LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
IN HIS EARLY WRITINGS.

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Important Note.

The spelling throughout this thesis is American spelling, according to Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary. For example, the English 'colour' is spelt 'color' and 'succour' is spelt 'succeor'.

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Luther's doctrine of the Church up to the Diet of Worms, naturally, is a doctrine in formation. A treatment limited to his early writings, therefore, calls for the tracing of the origin and development of this doctrine in Luther. The treatment follows two parallel lines. Along one line we see Luther drawing gradually away from allegiance to Roman Catholic authority and the traditional doctrine of the Church. Along a parallel line we follow the steady and consistent growth of Luther's own conception of the Church. When the break with Roman ecclesiastical authority has come with the Leipzig Disputation, the time has arrived for a full statement of the nature of the Church by Luther. In this early period it is only the nature of the Church which is fully worked out. The other phases of the doctrine of the Church, its power, its end, etc., are awaiting the coming years, when the theories of our early Luther meet the hard facts of actual practice. They can therefore receive only occasional and limited attention while our view is ever focused on the nature of the Church, which is the foundation of the doctrine of the Church.
INTRODUCTION.

1. Importance of the question.

We live in a period of revolt against established authority. In the political world this is self-evident, and it is hardly less evident in the religious world. True, it is on a much smaller scale in the latter case and takes on a totally different form. Neither peoples nor large sections of peoples are rising in rebellion against religious authority, as they have done in the political world during the last decade. And yet the same spirit of resentment and opposition to authority is disturbing the serenity of the religious world. Authority in the church is being questioned. There never was a time when it was not questioned; but since the Reformation spiritual authority has probably never
been challenged to such an extent as it is at present.
To-day, probably more than ever, men and women demand
the right to choose their own religion and to formulate
their own confession of faith. Any attempt to mould their religious thought in traditional forms is
resented. They will not be dictated to. This resentment in many cases is directed against the Church.
To analyze the concept "church" does not concern them.
The Church to them is an institution which conducts religious service in various "church buildings" and tells
people what to believe about God, self, and the world. It is against this "hierarchy" that their spirit of independent thought rebels. If this group of people
could be brought to realize that the Church is not such
an organized tyrannical authority, but, as Luther held, a spiritual communion, motivated and determined by faith
and love, might not much of their hostility cease?

That it is not an antiquated question with which we are dealing is further evidenced by many things.
On every hand we find Christian churches bending their efforts toward union. Consciously or unconsciously it
is an attempt to identify the visible, outward church with the invisible, spiritual church. Necess-
arily one of the burning questions at Lausanne, as at Stockholm, was the question of the Church.

We turn to almost any country, and we find one of the most vital problems to be the Church and its relation to the State. The Anglican controversy is the example par excellence. In the United States legislating against the teaching of Evolution has raised a tremendous discussion of the question. In Rome the question is again a burning issue. Utopian echoes of Marsilius of Padua and of medieval theocracies are not wanting in the discussion.

Most vital of all is the importance of Luther's doctrine of the Church for the Reformation. Many before him had seen the need of a reformation in the Church. Few had seen that at the root of the matter lay a perverted doctrine of the Church, which found its expression in the Roman Catholic hierarchical system. Those who had realized this had failed to present the Christian world with an adequate substitute for the hierarchical conception. Even the great reforming councils had failed, because they
attacked effect rather than cause, corruption rather than the system, church polity rather than church doctrine.

2. The Doctrine of the Church before Luther.

Luther was not alone, however, in seeing the importance of the doctrine of the Church for the welfare of Christ's Church. Numerous other writers had theorized on the doctrine of the Church. Saint Augustine, probably above all who preceded Luther, analyzed the nature of the Church and furnished a starting-point for all subsequent discussion of the subject. But no one can read Augustine's many pronouncements regarding the Church and emerge with a clear conception of the nature of the Church. He went a long way toward establishing a doctrine of the Church which should reach beyond the narrow limits of a hierarchical conception.

1) Eduard Bratke, Luther's 95 Thesen und ihre dogm-historischen Voraussetzungen. Göttingen 1884, P. 314: "Was der Kirche Noth that, das war nicht ein Fließwerk am Einzelnen, sondern eine umfassende nachhaltige Be- generation, welche das Verderben an seinem Hauptsitz angriff. Und das waren nicht die weltlichen Elemente an der Kirche, sondern das Verhältnisz des Menschen zu Gott, die Heilsordnung. Sie war aber bis jetzt nicht der Gegenstand der Reform gewesen. Denn die grossen Concilien beschränkten ihre Maßnahmen auf das Verhältnisz des Episcopats zum römischen Primat und auf die Abstellung zahlreicher Uebelstände im Klerus.... Der eigentliche Sitz des Verderbens, der hierarchisch-römische Kirchenbegriff, blieb unangetastet."
Augustine constructs an elaborate and Biblical doctrine of the spiritual nature of the Church.  

The faithful are the only true members of the Church, and they constitute a communion (congregatio, societas, compages) through which the Spirit works and grace becomes effective. This communion is preserved through the Spirit by the invisibilis unctio caritatis. This intimate and invisible bond, which joins the faithful together, makes the communion itself an invisible body. This is what Augustine calls the invisibilis caritatis compages.

We seize upon these statements of the great teacher and we are prone to believe that Augustine will give us the last word concerning the Church as the invisible body, the communion of saints. But in this matter one must take all of Augustine or none at all. We are soon disillusioned. For this "invisible Church" is only to be found within the vis-

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ible Catholic Church. The whole question between the Mother Church and the Donatists is whether the Church is "with us", or with them". He concludes that outside of the visible Catholic Church there is no Church of Christ and no member of Christ's Church. Consequently outside of the Church there is no salvation, and "Church" here means the visible Catholic Church. Thus Augustine leaves us with a twofold Church, whose existence is inseparably bound up with the historical Catholic Church. The confusion of Augustine's doctrine of the Church is further complicated by his theory of Predestination. For this provides him with another designation for the Church, viz.: the numerus praedestinatorum. We have here then actually three doctrines of the Church. The result has been that

4) Seeberg, op. cit.53: "Unsere Anseinandersetzungen zeigen, dass wir von einem dreifachen Princip in Augustus Lehre von der Kirche zu sagen haben".
three different sections of the Christian Church have at various periods cited the authority of Augustine in substantiation of their respective doctrines of the Church. By recognizing, with Cyprian, the visible Catholic Church as the only true Church of Christ, he became the strongest support, if not the very foundation, of the hierarchical tendency. Hus and Wyclif, among others, revived the Augustinian idea of the Church as the \textit{numerus praedestinatarum}. Luther, we shall see, found in Augustine support for his doctrine of the invisible Church and the communion of saints.

Of the three phases of Augustine's doctrine of the Church, the most influential was the hierarchical conception. And after all, the sum total of his discussion of this doctrine established the idea of the Church as the visible, hierarchical institution, the sole possessor of the means of salvation. For when Augustine himself confessed "ego
vero evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae communiveret auctoritas," he became one of the pillars of that enormous structure of hierarchical authority which Luther later dared to attack. How this structure grew, and how the claims of authority of the Church became more and more pretentious, need not arrest us. What interests us is to know the situation when Luther arrived on the scene. As Augustine in attacking the Donatists, wanted to know where the Church was, so Luther may well have asked himself when he met the first rebuff at the hands of Church authority. For the same reason we need to inquire as to what the state of the doctrine of the Church was when Luther appeared. That will enable us to understand why Luther felt himself called upon to challenge the authority of the Catholic Church and to restate the Scriptural doctrine of the Church.

2) De unit. eccl. II, 2: "Quaestio certe inter nos versatur, ubi sit Ecclesia, utrum apud nos, an apud illos."
Luther saw the importance of the question. He saw that any effective reform must begin with a reformed doctrine of the Church. For the Church had come to be identified with the hierarchical institution with its head at Rome. The seed of Augustine and Cyprian had born fruit a hundredfold. The claims of authority of the Church and the Pope at Rome had grown to tremendous proportions. Innocence III raised the Papacy to its most dazzling heights, claiming the Pope to be the divinely appointed vicar of Christ on earth, to whom is given supreme power in Church and State. The Holy Mother Church alone stands firm, he declared at the Fourth Lateran Council, and only confusion results

1) *Epistle XXXIX, 5. To the People, concerning five schismatic Presbyters of the Faction of Felicissimus.*
Anti-Nicene Fathers. Buffalo, 1886. v. V, P. 318. "There is one God, and Christ is one, and there is one Church, and one chair founded upon the rock by the word of the Lord."

Treatise on the Church. 6. Ibid. P. 423. "Whoever is separated from the Church and is joined to an adulteress is separated from the promise of the Church; nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. ... He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother." cf. Corp. Script. III, 214. *De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate,* c. 6.
from a diversity of religions. This did not however prevent the frequent repetition and reformulation of her pretentious claims, though the last word had been spoken. It was only natural that, as the hierarchical conception of the Church became even more pronounced, the spiritual conception receded into the background. At any rate, wherever the spiritual nature of the Church was considered, it was always conceived within the confines of the visible Catholic Church.

The vague connection of these two concepts in Augustine was clarified by the scholastics, but always with emphasis on the hierarchical phase. The scholastic doctors did not hesitate to proclaim the spiritual nature of the Church. To Hugo of St. Victor the Church was the "multitudo fidelium universitas Christianorum". To Thomas Aquinas

(1) Can. 13. Mansi XXII, 1002 E.
it was the "communio fidelium". But the faithful are to be found only within the Catholic Church. Therefore the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ, through which the Spirit works and by which salvation is dispensed. This body is infallible and at its head is the Pope, in whom is a plenitude of power in the Church. Since hope of salvation depends on outward membership in the institution, the question for every individual is not obedience to, and communion with, Christ, but obedience to the Church. For the Church is the dispenser of damnation as well as of salvation. The power and authority which the Catholic Church claims received its most extravagant expression in the Bull

1) Summa suppl. c. 23 a 1. Ed. Paris. 1877, IV, 1007
2) Summa II, II q.1, art. 9. Ibid. III, 24: "Ecclesia universalis non potest errare, quid a Spiritu sancto gubernatur".
3) Summa II, II q.89, a.9 Ibid. III, 699: "qui habet curam universalis Ecclesiae".
4) Ibid. "in omnibus generaliter quae ad dispensationem rerum eclesiasticarum pertinent, super quas habet plenitudinem potestatis".
Unam sanctam... of Boniface VIII. There is only one holy, catholic, church. Absolute submission in faith to this Church is necessary, for outside of it there is neither salvation, nor remission of sin. As there is one church, so there is one head, and submission to this supreme Pontiff is an absolute condition to salvation. The Church is given two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. The one is to be used by the Church, the other for the Church. The temporal power must bow to the spiritual and receive its authority from the latter.

This pretentious manifesto appeared two hundred years before Luther. Yet the year before Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses, Pope Leo X declared the Bull to be in full force and effect. This document then answers the question, "where was the Church when Luther arrived?". Into such an organized monster had developed the free communion of the followers of Jesus. Individual communion with God had given place to blind obedience to the Church.

Personal religion had yielded to a mechanical religion of works and ceremonies. Liberty of conscience had abdicated in favor of an ecclesiastical pawnshop of souls. Is it surprising that Luther saw the need of excavating a bit, in order to rescue the doctrine of the Church of Christ from the hierarchical debris which was smothering it?

Let it not be supposed that this hierarchical development continued its course unquestioned until Luther challenged it. The international sway of the Papacy had been checked by the awakening of a national consciousness in the German people, in particular, and other peoples in general. The sharp criticism of the Nominalists had taken its toll. Both Marsilius and Occam had challenged the authority of the Church and the Papacy. The latter is a purely human institution. As in

the State, so in the Church, the sovereignty is in the people. The Church of the New Testament is the communion of the faithful, which is built upon Christ and not upon Peter. By establishing Scripture as the highest and only infallible authority in the Church, Nominalism had put a wedge in the side of the Curial system which Luther proceeded to drive in further. The great Reform Councils, inspired by Gerson, D'Ailly, and others, had given the Papacy a temporary check by proclaiming the supremacy of a general council. Humanism had liberated many consciences from ecclesiastical tyranny. By encouraging free research and return to original sources, a basis was laid for historical criticism. The effect of this on the traditional authority in the Church is self-evident. Decretals and fabrications, long since composed in support of hierarchical authority, crumbled while the Papacy groaned. But because Humanism was an intellectual rather than a spiritual renaissance,
it failed where Luther succeeded.

A more positive preparation for Luther's doctrine of the Church however, was made by the so called forerunners of the Reformation. Wesel and Wessel continued where Marsilius and Occam had begun. The nature of the Church is spiritual and its unity consists in a community of its members in one faith, forming a communion of saints with one Head, Jesus Christ. Wyclif and Hus beyond all the others concerned themselves with defining the true nature of the Church. But their very definition of the Church as the *congregatio omnium praedestinatorum* was unfortunate, since it included the elect of all time, past, present, and future. The Church would then be a congregation of Christians, blaspheming...

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Sauls, heretics, and what not, as long as they were elect. This conception makes any unity in the Church on earth difficult to comprehend. There can be no communion between members of such a group. The doctrine of the Church promulgated by Wyclif and Hus was therefore inadequate to replace the existing one. They could shake but not shatter the Roman doctrine of the Church.

4. Luther's early environment and his Doctrine of the Church.

Here were two distinct tendencies, two views of the Church, the one identifying it with the hierarchy, the other conceiving it as a spiritual communion. The question naturally arises: in which milieu did Luther grow to spiritual maturity? It is easy to say that his doctrine of the Church was merely a product of his environment and a rehashing of ideas of predecessors. Grisar, by the very heading of a paragraph on this question

1) Grisar, Hartmann, Luther, Freiburg im Breisgau 1911. I, 29: "Die Kleine Welt von Wittenberg und die grosze Welt in Staat und Kirche."
intimates that Luther was so steeped in liberal Humanistic environment at Wittenberg, that his defection was a natural result of this contamination. But Grisar himself admits that the religious atmosphere at Wittenberg was wholly Catholic. A brief glance at Luther's early years suffices to show that he grew up in the strict atmosphere of traditional Catholicism.

From the beginning Luther's was a life of uncompromising discipline. From childhood to his ordination as priest the ruling principle of his training was obedience. In the schools at Mansfeld, Magdeburg, and Eisenach, the chief inducement to diligence was the rod. When we are told that the young Martin was whipped fifteen times in one morning, we gain an idea of the atmosphere in

1) Ibid, 30, "Die Lehrrichtung der Universität war damals in religiöser Beziehung selbstverständlich katholisch."
which Luther passed his early years. His training in the art of obedience reached a climax in the monastery at Erfurt, where the vow of obedience stood side by side with the vows of poverty and chastity. 1)

This decade-long course in obedience was sure


"Receptus, iam non solum acerrimo studio doctrinam Ecclesiae discit, sed etiam summa disciplinae severitate se ipse regit, et omnibus exercitus, lectionum, disputationum, ieiuniorum, precum, omnes longe superat. Erat autem natura, quod saepe miratus sum, in corpore nec parvo nec imbicilli, valde modici cibi et potus, vidi continuos quattuor diebus, cum quidem recte valeret, prorsus nihil edentem aut bibentem vidi saepe alias multis diebus quotidie exiguo pane et halece contentum esse."

to leave its imprint on Luther's further development. To-day our youth would revolt under such tyranny. Not so in Luther's day. Through the harsh demeanour of his father he saw parental love, and disobedience was ever far from his mind. In spite of it all he loved his father according to the commandment. And when he was to be ordained priest, he invited his father to attend the ceremony in these words: "Dearest father, As you are in age and care for me, master in merit and brother in religion, if private business will permit you, deign to come and help me with your gracious presence and prayer, that my sacrifice may be acceptable in God's sight."

Though this was the spirit in which Luther accepted the disciplinary treatment of his father, the rule of the rod in the schools and the discipline of the cloister left a deeper mark. As the rod of the teacher held him in constant fear of corporal punishment, so the rod of the Divine Law, harshly

administered, in home and cloister, threatened his souls petition. Through perfect obedience he could avoid the punishment of parent and master. Through perfect obedience to the precepts of God and the Holy Church he thought to avoid eternal punishment. Thus Luther grew up in an atmosphere of physical and spiritual tyranny. And he was not alone. As we have seen, Erasmus and a few other Humanists had thrown off the shackles by which men's minds had long been bound. But a stronger force than Humanism was needed to make the emancipation complete. That Luther was in his early years conscious of this tyranny any more than the great mass of his fellow-

1) HassenI, 605 - "Die durch die social - kirchlichen Verhältnisse erstandend Aergernisse wurden zur Untergrabung der Kirchlichen Autorität und der religiösen Ueberzeugung des Volkes planmäßzig ausgenutzt von einer jüngern Humanistenschule, welche sich allmählich neben der altern zu Macht und Ansehen erhoben hatte und seit dem Zweiten Jahresszehnt des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts in 'festem geschlossenen Bunde' auftrat".
Christians is too much to assume. For centuries men had unconsciously surrendered their spiritual, if not their intellectual, life and growth to the maternal guidance of the Church. The result was clear in Luther's case. He clung to the Mother Church long after he had begun to attack the abuses within the Church. The best proof, however, that Luther grew to maturity as a good Catholic, reared in the traditional Catholic atmosphere, we have in his own works. What is more, this traditional Catholic doctrine of the Church, which was the overwhelmingly predominant view, is set clearly before us in the defence of prominent Catholics to Luther's attacks, notably those of Tetzel, Eck, and Alveld.
Part I.

PERIOD OF INNER DEVELOPMENT. - PSALMS, ROMANS.

Chapter 1.

LUTHER THE ROMAN CATHOLIC.

1. Origin of Luther's Doctrine of the Church.

The first stage in the development of Luther's doctrine of the Church takes us to the beginning of the Indulgence Controversy. It brings us through those significant years from 1513 to 1516, when Luther was lecturing on the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans. His spiritual rebirth, which he later speaks of, had taken place. Whether it took place in the monastery at Erfurt or during the year preceding his lectures on the Psalms of 1513-1516 does not concern us. Certain it

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is, that no new doctrine of the Church appears in Luther until the basic doctrine of justification by faith has taken complete possession of him. The discovery of the latter doctrine was Luther's spiritual emancipation. From this root sprang the tree, whose branches were all the other doctrines of faith, as Luther found them in Holy Scripture. In this word of the Apostle, Luther had found the point of direct contact between the soul and God. But this was more than a matter for the individual soul. Luther did not stop there, but went on to draw all the consequences of this doctrine. The communion of the individual soul with God translates itself into a communion with other souls of like faith. These souls have need of mutual comfort and encouragement. Furthermore they have need of the nourishment offered in the Word of Grace. No more than the first Christians could walk in solitary communion with God could Luther and other justified souls avoid the consciousness that they were part of a community. This community was the Church.
Nothing is more logical, more consequential, and more consistent, than Luther's doctrinal development. Too often this development is pictured in terms of a series of violent upheavals with no apparent connection. True, we do find him suddenly awakened by a thunderstorm to a realization of sin and the Law's demands. We do find him in Rome, according to the traditional account, halted abruptly in his ascent of Pilate's staircase by the words of Paul: "the just shall live by faith". Each of these incidents is a landmark to which we can point and say: "here Luther has taken a definite step forward". But between milestones is a long road. Luther did not jump from one milestone to the next but travelled the full distance of spiritual struggle and progress, advancing step by step toward the goal that was destined for him, Luther the Reformer. No one realized better than Luther himself that he advanced but slowly to maturity and conviction. He says of himself in 1545:

1) André Jundt, Le Developpement de la Pensée Religieuse de Luther jusqu'en 1517. Paris, 1906 P. 3: "La découverte qu'il fut du véritable sens de la Parole de Dieu a été le résultat, non d'une inspiration subite, mais de longs et patients efforts. Il s'est avancé droite, guidé par un sur instinct, mais il s'est avancé pas à pas, comme un homme qui doit se frayer la route, vers la Terre promise de l'Evangile paulinien."

2) Preface to D. Martini Lutheri opera latina varii argumenti, Frankfurti ad M. et Erlangae, I, 1865, p. 23
"Dear reader, if you desire to read these writings, remember that I have been, as Augustine says of himself, among those authors, who have progressed in writing and teaching. I have not been one of those who, without labor, without research, without preliminary trials, attain to perfection immediately and understand at first sight the full sense of Scripture."

