presumably, there are still a few who, being exhorted, will remember their Baptism, and not despise a sacrament freely bestowed by Christ and purchased with a great price. Their example may finally jar the indifference of our unpolished, rude, licentious Christians and excite them to something better, as one knife whets another.

[9.] I do not mean to be understood as advising that the people be driven to the Holy Supper at fixed seasons and on certain days. Such was the way of popery. Thereby the pope has secured for himself and his ministers days of ease and indolence. Effort in instructing the people and thus urging the Sacrament upon them was unnecessary. Constraint and force were brought to bear upon their consciences, with the result that they ran to the Sacrament, but without pleasure and devoid of desire, unbenefited and unblessed. Thus they made a sacrament to be received in faith a human work whereby to acquire merit. Nor could the devil have devised a tighter and stronger grip with which completely to throttle the Sacrament, than such regulations. The appearance and the shell remain, but the life and the kernel have been

taken away, while none cared. Though it has been turned into a sacrifice and work of man, it is still called a Sacrament of Christ.

[10.] But the office of the ministry certainly has not been established by God for the purpose of creating presumptuous, lazy preachers and unwilling, craven Christians. He who is not a cheerful and willing Christian and communicant may stay away from the Sacrament and run to the place of his choice. God desires no compulsory service, and “God loveth a cheerful giver,” as Paul says, 2 Cor 9:7. The Lord’s Supper has been instituted rather to lead, invite and draw the people, influencing them to come willingly and cheerfully; indeed, they should hasten to the Holy Supper, and strive and press for it with effort. This is what Christ means when he says in Matthew 11:12: “Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.” He spurns those languid, disgusted, sated souls, but he welcomes the hungry and thirsty souls who strive and wrestle to obtain the kingdom. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled,” Mt 5:6.

[11.] Therefore, I desire to supply the pastors and preachers with arguments to use in exhorting and inviting their people to the Sacrament. I will point out a number of incentives to the people for going to the Lord’s Supper willing and uncoerced and receiving it with joy. I have done the same before, in the Catechism. Those preachers who can do better have no need of this sermon. May it suffice that I have given them this admonition. The other and not superior preachers are asked to make a note of one point or another, or to read to the people such sections as they see fit, word by word, in order that this Holy Sacrament may be lifted up from its fallen and despised condition. I will divide my arguments into two classes. My first argument relates to Christ himself; my second to those of us who desire to be Christians.

First Reason For Partaking Of The Lord’s Supper Is The Glory It Gives God.

I. What Man Does in the Sacrament for God.

[12.] A Christian should certainly be conscious of the fact that this Sacrament was not devised and invented by man, but was instituted and estab-

lished by Christ, according to the will and command of his Father. Not for dogs, not for swine, not for things of wood or stone, but for use by us Christians it has been instituted, and that by love, great, warm and unfathomable. Wherever a Christian heart dwells upon this thought, how is it possible for that heart to fail to be stirred with devotion and to long eagerly and lovingly for the Sacrament, craving it without constraint and law? The heart that is a stranger to such devotion is devoid of every spark or drop of Christian sentiment. If it refuses to believe that Christ instituted this Sacrament and enjoined it upon us, much less that he established it for us in fervent, unfathomable love, it is unquestionably an unchristian, Turkish, heathen heart. Where anything like the wonderful truth is really believed, the heart cannot remain indifferent, indolent, contemptuous.

[13.] Therefore, let everyone look to himself and examine his own heart. In the first place, to find if he believes that Christ, God's Son, did institute this Sacrament, to leave with mankind; second, to learn if he believes that unfathomable love prompted Christ to manifest such warmth and devotion toward him. If you do not so believe, you may know you are not a Christian, but a renegade, an accursed heathen and Turk. You ignore altogether Christ and his command, his love and his devotion, and you conduct yourself as if the Holy Supper were altogether fiction and folly. But if you do believe, such faith will preach to you in your heart thus: "You claim to be a Christian and know that it is Christ's command and appointment to partake of this Sacrament; but you put it off half a year, a whole year, three years and longer. Do you hear, my lord? How does such conduct agree with the profession of a Christian? Are not these things true?" The effect of a sermon of this import will be to make you ashamed and afraid of yourself. Lacking such preaching within your heart, you lack faith in the Sacrament as Christ's institution, and your lips lie when they profess this faith. In that case, you are a heathen twice over, and worse than any Turk; for you do not believe, which alone is enough to make you a heathen, and in addition you lie when you profess to believe.

[14.] You observe and are constrained to admit, then, that a wicked life, every falsehood, all contempt for divine order, all indolence, indifference and coldness toward the Lord's Supper, also ingratitude and disregard for the love of Christ toward us, emanate, each and all, from the unbelief of the heart denying that from this Sacrament Christ's love and his warm interest speak. That which does not enlist the faith of the heart cannot enlist its es-

teem, honor, love or praise. And whatever we spurn, neglect or forget, to that, by the same token, we deny regard, faith and interest. Again, whatever we believe and accept as true, that we cannot treat with indifference, whether it be good or bad. If it is good, the heart loves and craves it; if it is evil, the heart fears and deprecates it. Our experience shows the analogy to hold even in the case of false faith and superstition; for instance, where fear is entertained though there is nothing to be feared, and joy though there is no occasion for it. Such a live and active thing is faith.

[15.] Let preachers be careful to so well present this first reason to the people that they fail not to fully recognize this Sacrament as God's gracious and fatherly appointment in behalf of mankind. We hereby coerce no one in a matter of faith. We merely point out something which faith cannot ignore so that a Christian may know what faith is and to what it clings, lest his Christian name and appearance be occasion for self-deception, and he profess Christianity when in reality he is an infidel and a heathen, yes, worse than these. Should one herein deny Christ, desiring to be an infidel and to remain in unbelief, we let him pass on his way without restraint; nor do we interest ourselves in him beyond informing him that "he that believeth not hath been judged already," John 3:18. He shall find in due time one who will judge and constrain him. As for us, we are excused, for we have done our duty. Not for pleasure or as a useless device did God institute and establish this Sacrament. Hence he will not suffer it to remain despised, barren and unappropriated; still less does he permit it to be regarded as unnecessary and insignificant. He requires us to appropriate it and to turn it to account.

[16.] Even were it a Sacrament so worthless as to minister neither to our benefit nor our necessity, as to offer neither grace nor strength; were it a mere command, or law, of God, who, in the exercise of that divine power which claims us as subjects and to which we owe obedience, should require us to observe it — even then the very fact of its being a commandment would be sufficient to prompt and impel us not to despise the rite, but rather, solemnly and in loyal obedience, faithfully to make use of and highly honor it. Nothing is greater or more sublime than what God enjoins and commands through his Word. However, the Sacrament is not worthless, nor mere command to be obeyed regardless of its relation to our welfare or necessity. It could have been said of the sacrifices and public rites of the Jews that they ministered neither to the benefit nor to the necessity of the

people, yet the Jews were compelled to observe them as mere drudgery, as laborious duty, and in spite of their tendency to burden and restrict the people after the manner of serfs or bondmen of temporal governments. But the Holy Supper is a Sacrament of grace, replete with saving benefit and innumerable and unutterable blessings. In consequence, it should not only escape contempt and oblivion; it should receive the greatest honor, as it demands the most faithful use.

[17.] The reason it commands such reverence is explained in part by the fact we bring first to your attention, that Christ has instituted this Sacrament as a memorial of himself, according to his words, “This do in remembrance of me.” Notice the word “remembrance” and consider it well. It contains much food for thought and will supply you with powerful impulses. I do not speak now of the Sacrament as a contribution to our necessity and profit, but as a contribution to the honor of God and of Christ, for whose divine glory and service we are required faithfully to use and to reverence it. You are given to understand that Christ has bound up with this Sacrament the divine homage and glory which are his due, since he desires to be remembered therein. Now, what does it mean to “remember” Christ but to extol the grace and goodness bestowed on us through him; to hear the message concerning this blessing and to proclaim its praise, glory and honor. All the glory, all the service, which are God’s due, have been delegated to and bound up with Christ. Apart from Christ, no honor and service for himself can be rendered; apart from Christ he recognizes no honor and service, and absolutely refuses to be anybody’s God. For this reason he has repudiated and set aside his own service which of old was enjoined through the law of Moses, together with all other forms of worship throughout the world, however grand, beautiful, hoary and sublime.

[18.] Now, every man claims to possess the necessary desire and devotion to honor the sufferings of Christ and to render God service, one proposing this, another that; one running upon a pilgrimage to Rome, another becoming a monk, a third fasting — but who can enumerate all the different ways of serving God chosen through the devil’s inspiration and men’s own misdirected zeal? For this reason the sublime, beautiful service, the memorial and praise of the passion of Christ, has been obscured and relegated to oblivion. And yet, this service has been instituted by God and declared an object of his pleasure; and according to the very purpose of its institution, it can never be exhausted and overdone. For who can sufficiently remember

God? Who can praise God too much? Who can thank him too much? Who can lavish too much honor upon the sufferings of Christ?

[19.] Why did we frenzied saints, in our disgraceful infatuation, conduct ourselves as if this Sacrament were not a divine service, or as if we had exhausted it and fulfilled its terms long ago? In addition to it, and over and above it, we established many shameful, disgusting, offensive services based upon our own misdirected zeal and self-chosen works, filling the world with them. And the Holy Supper, the true service of God, has been set aside, blasphemed and maligned.

If you desire to render a precious, noble service to God, and duly to honor the passion of Christ, bethink yourself of the Sacrament and partake of it. That is his memorial. Therewith his praise and honor are bound up.

[20.] Such memorial is apparently a very humble service to God. There is no show of garment, ceremony and architecture filling eye and ear. The only agent at work is the spoken Word. The Word may, upon earth, be lowly esteemed; but no eye can see, no ear can hear, no heart can comprehend its worth and sublimity in the eyes of God and his angels. God's Word and work at first but feebly impress. Hence they require application and meditation. He who fulfills these conditions will come to realize their greatness. God himself says: "Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me," Ps 50:23. If this means anything, it means: The sacrifice of thanksgiving is the bestowal of divine honor; through that I am received and embraced as God. On the other hand, the sacrifices prompted by work-righteousness deprive God of his divine honor, transform him into an idol, rob him of his divinity. He who will not render thanksgiving, but takes his stand upon merit, has no God. Inwardly in his heart, outwardly in his works, he reconstructs the true God while retaining the name. How often does God in Isaiah protest, how severely in the first commandment warn, against constructing other gods, against reconstructing himself!

[21.] Would you construct a god? Come and hear; God desires to teach you the unfailing art of making not an idol, but of making the true God to be your very own. Not as if you could create his divine substance — that is and ever remains uncreated — but you can make him to be your God; he, true God in himself, may truly become God also to you, you, you! This art is simply and effectively taught in the words, "This do in remembrance of me." Learn to remember him. Receive, proclaim, praise and laud the tidings of the grace manifested in Christ, and thank him for it. So doing, you con-

fess with heart and mouth, with eyes and ears, with body and soul, that you have given God nothing, that you can give him nothing, but that everything you have has been received from him, especially eternal life and infinite righteousness in Christ.

[22.] This effected, you have truly made him your God; by this confession his divine honor is maintained. A true God is he who gives but does not take; who renders aid, but does not require it; who teaches and governs, but needs neither instructions nor direction. In short, that is the true God who accomplishes and gives everything, who needs none to help him, and who in everything acts from sheer mercy for the unworthy and undeserving, yes, for the condemned and lost, without looking for merit. This is the remembrance, the praise, the honor, which he asks.

[23.] Such divine service is indeed devoid of pomp. It does not satisfy the carnal vision, but it does satisfy the heart, which otherwise neither earth nor heaven can satisfy. And when the heart is satisfied, also eyes and ears, lips and nostrils, in short — body and soul with all the members, will be satisfied. The members adjust themselves to the heart, and the whole body is but as a tongue vocal with praise and thanks toward God. Ah, that service is an ornament and gem far different from golden caskets; yes, from imperial, regal and papal crowns. The gems and the splendor of all the world are mere offal compared to this precious memorial of Christ, the Sacrament. One thought in this service has a clearer, sweeter, stronger tone than all the drums, trumpets, organs, bells and musical instruments of every nature sounding in symphony and in their strongest notes. Indeed, it is a sound and song far different from any on earth. As it falls upon the ear from without, its volume is feeble enough; but coming from the heart, its power is such that every creature seems to echo it and all melodies of men are deaf and mute in comparison.

[24.] Moses' song (Ex 15:2) clearly informs us that to praise and thank God is the same as to honor and exalt God: "This is my God, and I will praise him; my father's God, and I will exalt him." Behold here how you may render your God beautiful; how adorn, exalt and beautifully deck him; how garland and crown him and how array him in bracelets and chain. You require neither money nor brass for it. All you need is to believe with your heart, to magnify with the lips, to hear his grace and his praise with the ears, and to do the things above mentioned. What else is to be expected of him who refuses thus to honor and exalt God than that, blinded and deranged by

the devil's power, he should proceed to adorn images of wood and stone instead, to deck boards and walls, to decorate altars and churches, to array the mass-saying priests in gold and silk, and to devote his entire substance to endowments, convents, pilgrimages and other modes of worship, false, accursed and self-devised? Not that I object to the outward adornment. What I do object to, however, is its being palm.ed off as worship, and especially its interference with and eclipse of this true form of worship. It must be made to promote and subserve the true method of rendering thanks to God or it is accursed, together with all performances and merits whereby God's grace is to be earned or purchased.

[25.] Were the remembrance of Christ the only argument for this Sacrament and the only benefit to be derived from it, that alone should be enough to prompt your participation. Should not your heart say to you: "Although I derive no advantage from the Holy Supper I will go, to praise and glorify God; will maintain his divine honor; will aid in making him truly God. If I cannot or may not preach, I will be a hearer. The hearer also aids in rendering to God thanks and praise; for there could be no preacher without a hearer. Even if I am unable to hear, I will still be among the hearers; I will perform the act of conveying thither my body, my members, that I may be where God is praised and honored. And if I cannot do more, I will do this much: I will receive the Sacrament for the purpose of confessing and testifying that I, too, am found among those who praise and glorify God; to the praise of my God I will receive it. This reception shall be my remembrance of him; thereby I will call to mind his grace, and render thanks for the mercy manifested in Christ."

[26.] It is not a slight privilege to be a happy member of a throng that praises and blesses God. The patriarchs oft sighed for the opportunity. "How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday," Ps 42:4. And in the beautiful song of praise, the one hundred and eighteenth Psalm, we read (verse 15): "The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous." Many similar utterances are recorded. He who is one of such a throng, unless false of heart, has a part in all its praise and thanksgiving. What desperate baseness, to be able to render such service and honor unto God, without cost and sacrifice to one's self — since nothing is required but an ear to hear, lips to receive, a heart to render praise — and yet to refuse God this devotion! Indeed, to find a company united for the purpose of

praising and glorifying God, and to share in such sacred fellowship, you should be willing to pursue to the end of the world.

[27.] How we used to run to the graves, the garments and bones of the saints! Pilgrimages were made to Rome, Jerusalem and to St. James for the purpose of looking at mere stones, at bones, wood and earth, while Christ received not even a thought. Through the Holy Supper, Christ himself, his very body and blood, is present in your own village or city. Here lives his memory, his praise and honor, and you have no desire to take part in thanking and praising him? Certainly, then, you are neither Christian nor even human, but a devil or a demon.