As steady as was the advance in Luther's general doctrinal development was the development of his doctrine of the Church. This very fact makes it impossible to say at what moment this doctrine appeared in its new Lutheran form. Luther was so steeped in the traditional doctrine that it is out of the question to determine where the one ends and the other begins. It is in the Lectures on the Psalms that the conflict of the two first appears in relief. An expression is thrown out now and then before this, as we shall see, but the first serious study of the doctrine appears in the Course on the Psalms. And as far as our subject is concerned, the Psalms-lectures are the all important work of the period up to 1517. 1)

1) K. Holl, Die Entstehung von Luther's Kirchenbegriff, in Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte, I. Tübingen.
They show us Luther the obedient son of the Catholic Church, identifying the Church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, we see in embryo the new spiritual conception of the Church as the communion of believers, which is soon to characterize Luther's teaching. It is not a new conception, to be sure. The scholastics, as we have noted, not to mention Augustine, spoke freely of the Church as the communion of the faithful, or the

1927, P. 306: "Über den Standpunkt, den er in der Psalmenvorlesung einnahm, ist Luther bis zum Jahre 1517 im Grundsätzlichen nicht hinausgegangen."
Jundt, Le Développement. P. 127: "Les sermons nous fournissent aucune indication sur latpensee de Luther qui ne soit deja contenue dans les scholies".
Yet this communion was to them only conceivable within the hierarchically institutional. The task for Luther, then, was to define the relation between these two concepts. Were there two Churches? Was one part of the other? Or was one only an outward manifestation of the other? The lectures on the Psalms show Luther face to face with the problem, which no reformer of the Church could evade.

2. The authority of the Church.

We note first the expressions of the period which show Luther still a faithful Catholic. Thereafter we may consider the new ideas which begin to characterize his doctrine of the Church. We concentrate our attention on the Psalms, which contain all that is new in Luther's doctrine of the Church in this period. The other works are merely additional evidence and will be noted from time to time.

Since Luther at this stage is wholly unconscious of the fact that he is beginning to formulate a

doctrine of the Church, he does not begin systematically by discussing the nature of the Church. The phase that first claims his attention is the authority of the Church and authority in the Church. In expounding the authority of the Church, Luther has in mind the visible Catholic Church. The authority which he assigns to the Church becomes apparent in his attack on heresy. In their ignorance and conceit the heretics have the affrontery to question the authority of the Church and thereby disturb the peace of Christ's Church. Their attacks on the Church are not malicious for their lives are spotless. The cause of their defection is their ignorance and their conceit. "Inflated with the affection of their own flesh", the heretics deny Christ, that is, the truth which is in the Church. The Jews sinned in rejecting Christ Himself in the flesh; the heretics sin "through apostacy and disobedience to the Church, that is, the

1) Ps. 39 (40-), 10. W. III, 225, 1. 20: "Annunciavi ... iusticiam tuam ..., in ecclesia magna Catholica".
2) Ps. 118 (119), 79. W. IV, 345, 1. 3, at 1. 17.
3) Ps. 77 (78), 25. W III, 578, 1. 3.
mystic Christ". By ignorance and misinterpretation of Scripture they cast about for another truth than the one Christ has given the Church. They do not see that "one word wrongly understood can bring confusion in the entire Scripture". Again and again we find Luther engaging in violent attacks on the presumptuous heretics who dare to question the established authority and seek to "set up another doctrine and wisdom". Likewise regarding the Mass he says: "it is permitted to no one to follow his own judgment, his own opinion, his own devotion, ... But the authority of the Church, and the understanding ought to be taken captive in obedience to Christ, for it is written: He is a fool who trusts in his own heart. And the Church cannot err, while any man can err in his own devotion, since also many prophets, saints, kings likewise have erred, for a warning and a source of terror to us".

How different is this Luther, urging men to submit to the Church's interpretation of Scripture, from

1) Ibid. P. 579, l. 5.
2) Ibid. 577, l. 39ff.
the Luther who opposed Eck at Leipzig! At this stage we find the bold statement that the Church cannot err. For that reason it was not for the individual to determine whether a doctrine were true or false.

It was true that errors had crept in, yes, had "de-luged" the Church. Yet these were not the errors of the Church, but rather errors against the Church by members not content with the traditional doctrines. The heretics reject the proof of centuries, the blood of martyrs, and the testimony of Scriptures, all of which testify that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ. This might as easily have been Eck attacking Luther as Luther attacking heretics. Here Luther denies the heretics the right which he later claimed at Leipzig: of direct approach to God and of personal interpretation of Scripture in the face of ecclesiastical authority. The Church which he later saw as a stumbling-block to personal communion

1) Ibid. p. 413, l. 18.
2) Ps. 100 (101), 7. W. IV, 129, l. 10
with God, he now saw as the "tabernacle" where the faithful might find shelter "from the strife of tongues", that is, from the attacks of heretics. Luther's submission to the authority of the Mother Church is thus complete.

The same obedience is due to the authority of the prelates of the Church, who are the vicars of Christ. The prelates are the altars of the Church, bringing their people as a sacrifice to the Lord. Christ is the principle altar. For what he is to the whole Church, his vicars are to its parts. Whence they receive the names, heads, pastors, doctors, chiefs, kings, masters, which are names of Christ. They are His angels and His ministers who praise Him and do His pleasure. These are "they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters". The "sea" is the world, the "ships" are the churches, and their "business" is the work of Christ: preaching

2) Ps. 83 (84), 4. W. III, 646, L. 3.
3) Ibid. P. 645, L. 34.
his Word. For this work they are appointed the 
"tongues of the Church"; while all the others who 
speak the things of faith and the Church are the "lips" 
of the Church. The prelates are not to be con-
temned, but obeyed; for they are by Christ 
ordained to be rulers over the Church. This 
power is given them not for the sake of wealth and 
honor, but that justice may be done, error prevented,

1) Ps. 106 (107), 23. W. IV, 208, l. 21: "Qui 
descendunt episcopi et sacerdotes, principes Ecclesi-
arum, mare mundum in navibus Ecclesiis, quas regnant: 
facientes operationem Christi, scil. verbum eius pre-
dicando". Sermo in Ferial S. Martini, A. 1516.
Opp. lat. arg., I. 141: "Nihil itaque tam est cur-
andum, quam ut in populo sit bonus episcopus, maxime 
praedicator, hoc enim est officium episcopi, praec-
dicare."
2) Ps. 70 (71), 24. Glossa 6. W. III, 452, l. 33 ff: 
"Igitur lingua Ecclesie sunt predicatores, doctores, 
ora- 
tores, labia similiter omnes qui loquentur ea que 
sunt fidei et Ecclesiæ".
3) Ps. 43 (44). W. III, 248, l. 15 ff. "ut ministerium 
Ecclesie non contemnatur."
4) Ps. 67 (68), 15. W. III, 386, l. 20: "Dum discer-
nit i.e. distinctos officiis et donis ordinat 1 Cor. 
12. discrete et prudenter caelestis Christus, non 
Herodes terrenus reges rectores et prelatus apostolos 
super eam Ecclesiam". cf. Glossa 6, l. 31.
and heresy defeated. Thus the power of the prelates comports an obligation. They are the workmen of the Church, on whom depend the life and the growth of the Church. Their work is more to minister than to rule, rather to serve than to command. For in the Church, let him who wishes to become an eye and a leader of others first become an ear and a disciple. This will teach him the humility which is fitting for a spiritual father. For he is to be consulted as a father by his flock, even as Moses urged his people: "Ask thy father and he will shew thee" (Deut. 32, 7). Yea, as the Church is the hen, even as Christ, so the prelates

1) Ps. 121 (122), 5. W. IV, 1. i ff.: "Sed nec frustra dictum: 'In iudices'. Quia potestas data est sacerdotibus non ad divitias, honores, voluptates captandas, sed ad iudicium exercendum. Quia ad hunc portinet mala prohibere, errores observare, hereses repellere, tollere scandalata et corrigere atque disciplinam exercere".

2) Ps. 118 (119), 109. W. IV, 359, 1.21: (Episcopi et doctores) "hii enim sunt operarii Ecclesie, in iis autem consistit tota via Ecclesie vel defendenda vel dilatanda."

3) Ps. 93 (94), 10. W. IV, 95, 1.5: "Ergo in Ecclesia qui vult oculus fieri et aliorum dux et magister, prius auris fiat et discipulus."

4) Ps. 43 (44) W. III, 248, 1. 15,ff.
are the wings which protect the little ones from being devoured by evil spirits. They give them shade, that is, teach them the doctrine of true faith, and this is their protection against evil spirits.

Thus the prelates are at once the rulers and the protectors of the faithful. Their authority is unquestioned and their power extends beyond the earth. "For their tongues are the keys of the kingdom of the heavens." The "gates of Zion" are the powers of the Church, through whose authority men are led to life, and whose work it is to judge and to sit in the causes of the Church. "Therefore let a man diligently beware, lest he ever discuss or pass judgment on a decision of his prelate." Hence obedience to the

1) Ps. 90 (91), 4. W. IV, 68, 1.20ff.: "Sed allegorice, quia Ecclesia gallina est sicut et Christus, cuius scapule sunt prelati et directores et protectores pullorum a demonibus ne devorentur. Quomodo hoc? per obumbrationem. Obumbrare enim est umbram super eos facere, id est veram fidem docere: per hanc enim doctrinam vere fidei proteguntur a demonibus."


3) Ps. 9, 15. W. III, 91, 1.23.

4) W. III, 18, 1.33.
Church means also obedience to the prelates, for this in turn means obedience to Christ, whose vicars they are.

It is only one step from this submission to Church and prelates to submission to the Pope. Luther's relation to the Papacy cannot be treated exhaustively here, but a glance at it does throw light on his changing theory of the Church. His submission to the Papacy in this period is as complete as it is to the Catholic Church. He is a good Catholic and a true Papist. In a sermon, 1516, he says, "all the works and merits of Christ and of the Church are in the hand of the Pope". For to Peter was delivered the spiritual power in the keys. "Had Christ not given all His power to a man," he says in his *Sermo in vincula S. Petri*, "there would have been no complete Church for there would have been no order, since anyone who wished could say that he was moved by the Holy Spirit".

1) Ps. 9, 15, W. III, 91, 1.32.
2) W. I, 67, 1.31: "omnia operae et merita Christi et Ecclesiae sunt in manu Papae."
3) Ps. 102(103), 20, W. IV, 165, 1.23ff.: "potestate spirituali Petro concessa in clavibus.
4) W. I, 69: "Nisi Christus omnem potestatem suam dedisset homini, nulla fuerit Ecclesia perfecta."
"Thus he desires to exercise no power except through man and what he has delivered to man, in order that they might all be gathered into one."

So complete is Luther’s acceptance of papal primacy in this period, that it is superfluous to discuss at length his views on the same. In fact he takes this primacy for granted to such an extent, that the whole question receives very little consideration from him before the Indulgence Controversy.

Christ’s grant of power to St. Peter appeared to Luther absolutely necessary for the sake of order and unity. The hierarchy in no way offended him. On the contrary, the very existence and growth of the Church was bound up with the hierarchy, with its chief seat at

1) The Roman Church holds this position by virtue of the fact that it has remained faithful. While Luther thus concedes all power and authority

2) Begins attack on abuses within the Church.

3) A striking passage to this effect appears in Ps. 86 (87), 4. W. IV, 25, 1.33: ("Memor ero Raab etc.")


2) Ps. 90 (91), 1. W. IV, 65, 1.20: "Proinde credo quod ex spiritu sancto Ecclesia Romana sic frequentat ps. 118 in horis, quia in recta fide permanet, que ibidem per singulos versus expetitur, ut dixi."
to the office in the Church, the officeholder does not escape his searching criticism. In every estate of the Church, be it laity, clergy, or Papacy, corruption has crept in and made the Church sick. The sufferings of the Lord in Ps. 68 (69) reflect the sufferings of His Church at present. Life in the Church is characterized by indifference, hypocrisy, and spiritual laziness. Outward observance is not lacking, but there are few who are fervent in spirit, and indifference reigns. And this because they think themselves to be something and to do sufficient, while the way to heaven is simplified through indulgences and easy teachings. The result is a weakening in faith and spiritual life even among those who are versed in Scripture. The foolishness of the wise prevents them from clinging fervently to the truth which they know. Their relation toward God becomes lukewarm and their good works cold. For who knows much and does not cling to it passionately,

1) Ps. 68 (69), W. III, 416, 1.17. "Tercia nunc est invalescentia tepidarum et malorum (pax et securitas). Quia accidia iam regnat adeo, ut ubique sit multus cultus Dei, scilicet literaliter tantum, sine affectu et sine spiritu, et paucissimi ferventes. Et hoc fit totum, quia putamus nos aliquid esse et sufficienter agere: ac sic nihil conamur et nullam violentiam adhibemus et multitum faciliter viam ad coelum, per Indulgentias, per faciles doctrinas, quod unus gemitus satis est."

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his eyes fail and he is like the foolish virgins, having a lamp but no oil. In such an age of tepidity and false security Luther urges men to pray. How otherwise can the Church endure, being honeycombed with false brothers and hypocrites, and devastated by the scandals of evil Christians?

1) Ps. 68 (69), 4. W.III, 423, l.8: "Tropologice autem oculi Christi sunt fidei sensus et illuminationes spirituales: ille similiter defecerunt in multis, etiam in his, qui multa sciunt in Script. ac omnia mysteria noscunt et ea, que sunt fidei, pulchre callent, ita ut vere sint in eis oculi Christi. Sed defecerunt, quia non sapiunt affectu ea que sciunt, et segniter ac frigide aguntur in deum secundum ea que cognoscunt. Nam qui multa scit et non affectu in ea tendit fervide: videntur oculi eius defecisse, et prope esse videtur cum fatuis virginibus habens lampadem sed non oleum."

2) J.K. Seidemann - Dr. Martin Luther's erste und alteste Vorlesungen über die Psalmen ans den Jahren 1513-1516. Dresden 1876, I, 324: "Dic: Domine Deus in adjutorium meum intende, quia haec oratio est clypeus, jaculum fulmen et munimen contra omnem impugnationem timoris, praesumptionis, tepiditatis et securitatis etc., quae maxime hodie regnant, ut scil. dictum est. Deinde, ut eis praevalere possis atque id cito tam malos motus destrueres; addes: Domine ad adjuvandum me festina, quia festinandum est in illis explodendis; maxime nostra aetate vitium securitatis et tepiditatis."

3) Seid. II, 187: "falsorum fratrum seu Hypocitarum"

4) Seid. II, 85: "Quinto insuper de vastatione Ecclesie per Schandala malorum Christianorum."
The blame for the corrupt condition of the Church, however, is less with the laity than with the leaders in the Church. Blinded by avarice they permit all manner of abuses to flourish in the Church. Long before Luther had posted his Ninety-five Theses, the sale of indulgences had presented a revolting spectacle to him. And he had not hesitated to assail the methods of certain officials in distributing them. In the previously mentioned Sermon on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity Luther thunders against the abuse of indulgences, which have become a "loathsome agency of avarice", by which the vendors seek money rather than the salvation of souls. Popes and priests pour


2) W. I, 65, L. 10ff.

3) Ps. 68 (69), 5. W. III, 424, L. 17ff.
out the grace and indulgences gathered from the blood of Christ and the martyrs", blind to the fact that "to accept from the treasury of the Church and not also to add to it is impossible and a vain presumption."

The chief evil of the Church, the false security of a hyocritical outward piety without true repentance, thus appears in relief in the promiscuous distribution of indulgences. In explaining the same, Ps. 68 (69), 4, Luther gives us a tirade against the clergy and prelates who are busy vending indulgences when they should be preaching the Word. They think the treasury of the Church is placed at their disposal so they may use it as they wish. So they surrender themselves to the things of the world, for the treasure will always endure, while the world will pass away. Thus they think they can enjoy the world while it lasts and afterward reap the abundant reward in heaven.

1) Ps. 68 (69), 5. W. III, 424, L. 17ff.
3) W. III, 424. "Ita pontifices et sacerdotes profundunt
Luther does not yet summarily condemn indulgences. In the Sermon on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity he admits that they are the merits of Christ and the saints, and, as such, ought to be revered and respected. But they have become an instrument of avarice, employed for pecuniary gain instead of for the salvation of souls. The ministers and agents do not teach people the merit of indulgences, but press the money out of them, leaving them to believe that the soul bounds into heaven at the same moment. Even the Pope is strictly

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gratias et indulgentias sanguine Christi et martyrum congregatas et nobis reliquas, ut non putent, sese necesse habere augere illum thesaurum, nec aliter remissionem peccatorum et regnum coelorum acquirere nisi illorum meritis, cum tamen nemo possit participare communi bono, qui non etiam symbolum suum addiderit. Accipere enim de thesauro ecclesiae et non etiam addere est impossible et frustanea praesumptio. Verum ipsi putant, sese habere in praesidio et promptu repositum hunc thesaurum, ut, quanto velint, eo utantur. Ideo securi tradunt se in omnia, quae sunt mundis, quia scilicet thesaurus ille permanet, mundus autem transit. Ideo, cum utrumque quaerant, prius mundum quaerunt, ne praetereat, postea abunde coelum sibi superesse credentes.

1) W. I, 65, 1.9: "De Indulgentiis: quae profecto, etiam ipsum meritum Christi et sanctorum eius idque omni reverentia suscipiendae, tamen terrerim factae sunt ministerium avaritiae. Quinam enim per eam salutem quaerunt animarum et non potius pecuniam bursarum!"  
2) Ibid. 1. 13: "Quod evidentem patet ex ipsorum ministerio: nusquam enim Commissarii et Ministri alid praedican, quam quod commendent indulgentias et populum pro- vocent ad dandum. Non hic audias, qui populum doceat, quid sint indulgentiae, quo die conferant, quedum, sed quantum dare debent, in ea scilicet populum ignorantia suspensum relinquuentes, ut credat se statim salum adeptis istis indulgentiis."
limited in his use of indulgences. He can grant them for the benefit of souls in purgatory, not through the power of the keys, but only through the intercession of the whole Church. \(^1\) Even then it is doubtful how far God will accept the intercession. \(^2\) If he accepts it at all, it is because he will not turn a deaf ear to his Church, in which Christ also prays, as He says: ask and ye shall receive. \(^3\) For the Pope has in himself no power to absolve or grant indulgence. He can only act as mediator, since it is God who both grants indulgence and absolves.

Worse than the avarice shown in their sale of

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1) Ibid. 1.32: "Nec hoc Papa habet solvere ullo modo per autoritatem Clavis, sed solummodo per applicationem intercessionis totius Ecclesiae."

2) Ibid. P. 66, 1.1. "Ibi adhuc dubium remanet, quo quanto, an pro tota Deo hac velit acceptare."

3) Ibid. P. 68, 1.31 ff.: "Quis certus est, quod ita Deus acceptat sicut petitur? Nisi forte ex hoc, quod Deus non repellit orationem Ecclesiae suae, in qua Christus orat cum ea, sicut dixit petita et accipietis..."  

4) Ibid. 1.27: "Adhuc tamen mihi manet dubium, eum Papa non nisi suffragetur et intercedat pro animabus, non ut potestatem habens, sed ut mediator accedens..."  