[28.] It would not be meet for such scoffers and renegades to escape the penalty of being possessed, deceived and seduced by the devil and never having the Holy Supper brought to their knowledge and attention again. They deserve to have for teachers fanatics, to whom the Sacrament is but bread and wine, who remove the kernel and give them the shell: or Papists, who treat the Sacrament as a sacrifice or traffic whereby to dispense forgiveness of sin and help in every trouble; who make a farce of it by placing it in a pyx or ciborium and carrying it in processions and parades; who withhold the cup, thus working untold harm but no blessing. And for all such performances money and treasure is exacted, enabling these teachers to rank in wealth with emperors, kings and princes. Quite right! “With the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward.” Ps 18:26. Why did the scoffers despise this service, a memorial of Christ — a service sublime, beautiful and impressive, and to be had without cost and effort to themselves? Very well! let them take the shell, to their own injury in body and soul, property and honor. They receive what they desire.

[29.] He, however, who remembers Christ in the manner counseled above, and honors his passion, is safeguarded against error and devilish delusions of every kind. He sacrifices neither money nor effort, and yet gains infinite benefits. He serves and honors God in two ways. In the first place, he does not despise God’s institution and order, but observes it with humility and joy. God undoubtedly receives such honor gladly, since he has instituted the Holy Supper to be appropriated, and not to be neglected. Certainly he cannot be delighted when man does not approach and receive it. Such neglect means to charge God with the folly of instituting unnecessary ordinances, and with uncertainty as to what we need, and to liken him to a huckster who carries about and offers for sale faulty and worthless mer-

chandise. Who can calculate the dishonor inflicted upon God and our Lord Christ by the single fact of the contempt heaped upon the Holy Supper when it is suffered to remain ineffective and unused? And still, the offenders want to be Evangelical and not Popish. He who retrieves from dishonor the Holy Sacrament or lends his efforts to that end; he who refuses to dispense with the divine institution, but honors and makes use of it, shall, in turn, receive honor from God. "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam 2:30.

[30.] In the second place, he who partakes, honors God by celebrating and aiding in the perpetuation of this memorial of Christ, by proclaiming, praising and blessing the grace manifested by Christ, through his suffering, to us poor sinners. As a memorial to him, the Lord's Supper has been instituted by God. He has bound up with it his own honor, for in Christ alone he desires to be acknowledged and worshiped as our God. It was explained above that the greatness of the praise here rendered and the sublimity of the service here engaged in, is due to the purpose they serve in perpetuating God's glory and establishing his divinity. Conversely, God will honor him who honors his Sacrament; he will make him like himself and raise him to divine sonship. Who can estimate the good resulting from thus glorifying and serving God? The communicant does more than bless and glorify God in Christ, though that is the principal purpose of this divine institution: he confesses his Lord Jesus Christ publicly and before all the world; he confesses the fact that he is a disciple and desires to continue one. Thus, by one act he performs the two supreme functions of a true priest of God.

[31.] In thanking, praising and glorifying God, he performs the fairest sacrifice, the highest service, the finest work — a thank-offering. So far as the Holy Supper is a confession before men, the communicant proclaims Christ and teaches faith in him. Thereby he helps to spread and preserve the Kingdom of Christ, strengthens the influence of Gospel and Sacrament and aids in the conversion of sinners and in storming the devil's kingdom. To sum up, whatever is accomplished in the world through the teaching of the Word, is accomplished in part by the communicant as participant in the work. But who can recount the good thus effected?

[32.] On the other hand, the wretchedness of those people who, too sluggish and indolent to use the Holy Supper, heap contempt upon it, is to be noted. Looking at the very reverse of the virtues above enumerated, they will be able to recognize and appreciate their baseness. First, they dishonor

God in the matter of his own institution, charging him with folly for appointing an unnecessary service. Ay, in not believing this sacred service his divine appointment and gracious institution, they decry him as a liar and untrustworthy. Unbelief is nothing but the blasphemy of making God a liar.

[33.] Again, they who do not partake despise the memorial of Christ, which the Holy Supper is, according to divine appointment. Neither do they honor the passion of Christ; they do not thank him for his sufferings, but are guilty of the base vice of ingratitude. And still worse, apparently, it is only with positive aversion that they hear of the gratitude and honor due Christ for his passion; and evidently they dislike to be present at the service of praise and thanksgiving. Thus, as we have seen, they rob God of his divine honor; they repulse him and will not permit him to be their God; nor do they desire that he be recognized as God in Christ. So far as they are concerned, Christ's passion and all the glory of God might be discredited and absolutely ignored throughout the world, and devils might become our gods. They do not inquire how to honor the suffering of Christ, how his memory is to be preserved and his Word proclaimed, nor how God may be known. This is worse than to throw dirt at the image of God or to treat with disrespect the person of Christ.

[34.] Moreover, they set a wretched example for others, becoming responsible for all who, following their example, likewise neglect and despise the Holy Supper. For these, in turn, Christ's memory perishes, his passion is rendered ineffective, and finally the Christian faith is destroyed. Then, think of the blessings the non-communicants neglect and turn aside. They render no thank-offering to God. They fail to confess Jesus Christ. They do not teach, encourage and reprove their neighbor by act and example. They withhold from God the thank-offering due him. They deny Christ. They lead their neighbor astray. Would it be any wonder if God should give only devils dominion over us, and pestilence, war, famine, bloodshed and wretchedness should be the order of the day? The dishonor and contempt heaped upon God in the disregard of the Lord's Supper are so enormous, and the horrible and accursed ingratitude among our Christian people has attained to such dimensions, that the Turks and Tartars and, allied with them, all the devils, could not inflict adequate punishment for its baseness.

[35.] The Jews felt in duty bound to praise, bless and thank God with great devotion year after year for effecting their departure and deliverance from Egypt and their passage through the Red Sea. The blessed prophets

can nowhere sufficiently exalt and commemorate this wonderful work of God. And we gentiles who used to be the devil's own, absolutely, without just claim upon Christ and without even the knowledge of him, have attained to such grace and honor as to share in his work of redemption. Not from Egypt has he redeemed us, not from the Red Sea, but from sin, death, hell, devils, God's wrath and all wretchedness. Not into the material Canaan did he bring us, but into an everlasting righteousness, into life, into heaven, into grace and to God himself. And all this not through Moses and angels, but through himself. Bitter enough was his toil. He dripped bloody perspiration; his heart within him melted like wax; on the cross he surrendered his life; for us he wept and groaned; for us he received the malignant taunts of blasphemy. Oh, what heart is able to conceive such love, grace and mercy! what tongue able to describe them!

[36.] And for all this should he have deserved from those in whose behalf it came to pass, no more recognition and honor than to be unremembered, although we sit among those who celebrate his memorial feast with thanksgiving; to have men refuse to be reminded of him; refuse to receive the Holy Supper to his glory, and allow him to be present in the Sacrament to no purpose? His invitation is permitted to fall upon listless ears, and in the meantime we indulge in gluttony, intemperance or even more grievous offenses. It is a wonder that the sun has not become coal-black long ago. No leaf should grow on earth, no blade of grass; no drop of water or trace of air should remain in existence in the face of such inhuman ingratitude. Wicked were the Jews who crucified him — but more wicked are we gentiles, spurning his passion with an ingratitude measured by our refusal to keep alive his memory by observance of the Holy Supper. O pope, O bishops, O sophists, O monks, O mass-priests, what have you done! All the responsibility rests upon you. You have made of the Holy Supper a sacrificial mass and a human work. Thus have you concealed from and deprived the people of the proper use of it, and the opportunity of making it an occasion for praise and thanksgiving. All the people have sought in it was their own work, obedience and merit. In this practice you were their teachers. By force you compelled them to receive the Sacrament, and even then you withheld the cup from them.

[37.] You strainers of gnats and devourers of camels (Mt 23:24), you have pretended to high regard for the Sacrament. You have enjoined to place it in precious golden caskets, to use in its celebration golden chalices

and patens. You have smeared upon the fingers of your priests a special ointment; you have dressed them in costly surplices and chasubles. You have introduced into the celebration altarcloths, paintings, candles, banners and a variety of processions and chants, as if these were of special importance. And to attest your intense, sublime devotion, you have devised a method to prevent wasting the blood of Christ — drinking from the chalice through tubes. You have made even the requisite faith an item of punctilious care by enjoining that Christ complete must be believed to be present in both the bread and wine. And, to offset all this, the beloved Sacrament has become to you a sacrifice, a work, through which you have attracted to yourselves the substance and praise of the whole world.

[38.] What has become here of the doctrine of the Holy Supper as a memorial of Christ? When did you instruct the people to use this Sacrament from the motive of love, to honor it as a divine institution, to praise, glorify and thank Christ by its use, to receive it as a token of honor for his passion, and to recognize it as an expression of grace manifested to us without effort and merit on our part? Far from presenting the Sacrament as a memorial of Christ, you have taught work-righteousness and freedom of will; the very Sacrament you have perverted by turning it into a human performance; and instead of repenting, you defend your conduct. Oh, you scoffers, fakirs, hypocrites, blasphemers! O my Lord Christ, come soon from heaven with fire and brimstone and put an end to such mockery and blasphemy; for their doings are becoming unendurable and intolerable.

[39.] However, let me drop this subject and point out to you a strong and worthy argument to prompt you to attend upon the Holy Supper. The counsel of your own hearts should be; “Very well, I will go to the Holy Supper, not in order to perform a good work or to acquire merit, nor for the sake of obedience to pope or church, but to honor and praise my God who has instituted the Sacrament for my use, and as an expression of love and gratitude toward my Lord and Saviour. He has ordained it as a memorial commemorating his passion for my grateful use, so that I may be found among those who thank him for his suffering, and not among the number of scoffers and ingrates. I will not set a bad example, thereby becoming an offense to others and responsible for their contempt and ingratitude, but rather a good example, drawing others to honor and magnify the Lord’s Supper. In this manner will I take part in the celebration of the memorial festival of the passion of Christ, and contribute to its influence, at the same time confessing my

Lord before the world. Such thank-offering I will bring, even if this should be all the Sacrament means to me. The Holy Supper shall be the expression of my gratitude for the Lord's bitter passion, which he endured for me."

[40.] I trust, however, it will not be necessary to explain at length what is meant by remembering Christ. We have given frequent and detailed explanations on other occasions. It is not the mere contemplation of the passion of Christ, whereby some attempt to render God service and to merit his grace. I refer to those who go about mourning for the bitter suffering of Christ. To remember Christ means to teach and to believe in the power and fruit of his passion.

The substance of such teaching and faith is that our own work and merit are nothing, that our free will is dead and doomed, that we secure deliverance from sin and righteousness through Christ's passion and death alone; in short, that the Holy Supper is a testimony and memorial of God's mercy in Christ, and not a work done by us for God. Popery, with its institutions, convents and work-righteousness, flatly contradicts this testimony and faith in every feature. Popery has turned the Holy Supper into the most common and unqualifiedly human work, whereas here the grace of God should receive exclusive attention, our own works none whatever. Popery has wiped out every trace of the Holy Supper as a memorial of Christ and perverted the gracious institution of God into a dreadful abomination. Take care, and beware of ascribing anything to your own activity in this respect, except gratitude to Christ for his passion and to God for his grace and mercy. As an expression and confession of such gratitude and praise, go and partake of the Holy Supper with joy.

[41.] Now, if the Papists try their sophistry upon my words as their custom is, and rejoin that I myself consider the Sacrament a sacrifice in spite of my contention that it is not, you shall make this reply: "I consider neither the mass nor the Sacrament a sacrifice. But the remembrance of Christ, namely, the faith and testimony concerning the grace of God which bars out our own merit and work — that is a sacrifice. It is a thank-offering; by such remembrance of Christ we confess with gratitude that our redemption, our righteousness and salvation stand altogether in grace and in the suffering of Christ." But the Paptists have spurned, condemned and blasphemed the Holy Supper as a memorial in this sense, and still do so. What they desire is to defend their own works and merits, to maintain their convents and masses, which is certainly in conflict with the remembrance of Christ. That

their works and masses are articles of traffic and performed in behalf of their patrons and brethren; that they intend their works of supererogation — those they have to spare — as aids to others in securing grace, thereby attempting to do what no one can accomplish but Christ through his suffering; that they in reality supplant Christ and his work and say: “I am Christ” — all these are matters with which we are quite familiar. This attitude is one thing against which I have fought.

[42.] In the next place, not satisfied with having suppressed the Holy Supper as a thank-offering and memorial of Christ, they have devised in its stead a sacrifice of another kind. The Sacrament they should receive and accept at the hands of God — Christ’s body and blood — they have made a sacrifice of their own unto God. They never would have attained to their present power had it not been for this fiction of the mass. Let it be noted, they do not treat the body and blood of Christ as an offering of thanks, but as an offering of works. They do not make the Sacrament an occasion for rendering thanks to God for mercy received, but for meriting and securing that mercy by celebrating it in behalf of themselves and others. Christ, then, has not secured grace for us; we ourselves must secure it through our own works, by offering unto God the body and blood of his Son. This is the chief abomination of popery and the source of all the others. Against such blasphemous sacrifice I have fought; against it I still fight. The Holy Supper shall not be a sacrifice to us, nor shall we so call it; it shall remain a Sacrament, an ordinance of God, given for us.

[43.] We have by our struggle accomplished enough to convince them of the error of their position in making the mass a sacrifice; nevertheless, they refuse to recant and to repent of their wrong. They resort to sophistry and bolster themselves up with the explanation that the mass, or Sacrament, is a symbolical and memorial sacrifice — one which at the same time both represents and commemorates the sacrifice made by Christ upon the cross. If we only had letter and seal proving that such explanation is pleasing to God! But who will demonstrate the reliability of this claim? On the contrary, this explanation is unmasked as a brazen and barefaced lie when are exposed the letters and seals in their institutions and convents by virtue of which they sell to the founders their masses and vigils for the living and the dead as offerings in which their own work constitutes the sacrifice. This fact is likewise attested by their books and writings still before us. That they aim to bolster up by such, lying explanations the same old abominations is

plain, inasmuch as they neither recant nor regret, but defend them. Does not St. Gregory write that he offered the mass for thirty days in behalf of one who had died? What good does it do to prop up old evils, by barefaced lies to oppose the clear truth? They will only render confusion worse confounded.

[44.] At any rate the explanation does not affect the facts in the case. Though they call the Holy Supper a symbolical or memorial sacrifice, they make it a meritorious work of their own in God's behalf. It is not what God does for us, then, but what we do for God that receives praise. Some, in time past, were fond of seeing the passion of Christ pictured and of reading it in books. To such a pastime they would ascribe much importance; from the dictum of Alberti we learn that a mere superficial contemplation of the passion of Christ contains more merit than a whole year's fasting, together with the daily praying of a psalm and self-castigation to the blood. To a work of precisely this character the Holy Supper would be degraded if it should be called a symbolical, or memorial, sacrifice — a mere aid to meditation upon the history of Christ's passion. It is within the power of any wicked man, of the very devil even, to perform a work of that kind. For this reason Christ has not instituted the Sacrament for the purpose mentioned, but as a memorial for himself, to enable men rightly to teach, to believe, to love and to praise his grace. This no wicked man can do. The Papists are not sincere with their explanation. They merely seek to prop up their sacrificial mass by pulling the wool over the people's eyes through cunning arguments. They do not have the Sacrament at heart, but merely mammon and their appetites.