Cf. ibid. 1.9.
indulgences is fornication and drunkenness among the clergy. 1) And here Luther gives us a polemic from the year 1512, a sermon he wrote to be delivered by a friend in Litzka at a general council. 2) In it he flays the clergy, not only for their vicious behaviour and corrupt lives, but above all for their failure to preach the Word of Life. For herein lies the cause of all evil in the Church, the indifference of the laity and general deadness in the congregations. Priests and prelates are only men, and therefore they will occasionally fall into sin, even gross sin. But much greater is their guilt if they fail to preach the Word. 3) For then they not only sin as men, but they

1) Sermo praescriptus praeposito in Litzka, 1512. W. I, 12, 1.29.
2) Dieckhoff, Festschrift, P. 56: "auf dem allgemeinen Lateranconcil, das seit 1512 bis in das Frühjahr des Jahres 1517 gehalten wurde."
3) W.I, 12, 1.29 ff.: (Speaking of the scandals of fornication, etc.). "Fateor, haec magna sunt, arguenda sunt, mutanda sunt; verum haec ab omnibus agnoscuntur, crasse sunt corporalia et sensibus exposita, ideo et movent animos. Sed heu! haec labes et pestis incomparabiliter nocentior et crudelior est, non tractasse verbum veritatis aut illud adulterasse, atque hoc malum, quia crassum corporale non est, non agnoscitur, non movet, non terret, quod tamen solum agnosci maxime oportuit. Quotquisque sacerdotum est hodie, qui non maius peccatum dicat, si lapsus sit in titubaverit in Canone, quam si verbum veritatis omiserit aut non recte tractaverit?"
sin against their office. 1) So if they are perfectly holy in every way, but fail to preach the Word, they must be numbered not among the shepherds, but among the wolves, and before God not as prelates, but as idols.

A man may be virtuous, cultivated, and learned, he may increase his revenue, build houses, extend his dominions, yea he may perform miracles, raise the dead, drive out demons; yet he only is a priest and a pastor who is an angel of the Lord of hosts, that is, a messenger of God, who presides over his people with the Word of truth.

Luther's criticism of abuses in the Church is thus not destructive but constructive. He has no patience with the heretics and schismatics. For they think to remedy the evils in the Church by going out of it

1) Ibid. P. 13, 1.2: "In ceteris sane peccat ut homo: hic, si verbum omittit aut adulteratur, in officium suum et ut sacerdos, i.e. longe horribilius quam homo, peccat."

2) Opp. Var. 1.25. 13. 1.9: "Proinde si pontifices aut sacerdotes alioqui essent rotunde sancti et beati, si in hoc uno sint incuriosi (sicut ferme omnes sunt), et verbum veritatis non curent recte tractari, certum est, eos inter lupos, non inter pastores numeratum iri, inter Idola, non inter pontifices coram Deo haberi. Sit alias castus, sit humanus, sit doctus augeat reditus, aedificet domus, dilatet ditionem, denique faciat miracula, suscitet mortuos, ejiciat daemones: ille sacerdos solum est et pastor, qui angelus Domini exercituum est, i.e. nuncius Dei, h.e. qui verbo veritatis populo praest."
and dividing it. They refuse to submit to the bishops and priests because they do not sit in justice and holiness, but are impious and wicked. But the latter at least preserve the peace and unity of the Church, while the heretics would destroy the same by disobedience and schism. They demand justice; but justice is only humble obedience. For no one is just unless he be obedient. Judgment, therefore, belongs to superiors, 1) justice to inferiors.

Luther's counsel to the heretics is therefore peace. To the heretic he proclaims the word of the Psalmist: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122, 6). By disobeying the Church the heretic disturbs this peace and destroys the unity of the Church. For Christ does not have two Churches, 2)

His dove is one.

1) Ps. 121 (122), 5. W. IV, 405, L. 14ff.: "Quare enim heretici nolunt subesse Episcopis et sacerdotibus Ecclesie? Aiunt: 'Quia non sedent in iustitia et sanctitate; sunt enim impii et mali, nos autem sanctos et ibatos habere volumus'. Quibus respondemus: Sufficit, quod sedeant in iudicio, quod prohibent tuum et aliorum errorem et heresim, ut sedeant in pace et sint pacifici subditi. Tu autem effringis iugum, iudicium abominaris et multam iustitiam iactas. Quasi subditorum iustitia aliquid sit, nisi obedierter iudicium superioris portent, licet iudicium superioris satis sit quo ad Ecclesie statum etiam sine iustitia. Iustitia enim est solum humilis obedientia. Quare iudicium ad superiores, iustitia ad inferiores pertinet. N ullus enim est iustus nisi obedientis. Sed superior non tenetur obedire et per consequens iustus exit."

No, the remedy for corruption in the Church is not schism. There is only one remedy and that is preaching the Word. Councils have been struggling to bring about a reformation in the Church. Their first duty toward this end is to see "that the priests overflow with the Word of Truth". For the people are so inundated with sordid doctrines, laws, opinions of men, and superstitions, that they are confused rather than instructed. The result is that the Word of Truth is scarcely held any more, while in many places its light does not shine

non nisi hereticus turbat, qui impugnat Ecclesiam gratis, non est enim de diligentibus, sed obedientibus eam. Non ergo duas Ecclesias habet Christus. Una est columna eius."

1) Sermo praescriptus praeposito in Litzka. W.I, l2, l11. "Maxima et prima omnium cura est - atque utinam flammantibus atque ardentibus verbis id possem in corda vestra pertonare ac, ut Propheta dicit, grandinem et carbones ignis, carbones desolatorios, et sagittas potentis acutas fulminare; adeo res ista hodie omnium maxima necessaria, - ut sacerdotes primo omni verbo veritatis abundant."
at all. They show surprise that there is so much dis-
cord among the people of Christ, so much wrath, jealousy,
conceit, disobedience and the like. But that is not
to be wondered at. The blame lies with the prelates
and priests, who forget the duties of their office
because of temporal entanglements, teaching nothing but
fables and human fictions. The Council can do all
the reforming it wishes, if it fails to cure this one
evil - the absence of Gospel-preaching - all its effort
is wasted, and it has convened in vain. "For this is
the pivot of things, the sum total of a legitimate re-
formation, the substance of all piety."

1) Ibid. L. 15: "Scatet totus orbis, imo inundat hodie
multis et variis doctrinarum sordibus: tot legibus, tot
opinionibus hominum, tot denique superstitionibus passim
populus obruitur magis quam docetur, ut verbum veritatis
vix tenuitur miscet, in multis vero locis no scintillet
quidem aliquando. Et quae potest esse nativitas, ubi
verbo hominum, non Dei generatur? quale verbum, talis
et partus: qualis partus, talis populus. Mirari nos
solemus, tantum in populo Christi regnare discordiam,
iram, invidia, superbia, inobedientiam, libidinem, gula,
penitusque frigere charitatem, fidelem extinguui, spem evac
uari: desistite, quae so, mirai. Non sunt ista mirabilia.
Nostra haec Praelatorum et sacerdotum culpa est. Hi potius
admirandi sunt, tam eae esse coecos, tam sui officii ob-
litos, ut, qui verbo veritatis huic nativitati servire
debuerant, allis intenti rerumque temporalium curis suff-
ociati penitus illud omissant; maior vero pars fabulas (ut
dixit) docet et humana commenta. Et adhuc miramur, tal-
ibus verbis tales populum fieri?"

2) Ibid. P. 13, L. 24: "Quare etiam si in hac venerabili
Synodo multa statueritis, si omnia bene ordinaveritis, et
huc manum non apposueritis, ut sacerdotibus populi doctoribus
mandetur, quatenus recisis fabulis, quae auctorem non
With such violence Luther could attack the corruption within the Church and still remain a faithful son of the Catholic Church and servant of the Pope. Attacking first corruption and then false doctrine, it still remained a long time before he suspected that either was the offspring of the Church, itself. And yet it is perfectly clear that Luther has already entered upon the road of the reformer. M. Jundt says that in the sermon delivered at Litzka, Luther for the first time speaks as reformer. He has, particularly in his doctrine of justificiation by faith, already strayed far from the Mother Church; but he remains wholly unconscious of the fact. In all the works of the period we find him defending vigorously the authority and ordinances of the Church. Heresy is anathema and schism is spiritual

suicide. Most important is the fact that parallel with the growing fervor of Luther's polemic against error in the Church is a development in him of a definite doctrine of the Church. Without any conscious effort, as far as we can see, to formulate such a doctrine, he throws out statements here and there which show that the doctrine is formulating itself within him, as his basic doctrine takes shape.
Chapter II.

NEW IDEAS.

LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

CONCEIVED IN ITS ELEMENTS.

1. Motives behind formulation of Luther's Doctrine

of the Church.

We cannot disregard the problem as to the motives
giving rise to Luther's doctrine of the Church. What
were the facts and circumstances which moved Luther to
formulate a new doctrine of the Church, or rather to
reformulate the Biblical doctrine of the Church?

Was he driven to it, in order to justify his break
with Rome, or was it a natural consequence of his gen-
eral doctrinal development? Grisar takes the former
view most emphatically, with an ingenious theory.

Luther, he says, had held his false doctrine of just-
ification, together with the accompanying errors, a
long time without a thought of separation from the
Church or of questioning the traditional doctrine of
the Church. Only when he saw that the Catholic Church would not adopt his new doctrine, but, on the contrary, condemned it summarily, did he decide to tear himself loose from the Mother Church. To justify this step before his conscience and to cover it up before the outside world, he began further and further to develop his theories concerning the nature of the Church. To arrive at this conclusion Grisar had to find that Luther's new idea of the Church first appeared in his sermon of 1518 on the virtue of the papal ban. Was this the beginning of Luther's new ideas? The best evidence that it was not is to be found in Luther's earlier works, notably those on the Psalms. That he already there had laid the foundation for his peculiar doctrine of the Church.

1) Grisar, Luther, III, 775: "Man weisz, dass er, als er schon lange in seiner falschen Ansicht von der Rechtfertigung aus dem Glauben allein und den damit zusammenhängenden Irrtümern befangen war, doch noch nicht daran dachte, sich von der kirchlichen Gemeinschaft zu trennen oder den Begriff der Kirche zu bestreiten. Erst als die alte Kirche nicht zu seiner neuen Lehre herübertrat, sondern sie streng zu verurteilen sich anschickte, entschloss er sich unter großem innerem Kampfe zur losreisung und eben um diesen Schritt bei sich zu rechtfertigen und nach auszen zu decken, bildete er seine Ansichten über Wesen und Begriff der Kirche nach und nach aus."

2) Sermo de virtute excommunicationis. W. I, 634.
will appear in the following treatment.

2. The Church born and nourished by the Word.

Already in the sermon he prepared for his friend at Litzka he begins to think on the origin of the Church and the source of its life. "The idea is firmly established, that the Church is not born, nor does it subsist, in its own nature, except by the Word of God. 'He begat us', he says, 'by the Word of truth'. 1) Just as the blessed virgin was the womb, whence proceeded the Lord Christ, so Scripture is the womb, whence springs divine truth and the Church. The Word is spoken of also as the foundation on which the Church is built. "The Church", he says in explaining Ps. 103 (104), 24, "is built on the word of the Gospel, which is the Word of divine wisdom and virtue:

1) W. I, 13, L. 38
just as the world, too, is visible, created from the beginning in the word and wisdom of God." As the Word gives birth to the Church, so it continues to preserve it and bless it. This blessing, spoken of in Ps. 44 (45), 4, signifies multiplication and growth. Since the grace on the lips of Christ is vast, so there follows a multiplication of the faithful, and this even in eternity, for the Church will never cease.

The "Word" is understood by Luther above all as the holy Gospel. For the Gospel is complete and perfect; it is the judgment and the justice, by which Christ rules the Church. Its power is great, for it is the iron rod of Ps. 2, 9, which is the regal sceptre of Christ in His Church and kingdom. It is called a rod, because it directs, affirms, reprimands, and protects.

1) W. IV, 189, 1.33: "Et hoc sunt opera magnificata et in sapientia facta, quia in verbo Evangello est Ecclesia constructa, quod est verbum sapientie et virtutis Dei; sicut et visibilis est mundus, in verbo et sapientia dei factus a principio."
2) W. III, 259, 1. 18 "Fronteres bendixit te Deus in eternum. Verbum enim dei conservat Ecclesiam dei; benedictio enim in scriptura significat multiplicationem et augmentationem. Solicet quia diffusa est gratia in labinis Christi, sequitur multiplicatio fideliem, et hoc in eternum, quia non cessabit Ecclesia."
3) Ps. 71 (72), 4. W. III, 463, 1.22: "Evangelium enim impletum et opere perfectum ipsum est Iudiciem et Iustitia, quibus regit Christus Ecclesiam."
It is Christ who wields this sceptre, for He is the
King of all power in the Church, which is His king-
dom.


Of what nature is this Kingdom? It is not a
corporal and earthly kingdom, but a spiritual king-
dom. Luther contrasts it with the Old Testament
Synagog and sees them both reflected in the death
and resurrection of Christ. Just as they dishonored,
destroyed, and slew Christ according to his manhood,
so it was symbolized thereby, that the whole body of
the Synagog according to the flesh must be dishonored,
destroyed and slain, in order that it might be raised
again into the spiritual body of the Church, even as
Christ was raised again into an immortal body. As

4) W. III, 32, 1.2: "Virga ferrea sanctum est
Evangelium quod est sceptrum regale Christi in Ecclesias us et regno suo; quod Hester devota fide os-
culatur. Dicitur autem virga, quia dirigit,
arguit, corripit et sustentat." cf. Ps. 44 (45),
7. W. III, 251, 1.5ff.: virga directionis quia diriget
per directum, sceptrum, quod est lex nova, ubi lex
Mosi circumdixit per desertum."
Christ went from this life through death to another life, so He wished that the Law and the Synagog should go over from the life of the letter, transitory and visible, to invisible spirit and to an eternal Church through the destruction and death of the letter, shadows, and figures. 1) If the Church thus is a spiritual body, it must of necessity be invisible. 2) It can only be perceived through the eyes of faith. 3) The work of

1) Ps. 88 (89), 45. W. IV, 47, L. 21ff: "Quia sicut Christum secundum hominem polluerent, destructurunt et occiderunt, in eo ipso iam figurabatur, quod et totum corpus synagoge secundum carmen polluendum, destructurum et occidendum fuit, et scilicet suscitaretur rursum in spirituale corpus Ecclesie. Sicut et Christus suscitatus est in corpus immortale ... Sicut enim Christus de vita ista et transitoria per mortem ivit ad aliam: sic voluit, ut lex et Synagoga de vita literae transitoriae et visibilis transiret in spiritum invisibilem et Ecclesiam eternam per occisionem et mortem literae et umbrarum et figurarum" Ibid. v. 44, p. 49, L. 24: "Quia si sicut noce faa solvi templum corporis Christi, ut suscitaretur novum: ita et mysticum eius templum, scilicet synagogam, solvi oportuit, ut suscitaretur novum, quod est Ecclesia."

2) Luther only rarely speaks of the Church as invisible but more often he calls it spiritual, which two terms he uses almost synonymously. Holl. Gesammelte Aufsätze, 296, note 3: "Der eine zeitlang heftig geführte Streit, ob Luther den Ausdruck unsichtbare Kirche kenne, war von vornherein mässig. Es ist richtig, das Wort unsichtbar sich nicht allzuhäufig bei ihm findet. Aber Luther gebraucht ganz im gleichen Sinn das Wort geistlich. Und geistlich hat er die Kirche Christi an unzähligen Stellen genannt."

3) Ps. 103, (104), 13. W. IV, 189, L. 17: Invisibilis,
Christ in the Church, yea the very structure itself is invisible and cannot be seen except through spir- itual eyes and faith. Thus it is not in essence a visible body but a spiritual communion, bound together by a common faith. Hence Luther in one of his earliest works, the *Tractatus*, of unknown date, begins to call the Church the "communion of the faithful".

Thus appears already the concept that is soon to become so dominant, the Church as the communion of the faithful, the communion of saints. This was not a

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intelligibilis per fidem est Ecclesia".

Seeberg seems to have overlooked this passage. In his *Studien zur Geschichte des Begriffes der Kirche*, L. 91, note 2, he says that Luther first calls the Church "invisible" in his *Responsio ad Librum Ambrosii Catharini*, Opp. Var. Arg. V, p. 295, a work from the year 1521.

1) Ps. 91 (92), 7. W. IV, 81, 1.12: "Quod exinde fit, quia opera et factura Christi Ecclesia non apparet aliquid esse foris, sed omnis structura eius est intus coram deo invisibilis. Et ita non oculis carnalisbus sed spiritualibus in intellectu et fide cognoscuntur".

2) Ps. 110, (111), 1. W. IV, 239, L. 23: "Quia vero spiritualis conventus non est nisi vere iustorun, corporalis autem potest esse sine vere iustis, vel saltem spiritualis conventus stat cum corporali, et vere iustum non vere iustis possunt convenire..."

3) *Tractatus de his, qui ad ecclesiam conficiunt.* W. I, 4, L.3: "communio fidelium".

4) Ps. 67 (68), 26 W. III, 406, L.10: "Ibi Benjamin etc. Mystice: qui in Ecclesiis et communione sanctorum manet, ipse est Benjamin..."

Ps. 118 (119), 63. W. IV, 289, G1. 2, L.25: "Inde communio sanctorum. Una fides, unus Dominus, una Ecclesia". Ps. 32 (33), 7. W. III, 183, L. 20:
new idea. The Scholastics and many others before him had used the formula. But Luther gave it new meaning. Above all, he extricated it from the traditional identity with the Roman Catholic Church. And only then could the concept realize its full meaning. For here was a spiritual community, subsisting by the Word and characterized by the faith and personal communion of the individual soul with God. This does not leave the believers scattered and dissociated. No, they form a society far more intimate and compact than the visible Catholic Church. They and they alone compose the true Church, a body which is the mystical body of

"sanctorum congregatio".

Ps. 127 (128), 3. W. IV, 416, L. 19: "domus tuae communionis Ecclesie et sanctorum".

Showing the intimate communion between the faithful,

Ps. 142, 1. W. IV, 443, Gl. 1, L.26: "Et nota, quod moraliter hunc et omnes psalmos orare debes tanquam cum omnibus fidelibus devote orantibus eundem, ut scil. optes cum illis tuam quoque coram deo orationem venire et sic in unione et communione sanctorum".

The heretics are outside this communion, they "shall not dwell within my house", as we read in Ps. 100 (101). 7, i.e. they are not "in intimo eius, in spiritu, in unitate, in vinculo communionis sanctorum". W. IV, 138, L. 33.
Christ. The "pavillion" in Ps. 26 (27), 5. "is the Church or body of Christ, which indeed in a mystical way is the Church! The holy temple of God, in Ps. 17 (18), 7, is the multitude and order of holy angels, in whom God dwells, "the very body of Christ, or the Church." Like Augustine Luther affirms that "Christ and the Church are one body, even as husband and wife." The Church is the spouse of Christ. A more intimate relationship between the Church and Christ and between the members of the Church themselves could hardly be conceived. They form a perfect unity, one

Ps. 100 (10), 2. W. IV, 136, L. 11: "Et loquitur in persona corporis sui Ecclesie."
Ps. 70 (71), Gl. 2. W. III, 449, L. 33: "Licet Christo possit psalme adaptari, tamen proprie est vox corporis eius, scil. Ecclesie ad ipsum Christum Dominum suum et Sanctum Israel. Vel saltam Christus mixtim pro sua persona et corporis sui loquitor."
2) Ps. 26 (27), 5. W.III, 150, L.16: "Tabernaculum est Ecclesia vel corpus Christi, quod tamen mystice etiam est Ecclesia."
3) W.III, 113, Gl. 5, L. 19: "Templum sanctum Dei est multitudo et ordo sanctorum angelorum, in quibus Deus habitat, vel est ipsum corpus Christi vel Ecclesie."
4) Ps. 37 (38), 2. W. III, L.23: "Et secundum Augustinum Christus et ecclesia sunt una caro, sicut sponsus et sponsa."
5) Ps. 127 (128), 3. W.IV, 416, L.17: "Uxor tua i.e. Ecclesie, sponsa tua, C Christi."
Ps. 82 (83), 10. W.III, 635, L.15: "tabernaculum Iahel uxoris Cinei (id est Ecclesie sponsa Christi...)."
Here is a conception that may seem spiritualized and abstract, and we ask: How may we know that this Church really is present? The answer lies in the importance of the Word for the Church. Wherever the Word is preached, there is the Church; for the Word is never preached without bearing fruit. This fruit is the "blessing" already noted, which consists in multiplication and growth. But the preached Word does not win all its hearers. Some are won,

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Ps. 100 (101), 4. W. IV, 137, L.1: "Ecclesia est unum in spiritu."
2) Ibid. Text, L.1: "Particeps ergo sum, quia Ecclesia est vivum corpus, in quo participat omnes omnes omnibus."
3) Ps. 44. W. III, 258, L.38: "Quia ubicumque predictur verbum spiritus, sine fructu non predictur."
Ibid. 259, L.15: "Notamus, quod verbum dei libenter audiendum est, quia nunquam frustra predictur."
others reject it. These together form the visible outward Church, where the good and bad are mingled together. The former are members of the Church "in merito", the latter only "in numero". According to its true nature, the Church is composed only of the former. They alone form the true body of Christ, and of this body alone Christ is the head. The others are the brothers in the flesh, who persecute Christ. The former are in the honor of Christ and the Church and likewise understand. The latter have the name, form, and appearance of God's people, but deny virtue and truth, and do not understand. These are

1) Ps. 84 (85), 9. W.IV, 10, L.22: "evangelium licet sit verbum dei et de natura sua sit, ut in hominem dicatur, tamen non in omnes dicitur, quia non omnes capiant."  
2) Ps. 110 (111), 1. W.IV, 240, L.6: "Sed quia concilium iustorum non potest consistere nisi in congregazione, ubi mixti sunt mali...."  
3) Ps. 48 (49), Gl. 1. W.III, 273, L.33: "Alii sunt in honore Christi et Ecclesie et simul intellegunt, scilicet qui in numero et merito sunt in Ecclesia. Alii autem sunt, sed non intelligunt, scil. qui numero tantum sunt in Ecclesia et non merito. Et hi sunt homines tantum, ills autem dii, ps. 81. 'Ego dixi, dii estis etc.'"  
4) Ps. 86 (87), Gl. 5. W.IV, 24, L.35: "Quia alii, qui tantum numero sunt fideles, non habitant sed hostitantur in Ecclesia, immo transeunt, i.e. secundum corpus sunt in Ecclesia, quod transit, non secundum animam, que permanet." It is interesting to note that Thomas Aquinas also used this distinction, between those who are "numero et merito
only men, while the former are Gods. (Ps. 82, 6)

Luther has here constructed a doctrine of the Church as an invisible communion of believers, the mystical body of Christ. What a contrast with the visible, historical, Church, wherein he saw abuses on every side! Not only was the clergy corrupt and the orders worse, but worst of all, they failed to preach the Word, which was the very life-blood of the Church.

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1) Cf. supra Ps. 48 (49), Gl. 2. W. III, 273, L.33ff.: "Et hi sunt homines tantum, illi autem dii, ps. 81. 'Ego dixi, dii estis etc.' ".

4) Ps. 48 (49), 6. W. III, 274, L.17: "Iniquitas calcanei mei circumdabit: q.d. esto, iniquitas eorum, qui mihi fratres sunt secundum carmem, me persequitur."

5) Cf. supra Ps. 48 (49), Gl. 2. W. III, 273, L.33ff.: "qui sunt mixti et immedio numero populi veri, habentes nomen et formam atque speciem populi dei et tamen virtutem et veritatem eius abnegantes."

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de Ecclesia". Summa II, II, q.1 a. 9.
Church. Scathing as was his criticism of these abuses, he never for a moment thought of a revolt against the Church itself. On the contrary, he did not cease to condemn schism and to urge all men to obedience to the Church. For the sake of order, authority and ordinances in the Church must be obeyed and respected. For the Catholic Church remained the God appointed dispenser of the Word of truth. It was this "Word" that gave Luther the connecting link between the invisible and the visible Church. Since it is the Word by which the Church of Christ is born and preserved, there must be an agent charged with the dispensing of this Word. This agent is the visible Catholic Church, whose prelates and clergy were divinely ordained to preach this Word. It is interesting to note here the first appearance of the idea of the spiritual priesthood of believers, soon to become so prominent in Luther's theology. The expressions thrown out in

1) Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 304: "Der Begriff des Evangeliums schlug ihm die Brücke von der unsichtbaren zur sichtbaren Kirche hinüber."
2) Ps. 37(38), 12. W.III, 217, L.22: "licet autem ossa dispersantur sic per disensiones et iniquitates, non tamen confringuntur, quia officia manent in ecclesia et numquam afferentur. Alias Ecclesia cessaret, quod est impossible."
a few places are not enlarged upon, however, so Luther cannot yet have been thinking seriously on this concept.

4. Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans. - General broadening, but nothing new.

Beyond this concept of the Church, so completely outlined in the work on the Psalms, the Lectures on Romans have little to offer. They do show a certain advance, however, though following immediately after the Psalms. Plunged into the study of the great Epistle, he not only reads it, but he lives it.

Here he comes to a full understanding of justification by faith. He finds Augustine too has lived the Epistle, and he sees in him Paul's greatest interpreter. It is difficult to put one's finger on a passage of this work and say that here is a product of Tauler or German mysticism. Yet at times the spirit of Tauler is

1) Ps. 108 (109, 8. W. IV, 224, L. 21: "Nam omnes fideles per Christum sacerdotem sunt sacerdotes et reges."
Ps. 115 (116), 11. W. IV, 267, L. 17: "Nunc quia credidi et in excessi sum et spiritualis homo factus per fidem, omnes indicans, a nomine iudicatus."
Strohl, L'Epanouissement, 1515, à 1520, p. 293: "il ne tire encore aucune consequence de ce principe du sacerdoce universal."
unquestionably in evidence. This may account for the subjectivism which Grisar finds so prevalent in this work of Luther. It cannot be denied that Luther here displays more subjectivism than in any previous work. Nevertheless it is easy to mistake for subjectivism his increased independence of Church authority. One does get the impression that Luther here begins to doubt the Church's claim, which virtually insists that the soul's only approach to God is through the Church as intermediary. Not that he shows the slightest sign of revolt against the established Church authority. But he has discovered the sweetness of personal communion of the soul with God, and this discovery is bound to give a certain degree of spiritual independence. Eventually this was to develop into a conception of Christian liberty which was altogether incompatible with hierarchical claims of authority over the individual conscience. As yet, however, he makes no

1) Grisar, Luther, I, 180: "Der Subjektivismus beansprucht in der Auslegung des Romerbriefes einen sehr breiten Spielraum."
protest against ecclesiastical authority. He still
preaches obedience to the established order. On the
other hand he cries out against the corruption of pre­
lates, clergy, and monks. They have become so blinded
by luxury, ambition, and avarice, that they no
longer know to distinguish spiritual from temporal
values. The Roman Curia itself is so thoroughly
rotten, that the luxury and corruption of ancient
Rome is almost put in the shade. Pope and prelates
find the sale of indulgences an easy method of raising
money for temporal projects, and hand in hand with
this goes the granting of benefices. The poor,

1) J. Ficker, Anfänge reformatorischer Bibelauslegung.
Erster Band, Luther’s Vorlesung über den Romerbrie­f
1515/1516. (I Teil: Die Glosse. II Teil: Die
peccatum est totius Curie corruptissima labes et por­
tentissima colluvies omnium luxuriarum, pomparum,
avaritarum, ambitionum, sacrilégiorum."
2) Romerbrief II, 297, 30: "Hoc autem regnum spirituale
adeo nunc ignornatur, ut fere omnes uno ore dicant tem­
oralia Ecclesie data esse res spirituales. Quas et
solum spirituales nunc estimant et in illis regnant."
3) Cf. Note 1 supra. Romerbrief II, 310, 8: "At
nunc etiam Roma ad priores mores reversa totum orbem
trahit pene ad exemplum suum, si tamen non excedit
effusio luxu hodierna priscam."
4) Romerbrief II, 243, 16: "Tunc rudes talia ali­quid
esse, statim anhelant omnibus neglectis eadem imitari
inde veniunt tot indulgentiarum promissa et permissa
pro templis edificandis, ornandis, ceremoniis multi­
plicandis - interim nihil solliciti, quid quique Deo
debat secundum vocacionem suam. Et papa et pontifices,
qui tam largi sunt pro temporalibus subsidiiis eccles­
iarum in indulgentiis, super omnem crudelitatem crudeles
sunt, si non maiora vel equalia propter Deum gratis et
intuitu animarum largiuntur, cum omnia gratis acceperint
gratis donanda."
innocent, people are led far astray, not only by indulgence vendors, but by ignorant preachers who confuse them with fables and legends instead of preaching the Word of God.

Again and again in these lectures Luther launches attacks on the abuses so rampant among the servants of the Church, from the Curia right down to the monastic orders. But in no case does this attack transfer itself from the individual to the Church itself. As in the lectures on the Psalms, so here, the authority

1) Römerbrief. II, 243, 25: "Sed corrupti sunt et abominabiles facti sunt in studiis suis, seducti et seducentes populum Christi a vera cultura Dei."
2) Römerbrief II, 243, 14: "Huc ergo respiciunt indocti predicatores rudem populum seducentes, qui vel predicantes vel legentes magna opera in legendis sanctorum solum ea inculcant populis atque efferunt."
of the Roman Church stands unquestioned. It is the vis-
ible institution divinely appointed to preach the Word
of God. As such, the Church itself and all who are in
authority therein are to be respected and obeyed. The
fact that many offices in the Church are filled by evil
men does not relieve the laity from obedience to the
office. The power lies not in the heart of the preacher
but in the Word itself. Therefore even a wicked preacher
can be of service to the Kingdom, and he shall be
obeyed because of his office and the Word he pro-
claims. For the Lord will not abandon the Church
or a part of it because of the unfaithfulness of certain
servants within it. Therefore schismatics and heretics
are without excuse in their disobedience and forsaking

1) Romerbrief I, 6, 33: "Deo enim omnia servirent,
etiam mali, ergo et predicatorum evangelii, licet
ipsi sint sine spiritu."
2) Romerbrief II, 88, 23: "Quid est os Dei? Sacer-
dotis, et prelati."
3) Romerbrief II, 88, 9: Ecclesia sc. et omne verbum,
quod et ore prelati Ecclesia procedit vel boni et
sancti viri Christi verbum est, qui dicit: 'Qui vos
audit, me audit'. II, 157, 1: "Semen mulieris est
verbum Dei in Ecclesia, quod inclinat ad iustitiam
et bonam."
4) Romerbrief II, 334, 5: "Vide itaque singulos
ordines primum. Nullum Deus ita relinquit quin
aliquos bonos et honestos in illis ordinavit, qui
sint aliorum tectura et honestas. Sic mali mulier-
ibus parcitur propter bonas, sacerdotes boni prote-
gunt malos, monachi indigni honorantur propter dignos."
of the Church. They may have the most pious intentions, but their religious zeal is unbalanced and fanatical. Whatever their intentions, the fact remains that in their stubbornness and conceit they are disobedient to the Church. Their revolt against established order is stupid, and it is only to please themselves that they separate themselves from the communion of others. In their enthusiasm for a new piety they forget that obedience is a mark of love for God and Church. To be sure, the duty of reforming and correcting abuses in the Church is always present. Yet this is the duty, not of the laity, but of the duly ordained servants

1) Romerbrief II, 238, 28: "Zelum Dei habent, sed non secundum scientiam. Hoc est portentum, quod proprie et solum repugnat fidei, resistit obedientie, facit homines dure cervices et incorrigibiles, ut in hereticis et schismaticis patet. Quia velit sit impos-sibile eos errare, ita duri stant et obstinate summam sue salutis statuentes, quod pie intendant et Dei zelo."

2) Romerbrief II, 334, 9: "Hic autem insulsi homines contra totum ordinem insurgunt ac velut ipsi sint mundi, ut nullubi sordeant cum tamen ante et retro et intus non nisi suum et porcorum sinto forum et officina."

3) Romerbrief II, 17: "Inde tediosi sunt et nolunt esse in communione aliorum. Sic heretici, sic multi superbi- alii. Que non facerent, nisi sibi placerent."

4) Romerbrief II, 317, 17: "Que consensu antique totius Ecclesie et amore Dei ac iustis causis imposita sunt, necessario sunt servanda non quod ipsa sint necessaria et immutabilia, sed quod obedientia ex charitate debita Deo et Ecclesie est necessaria."
of the Church. Therefore Luther feels himself bound to raise his voice, because he holds the office of teacher by apostolic authority. This feeling of responsibility it is that leads him to his first great step toward the reformation of the Church, the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses.

1) *Romerbrief* II, 301, 16: "Obsecro autem ne me in istis imitetur, que dolore et officio requirente loqour. Simul quia authoritate apostolica officio docendi fungor. Meum est dicere, quaecumque videro mon recta fieri, etiam in sublimioribus."
Part II.
WITTENBERG TO LEIPZIG, —

THROUGH CONTROVERSY TO CONVICTION.

Introduction.

Luther's doctrinal position at beginning of Indulgence Controversy.

At the beginning of the Indulgence Controversy we thus find that Luther's doctrine of the Church is only in its infancy, though its fundamental principles are established. The "material principle" is the one point where Luther has at this time "arrived". The "formal principle" has not taken its final definite form, but we clearly see it in the process of formation. If he does not in the Resolutionae 1) rule out the Church Fathers and the Papal canons as authorities, yet it is there quite evident that he regards Scripture alone as the ultimate authority.

And he clings to the principle of Paul, to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good". (1 Thess., 5, 21). As the controversy finds him drifting gradually away from the Roman Church and the Papacy, it also finds him growing into a new and broader conception of the Church.

In this second period, which is marked by the Indulgence Controversy and the Leipzig Disputation, we do not find Luther making any special effort to define the doctrine of the Church. But from the point of view of the historical development of his Church doctrine the period is most interesting and important. The years from 1517 to 1519 are for Luther one continuous battle, and that not from any desire on his part. His Ninety-five Theses were in no way intended as an attack on established Roman institutions. They were only an invitation to discussion of a matter not sufficiently understood either among theologians or

laity, and aimed to correct the abuses caused by that misunderstanding. Nevertheless he is immediately attacked successively by Tetzel, Prierias, and Eck, the heresy-hunting champions of Rome. He is given no time for constructive development of doctrine. He is too busy answering the exaggerated claims of Roman primacy, Papal infallibility, and the like. The net result is that it becomes our chief concern in this period to follow Luther step by step from Wittenberg to Leipzig. That means following his changing relation to authority in the Church, viz. to the Roman Catholic Church itself, to the Papacy, and to general Councils. The obedient servant of Rome at Wittenberg could not view the nature of the Church through the same eyes as the independent interpreter of Scripture at Leipzig. Therefore it is that when the smoke of the Leipzig Disputation has cleared away and the break with Rome become a fact, Luther sits down and pens his first great exposition of the nature of the Church. This tract, however, which he entitled Von dem Papatthum zu Rom, belongs to the third and last phase of our


subject. The second phase, with which we are now concerned, virtually serves as an historical introduction to the final phase, where the doctrine of the Church becomes a complete and unified reality.

Before entering upon this historical development, which culminates in the break at Leipzig and thus prepares the way for the third phase, we stop to consider a point in the Indulgence Controversy which is important to our subject. It is the question of the treasure of the Church and the power of the keys. This question, which found a prominent place in the Ninety-five Theses, remained a bone of contention throughout the controversy. This in itself shows the relation of the Indulgence Controversy to the doctrine of the Church. The relation becomes more and more evident as the controversy progresses. Thus the Theses of Tetzel in answer to Luther's, as it were, bespeak the fact that Tetzel regards Luther's theory of indulgences as springing from an erroneous conception of Church,
Pope and council. This appears notably in that group of the Ninety-five Theses which concerns the treasure of the Church. (Th, 56-66).

Chapter I.

THE TREASURE OF THE CHURCH.

1. Traditional definition.

1) For several centuries the Church had taught that Christ had earned more merit than was necessary to avenge for all the sins of the world. The saints too had done more than the Law required for the saving of their own souls. These superfluous merits of Christ and the saints serve as a treasure for the Church. Out of this treasure it is that the Pope, as the head of the Church, grants indulgences.

2. The treasure of the Church not sufficiently named or known.

In spite of the age of the theory, Luther insists that the treasures of the Church "are not sufficiently 1)

Preserved Smith, in The Life and Letters of Martin Luther, Boston and New York, 1911, p. 37, finds that it was Alexander of Hales who "discovered the treasury of the Church (thesaurus meritorum or thesaurus indulgentiarum)."
named or known among the people of Christ" (Th. 56).

And this gives the motive for raising the question here:
to clarify by discussion a confused theory and thus to
get at the truth. 1) Tetzel (Th. 90) denies Luther's
complaint and Prierias asks Luther how he expects the
people to know the theory when he, a theologian, thinks
it needs explanation. There was good sense in that

1) In Luther's Resolutiones we have a most excellent
commentary on the Ninety-five Theses. Thesis 56 is thus
enlarged upon: "Haec est mors secunda, quam merui.
Idea postquam multa iam diu asservi tam manifesta, ut
protestatione non egerent, nunc rursum aliquando dis­
putandum est ideoque et protestandum novissima pro­
testatione in hac disputazione. Disputo ergo hic et
quaero veritatem...." W. Köhler, Luther's 95 Theses
samt seinen Resolutionen sowie den Gegenschriften von
Wimpina-Tetzel Eck und Prierias und den Amtworten Luth­
er's darauf. Leipzig 1903, P. 158. The very title
shows the tremendous service Köhler has performed for
Luther's research. All the most important of Luther's
Theses brought a response from his opponents and often
long discussion. The material relevant to each of the
95 Theses is collected under the head of the thesis con­
cerned. It is to be regretted that his examination does
not include the Acta Augustana, which has much relevant
matter.

3) Köhler, Luther's 95 Theses, 158: "Non est mirum, si
vulgus ista non novit cum tibi, quid cum orbe universo te
disputaturum obtulisti, ista aut non intellegeris, aut
fingas, ut patebit."
P. Wernle, Der evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften.
retort, but it neither denied nor disproved Luther's thesis. In fact the hair-splitting discussion which the thesis evoked was ample proof of the confusion in regard to the theory.

3. **It is not a temporal treasure.**

It is difficult to say whose argument is the more complex, Luther's or his opponents! Luther may well have appreciated that fact, when he humorously declares that they can at least be sure that it is not a temporal treasure, for the vendors are always ready to collect, but rarely to pay out. (Th. 57). Experience is sufficient proof of this, he dryly adds in the Resol-uti Anes. Prierias scolds him like he would a

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**der Reformatoren. Tübingen, 1918, I, 15.** The author is offended in this thesis of Luther, and like Prierias demands to know why Luther speaks of the ignorance of the people regarding this article, but has no word regarding theologians and Popes who formed and used the theory, no word concerning the **Bull Unigenitus** of Clement VI. Wernle seems to assume that Luther did not know of this Bull. Luther explains clearly that he knew the Bull perfectly well, but kept silent because it contained so many difficulties. **Acta Aug., Opp. var. arg. II, 372:** "Non fuit mihi incognita Extravagans illa, .... sed cum certissimus essem unamque totius ecclesiae sententiam esse scirem, merita Christi in spiritu non posse committi hominibus, sicut tamen Extravagans ista sonare videbatur, volui intac tam relinquire, aliisque ingenis melioribus committere magnas illas molestias et angustias, quas pro tuenda papae reverentia patiebar."

1) **Köhler, Luther's 95 Thesen, 159:** "Satis patet ex- perientia."
mischievous urchin, saying that he is slandering not only the "soap-box orators," i.e. the indulgence vendors, but the most innocent Pope Himself. Luther insists that he is ever conscious of the Pope's innocence, and if he reproaches avarice, he is not thereby "biting" the innocence of the Pope.

4. Nor is it the merits of Christ and the Saints.

More painful to the Pope and his faithful defenders is thesis 58. Here Luther declares boldly that the treasures of the Church are not the merits of Christ and the saints, as the scholastics and the indulgence-vendors claim, "for even without the Pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man." That Christ is the treasure of the Church, Luther will not deny for a moment. Only a heretic would deny that, he goes on to say in the Resolutiones. As the Redeemer of the world Christ is the one and only true treasure of the Church. But that He


is the treasure of indulgences, he will most emphatically
deny, until he is convinced to the contrary. His
reasons for this stand are many. The main reason is that
there is no proof for it in Scripture. That the Pope
and the Roman Church affirm it, is no proof to heretics
or anyone else outside of the Roman Church. And in
this case he is not alone, as his opponents claim, for he
has truth on his side, and with him stand also the Pope
and the Church. Many others, like him, question the
theory, and rightfully, that indulgences can remit pen-
alties, whether one believe in them or not.

avaritiam taxo, numquid ideo 'pontificis innocentiam'
mordeo"?