[45.] Note also this: As priests they claim a special, a stronger and holier interest in the Sacrament than other Christians. Though the whole Christian church appropriates the Lord's Supper as an object of faith and gratitude, it dare not call it a sacrifice. No one can partake of or administer the Holy Sacrament for another. Each one may use it only for himself. But when the mass-priests handle it, it is a sacrifice, performed not for themselves merely, nor as a thank-offering, but in behalf of all other Christians — to obtain for them grace and help. See you not that the words of Christ do not authorize a sacrificial view of the Sacrament, and that it is no sacrifice? But when the chasuble and paten are added, then it is a sacrifice. The whole Christian Church may handle the elements with hands and lips; cloth and cup may be in evidence, and praise and gratitude, with the very angels of heaven as wit-

nesses: still the Sacrament is not sacrificial. But as soon as it is flourished over the altar in the paten, it is a sacrifice. What a powerful thing is the consecration of person and altar! Tell me, dear friend, why is the Lord's Supper not a sacrifice when the laity appropriates it? Is the Sacrament of the priest different from the Sacrament of the layman?

[46.] The churches under the pope, then, have a twofold Sacrament. For the ordinary Christian it is not sacrificial, but a simple rite, and only one of the elements is permitted. For the priests it is sacrificial, and the privilege of the complete Sacrament is theirs. A fraternal spirit and a fair division, indeed! Plainly it was Christ's purpose to grant all his Christians the same Baptism, the same Holy Supper and the same Gospel; and that he has forbidden any distinction of persons. Whence, then, the difference that a simple Sacrament, yet it is the same Sacrament in either case? The explanation is found in the *Sic volo, sic jubeo* (This is my will; thus I command), of the pope; in the wide power claimed by the pope whereby he so manipulates the Gospel as to determine what is heresy and what is truth. When Luther teaches as Gospel that monks and nuns may wed, it is heresy; when the pope gives monks and nuns dispensation to do so, it is Gospel indeed! When one misuses or injures church property, the papal authorities say violent hands are laid upon the heritage of Christ. But when they themselves pilfer the substance of the poor and waste it by lasciviousness and war, they say the heritage of Christ is put to holy use. What a powerful creator and god is the pope!

[47.] But lest they accuse me of waging mere wordy strife, I will concede for the sake of argument that where there is no question as to facts, words have little significance, though this is a dangerous principle in its application to Scripture. I will grant, then, that not the Sacrament in itself, but the reception, or use, of it, may be termed a sacrifice. But we insist upon this distinction being understood. First, that the sacrifice consists neither in the symbolical representation of Christ's passion nor in any performance of man, but in the rendering of thanks, the communicant receiving the Holy Supper as an expression of his heart's gratitude for Christ's suffering and grace. Second, that the priests do not make of the Holy Supper a different Sacrament when it lies upon the altar, nor receive it with any other meaning than as their thanksgiving to Christ in behalf of themselves and the Christians to whom they minister it from the altar; the Sacrament to be the same for the priests as for the laity, not in any wise better, just as they have the

same Baptism and Gospel. Third, that the priests henceforth abstain from selling the Sacrament, or mass, to others under the pretense that their part therein constitutes a sacrifice, and from offering it in behalf of others, living or dead, as a means of grace; and that each priest celebrate the Holy Supper as an expression of his own gratitude, the same as any other Christian. Fourth, — if I may dare touch upon the matter — that when the celebration or use of the mass, or Sacrament, shall have become once more a thank-offering, that they repentantly return the property, sealed contracts and all rents from convent lands and other endowments which they have acquired through the mass as an offering of their own works, and that they make such restitution on the basis of having acquired that property by fraud and deception, ay, by blasphemy and treason toward Christ. Think you that had kings and princes known the act of the priest in partaking from the altar to be identical with that of the layman receiving before it, they would have been such lunatics as to donate their property to one who cannot offer a sacrifice in their behalf and reconcile God, but merely renders thanks for himself? But oh! here I begin to feel my teeth chatter! I dare not broach such a thing to them; I am well aware it would not do.

[48.] I will go so far as to concede that the priests may perform such a thank-offering for others in the way that I am able to thank God for Christ and all his saints, yea, for all creatures. The priest may be permitted to think in his heart: “Behold, dear God, I celebrate and receive this Sacrament to thy honor and praise for having magnified Christ and all thy Saints.” Who does not know that it is our duty in any event to render thanks to God for ourselves, for all men, for all creatures? This we are taught by Paul. Therefore, I have no objection whatever to the priests rendering thanks to God for us all in the mass so long as they do not deem that mass as special and different from the Sacrament of the laity, as if the latter could not and should not appropriate it with the same degree of gratitude. I have no use for the exclusionist in a Sacrament which is the same for all and which all have in common. I have still less use for him who renders thanks in behalf of others where the idea is that of performing the service for them, as if the thank-offering of the priest in my behalf and for my money were the same as rendering thanks myself. No! to such buying and selling I object; for such huckstering and bartering I have no use,

[49.] If they take exception to these conditions, we will repudiate their cunning and false explanation of a symbolical, or memorial sacrifice. Nor

shall we be satisfied to accept this word “memorial.” It is a misnomer, based upon a very crude and dangerous misunderstanding. Christ makes a broad distinction between the two conceptions “Sacrament” and “memorial” when he says: “This do in remembrance of me.” The Sacrament is one thing and our remembrance another. We should receive and celebrate the Sacrament according to his Word, and besides remember him; that is, proclaim him, believe him, thank him. Our commemoration of Christ is indeed to be a thankoffering; but the Sacrament in itself is not to be a sacrifice, but a gift of God for us, to be received with thanksgiving. I think the ancients called this rite the “Eucharist,” or the “Sacrament of the Eucharist,” which means “The Sacrament of Thanksgiving,” for the reason that, according to the command of Christ, thanks are to be rendered unto God in connection with this Sacrament, and the Sacrament itself is to be celebrated and received with thanksgiving. Later “Eucharist” became through error the exclusive name for the Holy Supper. It would not be altogether improper, when about to attend mass or preaching, to say: “I am going to the Eucharist, or to the rite wherein God receives thanks and praise through his Sacrament.” This, it seems to me, is what the ancients meant.

[50.] And that is presumably the reason why the theme of so many chants in the mass is one of thanks and praise, and why the chants have been retained to the present time. I refer to the Gloria in Excelsis, the Hallelujah, the Patrem, or the Nicene Confession of Faith, the Offertory, the Sanctus, the Benedicite, the Agnus Dei. In none of these do you find a reference to sacrifice; there is nothing but praise and thanksgiving. That is the reason they have been retained by us in the celebration of the Holy Supper. The “Agnus” is preeminently adapted to the Sacrament, for it plainly lauds and exalts Christ our sin-bearer, and impressively and delightfully, in brief and beautiful words, commemorates Christ. To conclude: Those features in the mass which are expressive of the ideas of sacrifice and work-righteousness, have, by God’s marvelous providence, been ordained to be read by the priest inaudibly; they constitute what is termed “the silent mass.” But the anthems sung in public by the choir and the throng of worshipers are songs of praise, expressive of the choicest blessings; as if God would spare Christians the silent mass and permit the priests to torment themselves with their own abominations.

[51.] This much concerning the first reason, that should arouse in us the desire and longing to attend upon the Holy Supper. Our motive in atten-

dance should be to praise and thank God, to show that we love Christ and confess him, to reprove the neighbor's neglect by our example, and finally, to contribute to the preservation of the Sacrament, of the Christian doctrine, the Christian faith and Church, irrespective of the fact that we neither should nor can obtain merit thereby. It is our duty to do these things also apart from the Sacrament, since we are generally commanded to praise and thank God, to prize and honor Christ's passion, to benefit our neighbor and to aid in the preservation of the Christian doctrine, the Christian faith and Church. Much greater is our obligation when a special institution has been provided for the purpose, to which we are invited, yes, called. Should we be unwilling or unable to receive the Sacrament, there is no reason why we should not be present to see others receive it, to hear them praise God and render thanks to Christ. Nor is it a self-devised worship or one of human choice. The warrant for it is the Word of Christ: "This do in remembrance of me."