1) Köhler, 163 (De merito Christi) "Hoc non esse 'thesaurum indulgentiarum disputo, esse autem 'thes-
aurum ecclesiae haereticus negat, siquidem Christus est
pretium mundi et redemptor et ideo verissime et solus
unicus ecclesiae 'thesaurus'. Sed quod sit 'thes-
aurum' indulgentiarum, nego, donec docear."

2) Ibid.: p. 167: "non sum "solum", sed veritas mecum...
et papa mecum est, quia etsi concedit indulgentias, nus-
quam tamen dicit, quod sint de 'thesauro meritorum
Christi et ecclesiae' ... et tota ecclesia mecum".

3) Ibid.: "et multi alii (meum), scilicet qui dub-
itaverunt et adjuc dubitant, quid indulgentiae, nec
peccant eo dubio, cum sint remissiones tantum poenarum,
quas sive quis credat sive non, sive consequatur sive
non, nihilominus salvus erit."
Luther is not ignorant of the fact that Clement VI in his *Extravagans*, *Unigenitus*, speaks of the treasure of the Church, and this decretal is again and again thrown up to him to convince him of the error of his ways. But Luther says he fails to discover that this article was approved. "It is one thing for the Pope to speak (narrare), another to prescribe (statuere). On the other hand it is a far different matter for the Pope to prescribe, than for a council to approve."

When Luther in October 1518 faced Cajetan, the Papal legate, at Augsburg, the latter promptly confronted him with his denial of the article of Clement and demanded that he recant. Luther responded that he placed Scripture above every other authority. Instead of recanting he preferred to debate the question.

2) *Extravagantia Communis*. Lib. V, cap. 11, in Sex- tus Decretalium Liber. Antverpiae, 1573, p. 373D: (Christus) "thesaurum thesaurizare filiius pietas, ut sic sit infinitus thesaurus hominibus, quo qui usi sunt, Dei amicitie participes sunt effecti."
5) Ibid. P. 370: "Ideo scripturas, quas ego in propositione mea sequor, esse ei praeferrendas omnino."
The Cardinal refused to enter a controversy with Luther, but the latter succeeded in presenting his views in the matter, partly orally, and partly in writing. He does not mean positively to deny the truth of Clement's article. For there are two senses in which the term, "merits of Christ", may be used. It may mean, and this is the correct sense, the grace which is granted to the believing soul. On the other hand it may signify the results flowing from the merits of Christ. In the first sense the merits of Christ are not the treasure of indulgences; for, as the thesis says, these work grace without the pope and without indulgences. But in the other sense, "effectively and improperly", they may be called the treasure of indulgences. That means that the power of the keys, given by Christ's merit, is the treasure by which the Pope can grant remission of satisfaction.

1) The distinction is between cause and effect, between the merits themselves and the results flowing from them.

2) Luther insists that Clement's

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1) Thesis 60. W.I, 236: "Sine temeritate dicimus claves ecclesie (merito Christi donatas) esse thesaurum istum."
2) Act. Aug. Opp. var. arg. 375: "Tertio, idea sequitur, quod thesaurum indulgentiarum sunt merita Christi non formaliter, nec proprile, sed effective et improperly, quia papa non dat merita Christo formaliter, sed de merito Christi, id est, per claves, quas meruit dari ecclesiae suae, quia in virtute clavium est, ut remittatur satisfaction, et sic patet, quod recte dixi conclusione 60., thesaurum hunc esse claves ecclesiae merito Christi donatas. Et hoc sensu verum est, merita Christi esse thesaurum in-
article is speaking of the merits of Christ in the second and indirect sense. The article does not say that the merits of Christ are the treasure of the Church, but that Christ "acquired a treasure for the Church." 1) "That this is the meaning of the Pope in that Extravagana, is proved by the Pope's own words, where he says, that this treasure was by Christ committed to Peter and his successors. But it stands firm and certain, that nothing was committed to Peter besides the keys of the Kingdom of the Heavens, which are the merits of Christ (that is, given by the merits of Christ) improperly and effectively, as I have said, and that other treasure of the Word, concerning which he said: 'Feed, feed, feed my sheep.'" 2)

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2) Act. Aug. Opp. var. arg. 375: "Quarto, hanc esse mentem papae in ista Extravagante, probant ipsa verba papae, ubi dicit, hunc thesaurum Petro et successoribus sui a Christo commissum. Sed constat et certum est, nihil Petro commissum praeter has claves regni coelorum, quae sunt merita Christi (id est de merito Christi..."
By admitting Clement's statement to be true in a certain sense, Luther did two things. In the first place, he gave the Papacy a loophole of escape from an embarrassing situation. In the second place, he showed that his intentions were not to attack or embarrass the Papacy. However, his efforts at conciliation were not rewarded, for Cajetan at length told him to be gone or revoke, otherwise not to show himself again.

Wearied by his efforts, Luther writes to his friend, the Elector, concerning the progress of the controversy. He admits again that there is a certain truth in Clement's article, but insists that it has nothing to do with the words of Scripture regarding the merits of Christ and the forgiveness of sins. His opinion therefore, is that the merits of Christ are the treasure of the Church but not the treasure of indulgences. No one is granted the grace of contrition, except the merits of Christ are poured upon him. Hence the contrite donata impropri et effective, ut dixi, et alterum verbi Thesaurum de quo dicit: Pasce, pasce, pasce oves meas.


2) Ibid. P. 416: "Igitur permittro Extravagantium esse veram, sed nego sensum eius esse, quem adducta verba Scripturae habent in suo loco, quae verba utique vera fuerunt plus quam per duodecim annorum centenaria ante constitutionem huius Extravagantis."
sinner is imparted the merits of Christ before indulgences.

It is error, he further shows, to assert that the merits of the saints are the treasure of indulgences. Quite concisely he puts it in the Resolutiones: "None of the saints in this life has sufficiently fulfilled God's commandments, therefore they have done absolutely nothing superfluous; wherefore they have left nothing to be distributed toward indulgences". In suffering torture and death the martyred saints have done nothing beyond what it was their duty to do, and scarcely that. In proof of this there is an abundance of testimony both in Scripture and in the Fathers. With these allies Luther can make his assertions with holy conviction, declaring, "I am prepared to undergo

1) Köhler, 160.
2) Ibid: "Omnis sanctus debitor est dei diligendi quantum potest, immo ultra quam potest, sed nullus id fecit nec potuit.... Sancti per opus eorum omnium perfectissimum, scilicet mortem, martyrium, passionem, non faciunt ultra quam debent, immo faciunt quod debent, etiam vix faciunt; ergo multo minus in aliis operibus plus fecerunt quam debuerunt."
3) Ibid. Luther cites Luke 17, 10; Mt. 25, 9; 1 Cor. 3, 14; Gal. 6, 4f.; 2 Cor. 5, 10; Ps. 32, 2; 1 Joh. 1, 3, etc. Among the Fathers, he quotes Augustine, De natura et gratia op. 35: "Omnes sancti necesse habent orare: 'Dimitte nobis peccata nostra'; also Jerome, Cyprian, and many others.
fire and death for them and I shall pronounce everyone a heretic, who holds the contrary." Someone may suggest that the merits of the saints are this treasure because there is a communion of saints, where everyone labors for his fellow, as one member for another. But this the saints did during their lifetime, and if they are to do it now, let them do it by intercession rather than by the power of the keys.

No, the merits of the saints, even as the merits of Christ, are working without the aid of Pope or indulgences. The treasure they have left us is their example. When we meditate on the suffering and death which they bore so patiently, our souls are moved and grace is given us to face cross, death, and hell, as they did. And so we pray: "Quorum festa colimus, virtutem quoque passionis imitemur." And yet, the cross which they

1) Ibid. P. 161: "paratus sum ignem et mortem suscipere pro illis et haereticum asseram omnem, qui contra sapuerit."

2) Ibid. p. 162: "nisi quis sic putet ea nobis esse 'thesaurum', non quia superfluent, sed quia est 'communio sanctorum', quod quilibet pro altero laborat, sicut membro pro membro; sed hoc fecerunt in vita, et, si nunc facerent, intercessione potius quam potestate clavis id fieret."

3) Thesis 58, Also 37: "Quilibet verus Christianus, sive vivus sive mortuus, habet participationem omnium honorum Christi et ecclesiae etiam sine literis veniarum a deo sibi datam." W.I, 235.

4) Resolutiones. Köhler 162: "Martyrum autem et sanctorum poenae debent esse potius exemplum ferendarum poenarum; sic enim oramus; "quorum festa colimus, virtutem quoque passionis imitemur".
teach us to bear, the Church would take from us through indulgences!

5. The true treasure of the Church is the Gospel.

Thus Luther strives to explain the many medieval theories concerning the treasure of the Church, which have become befogged through centuries of disuse. But he no doubt realizes that he is arguing beside the point, and so in the sixty-second thesis he sums up the matter in a few words. "The true treasure of the Church is the most holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God." The Gospel to Luther is above all the forgiveness of sins, the glad tidings of God's love in his incarnate Son. This is the greatest treasure of the Church, yea the only true treasure. "For Christ left nothing in the world but just the Gospel." He left his

1) Ibid, P. 161: "Tamen per impossibile admittendo, quod vere superfluerant merita sanctis, nescio, si satis dignum opus fieret ab ecclesia, ut tam prelicsa merita tam viliter expenderet, scilicet pro solutione poenarum, cum solutio poenae sit vilissimum domum ecclesiae et vilissimis donabile."

2) Hansrath, Luther's Leben, I, 173: "So sucht Luther im Sinne der mittelalterlichen Mystik allen diesen Vorstellungen von der Schlüsselgewalt, dem Fegefeuer und dem Schätze der Kirche eine tiefere religiöse Bedeutung abzugewinnen."

3) W.I, 236: "Verum tesaurus ecclesiæ est sacrosanctum evangelium glorie et gratie dei."
disciples no talents, denarii, or moneys, in order to
show that He, Himself, is the true treasure. Paul says
that he lays up for the children (2 Cor. 12, 14), and
Christ speaks of a "treasure hid in a field" (Mt. 13,
44). This fact, that it is hid, brings about that it
also is neglected. For it is a fact, says Luther,
that the Gospel is sufficiently unknown in a great part
of the Church. This is the more deplorable since
it is such a boundless treasure. According to St. Paul
(Rom. 1) it is the Word concerning the incarnate son of
God, given us, without merits, for salvation and peace.
"It is the word of salvation, the word of grace, the
word of solace, the word of joy, the voice of husband
and wife, the word of blessings, the word of peace, as
Isaiah says X 1. (9, 52, 7), 'How beautiful upon the
mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings'.
The Law is the word of perdition, the word of wrath, the
word of grief, the word of sorrow, the voice of the
judge and of the deed, the word of inquietude, the word

1) Resolutiones. Köhler, 178, 35: "Nihil enim reliquit
in mundo Christus praeter solum evangelium. Unde et nihil
servis suis vocatis tradidit quam mnas, talenta, pecunias,
denarios, ut ex iis ipsis vocabulis 'thesaurum' ipsum verum
'thesaurum' esse ostenderet; et Paulus dicit sese 'thes-
aurisare filiis suis' (2 Cor. 12, 14) et Christus 'thea-
aurum absconditum in agro' (Mt. 13, 44), et hoc ipsum,
quod est 'absconditus', facit ut sit pariter et neglectus'.
2) Ibid. L. 33: "Satis incognita res est evangelium
dei in multa parte ecclesiae."
of malediction: 1 Cor. 15, 56; Rom. 4, 15; 7, 5; 13" But to the distressed captive of sin, frightened by the Law, comes the light of the Gospel and says: "Fear not (Is. 35, 4), comfort ye, comfort ye, my people..." (Is. 40, 1), "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world". In this thesis Luther had pronounced a truth which all his opponents found difficulty in explaining away. So after Tetzel, Eck, and Prierias, all have left it intact, Luther concludes the argument by saying, "I pass on...., since you admit this/to be true, yet not without evasion."

How deplorable that people will pass by this treasure, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for the empty treasure of indulgences! In four ironical theses Luther gives the explanation. "This treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last" (Th. 63). "On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first" (Th. 64). "Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are

1) Ibid. 179, 7.
2) Responsion. Köhler, 180:...."Transeo ...., quia admissis eam esse 'veram', non tamen sine calumnia."
nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches" (Th. 65). "The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men" (Th. 66).

6. **The power of the Word in the Church.**

The importance here ascribed to the Word in the life of the Church is ever in the background of Luther's theology. In all the theses concerning the treasure of the Church, we find not one word about the sacraments. We know that the sacraments held an extremely important place in Luther's theology. But even they receive their power and efficacy from the Word. Both the sacraments and the Word may thus be considered treasures of the Church, but Luther emphasizes that it is the Word, or the Gospel, which is the true treasure of the Church. The relative importance which he ascribes to the Word, the sacraments, and the Mass, we find in the Resolutiones, commenting on the fifty-fifth thesis. The thesis itself is sufficiently emphatic: "It must be the in-

1) We have noted above that "Word" and "Gospel" are in Luther practically synonymous.
tention of the Pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies."

"For nothing", he continues in the Resolutiones, "should be treated with greater care in the Church than the holy Gospel, since the Church has nothing more precious and salutary." Hence the one work, which be repeatedly enjoins his disciples. And Paul says that he is sent not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. Christ commands that the Eucharist be not celebrated except in remembrance of Him. Paul again says (1 Cor. 11), "as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death (annunciatitas) till he come". "For it is better to omit the sacrament than not to proclaim the Gospel, and the Church has decreed that mass shall not be celebrated without a reading of the Gospel; and thus God considers the Gospel more than the mass, for man does not live in

1) W. I, 236.
the spirit without the Gospel, but without the mass he lives. For man lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."  

The power of the Word in the Church is unique. "The mass renews those who are in the body of Christ, the Gospel, the sword of the spirit, devours the flesh, divides Behemoth, destroys the vessels of the strong and increases the body of the church". He appeals to the practice in the early Church, where the catachumens were permitted to remain until after the Gospel reading. Even now the laws permit the excommunicated to be present at the Mass until after the Gospel has been read. "Just as John preceeded Christ, so the Gospel the mass". The Gospel prostrates and humiliates, the Mass gives grace to the suppliant. Therefore they would do better, if they would prohibit the Mass.  

All this leads to the same conclusion that Luther drew in the Psalms, that where the Word is preached, 

2) Ibid. 605, L.1.  
3) Ibid. L.4: "in primitiva Ecclesia permittebantur energumeni et catechumeni usque post Evangelium interesse."  
4) Ibid. L.6: "et nunc etiam permittunt iura excommunicatos usque post Evangelium interesse missis."  
5) Ibid. L.7.  
6) Ibid. L.8: "Evangelium prostorenit et humiliat, missa humiliatis dat gratiam. Melius ergo facerent, si missam prohiberent."  
7) Cf. Part I supra.
there the Church is. Not only is the Word the foun-
dation of the Church, but it preserves it, giving it
life, strength, and unity. Its numbers are by it
bound together into a spiritual body, whose Head is
Christ and whose guiding principle is the Word itself.
Chapter II.

THE DISPENSING OF THE TREASURE, - 1)

THE KEYS AND THE POWER OF THE CHURCH.

1. What is the power of the keys?

The question naturally arises, how this treasure is dispensed. So great a treasure as the forgiveness of sins the Church must not allow to lie idle. For every discouraged sinner, bowed down by the weight of many transgressions, has need of a share in this treasure. Therefore the Lord in his mercy said to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 16, 19). So the Church of Christ, according to His words, speaks of the power of the keys as the power to bind and loose a person with respect to his sins. This word of Christ,

1) In his early writings Luther does not give us a complete doctrine of the power of the Church. As we have seen, he does discuss the power of Popes and councils in the Church. But the power of the Church as seen at this time appears only in this phase of the power of the keys. Naturally the complete doctrine of the power of the Church could only come later, when he became concerned with the actual formation of an outward Church body.
"whatsoever thou shalt loose shall be loosed," must be in every absolution, says Luther in his Sermon on the Sacrament of Penance, for all absolutions are dependent thereon.

2. To whom was it given? - The communion of saints.

The power of the keys is not a law-giving power or a governing power, as the Popes have interpreted it. In fact it is not a power at all, but a service. The Pope has usurped the power wherewith to tyrannize souls. But "they are not his keys, they are rather mine, given me for my salvation, for my consolation, vouchsafed me for peace and quiet. The Pope is my servant and minister in the keys, he does not need them as pope, but I do". The Pope has made out that the keys were given St. Peter as a power with which to rule the Church. That is utterly false, for the keys were not given St. Peter, but you and me, and their entire virtue lies in aiding the sinner, in giving comfort and strength to the conscience.

later work, the Resolutio super Propositione XIII, Luther declares, that Christ says not to Peter alone, but to all for whom Peter speaks: "Thou art Peter, I will give unto thee the keys, etc."

Peter answers not as flesh and blood but as the hearer of the Father's revelation. And so the keys are not given to any single individual, "but to the Church alone", for one can never be certain that the individual has the Father's revelation. And here Luther leaves no doubt of what he means by the Church. It is the Church regarding which we need never be in doubt, since it is the body of Christ, one flesh, living in the same spirit with Christ. The Church is the Peter who hears the revelation and receives the keys. For here the symbol stands firm "Credo ecclusiam sanctam, communionem sanctorum; not as some dream: "I believe the holy..."
Church to be a prelate". "The whole world confesses that it believes the holy Catholic Church to be nothing else than the communion of saints." Hence, as the original symbol did not have these words, "sanctorum communionem", it was later added to explain that the holy catholic Church is the "communion of saints."

How necessary this has proved to be against those who today call the Church anything but the communion of saints!

All the claims of Pope and priest hereby resolve themselves into this conclusion: the keys are given the Church, the communion of saints. Therefore if Pope or priest use the power of the keys, it is only as the servant and minister of the Church. As individuals they have no such power. If the Pope has the keys, where did he get them? Did he bring them with Him when he was elected? Then he must have been Pope before he was elected. If he did not bring them with him, who gave

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dantur claves, non Petro, non filio Johannis, non carnii et sanguini, quod si ita est, pronum iam sequitur, quod nulli private homini datae sunt claves, sed soli ecclesiae, quia de nullo privato homine certi sumus, habeat nec ne revelationem patris."

1) Ibid. P. 190, L.15: "Ecclesia autem ipsa est, de qua dubitari non licet, cum sit corpus Christi, una caro, eodem spiritu vivens quo Christus. Ipsa est Petrus ille auditor revelationis et acceptor clavium: quia hic sym- bolum stat firmiter 'Credo ecclesiam sanctam, communionem sanctorum', non, ut munc aliqui somniant, 'Credo ecclesiam sanctam esse praelatum' vel aliquid quod fingunt. Totus mundus confitetur, sese credere ecclesiam sanctam Catholicam aliud nihil esse quam communionem sanctorum. Unde et antiquitus articulus ille 'sanctorum communionem' non orabatur, ut et Ruffini symbolo exposito videre licet, sed glossa aliqua forte ecclesiam sanctam Catholicam
them to him? An angel from heaven? - Did he not then receive them from the Church? Likewise when the Pope dies, with whom does he leave the keys? Does he take them with him? If not, with whom else does he leave them than with the Church, from whom he received them? It follows again that the keys were given neither to Peter nor to his successor, but alone to the Church, from whom the priest receives them as a minister to use for them.

3. Use and efficacy of the power of the keys.

a. The power to loose, - forgiveness of sins.

Every member of the Church of Christ should understand, that this power to forgive sins is in the Church for his benefit, that Christ meant it to be a source of comfort and encouragement to him, and that it is at his

constant disposal, whether by Pope, priest, or fellow Christian. For this power, says Luther, to forgive sin, is nothing else than that a priest, yea, if necessary, any Christian say to another: "Thy sins are forgiven", and if the latter believe and accept that as the Word of God, his sins are verily forgiven.