Second Reason For Partaking Of The Lord's Supper Is The Blessings It Confers Upon Ourselves.

II. What God Does In The Sacrament For Man

[52.] Thus far we have said nothing of the benefit to be sought and received by ourselves in the Holy Supper. We have dwelt exclusively upon the blessing our attendance confers upon God himself, upon Christ, the neighbor, the Gospel, the Sacrament and all Christendom. Who can calculate the infinite good wrought by praising God, rendering thanks to Christ, magnifying his passion, setting one's neighbor right, contributing to the preservation of the Sacrament, the spread of the Gospel and the furtherance of the entire Kingdom of Christ, and at the same time helping to defend these holy things against opposing influences. Nevertheless, in order to convince ourselves how pregnant with blessing, how rich in grace, this divine institution is, and thus be led to love it and gladly appropriate it, let us consider the benefits conferred particularly upon ourselves. So doing, we shall not conclude that Christ has failed to remember us in connection with the Holy Supper. While

I have in the small Catechism touched upon these matters sufficiently to meet the requirements of the faithful pastor, I will recur to the topic in this connection.

[53.] First, as I called your attention to the words “in remembrance of me,” to their significance as an invitation and summons from Christ to receive the Holy Supper, or, at least, to witness its observance from motives of gratitude and love for him and of honor and reverence for his passion, so I now call your careful attention to the phrase “for you,” in Christ’s words, “which is given for you,” “which is shed for you.” The words “my” and “you” are words of unmistakable significance. Well may you be impelled to walk a hundred, a thousand, miles to Holy Communion. For who is it that says “my body,” “my blood,” and “This do in remembrance of me”? The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who shed his blood and died for you. When he says, “my body,” “my blood,” he merely asks you to acknowledge and believe it, to rest in such faith and render him thanks for what cost him so bitterly. He would not have you shamefully despise his Sacrament or lightly neglect it because it is to be had without price or effort.

[54.] You will find upon reflection, then, that when Christ says, “for you,” he means you and me and all men, for whom he died. Now, if he really died for us, necessarily we were in sin, death and among the devils of hell. This is clearly demonstrated by the words “shed for you for the remission of sins.” For where there is sin, there is also death; where there is death, hell and the devil surely are. The result of this reflection should be a more fervent gratitude and a more eager participation in the Holy Sacrament, to the praise of his passion. What heart can fully apprehend this merciful blessing, that man is redeemed from death and the devil, from sin and all evil — justified, quickened and saved — without merit of his own, solely through the blood and death of the Son of God, who requires no praise and thanks from man except the recognition of the atonement and its acceptance in faith, and the sparing the Holy Supper shameful contempt or neglect.

[55.] The first way, then, in which attendance upon the Holy Supper benefits you is as a reminder of God’s merciful blessing; it stimulates, renews and strengthens your faith and love, helping you not to forget or despise your dear Saviour and his bitter suffering and to remember the infinite and eternal distress and death from which he has delivered you. Do not, my dear brother, lightly esteem such blessing. Indeed, if partaking of the Holy

Sacrament were to bring no other benefit than the stimulation of faith and love for your Saviour incident to being reminded of Christ's goodness and your own distress, that would be abundant blessing and fruit. We stand in urgent need of faith in order to abide in the fellowship of Christ; abiding is impossible without faith. Unbelief is a dangerous, daily-encountered, persistent devil, who endeavors to wrest us from our dear Saviour and his passion, either by force or by cunning. To keep in mind Christ's goodness and his death calls for strong effort aside from persistent application, stimulation and exercise of faith. What is to be expected when we turn away from the subject, rarely consider it, and despise or neglect the Holy Supper?

[56.] Again, benefit from communion results in this ways The refreshing and renewal of faith effects a heart renewed and quickened in love for the neighbor, and equipped and made strong to perform every good work, to resist sin and every temptation of the devil. Faith cannot be inactive, it needs must produce fruits of love; it must do good and shun evil. With faith the Holy Spirit is present, who will not permit us to be inactive; he makes us eager for and desirous of everything good and defiant and scornful of everything evil. Thus a Christian shall continually be renewed and grow in Christ from day to day through the right use of the Holy Supper. This is Paul's thought when he exhorts us to be renewed and to grow from day to day. On the other hand, to refrain from observance of the Holy Supper brings inevitable injury. Faith will daily become feebler and colder. Consequently one likewise grows indifferent and cold in his love to his neighbor and becomes unable and unwilling to resist evil, and all the time the desire for the Holy Sacrament wanes. At last one altogether wearies of occupying himself with thoughts concerning his Saviour. Every day witnesses an increase of carnal indifference and and spiritual ruin, and readily, even eagerly, wickedness is embraced in every form. For the devil is with such an one and cannot rest until he has dragged him into sin and shame.

[57.] As an example for those willing to receive warning, I will describe my own experience, that they may see what a cunning rogue the devil is. It happened on several occasions that I proposed to go to the Lord's Supper on a certain day. When the day came my devotion had disappeared or some obstacle had arisen or I deemed myself unprepared. In consequence I said: "Very well, I shall go next week." But when the time came I found precisely the same obstacles and lack of preparation. "Very well, now I shall go next week." Such postponement of the Holy Supper from week to week oc-

curred so often that I ran a risk of abandoning the Sacrament altogether. However, when God gave me the grace to discover the devil's wife, I said: "If you are to have your way, Satan, you will have a prosperous year through your cleverness and my own." And I tore through the obstacles and went in defiance of the devil, even though, contrary to my custom, I missed confession on one or two occasions. In this purpose I was strengthened by the fact that I was not conscious of any gross sin.

[58.] My experience, then, is this: A person may be without desire and a devotional frame of mind; nevertheless, a resolute determination to attend upon the Holy Supper, will, in connection with the occasion, produce the desire and the devotional frame of mind and thoroughly expel those lazy, rebellious thoughts which present obstacles and prevent preparation. The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament fraught with grace and power. Only let us consider it with just a little seriousness and make ready for it, and it will enkindle, attract and captivate the heart. Try it, and if your experience does not bear me out you may charge me with falsehood. I wager you will find that the devil has practiced this masterly piece of deception upon you and kept you from the Holy Supper by cunning, in order to estrange you altogether, in the course of time, from your faith and to cause you to forget your Saviour and your own misery.

[59.] Had you no other occasion or necessity to partake of the Holy Supper, my dear friend, is not the very fact that you are indifferent toward the Sacrament, without desire for it, a reason sufficiently significant of misery to make it necessary? To be cold and without desire in this respect, what does it mean but to be cold and without desire in regard to the faith, the gratitude and the remembrance you owe Christ for all his goodness manifest in that bitter passion that saves you from sin, death and the devil, and bestows upon you righteousness, life and salvation? How will you warm yourself from the frost of indifference? How will you quicken your faith? How will you incite your gratitude? Will you wait until these conditions come of themselves, or until you receive permission from the devil and assistance from his mother? Then you will be left in the lurch. Contact with the Sacrament, approach to the Holy Supper, is what you need. From that friction leaps fire to enkindle the heart. There you must contemplate the need and barrenness of your soul. There you must hear of and learn to believe in the goodness of your Saviour. Thus your heart shall be renewed and filled with holier thoughts.

[60.] Mercifully has God left us in a state wherein we must battle and wrestle with sin, death, the devil, the world, the flesh and every kind of trial. We are constrained, even compelled, to seek and to desire his gracious help, his Word and Sacrament. Otherwise no man would care in the least for the Word and Sacrament; no one would ask for grace or help. But those hounds and devils being on our trail, we must arouse ourselves; and as the hunted hart pants after the water brooks, so must we pant after God (Ps 42:1), if our faith is to be exercised, schooled and strengthened and we are to be established in Christ's fellowship.

[61.] Should you contend, however, that you are not sensible of sin, death, the world and the devil, and of the conflict with them, and hence it is unnecessary for you to partake of the Holy Supper, I reply: I trust that you do not seriously claim that of all saints and men you are the only one devoid of such experience. If I thought you were serious, I would have the bells rung on every street you tread; I would have your coming heralded by the proclamation: "Here passes a novel saint, greater than all the others; he has no sin, and he feels none." But let me tell you without joking: If you are sensible of no sin you are totally dead in sin, and it rules over you completely. I will not speak of such gross, manifest sins as impure inclination, adultery, wrath, hatred, envy, vindictiveness, pride, avarice, sensuality and the like. Not to feel the necessity for the Sacrament, not to desire it — that in itself is sin abundant and great. It is proof that you have no faith, that you have forgotten the sufferings of Christ, that you are filled with ingratitude and spiritual abominations of every description.

[62.] This, therefore, is my counsel: If you are so insensible as to feel neither sin nor death, touch your mouth, your nose, your ears and hands, and feel whether they be flesh or stone. If they be flesh, believe the Scriptures, though you may not believe your senses. The Scriptures say (Gal 5:17): "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit"; also (Rom 7:18): "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing." Similar expressions abound. In accordance with such passages you should say: "Truly, it is evident that I am in the flesh. It is not likely, therefore, that any good thing dwells in me.

Accordingly, so long as I remain in the flesh I shall need to partake of the Holy Supper in order to strengthen my faith and my Spirit against that flesh, for the flesh lusts against the Spirit." The Scriptures do not deceive you. You, however, may be deceived by your own impressions and by the absence of them. Although sin has been conquered through Christ and can-

not condemn us nor accuse our consciences, and though our individual sins be forgiven, yet sin continues to exist to the extent of being a source of temptation for us and of trial for our faith.

[63.] Similarly, if you are not sensible of the world, look about you and learn whether your eyes, your ears and your experience do not inform you of murder, adultery, robbery, error, heresy, persecution and vice of every description among the people surrounding you. When you observe these things, believe the Scriptures which say: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (Cor 10:12); for into such ^pitfalls you also may plunge at any hour, not with the heart only but in reality. To hate your enemy, to injure him and to hinder his advantage, is quite within the range of possibility for you. Accordingly, it will be well for you to say: "Truly, I see that I am in the world, in the midst of all kinds of sin and vice, into which it is quite possible for me to fall. Therefore, so long as I live in the world I need to go to the Sacrament, that I may cling to my Saviour and strengthen my faith; for only so may I withstand this evil world and be secure against sin and vice." Although Christ has overcome the world and we cannot be forced into sin, yet sin still exists to the extent of being a power to tempt, torment and hound us and thereby to try our faith.

[64.] Similarly, if you are not sensible of death, go to the charnel house and to the graves in the cemetery, or believe the Scriptures when they say that it is appointed unto men once to die (Job 14:5). You shall find that you are not yet in heaven with your body, but death awaits you also; that among the graves there is one for you and at no moment may you rest securely. When these things come to your notice, reflect: "Verily, I am not yet in the other world. I still have need of going to the Holy Supper to strengthen my faith, lest death, when it overtake me, makes me fearful and fainthearted." A cruel enemy is death; the unbeliever will find him invincible, and he is formidable to the weak believer. Christ has indeed conquered him and he cannot devour nor hold us; however, he still has power to disturb us, to threaten us with despair. Thus he exercises our faith.

[65.] If you do not realize from your own experience how the devil may drive one into false faith, despair, blasphemy and hate, do believe the Scriptures when they tell you that he so tormented David, Job, Paul and others, and that the same fate for yourself is by no means beyond the range of possibility. You should say: "Truly the devil is still prince of this world and I have not escaped yet from his power. So long as I am in his kingdom I am

not secure against him. Therefore it is necessary for me to partake of the Holy Supper and to cling to my precious helper and Saviour. Thus my heart and faith shall be strengthened every day against the danger of the devil's impaling me upon his thorn or strangling me with his poisoned fiery darts." Christ has indeed vanquished the devil for us, but he still remains master of the world sufficiently to attack us with those subtle trials of the spirit whereby our faith is exercised.

[66.] I have been compelled to express myself in the crude manner of a simpleton for the sake of the ignorant, lazy Christians who do not dwell upon divine things. In consequence of their indolence they soon become indifferent and secure, as if they could dispense with God and his Word; they go on as if danger and trouble could never touch them. Meanwhile they lose their faith and are incapacitated for good works. However, God has permitted such enemies to remain with us that we may be compelled to battle instead of becoming lazy and secure. That was the reason that prompted Jehovah, according to Judges 2:23, to leave some heathen kings and princes among the children of Israel; he meant to teach the Israelites the lessons of war and to keep them in a warlike condition. God's Word is almighty. Faith and the Spirit are active and astir; they must always be busy and at war. God's Word, then, requires for a test not puny enemies but the most puissant. From these it wins glory when its mettle is tried. Such enemies are the flesh, the world, death and the devil. Christ is called the Lord of Sabaoth, which means Lord of the warfare, or Lord of hosts — one who is always at war, and ourselves are his battlefield.

[67.] Plainly we stand in dire need of a gracious God who is able to come to our aid. Further, we must be absolutely certain of his unquestionable desire to manifest his grace and to render aid. But how can we be absolutely certain in this; matter without a definite token of his grace and love to us? Without such a sign, who could divine that he thinks of us?" Now, the Holy Sacrament has been intended for this purpose; it is established as a sure token of Jesus' grace and love. The Holy Supper is not a sign of his wrath; he would never give it to us if he were angry with us. It is a sign of his supreme love and mercy. And could his love ascend higher and his mercy descend deeper than to truly give us as meat his own body and blood? More than a token, it is intended as a food to refresh and strengthen the soldiers of his army who war by his side. It is the wages and provisions wherewith he pays and feeds his army, all his warriors, until they finally

conquer, remaining masters of the battlefield. Again, it is a valuable coin; it is precious, shining gold; it is pure, gleaming silver. Yet again, it is delicate, fine bread, and good, sweet wine. And all this in infinite degree. It is a delight to take part in this warfare.

[68.] However, you may argue that the statement of Paul is too awful, saying (1 Cor 11:27) that whosoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, eats and drinks judgment unto himself, and is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. "His words make us afraid to go to the Sacrament," you say, "for who could deem himself worthy?" I reply: My dear friend, you see who they are whom the apostle reproveth, namely, those who rushed in like swine, turned the Sacrament into common food for their bodies by handling simply the bread and wine of daily fare, and despised each other; moreover, each partook of a separate meal. But they to whom our words refer do not regard the Holy Supper as a meal for swine, but as the true body and blood of Christ. They know that Christ has instituted it as a memorial for himself and as a comfort for us. We speak of those who desire to be Christians, and as such to praise, thank and honor their Master, and who desire to enjoy his grace and love, but who have misgivings by reason of the unworthiness of their persons and therefore stay away, hindered and deterred by groundless fear.

[69.] Dear friend, you must not consider yourself so much from the standpoint of the worthiness or unworthiness of your person as from that of your need, which renders the grace of Christ necessary. If you recognize and feel your need, you have the requisite worthiness and preparation. The Holy Supper has been instituted by Christ not as poison for us and as a sign of Christ's wrath, but as a means of comfort and salvation. Above all, you must realize that however great your own unworthiness, the merit of your Lord Jesus Christ cannot be doubted. It is your duty to praise, honor and thank him, and, as has been pointed out above, to be one of the observers of his ordinance and institution, as he has a right to expect and as you have vowed in your Baptism. This, then, should be the sentiment of your heart: Very well, if I am unworthy to receive the Lord's Supper, so much worthier is my Lord Christ to receive my gratitude, my praise and regard for his institution. These I am pledged to give by reason of my baptismal vow. Again, while I am not worthy of the Holy Supper, I am surely in need of it. A beggar has no right to be ashamed. Shame is an unnecessary utensil in the

house of a poor beggar, even Christ having had words of praise for a certain impudent haggler, Lk 11:5 ff.