It is not a matter of office or rank, for Pope or bishop does no more than the humblest priest or, in his absence, any Christian man, when he declares to you that God forgives you your sins. The normal thing in the daily practice of the Church is that the priest pronounce the absolution. Only let it be understood that he "administers the keys of the Church, not in his own right, but by reason of his ministry (because he is the minister of the Church)". The method of the thing is of little importance, whether it be by private or

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1) *Sermon vom Busse*, W.II, 722, L.16: "Dan disz gewalt, die sund zuvorgeben, ist nit anders, dan das eyn priester, Ja, zo es nott ist, eyn yglich Christenn mensch mag zu dem andern sagen... 'sey getrost, dir seyn deyn sund vorgeben,' Unnd wer das auff nympft und glaubt es alls eyn wort gottis, dem seyn sie gewiszlich vorgeben."

2) Ibid. P.716, L.25: "das ynn dem sacrament der pusz und vorgebung der schult nichts mehr thut eyn Bapst, Bischoff, dann der geringiste priester, ja wo eyn priester nit ist, eben szovil thut eyn iglich Christen mensch, ob es schon eyn weyb oder kind were, dann wilch Christen mensch zu dyr sagen kan 'dyr vorgibt gott deyne sund, yn dem namen etc.'

public absolution, in sermon or in sacrament. The important thing is that Christ's promise is offered in His name, and accepted in faith.

The power which lies in the words of absolution Luther does not make consistently clear. Against the Curial assumption of governing power from Christ's words, Luther declared in his sixth thesis that "the Pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission."¹ This idea, that the Pope or the priest does not himself absolve the sinner, but only announces that God has remitted his sins, finds frequent expression in Luther. But it will be found that these expressions always are aimed at the presumptions of the papists. And Luther leaves no doubt of the efficacy of absolution, whereby he might have confused thousands of souls. In the Sermon vom Buaze he says, "as surely as you believe the word of the priest, when he absolves you (that is, that he in Christ's name and by virtue of His word absolves

¹ W.I, 233: "Papa non potest remittere ullam culpam nisi declarando et approbando remissam a deo"...
you and says I loose you from your sins), so surely
are your sins truly loosed before God, all the angels,
and all creatures, not for the priest’s sake, but for
the sake of the true word of Christ, that He may not,
lie, when he says: what you lose, shall be loosed”.

The efficacy of the absolution thus depends upon
the faith of the receiver. For if he doubts that he
is absolved, he makes Christ a liar, and he is him-
self a heathen, unchristian, and unfaithful to his
Lord Christ, which is the greatest sin against God.

In his address to Cajetan at Augsburg Luther repeats
the solemn warning: "Under penalty to eternal conden-
mation and the sin of infidelity it is necessary to be-
lieve the words of Christ; Whatsoever ye shall loose
on earth shall be loosed in heaven. If then you come

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1) W.II, 717, L.6: "Drumb, szo du glaubst des priesters
wort, wen er dich absolviirt (das ist, das er yn Christus
namen und yn seyner wort crafft dich løszet und spricht
‘ich losze dich von deynen sunden’), szo seyn die sund
auch gewiss losz vor gott, vor allen Engelnen und allen
creaturen, nit umb deynen willen, nit umb des priesters
willen, sondern umb des wahrhafftigen worte Christi
willen, der dir nit liegen mag, do er spricht: Was du
løszest, soll losz sein.”

2) Ibid. L.21: "Dar was ists anders gesagt, wan du
zweifelst, ob dein absolution got angeneme sey und
du losz seyst von sunden, dam als sprechstu ‘Christus
hatt nit was gesagt...da er zu Petro sagt; Was du løsset
soll losz seyn’.”

3) Ibid. L.12: "Und szo du nit glaubst, das war sey,
dein sund vorgeben und losz seyn, szo bistu eyn heyde,
unchristen und unblaubig deynem herrn Christo, das die
aller schwerest sund ist widder gott.”
to the sacrament of repentance, and believe not firmly
that you are to be absolved in heaven, you enter into
judgment, because you believe not that Christ spake
the truth when He said: 'Whatsoever ye shall loose,

1) On the contrary the absolution should be
received with such a faith, that one would be torn to
pieces and slain, rather than doubt that one is ab-
solved.

2) For what one believes, that one receives.

What blessings, are thrown away if one fails to
seek this treasure or fails to believe it when received!
"This holy, comforting, gracious word of God must fill
every Christian with deep encouragement and sincere
gratitude, for herein lies the sacrament of penance,
 Forgiveness of sins, comfort and peace in the conscience,

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sub periculo aeternae damnationis, et peccato infidelit-
atis credere his verbis Christi: quodcumque solveris
super terram.... Ideo si accedas ad sacramentum poeni-
tentiae, et non credideris firmiter tete absolvendum in
celo, in judicium accedis et damnationem, quia non
credis Christum vera dixisse: quodcumque solveris etc."

2) Sermon vom Buaze. W. II, 717, L. 28: "szo soltu
das mit solchem glauben an nehmen, das du dich soltest
lassenn zu reyssen, vill mal todten, ... ehe du dramm
zweyffelt."

3) Ibid. P. 715, L. 32: "dan wie du glawbst, szo ges-
cht dir."
complete joy and salvation, in the heart against all sin, against all terror of conscience, against despair and temptation at the gates of hell. 1) Never did Luther speak more from the heart than when he spoke of this treasure which the Church possesses in the power of the keys. He had in earlier years suffered all the terrors of the conscience-stricken sinner. He had cried to God for peace and for faith to believe His promises. But peace came to him only when he could go to his spiritual father, Staupitz, and receive from him the assurance that his sins were forgiven. Through his own experience he saw the necessity of the power of the keys. The Law was ever present to bring the sinner to his knees, but the Gospel, the words of absolution, the keys, must raise him up.

It is only within the Church that the repentant sinner can call the power of the keys to his aid. This treasure, as we saw, was granted to the Church, but only to the Church. The priest, as the servant of the Church

has the duty of using this power to absolve the repentant sinner. It is not for him to judge the heart of the suppliant. It is sufficient that the sinner comes to the Church and desires it. For the priest must not make an instrument of tyranny of the keys. They must be loved and honored and used for the purpose Christ gave them, viz.: to grant forgiveness and comfort. On the other hand the penitent sinner is to respect this power in the hands of the priest as much as in the hands of a bishop or Pope. And he must realize that the Lord wants order in His Church. Therefore he shall humbly submit to His priest, for "God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same time, humble in all things and bring into submission to His vicar, the priest" (Thesis 7). When priest and communicant thus see their duties and privileges,

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1) Ibid. P.719, L.26: "Auch hatt der priester gnug-sam zeychenn und ursach, zu absolvirenn, wan er siht, das man vonn yhm begeret der Absolution.

2) Ibid. 2. 28: "Das sag ich darumb, das man die aller gnedigste tugent der schlussel lieb hab und eer wirdige, und nit vorachte umb ettlicher miszprauch, die nit mehr, dan bannen, drawen und plagenn, lauter tyranney machen ausz solcher lieblicher trostlicher gewaltt, alsz het Christus nur yhren willen und hirschafft mit den schlussen eyngesetzt, gar nichts nit wissenn, wa zu yhr prauchen soll."

3) Ibid. P.716, L.36: "Doch soll man die ordenung der ubirkeit halten, und nit vorachten, allein das man nit yrre ym sacrament und seynem werck, als were es besser, sso es ein bischoff adder babst gebe, wan so es eyn priester adder leye gebe, dan wie des priesters mesz und tauff und reyohung des heiligen leichnams Christi eben sso vil gilt, ab es der bapst adder bischoff selbs theten, also auch die absolution, das ist, das sacrament der pusz".
which accompany the power of the keys, then it will become to the Church of Christ the blessed treasure which He meant it to be.

b. The power to bind, - excommunication. - Twofold communion of the faithful.

So far our consideration of the power of the keys has been concerned mainly with the power to "loose". But Christ also gave the Church power to "bind". Luther found it the less important of the two. Yet it involved a question which had begun to claim the attention of many earnest Christians as well as of Luther himself. For at this time the power to "bind" was for Luther particularly identified with excommunication. Later he speaks of preaching as effective both to bind and to loose; but at present he considers only the phase exemplified in the act of excommunication. Therefore his thoughts on the subject find expression in a sermon intitled, Sermo de virtute excommunicationis, delivered in the Spring of 1518. There were at least

1) W. I, 638. 

1)
two reasons why Luther should devote a special sermon to the question at this time. In the first place, many consciences were being torn and tormented by the promiscuous use of this power by the Church. In the second place we may reasonably assume that Luther saw the solemn spectre of excommunication descending upon him with certain steps.

Under these circumstances it is rather surprising to find Luther treating the subject so calmly and fearlessly. It is another example of Luther's splendid conservatism and unique equilibrium. While he shows no fear of the terrible power of this instrument, yet not for a moment does he treat it with contempt. He deliberately analyzes the power, and his conclusions are drawn with unwavering conviction. The foundation of this conviction is his conception of the Church.

His distinction between the visible and the invisible Church stands him in good stead, thought it is expressed in different terms. For though the visible

1) This distinction will be discussed in Part III. Meanwhile let it be remembered that to Luther there was only one Church, viz.: the communion of saints, and that was an invisible, spiritual communion.
Roman Church threaten, he takes refuge in the arms of the invisible communion of all believers. The light thrown on this concept is for us more important than the treatment of excommunication itself. We follow Luther's thought in the Sermon, where his views on excommunication are outlined with admirable logic.

Excommunication is nothing more than being placed outside of the communion of the faithful and deprived of communion with them. But there is a twofold communion of the faithful: one internal and spiritual, the other external and physical. The spiritual communion is one faith, one hope, one love toward God. The physical communion is a participation in the same sacraments, that is in the signs of faith, hope, and charity, which extends further, even to a community of property, dwelling, and the like.

Even as no one but God alone can make the soul a part-taker of that spiritual communion or restore him to

1) Ibid. 639, L.1: "Excommunicatio nihil est aliud quam privatio communionis et extra communionem fidelium positio."
2) Ibid. L.2: "Est autem fidelium communio duplex; una interna et spiritualis, alia externa et corporalis. Spiritualis est una fides, spes, charitas in deum. Corporalis est participatio earundem sacramentorum, id est signorum fidei, spei, charitatis, quae tamen ulterior extenditur usque ad communionem rerum, usus,..."
the communion when once excluded, so no one can exclude him from that communion except the individual himself through his own sin. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8, 35).

It follows, that ecclesiastical excommunication is a privation of external fellowship only, of sacraments, burial, and other bodily needs. This is in accordance with Paul's warning to the Corinthians, to keep no company with fornicators or idolaters, no, not even to sit at meat with them (1 Cor. 5, 11). Likewise he tells the Thessalonians to have no company with the man who obeys not "our word by this epistle" (2 Thess. 3, 14). But then follows an important word: "Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." "If these words were not spoken with reference to external excommunication, but only concerning internal excommunication" says Luther, I confess that I do not understand the Apostle Paul." 3)

1) Ibid. L.7: "Igitur siout priore illa spirituali communione nulla creatura potest animam vel communicare vel excommunicatum reconciliare nisi deus solus, ita non potest communicem eandem ulla creatura ei auferre seu eam excommunicare, nisi solus ipse homo per peccatum proprium." (Rom. 8, 35; 38; 1 Peter 3, 13.)

2) Ibid. L.19: "Consequens ergo est, quod excommunicatio Ecclesiastica est duntaxat externae privatio communione scilicet sacramentorum, funeris, sepulturae, publicae orationis, deinde aliarum... corporalis necessitatis rerum et conversationum."

3) Ibid. L. 27.
To be excommunicated does not mean that the soul is delivered to Satan or deprived of the blessings of the Church together with its prayers. For where faith, hope, and charity remain, there is also the true communion and participation in all the blessings of the Church. 1)

"Excommunication, if it be just, is rather a sign that the soul has been delivered to the devil and deprived of the spiritual fellowship of the Church, because it is brought upon him who by his own mortal sin has deprived himself of the communion of love and has delivered himself to the devil, even as the sacrament of reconciliation is the outward sign of inner reconciliation and communion. Hence it is true, that ecclesiastical excommunication does not bring about, but presupposes, that a person is in mortal sin, that is, that he is truly excommunicated." 2)

Thus excommunication is temporal and physical, in order that it may only be administered, not against, but for inner communion, either to restore communion,

1) Ibid. L.33: "Excommunicari non est animam tradi diabolus neque privari bonis Ecclesiae communibusque orationibus eiusdem. Hoc ex dictis abunde patet, quia manente fide, spe et charitate manet vera communio et participatio omnium bonorum Ecclesiae."
if justly born, or to increase communion, if unjustly suffered. And here Luther gives us the Scriptural foundation on which his theory is built. He proves it by the words of Paul, who acted according to the power God had given him "to edification, and not to destruction (2 Cor. 13, 10)". This surely means that one cannot destroy, but only build by ecclesiastical power. The fornicator was by the Church to be delivered to Satan "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved" (1 Cor. 5, 5). As was said above, such ought not to be regarded as enemies, but corrected as brethren, not that they may be lost, but that they may be blended together in the spiritual communion. Christ had no idea of granting this power for the separation of souls from the communion. "The Son of man came not to lose but to save souls" (Luk. 9, 56). "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all

1) Ibid. L.10: "Excommunicatio sic est temporalis et corporalis, ut tamen ordinetur non contra sed pro communiione interiore vel reparanda, si iuste lata fuerit, vel augenda, si iniusta fuerit."
2) Ibid. L.13: "hoc certe intellego, quod non possit destruere sed tantummodo aedificare per Ecclesiasticam potestatem."
3) Ibid. L.18.
which he hath given me I should lose nothing" (Joh. 6, 39). In the spirit of Christ excommunication should therefore be regarded as the maternal rod of the Church placed over the body and the activities of the body, not to drive it into hell, but rather to recall and save those who are hastening toward hell. Therefore it ought to be embraced with the greatest exultation and reverence and born with all patience.

Luther warns his hearers that this "faithful minister of salvation" should not be contemned or impatiently born. For the Church is not only to be feared because of its power, but it should be loved on account of the tender administration of this power and the advancement of salvation. A mother applies the rod to the child she loves, though occasionally the child may be innocent. If now the innocent child revolts at the punishment, he breaks the commandment to

1) Ibid. L.30: "Igitur Ecclesiastica excommunicatio est pium et maternum flagellum super corpus et res corporis impositum, quo non trudit ad infernum, sed potius revocat et urget ad salutem eos, qui ad infernum properant: ideo cum summa exultatione et reverentia simul amplectendum, sed patientissime ferendum est."
2) Ibid. L.36: "Illud solum et maxime omnium curandum est, ne excommunicatio, tam fidele salutis ministerium, contemnatur aut impatienis feratur, quia non modo propter potestatem Ecclesiae, quae per seipsam semper est metuenda, sed etiam propter plam huius potestatis operationem et salutis propriae promotionem amanda."
honor one's parents. If he had borne the unjust punishment patiently he would have been without sin, yea he would have earned special merit. By failing to suffer it he has brought upon himself eternal punishment. So we find people slaughtering officials, beating messengers and nuncios, and committing all manner of excesses, which they would never do, unless they had that perverted notion, that by excommunication they were being driven to damnation instead of being sought for salvation, as is really the case. From their crimes they are driven to desperation, the last and most horrible of all evils. That was Luther's reason for preaching this sermon. The officials who concealed the true purpose of excommunication in order the better to establish their tyranny over terrorized souls, were receiving the tyrant's just reward.

1) Ibid. P.641, L.3: "Sit simile, quod mater corripiat dilectum filium quandoque meritum, quandoque immeritum. Hic constat pium esse flagellum et filio salutare. Quod si ipse impatiens maternae huius disciplinae non omiserit prohibitum aut non fecerit iussum, sed furens in matrem insurgat aut contemnat, ecce tum incurret in mandatum dei, ubi praecipit parentes honorari, et fiet, ut ex unica leviuscula disciplina, quae sine peccato, immo cum merito erat, sibi conflet detestabilissimam culpam et aeternam poenam. Ita et nostro saeculo fieri (heu miseriam!) videmus, ut officiales trucident, notarios et nuncios

2)
If people were instructed as to the necessity and wholesome force of excommunication, that it was for their benefit and not against them, the Church would have less of dangers and more of obedience among the people. To this end Luther delivers his most solemn instruction to the people. Let them forget about these tales. The officials may be good, bad, or indifferent, the sinner need fear no harm from the power, for whether inflicted rightly or wrongly, it will bear fruit, if he bear it properly. "Respect

caedant, mergant, captivent aliaque detestabilia portenta committant, quod non facerent credo, nisi vulgata illa erroneaque opinione crederent sese per excommunicationem tradi in damnationem ac non potius quaeri ad salutem. Hinc enim sceleribus adiiciunt desperationem, novissimum omnium horrendissimumque malorum".

1) Ibid. L.1: "Atque haec causa fuit, ut hunc sermonem meditarer et nunc ederem quoque."

2) Ibid. L.16: "Quanquam iuste permittat hanc caedem in officiales deus, ut qui hanc sententiam salutis absconditam cupiunt, quo securius tyrannidem suam falsos terrore honinum stabilient, tandem extrema tyrannorum etiam patientur."

3) Ibid. L.20: "Si vero populus huius potestatis et excommunicationis optimam necessitatem et saluberrimam vim ac non contra eos sed pro eis valere doceretur intelligere, minus ipsi periculorum et quietorem obedientiam in populo haberent."

2) Ibid. L.24: "Igitur, mi fratres in domino nolite haec portenta cognitare. Sunt officiales vel publicani huius potestatis ministri, sint inquam, boni, mali, qualescunque, non nocebit potestas ipsa vobis, sed proderit semper, sive sit in usu vel abusu, tantummodo recte feratis eam aut cum humilitate evadere seu solvi quaerite".
the Mother Church", he pleads. "What is it to you if
she lays her rod upon you by the hand of an unworthy
man? none the less it is the rod of your most sweet
mother, and indeed a most salutary rod." Let
him not contemn the office because the officebearer
is unworthy. Whether the ban be, in his judgment
justly or unjustly administered, let him follow the
command of the Church. Let him cease to do that for
which he is banned, "unless it cannot be done without
sin." For justice and truth, since they concern the
inner communion of the Church, ought not to be omitted
on account of outward excommunication, even if it lead
to death." For he who dies even under a just ex-
communication, will not therefore be damned, unless per-
chance he was not contrite and died in contempt of ex-
communication. Happy and blessed is he, who shall
have died in unjust excommunication, for pierced with

1) Ibid. L.28.
2) Ibid. P.642, L.15ff. Pilate, Herod, Annas, Caiphas,
all were unworthy, but Christ was subject to them.
3) Ibid. P.643, L.1: "In excommunicatione iniusta sum-
me cavendum, ne id deseras, omittas, facias, dicas, pro
quo excommunicaris, nisi id sine peccato fieri possit.
Nam iusticia et veritas, cum sint de interiore communione
Ecclesiae, non debent omitti propter excommunicationem
exteriorem, etiam si ad mortem usque procederet."
4) Ibid. L.10: "Nam qui etiam iustus excommunicatus mor-
itur, non iode damnabitur, nisi forte non contritus et
cum contemptu excommunicationis mororetur."
such a scourge for a justice which he did not deserve, 1)

God will grant him an eternal crown.

Here is Luther's concept of the spiritual communion of believers brought into actual practice. It is here made a reality to the common layman, who sees the Church too often as a mere visible organization. What comfort was here for the terror-stricken sinner, who saw in the ban of the Church God's own pronouncement of damnation? If he were innocently excommunicated, where could he fly for comfort and reassurance? To the communion of believers, said Luther. He could be driven out of the outward organization called the Church, but if he were guiltless or truly penitent, he was still in that sacred fellowship of the faithful, whose Head was Christ. He could now fully realize that the Church was not Popes and priests, Masses and ceremonies, but the blessed fellowship of all believers in Christ Jesus.

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1) Ibid. L.13: "Beatus autem et benedictus, qui in excommunicatione iniusta mortuus fuerit, qui pro iusticia quam non deseruit, etiam tanto flagello percussus, coronabitur inaeternum."

So Resolutiones, W.I, 621, L.13: "Ita si ecclesia vel pontifex privaverit communione fidelium sine causa, debet id sustinere et potestatem non damnare... sed potius mori in excommunicatione."
Chapter III.

LUTHER'S CHANGING RELATION TO
ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY.