[70.] So you see there is a twofold reason for you to receive the Lord's Supper. First, it means gratitude and praise for Christ; secondly, it means grace and solace for yourself. To occupy the standpoint of this twofold reason does not argue wickedness and a misuse of the Sacrament; it is the right standpoint and pleasing to God. Our relation to God is right only when we occupy the standpoint of gratitude and supplication. In rendering thanks we honor him for the blessings and grace already received, in supplication for those we crave for the future. When one goes to the Holy Supper with this disposition, what is his act but the declaration: "Lord, I thank thee for all the grace I have received at thy hands, and I pray thee to supply still further my need"? It is a joint sacrifice of praise and supplication. You cannot do more for God; you cannot more highly honor him.

[71.] See how precious is that Sacrament wherein you simultaneously thank God for his former mercies and pray for future ones. But who is able sufficiently to thank and to praise? There is absolutely no reason for becoming indolent and indifferent; ardent and strong is the incentive to receive the Holy Supper eagerly and with gladness. Oh, had the dear prophets and fathers only had the opportunity to witness the administration of this Sacrament, with what longing and eagerness they would have thronged about it! how they would have marveled at a state so favored in comparison with their own! But what grief they would have felt had they seen how shamefully we spurn it! And to what height their grief would have risen, had they seen the Papists and sophists make of the Holy Supper a means of traffic through private masses and kindred practices!

[72.] Take care, therefore, to use the Sacrament only from the twofold standpoint of gratitude and supplication. Beware of the abomination of the Papists, who make of it a sacrifice whereby they do not render thanks for the grace of the past, but seek to acquire and merit grace for the future as by a work of their own; and this grace not in their own behalf, but in behalf of others to whom, as shown above, they sell their sacrificial mass. But you should swell the throng of those who render thanks and praise for the grace of the past, and who long and plead for grace to supply the needs of the future. Thus you will be safe against the temptation to traffic in the Sacrament, or to communicate or sell it as a meritorious work to others. Every

one must thank God for himself here, and in fellowship with all make supplication.

[73.] So much for the present. To what I have said I call the attention of preachers who may need to be informed. I ask them to instill it into the minds of the people, emphasizing its importance. While some may be too hardened, impenitent and brutish to heed the instruction, with others it will not remain fruitless. It will be good words falling upon good ground, as the saying is. God says his Word shall not return unto him void, but shall accomplish his pleasure. Is 55:11. They who, in their contempt for the Holy Supper, spurn admonition and refuse to observe the rite while in life and health, should be left to themselves in their last extremity; its administration should be denied them in the hour of death. If they have lived like dogs and swine, let them die like dogs and swine, unless they manifest unmistakable signs of a repentant, believing heart. That which is holy should not be given to dogs, nor the pearl be cast before swine. Mat 7:6. God's own chastisement shall fall upon the despisers of his Holy Supper; they will be unfitted to receive that Sacrament. I will illustrate this point by a recent occurrence in the city of Torgau. The pastor and the chaplain are still to be found as witnesses.

[74.] In that city a man, whose name I will not mention, under the cloak of Christian liberty neglected to attend upon the Holy Supper for six or seven years. He postponed it and procrastinated until his final illness came; and even then he waited until the last hour. When he realized the approach of death, he summoned the chaplain and requested that the Sacrament be administered. The chaplain complied, but while the Sacrament was yet in the man's mouth his soul departed. The chaplain was compelled to take the wafer from the open mouth. Its possession filled him with loathing. He asked me what he should do with it, and I advised, to burn it. Dear friend, let this incident warn you from) living in a brutish manner, even though the Holy Supper is not compulsory. If you can afford to spurn God in his Sacrament, he can afford to spurn you in your extremity. "Ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh in the day of your calamity," Prov 1:25-26. It is quite right that a professed Christian who brings reproach upon his profession by refusing to receive the Holy Supper when he may do so, shall be denied it when he desires to receive it.

[75.] Not that I would force any to attend the Holy Supper, or would lay down a law dictating the time to observe it, as the pope did. God does not

desire service that must be coerced; still less will he force his gift upon an ingrate. I merely admonish everyone to coerce himself; to let his own devotion be the force which constrains him to seek this precious, priceless blessing of souls. Incidentally, I desire to point out that God will justly manifest his dire displeasure against shameful contempt of his grace and goodness, my motive being that men may learn to seek and receive the grace of God without coercion and law. Such infinite contempt and ingratitude call for a greater penalty than to find ourselves in the end debarred from the Sacrament; and a much greater penalty is inevitable.

[76.] Consider how repulsive and desperate are the ingratitude and contempt of which we here treat: Under the pope, when we were forced and urged to the Sacrament, we thronged to it. We had to supply money in abundance for its maintenance, and our privileges were purchased at great cost. And receiving the Sacrament in one kind, we got but half of it. Worst of all, we were compelled to attend, not for our good nor to the glory of God, but merely in obedience to the pope as if we were his serfs. He did not consider how we were to be blessed therein, nor how God was to be glorified. Nothing in that connection was preached and taught by the Papists. All the pope was after was our subjection to himself. Indeed we had to go to the Sacrament to our own injury, both in body and soul. Of faith nothing was taught. The Holy Supper was made a work conferring favor upon God. This construction served to conceal from us the true way of celebrating and appropriating the Sacrament, and to rob us of its blessing and fruit.

[77.] But now that the Lord's Supper is free, and we are taught how to appropriate it; in short, now that its administration redounds to our welfare and the glory of God, the contempt we manifest toward it and the shameful treatment we accord it are unbecoming men, let alone Christians. We act as if we were stumps and stones having no need of the Sacrament and no concern in it. What wonder that God responds by tormenting and punishing us? Ay, since we who profess Christianity deport ourselves toward our Saviour so contemptuously and blasphemously, it should cause no surprise did God unceasingly torment us with famine, plague, war and every kind of disaster. What do we mean when we who not only obtained gracious deliverance from the papal bondage of souls and from papal fetters, but in addition are offered abundant grace, fail to render thanks for our deliverance, even making light of the Lord's Supper as if it were a needless, useless thing?

[78.] Therefore, I may justly proclaim this warning in God's stead: "If you will not eat and drink of my Supper which I have instituted for you with fervent love, I will send famine upon you. You shall find your table bare, in the evening and in the morning. If your satiety is such as to leave no desire for my food, I will make you hungry enough, and deprive you of that also which is yours. If you reject the bread of life offered by me in abundance, then suffer the plague, the fever and every variety of disease, and the devil take you at your death. If you reject the Sacrament and the love, grace and peace conferred with it, then take war, trouble, strife and anxiety." What else remains for God to do? How can he suffer his grace persistently and incessantly to be despised? How can he permit steadily increasing ingratitude when the Lord's Supper has been purchased by him at the stupendous cost of the crucifixion of his own Son? God must strike, sending upon us penalty after penalty; in fact, a beginning has already been made. We are provoking his wrath. Grace is suspended and his displeasure holds sway. His attitude cannot be otherwise in view of the incessant contempt and ingratitude we manifest.

[79.] I claim now to have done my part; and I have entreated the preachers faithfully to be zealous in this respect and add their entreaties to mine, lest we call down upon ourselves the wrath of God in all its fury. No doubt, some few godly hearts will receive what I have written and amend their lives. As far as the others are concerned, I disclaim all responsibility; their blood be upon their own heads since they have received sufficient warning. May our God, the God of all grace and mercy, grant us his Holy Spirit to quicken us and to warm us to diligently seek his glory and, with fervent devotion of heart, to thank him for his innumerable and unutterable blessings and gifts, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Upon him be praise and thanks, honor and glory, forever, Amen! Amen!

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Originally published 1908 by The Luther Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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607 – v5.1 (2020-02-20)

ISBN: 9798614359553 (paperback)

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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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