A. In the Indulgence Controversy.

1. Authority of the Church versus individual liberty
   of conscience and reason.

It is safe to say that at the beginning of the Indulgence Controversy Luther is a conscientious and obedient son of the Church. It is true, he has raised his voice against corrupt practices in the Church. He has attacked the clergy for their lascivious lives and above all for their failure to preach the Word. He has preached fire and brimstone to the people for their callous indifference to their spiritual welfare, which condition he also lays at the door of the clergy. He has not even hesitated to include the Curia itself in his tirade against abuse. The crying need of reform is already clear to him, and duty and responsibility
force him to demand a purification of the Church.

In all his efforts he has not the slightest intention of placing himself in opposition to the visible Church. In fact he means to be acting for the good of the Mother Church. By cleansing its members, the body will become clean, as becomes the Church of Christ. His attacks are therefore directed against abuses of individuals within the Church and not against the Church itself. This is evident from his repeated condemnation of the heretics. Of particular offence to the Church he finds the Bohemians, who have the affront to set their own judgment above the judgment of the Church and its fathers. Likewise we see him constantly exhorting Christians to obedience to the authorities and ordinances of the Church.

1) Dieckhoff, *Festschrift*, 59: "Luther ist schon in der Zeit vom Ablaszstreit mit allem Ernst dem Verderben der Kirche gegenüber auf die Reformation der selten gerichtet."

The apparent contradiction is not real, when we read in Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, 309: "Als Luther seine 95 Sätze über den Ablasz anschlug, lag es ihm fern, einen umfassenden Plan zur Reform der Kirche anzukündigen." While Luther had no "comprehensive plan of reform" at this time, even Holl would hardly deny that reform was the object of his criticism.
Such is Luther's relation to the Roman Church when he posts his Ninety-five Theses in Wittenberg. Surely he is far from any thought of revolt. Innocently he invites discussion to clarify an obscure doctrine. Instead of a friendly debate, he is thrown into a controversy, such as he had never dreamed of. He sought light, and he received an abundance of it. At the beginning he thought he was doing the Church a favour by his criticisms, and he was confident in the belief, that he had both the Church and the Pope behind him. The disillusionment was slow but sure. Step by step he is led to realize that the practices which he is attacking are not practices of erring individuals, but practices of the Roman Catholic Church, sanctioned by Rome itself. As the controversy progresses, this gulf between Luther and the Church widens, until the crack of Wittenberg becomes the chasm of Leipzig.

And as there grows in him the realization that he differs

1) Bratke, 95 Thesen, 275: "Als er "öffentlich auftrat, wollte er lernen, nicht wollte er den Lehrmeister spielen."
with the Church itself in doctrine as well as practice, a new question poses itself. Duty drove him to attack individuals. But questioning the established authority of the Church was another matter. How far must individual liberty of conscience and reason yield to external authority? Does he have a right to question the authority of the Church, built on the rock of St. Peter and established through centuries of supremacy? Does the individual have the right to interpret Scripture for himself, independent of the interpretation of the Church? With these came also the question which Luther had already met with: may the individual approach God without the mediation of the Church? Throughout the period these questions kept presenting themselves to Luther, ever in a clearer light. They are some of the things which helped to clarify, crystallize, and enlarge that doctrine of the Church, which, as we saw, Luther had already conceived in its elements.

The change which takes place during this period in Luther's conception of the visible Church and its authority is difficult to point out step by step.
But in following the controversy, as Luther answered one opponent after another, we see plainly that there is a steady growth. And when we regard Luther at Wittenberg and again at Leipzig, we realize the development which has taken place. Thus in the *Sermons upon the Decalogue*, which were delivered in 1516 and 1517, Luther says, in regard to attending mass, that a man may not follow his own judgment and opinion, but the authority of the Church, and the reason must be taken captive in submission to Christ. "For it is written: 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool', and the Church cannot err".1) This was quite another Luther from the one who at Leipzig declared that a council not only could err, but had erred.2) It was in fact only at Leipzig that Luther finally denied the infallibility of the Church and de-

1) *Decem Praecepta Wittenburgensi praedicata populo*. W.I, 444, L.14: "Nulli esse licitum in hoc ipso suum judicium, suam opinionem, suam devotionem sequi, sed autoritatem ecclesiae, et captivandum sensum in obsequium Christi, quia scriptum est: Stultus est qui confidit in corde suo, et Ecclesia non potest errare."

finitely broke with Roman authority.

Surely the Ninety-five Theses show no disposition toward such a break. Luther there makes every effort to defend the Holy Father against the "enemies of Christ and of the Pope, who bid the Word of God be altogether silent in some Churches in order that pardons may be preached in others" (Th. 53). For the Pope, he declares, desires prayer more than money, when he dispenses indulgences (Th. 48). Clearly Luther is sincerely bent on defending the Church and its traditional doctrine, as well as the Pope at Rome. It is true, as we saw in considering the treasure of the Church, that Luther allows that the blessings of Christ are poured upon the sinner directly, without the medi-

1) W. I., 236: "Hostes Christi et Papae sunt ii, qui propter venias predicandas verbum dei in allis ecclesiis penitus silere iubent."
2) Ibid. 234: "Docend i sunt Christiani, quod Papa sicut magis eget ita magis optat in veniis dandis pro se devotam orationem quam promptam pecuniam."
1) Nevertheless, he is not thereby preaching disobedience to, or disrespect for, the visible Church and its ordinances. On the contrary, "he closely connects the ordinances of the visible Church to what actually takes place in the invisible Church, when he emphasizes, that God forgives no man his sin, whom he does not at the same time bring into subjection in all things to the priest". This means, as the Resolutiones explain, that the believer does not experience the full assurance that his sins are forgiven until he receives the Gospel promise from the Church. Thus at every turn we find Luther preaching obedience to the mother Church, the repository of divine truth.

Luther thought he was doing the Church a service by posting the Theses. He thought he was speaking the mind of the Pope and all good Catholics. In fact he thought very little about provoking anything but an academic...


2) Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 310.

3) W. I, 540, L. 34: "Stante autem hac misera suae conscientiae confusione, non habet pacem neque consolationem, nisi ad potestatem ecclesiae confugiat suisque peccatis et miseriis per confessionem detectis postulet solatium et remedium."
debate on the matter involved. How mistaken he was in all his assumptions he only realized by the reaction which the Theses caused. In spite of the attitude of deference and submission to the Pope, which the Theses displayed, we find Tetzel answering them as though they had been a direct attack on the Papal power.

1) Tetzel's Theses constitute one of the most extravagant eulogies of the Papacy and the Roman Church which we have from the period. It at once becomes evident that Luther's opponents are converting the discussion from the question of indulgences to the question of the authority of the Roman Church. They see the whole Roman ecclesiastical system threatened, so they intrench themselves behind the scholastic theology and Papal infallibility. Tetzel himself, humiliated and frightened by Luther's Theses, shields himself behind Papal authority and makes Luther's attack on the indulgence traffic an attack on the Papacy. The power of


2) Dieckhoff, Der Ablaszstreit, 72: "indem sie demgemäß ihren Gegenangriff gegen Luther richteten, haben sie damit dem Streite über den Ablasz, die tiefgreifende prinzipielle Wendung gegeben, wodurch derselbe sofort zu einem Streite über die Fundamente des römischen Kirchenwesens geworden ist."

3) Dieckhoff, op. cit., 76.
the Pope is supreme in the Church and is instituted by God alone (T. Th. 1). The Pope, "by the greatness of his power, is above the whole universal Church, and superior to councils" (T. Th. 3). In matters regarding faith and salvation he cannot err (T. Th. 5). He alone can decide in matters of faith, and he alone has power to interpret Scripture (T. Th. 4). Here was the traditional principle which faced Luther when he pondered on the freedom of individual interpretation of Scripture. Tetzel's attack was unfair as well as unjustifiable. What could have been his purpose in answering Luther with fifty theses extolling the Papacy above Church and council? This was not the subject of Luther's Theses. Tetzel's purpose could only be to discredit Luther in the eyes of the Pope and the whole Church. He might regard Luther's theory of indulgences as a product of a perverted conception of the

1) Opp. var. arg. I, 306: "ex quo in ecclesia potestas papae est suprema, et a solo Deo instituta."
3) Ibid.: "quod iudicium papae, in his quae sunt fidei, et ad humanam salutem necessaria, errare potest minime."
4) Ibid.: "quod papa ea, quae fidei sunt, solus habet determinare, quodque sacrae scripturae sensus ipse autoriative, et nullus alius, pro suo sensu, interpretatur."
5) Hausrath, Luther's Leben I, 137: "Die Gewalt des Papstes über Konzil und Kirche in fünfzig Themen zu vermeiden, wie Tetzel tat, lag keinerlei Grund vor, da Luther dieselbe gar nicht angegriffen hatte. Es handelte sich eben darum, Wittenberg und seinen groszen Lehrer in Rom zu verdächtigen."
Church. He might also regard them as a threat against the traditionalism of the Catholic Church, and against the infallibility of Pope and council. But even admitting this, it is difficult to regard Tetzel's Theses as a fair and competent answer to those of Luther.

The importance and the results of the Ninety-five Theses were infinitely more far-reaching than Luther had intended or anticipated. In the light of the succeeding controversy and of subsequent history their importance looms ever larger. In the development of Luther's doctrine of the Church their importance is rarely recognized. It is only with the Resolutiones that their significance becomes apparent; but even standing alone they are a milestone in this phase of Luther's development. While all former efforts at reform had failed to create more than a comparatively local stir, the Theses immediately kindled a blaze throughout the Church. The reason lies in the very nature of the Theses. Others had attacked abuses in practice and doctrine, but none had seen that the crux of the matter

1) Dieckhoff, op. cit. 112: "Der traditionalismus der vorreformatorischen Kirche - darin sah Tetzel richtig - war durch die opposition Luther's im Fundament angegriffen. Aber damit ist die Frage wegen des Rechts oder des unrechts keineswegs, wie Tetzel meinte und die römischen Gegner der evangelischen Reformation noch heute behaupten, gegen Luther entschieden."
was man's personal relation to God. Under the prevailing ecclesiastical system, this relation must necessarily be perverted. Therefore the root of the trouble must be attacked, and that was the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Church. Though Luther in the Theses did not set out to do this, yet they contained such an attack, by setting up against the ecclesiastical order of salvation the principle of justification by faith, of personal approach to God. Note well that this was set up as a problem for discussion; but at any rate it was set up, and it was discussed - to the limit. And when Luther announced that the sinner received grace from the merits of Christ even without the mediation of the Pope (Th. 58), he was virtually sounding the death-knell to the Church's absolute claim to mediation between God and man. It marked the beginning of the principle of liberty of conscience and reason which soon grew to manhood in Luther's doctrinal development.

From one quarter after another, Luther is given notice that his Theses are an attack on the very found-

1) Bratke, 95 Thesen, 314.
2) Bratke, 319: "Aber was die Hauptsache ist, der Anspruch der Kirche auf Heilsvermittlung ist ja in dem Sinne, wie es die römische Curie verlangte, in den Thesen rundweg geleugnet."
ations of the Church. While Tetzel, in true scholastic fashion, pronounced the Theses contrary to the traditionally accepted teaching of the Church, Eck, the cultured humanist, reveals them to be in opposition to the Papal decretals. The contents of this exchange we have already seen. The Obelisci of Eck was a surprise attack from an old friend, and Luther's Asterisci are a response in the same sarcastic tone. The only advance shown in the developing doctrine of the Church is that he begins to question the authority of Papal decretals. One authority after another falls, for they are man made and not supported by Holy Scripture. We shall very soon meet with a definite and decisive pronouncement with respect to Papal decretals and their authority. The Asterisci, while contradicting a Papal decretal, nevertheless urge obedience to the Church. Luther himself remains subject to the Church, but not to Eck or any other verbose scholastic doctor. Until the Church has spoken, he claims the right to hold his own opinion. Liberty of conscience and of inter-

1) The two works appear together in the form of a disputation, W.I, 281ff.
2) Asterisci - W.I, 285, L.31: "Mélius est in re non necessaria ad salutem vile quam mendacium, expectoque vel contrarium probari vel Ecclesiam determinare. Interim opinionibus hominum volo uti et abuti pro mea libertate."
pretation is in the mind of Luther still limited, and
must yield to the pronouncement of the Church.

This submission to the Church is sincere, for
Luther still loves the Holy Mother and yearns for her
comforting support. He pours out his heart in rever-
ence for the Church in a sermon on Maunday Thursday.
Let him who is weak in faith permit himself as a child
to be carried in the arms and bosom of the Mother Church,
even as the paralytic on his bed, that the Lord may at
least regard her faith. Let him go in the faith of the
universal Church, or of some faithful member, praying
the Lord to accept him in the faith of His Church or of
this or that member. For it is necessary to obey the
Church, which bids him draw near. And there is no
doubt that God accepts obedience to the Church as obed-
ience to Himself. Surely the faith of the Church will
never allow him to perish, any more than a little child,
which is baptized and saved through the merit and faith
of another.

Thus while Luther accepts the mediation of the Church

1) Sermon de digna praeparatione cordis pro suscipientiando
toward salvation, he will not admit that salvation is dependent on this mediation. This is one of the points in the Theses which Luther sees need further consideration. In fact he sees many misunderstandings and misinterpretations following the publication of the Theses. He is shocked at the reaction to them. When he sees them circulated broadcast through the country, he is worried by their insufficiency. He expresses his anxiety to his friend Christoph Scheurl in a personal letter. He says he should like to publish a work in German on the virtue of indulgences to correct false impressions produced by the Theses and their hostile interpreters.

After many months of careful preparation the Resolutiones were published in August 1513. They were dedicated to Pope Leo X in a remarkable letter. "Certain friends," he tells Leo, have been busy trying to bring him into disrepute with the Curia. They have heaped maledictions upon him. They have misinterpreted his Theses and thus made him out a heretic and

1) Luther an Christoph Scheurl, March 5, 1512. Enders I, 166: "cupio libellum vernacula edere 'de virtute indulgentiarum', ut opprimam Positiones illas vagantissimas"
an apostate, who is subverting the authority and power of the keys and the Roman Pontiff. He pleads his innocence and the injustice of their attacks. His purpose in publishing the *Theses* had been to save the Church from the scandals and corruption that threatened her from within. By no means did he aim to attack the Church itself. The best proof of this was that he did not appeal to the people first, but to the Church authorities. When they turned a deaf ear to his complaint, he called for a public disputation, hoping thereby to get better results. They had driven him to it, and the result was the present conflagration. He could not revoke now. Therefore he addresses the *Resolutiones* to the Holy Father. He will publish them under his protection, that all may see how highly he esteems the ecclesiastical power and the keys, and likewise how falsely his adversaries have accused him.

Most significant is the conclusion of the letter. For here Luther puts himself in complete subjection to the Papal power. "Therefore, most blessed Father, I prostrate myself at your feet, with all that I am and possess: quicken, kill, call, revoke, approve, reprove, as you wish. I will acknowledge your voice as the
voice of Christ, directing you and speaking in you. If I have deserved death, I shall not refuse to die."

This note of complete submission is rather contradicted in the work itself. He is becoming more and more skeptical as to the real authority of the Papacy. At the same time his thinking is becoming more and more independent, as the formal principle takes shape in his mind. Who are his opponents to call him a heretic? He admits in the Protestatio, or introduction, that he may err. But he will not be called a heretic, no matter how madly they rave, who believe otherwise. Even though his friends call him a blasphemous heretic, because he does not regard the Church of Christ and the Holy Scriptures in the Catholic sense, yet he believes them to be deceived. The Lord is his judge and compels him to take the stand he has taken. He does not speak because he is so impudently arrogant, that he thinks he ought to be numbered among the doctors of the

2) Protestatio, W.I, 530, L.10: "quod errare quidem potero, sed haereticus non ero, quantumlibet fremant et tabescant ii qui aliter sentient vel cupiunt."
holy Church, much less among those whose business it is to settle these matters. But it is the misfortune of the time, that even such men cannot succor the Church. He has no intention of saying anything which is not established first in Scripture and then in the Church Fathers and Papal canons and decrees. Unofficial pronouncements of the Church or the Pope however, he does not feel bound to heed. The Roman Church itself is only a man-made institution, and its primacy is an artificial one, never acknowledged up to the time of Gregory. And as far as the Pope is concerned, he is only a man and his opinion "moves me not at all." There have been many Popes, with whom not only errors and vices have found favor, but even omens (portenta). He will heed the Pope "as pope", that is, when he speaks in the canons and according to the canons or a council,

1) Ibid. 573, L.6.
2) Protestatio, Ibid. 529, L.33.
3) Strohl, L'Epanouissement, 298: "Luther entrevoit déjà que l'Eglise romain n'est qu'une institution humaine, un pouvoir temporel auquel s'applique Romains XIII et non Matthieu XVI."
4) Resolutions W.I., 571: (Romanam ecclesiam) "adhuc tempore B. Gregorii, quando non erat super alias ecclesiis, saltem Graeciae."
but not when he speaks according to his own head (caput). Bonaventura’s opinion, too, is insufficient when he asserts that the Pope has authority in Purgatory. However, “when the Pope shall have asserted this, it ought not to be resisted.”

Christians are urged to submit to the Pope in all things with reverence, for he who resists this power resists divinely ordained government, and brings upon himself condemnation. Even though the Pope impose cruel and unjust sentences, they ought to be feared. Regard the Church in our day, how it is oppressed by untold burdens, yet it endures it all quietly and humbly. Nevertheless it would be stupid and unchristian to say that, though powers that be are to be honored, abuse of power should not be reproved and resisted. Thus the saints supported and honored the powers of their generation, which the Apostle called “of God”, even through

1) Ibid. 582, L.19: “Me nihil movet, quid placeat vel displaceat summo Pontifici. Homo est, sicut et caeteri; multi fuerunt summi pontifices, quibus non solum errores et vicia, sed etiam portenta placuerunt. Ergo audio Papam ut papa, id est ut in Canonibus loquitur et secundum Canones loquitur aut cum Concilio determinat, non autem, quando secundum suum caput loquitur.”
2) Ibid. L.29.
3) Ibid. 618, L.24: “Quia auctoritati papali in omnibus cum reverentia cedendum est. Qui enim resistit, resistit dei ordinationi qui autem deo resistunt, ipsi sibi damnationem aquirunt.”
4) Ibid. L.28: “et si Papa ferret iniustas sententias, timendae tamen sunt.”
5) Ibid. L.31: “Ecclesia, quae certe infinitis oneribus hodie premitur et tamen pie et humiliter fert quieta.”
punishment and torture. Though they bore it, they con-
stantly called God to witness against the abuse. They
suffered it, not because the power was rightly used
for persecuting them, but they left them with the crime
on their conscience and bearing testimony even in
death. 

1) Thus Luther puts the Papal power on the same
plane as the temporal power. Both exist by divine
right in a certain sense. 2) But as for the power
of the two swords, which the Pope claims, that is an
unspeakable fiction. What abominations are committed
under the guise of this power. Luther marvels at the
man who invented the theory, that the Pope had a material
and a spiritual sword at his command. Thus armed the
Pope ceased to be a loving father and became a cruel
tyrant, in whom people would soon see nothing but
"power". And this in the face of decrees of the fathers,
who strictly prohibited the clergy from bearing arms,

1) Ibid. 621, L. 11: "Quantumcumque enim potestas
honorable est, non ideo tam ignavi esse debemus, ut
abusum eius non reprobemus aut non resistamus. Sic
enim omnes sancti potestatem saeculi, quam etiam dei
vocat Apostolus, sustinuerunt et honorant..."
2) Strohl, L'Énnonciissement 298, n. 3: "le pouvoir
papal est entièrement assimilé à la potestas saeculi,
quam etiam 'dei' vocat apostolus..... Il est de droit
divin au même titre que le pouvoir temporel, ni plus,
ni moins."
he adds in humorous irony. He marvels that they do not invent a theory of two keys, or of a third sword, a "gladius scientiae." Must not God be wroth, when men interpret "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" to be a sword of iron! Truly he has given them the sword they wanted, in sending cruel wars, which are never worse than among Christians. Against the heretics they proceed with fire instead of wisdom, following the counsel of Cato rather than of Scipio.

2. Authority of a General Council versus authority of Papacy.

As the work progresses, we find Luther standing less and less in awe of Papal authority. It gradually develops that he no longer regards the Pope as the highest tribunal in matters of faith, but a general council. Even if the Pope with a large part of the Church holds a certain opinion, it is not sin or heresy to hold a contrary opinion, especially in matters not necessary to salvation, until a general council has

1) Resolutiones, W.I, 624-625.
rejected one opinion and approved the other. He cites the fact that the Christian Church is split on the question of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. The Roman Church, with the council of Basel and nearly the entire Church, accepts the theory, yet, since the opposite view is not condemned, they are not heretics who accept the latter view. In like manner, even though the Pope do not err with his penitences, they are not therefore heretics who deny or do not believe his theory, until one view shall have been established by the judgment of a general council. Thus whatever is granted regarding indulgences, it is not necessary to believe a certain formula to be the true one until the Church shall establish it. "Again you see how great is the need of a legitimate and universal Council". Likewise in the matter of the Pope's power in Purgatory, he is ready to follow freely, when the Church shall have given her decision. Meanwhile he bids the rash

1) Ibid. 583, L.5: "Etiam si Papa cum magna parte Ecclesiae sic vel sic sentiret nec etiam erraret, adhuc non est peccatum aut heresis, contrarium sentire..., donec fuerit per Concilium universale alterum reprobatum, alterum approbatum."
2) Ibid. L.8.
3) Ibid. 584, L.10.
4) Ibid. L.16: "Et iterum vides, quanta sit necessitas legitimi et universalis Concilii."
advocates of dreams keep quiet. He can not be intimid-
idated by quotations from Thomas, Bonaventura, and the rest. Their arguments fail, because they are not based on Scripture. And again we see that the whole consideration of authority in the Church comes back to this, that Scripture alone is the infallible authority. All claim to authority, whether by the visible Church, Pope or council, must be founded upon Scripture. We have noted how, the Papal power sinks more and more into the shadow of a general council in Luther's doctrinal development. It is equally clear that in the same way the authority of a council must yield to the authority of Scripture. At this point, the supreme human authority in the visible Church is not the Pope, but a general council. But we may assume that Luther will submit to this only if it is in accord with Scripture. However, this question, concerning the fallibility of a council, was reserved for the next dispute. It was Sylvester Prierias, the arch-papist, who was to lead Luther on to the next step, which was to say that "a council can err."
A general council represents the Church, and is the only mouthpiece of the Church. Prierias attacked this conception of Luther, and thus Luther is led to expound further his theory of a general council and its place in the Church. Prierias asserted in his *Dialogus* that "the Church Universal is essentially the assembly for worship, of all believers in Christ. But the Church universal is virtually the Church of Rome; the head of all the Churches, and the Pope. The Roman Church is representatively the college of cardinals; but virtually it is the Pope, who is the Head of the Church, although otherwise than Christ. Just as the Church Universal cannot err in deciding concerning faith and morals, so also a true council, acting according to its end, *viz.*, to understand truth, and including its Head, cannot finally err. Although, for a time, it may be deceived, nevertheless, as long as the motive to inquire after the truth remain, even although it sometimes err, it shall at length, through the Holy Spirit, have the correct understanding of the truth. Thus, the Roman Church cannot err, neither its Pope,
when he decides concerning that with respect to which he is Pope, i.e., when he makes official declarations and acts for the understanding of the truth. Whoever does not rest upon the doctrine of the Roman Church and the Roman Pope, as an infallible rule of faith, from which even the Holy Scriptures derive their authority, is a heretic. The Roman Church can determine anything concerning faith and life, by deed as well as by word. The only difference is that words are more precise. Custom, therefore, contains the force of law, because the will of a ruler is expressed in deeds, permissively or effectively. As a heretic, therefore, is one who thinks incorrectly concerning the truth of the Scriptures, so also is one who thinks incorrectly as to the doctrine and deeds of the Church, pertaining to faith and life.  

Here we have the traditional Catholic doctrine of the Church, the straightjacket from which Luther is struggling to free himself. His Resposania, or reply, takes him a step farther in his emancipation. He denies and holds for naught Prierias' fundamental principle, where he distinguishes between the Church "essentially",

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the Church "representatively", and the Church "virtually". This is Prierias' own creation, for he has failed to cite Scripture or any authority. He goes on to refute Prierias' arguments.

"The Church, virtually, I do not know, except in Christ; nor do I know it representatively, except in a council. Otherwise, if whatever the Church, virtually, i.e., the Pope, do, be called the deed of the Church, what monstrous crimes, I ask, must we not reckon as good deeds! Must we not include among them the horrible shedding of blood by Julius II? Must we not include also the tyranny of Boniface VIII, abhorred by the whole world? Nevertheless as to the latter, the proverb is well known: 'Like a fox he entered; like a lion he reigned; like a dog he died!' Surely you would not have us believe that all these intolerable monstrosities are the most holy deeds of the Church! But, if the Pope be the virtual Church, and the cardinals the representative Church, and the collection of believers the essential Church, what will you call a general council? A virtual Church? No! A repre-

1) Ibid. II, 22, L.3.
sentative Church? No! An essential Church? No!
What then? An accidental, perhaps a nominal and verbal Church!"

Thus Luther challenges Prierias to define the place of a council. Yet we search in vain up to this time for Luther's own definition of a legitimate council. As regards the membership, the constituency, of such a council, Luther is still silent. The Resolutiones make it clear that Pope and cardinals are not sufficient. The Church, he says, needs a reformation; but this is not the work of one man, a Pope, or of many cardinals, as each new council has shown, but it is the work of the whole world, yea of God alone. Further he does not define the membership of a council.

As to the authority of a council the Responsio takes one momentous step beyond the Resolutiones. In the latter a council is given an elevated position at the expense of the Pope. In the former Luther is driven.

1) Ibid. L.8ff: "Ego, ecclesiam virtualiter non scio nisi in Christo, repraesentative non nisi in concilio" Jacobs, 93.
by Prierias to make the bold statement that Pope as well as a council can err. There is only one step farther to go, that is to assert that a council has erred. It was reserved for the learned Doctor Eck to extract that epoch-making statement from the Reformer. In the Responsaio he is not ready to go that far. While he says that a council can err, yet almost in the same breath he intimates his willingness to yield once a council has spoken in a matter. He affirms the principle so often used in the Resolutionae, merely substituting the word council for the word Church. "I am not a heretic," he says, "if I hold a contrary opinion, until it is determined by a council."

Prierias had tried to make Luther a heretic. We noted above his assertion that "whoever does not rest upon the doctrine of the Roman Church and the Roman Pope, as an infallible rule of faith, from which even the Holy Scriptures derive their authority, is a heretic." This sidetracking of Scripture in favor of the Pope and the

1) Responsaio, Opp. var. arg.II, 22: "Tam papa quam concilium potest errare."
2) Responsaio, Opp. var. arg. II, 20. W. I, 655, L.29
Roman Church was to Luther a monstrous theory. He marvels that Prierias dares call the Roman Church a rule of faith. "I have always believed," he says, "that faith was the rule of the Roman Church and of all Churches, as the Apostle says in Gal. VI". He believes, however, that they may be merely using a different vocabulary. Prierias is improperly speaking of a rule of faith, because that faith which the Roman Church professes ought to be uniform for all. For he gives thanks to Christ, that he has thus preserved this one Church on earth, and that it alone can so wonderfully prove our faith to be the true one, that it has never in any doctrinal decree (decreto) departed from the true faith, and that the devil has not been able to prevent the authority of Scripture, Fathers, or interpreters from remaining firm from the beginning. While the Roman Church can err, so much stands firm, that "the universal Church cannot err."

Thus far Luther has advanced when at Augsburg he is summoned before Cardinal Cajetan, the pride of the

2) Opp. var. arg. II, 65: "Universalis autem ecclesia non potest errare."
Dominicans. The most important phase of their parleys for our consideration was their discussion of the treasure of the Church, which we have already investigated. A vital point in the debate, we saw, was the Extravagans of Clement VI. This discussion led Luther to take a stand on the authority of Papal decretals, and in the course of the proceedings he shows a marked advance in relation to ecclesiastical authority. When he attempted, as we noted, to harmonize the article of Clement with his own view, he only showed that he intended no attack on the Papacy. But his good intentions were not accepted. For his enemies needed this apparent denial of a Papal decretal to prove Luther an enemy of the Papal power. His indirect submission and constant professions of obedience to the Pope were not the kind of submission that would satisfy Rome. Rome would not countenance a subject who repeatedly refused to acknowledge the infallibility and absolute power of the Papacy. And before the conference was finished, Luther made it clear that he cared not whether the Extravagans harmonized with his own views or not. He found that it contained manifest errors, which contradicted Scripture.

Both Clement and Sixtus in their Bulls twist the Scripture into a sense which serves them, but which is far from the real sense of the words. That fact deprives them of all authority in Luther's eyes. Therefore the Scriptures, which he uses in his thesis, is much to be preferred to the Extravagans, which proves nothing, but only recites the opinion of St. Thomas. Cajetan retorts that the Papal power is superior not only to a general council and every power in the Church, but to Scripture. In proof of this he cites the abrogation of the Council of Basel and the condemnation of Gerson and his followers. As Luther says, these things were new to his ears, and he is quick to deny the Pope's superiority to councils and Scriptures.

Here we have in bold relief the fundamental difference between Luther and his opponents. Cajetan represented the traditional system of Papal absolutism.

1) Ibid. 370: "et verba ... audacius torquet in alienum sensum, quem suo loco non habent,... Ideo scripturas, quas ego in propositione mea sequor, esse ei praeservendas omnino, ac nihil inde probari, sed recitari duntaxat ac narrari opinionem S. Thomae."
2) Ibid. L.15: "Tunc coeptit adversus me potestatem papae commendare, quoniam supra concilium, supra scripturam, supra omnia ecclesiae sit. Et ut illud persuaderet, reprobationem et abrogationem concilii Basiliiensis recitavit, ac Gersonistas quoque una cum Gersone damnandos censuit."
3) Ibid. L.21: "Haec ut erant nova in auribus meis, negavi contra, papam supra concilium, supra scripturam esse."
and ecclesiastical authority. He represented the visible Church with its claim to absolute power over conscience and faith. Luther, on the other hand, planted himself on the authority of Scripture, and within the limits set by it alone, claimed the right to think and believe as he wished. "The humble monk who stood there in the character of an accused heretic was the prophet of a new age in religion. What he stood for was nothing less than the indefeasible right of individual liberty of thought and conscience against the mediæval principle of unquestioning obedience to established corporal authority. He did not, it is true, realise all that this involved and still professed his willingness to submit to the judgment and determination of the Church, as distinct from the Roman Church, i.e., the Roman Curia, or accept the arbitration of an im-

1) It was the irony of circumstance that this representative of the absolute power of Rome should himself be a broad-minded critic, whose liberal views led Luther to say that he had at last become a Lutheran. Kalkoff uncovers much interesting material in his work, G.B. Flavio als Biograph Kajetana und sein Bericht über Luther's Verhör in Augsburg. Kirchengeschichtliche Forschungen, Th. Brie ge, Got h a 1912, P. 104: "Denn nun berichtet der Biograph wie Kajetan, der ja auch als Bibel exeget und Dogmatiker seine eigenen Wege zu gehen wagte, so dass Luther von ihm sagte: 'Cajetanus post-remo factus est Lutheranus.' cf. also Kalkoff, Zu Luther's romischen Procesz. Zeits. f. Kirchengesch. 1904 Band XXV, P. 90ff. Cajetan had also been a sharp critic of abuses in the Curia.
partial tribunal. His plea is for freedom to investigate the truth untrammeled by traditional theological opinion, to follow the light of Scripture and reason in the search for truth, and to hold fast to his convictions as a sacred obligation which he owes to God and his conscience. What he really stood for was the divine right of the individual reason and conscience against external authority, whether ecclesiastical or academic. Subject to this indispensable condition, he was willing to yield to what he called a better opinion."

Still unwilling to break with the Church Luther finally begs Cajetan to refer the case to Pope Leo, "that these doubts may be settled by the Church, so that he may either compel a just withdrawal of my propositions or else their just affirmation. I wish only to follow the Church." "I protest", he says


1) Mackimmon, Luther and the Reformation, II, 93-94
again, "that I respect and follow the holy Roman Church in all my words and deeds, present, past and future. But if anything has been said or will have been said to the contrary or otherwise, I wish it not to have been said." He protests that he is not conscious of having said anything contrary to Scripture, the Church Fathers, papal decrees, or right reason. "Nevertheless, I am a man", he continues, "and being able to err, I have submitted myself, and even now submit to the judgment and determination of the legitimate holy Church, and to all those of a better mind." To that end he is willing to leave the decision with the universities of Basel, Freiburg, Louvain, or Paris.

We have the peculiar situation of Luther appealing to a Pope and yet insisting with Panormitanus that "in a matter of faith not only is a general council above the Pope, but even any believer whatsoever, if he rests upon better authority and reason than the Pope, even as Paul in relation to Peter, Gal. 2."

And though he appeals to the Pope, he does not regard his
decision as that of the Church. In fact he regards his
appeal to the Pope as unnecessary, because he has referred
all things to the decision of the Church and is only wait-
ing for its opinion. He will give heed to what the Church
says; he will not oppose it as an adversary, but he
will listen to it as a disciple.

Consistently with this view, and knowing that the
Pope's thunder may peal at any moment, Luther on
November 28, 1518, appeals to a general council, "law-
fully gathered in the Holy Spirit." He desires by
this act to do nothing contrary to the one holy and
Catholic and Apostolic Church, which he does not doubt
to be the mistress and sovereign of the whole earth, nor
against the authority of the holy Apostolic seat and
the power of his holy and well-experienced lord, the
Pope. But such a council represents the holy
Catholic Church, which, in matters of faith, is above
the Pope. Here Luther expresses no opinion as to

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"Tamen quantum in me fuisset, non appellassem, primum, quod
mihi non videatur necessaria appellatio vel commissio ad par-
tes, cum ego, ut dixi, omni in iudiciu ecclesiae retulerim,
et non nisi sententiam eius exspectem. Quid enim ultra aut
facere debeo, aut facere possum? Neque enim me reo aut re-
sponsore opus est, qui non quid ego dixi, sed quid ecclesia
dictura sit attendo, nec adversarius contendere, sed dis-
cipulus audire volo".
2) Appelatio F. Martini Luther ad Concilium W.II,36: (Op.
var. arg.II,438)-"ad Concilium proxime et immediate futurum
saltam in spiritus sancto legitime congregatum."
3) Ibid.P.37: "Quod contra unam sanctam et Catholicam et
the fallibility of such a council. Hence we cannot say that it marks an advance in the conception of a general council beyond what we saw in the *Responsio* to Frieras. In so far it is an advance, that Luther apparently has finally discovered that the Pope is himself in the camp of his enemies. As he is gradually becoming disillusioned, he writes to Link in December, 1518, and for the first time airs the suspicion that the Pope may be the Anti-Christ.

Can the Church have another head beside Christ? In an exchange of letters with Dungersheim he denies the primacy of Peter. He takes his stand on the words of the Gospel, that all the Apostles were equal, and on the words in Matth. 18, 18. Yet he deplores the fact that so much is made of this question. For he does not deny a primacy in the Roman Pontiff, and he concedes all they ask, except that they make heretics of the early saints and Apostles on account of this new article of faith, which they never held.

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4) Ibid. P. 36, L. 27.


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Apostolicam Ecclesiam, quam totius orbis esse magistram et obtainere principatum non ambigo, sanctaeque sedis Apostolicae autoritatem ac Sanctissimi domini nostri Papae bene consulti potestatem nihil dicere intendo". 4) Ibid. P. 36, L. 27.

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Peter had a place of honor among the Apostles so Luther has no scruples about giving the Roman Church a place of honor among the Churches of the world. His Unter-
richt auf etliche Artikel emphasizes this. Following his arrangement with Miltitz, this work calls all men to obey and preserve the unity of the Church. But the primacy he grants the Roman Church is not based on the pretentious Roman claims, not on the primacy of Peter, but on the throng of martyrs, including Peter and Paul, whose blood was poured out that the Church might rise. Separation from this Church should be the last resort, for that will never improve matters in the Church. No sin is great enough to sever the bond of love and spiritual unity.

As far as the power and supremacy of the Roman Chair is concerned, leave that to the learned. For it does not concern the soul's salvation, and Christ has not built his Church upon outward visible power or temporal things, but upon love, humility, and unity.

In conclusion

1) W. II, 72, L.31: "Das die Romische kirche von gott fur allen andern geeret sey, ist keyn zweyfell, dann doselb Sanct Peter und Paul, zlvi bebste, darzu vill hundert tausent martyrer hyr blut vorgoszen, die hell unnd welt ubirwunden, das man wol greyfen mag, wie gar eynen besondern augenblick got auff die selb kirchen habe!" 2) Ibid. L.35: Ob nu leyder es zu Rom alszo steht, das woll beszer tuchte, szo ist doch die und keyn ursach szo grosz, noch werden mag, das man sich von der selben kirchen reyszen adder scheyden soll... Ja umb keynerley sundader ubel, das man gedencken adder nennen mag, die lieb zurtrennen und die geystliche eynickeyt teylen."
he expresses the hope that he will no longer be accused of attacking the Roman Church. He bids them follow the Roman see in all things, "but never believe a hypocrite."

Thus as the Indulgence Controversy draws to a close, we find Luther still anxious to preserve the unity of the Church. Nor has he any desire to rend the unity of the Roman Church, or to overthrow the established institutions of the visible Church. He only asks that truth be not stifled in the Church, and that he be no longer pressed to recant articles which to him represent Scriptural truth. Such a modus vivendi seemed to have been found in the interview with Miltitz.

In the Unterricht Luther showed he was prepared to carry out his part of the arrangement, which was to keep quiet, except to exhort people to obedience to the Church. There was a lull, which Miltitz and his "co-optimists" believed to augur peace. It was Eck who broke the armistice and dragged Luther through a long and sharp

3) Ibid. 73, L.6: "Was aber die gewalt und ubirkeit Romisches stuels vormag, und wie ferne sich dieselb streckt, lasz die gelerten auszfechten, dan daran der seelen selickeyt gar nichts gelegen, und Christus seyne kirche nit auff die euszerliche scheynbare gewalt unnd ubirkeyt adder eynige zeitliche dingk, ... sunder yn die eynickeyt gesetzt und gegrundet hatt."

1) Ibid. L.17.
2) Dieckhoff, Der Ablaazstreit 255-256.
3) Luther an Papst Leo X, March 1519. Enders I, 442-444
struggle to a definite break with Roman ecclesiastical authority. Before the struggle was ended, he had made up his mind on two matters, viz.: the head of the Church and the authority of a general council.

B. In the Leipzig Disputation.

1. Divine right of Roman primacy.

In the twenty-second Conclusion of his Resolutiones, Luther had asserted that before the time of Gregory I the Roman Church was not superior to other Churches, at least not to the Greek Church. It was a distinct surprise to Luther when Eck in the last of his Thirteen Theses introducing the Leipzig Disputation, challenged this article. Thus, while Eck had formally challenged Calstadt to a disputation, his attack was in substance directed squarely at Luther. Luther in turn published thirteen theses and followed these with a comprehensive work, enlarging

1) W.I, 571, L.16: "(Romanam ecclesiam) "adhuc tempore B. Gregorii, quando non erat super alias ecclesias, saltem Graeciae."

2) Eck's dreizehn Thesen wider Luther und Carlstadt, March 1519. Walch, XVIII, 860. St. Louis Ed. XVIII, 712.

3) Contra novos et veteros errores defendet Martinus Lutherus has positiones sequentes in studio Lipsiani. Opp. var. arg. III, 16.

Romano Pontifici non negem primatum, et omnia, quae volunt, concedo, nisi quod antiquos Sanctos et Apostolos nolim haereticos fieri ob novum hunc fidei articulum quem ipsi non tenuerunt".
upon his thirteenth thesis concerning the authority of
the Pope and the Roman Church.

Eck's thesis asserts: "We deny the assertion that
the Roman Church was not superior to other Church be­
fore the time of Sylvester; but we have always acknow­
ledged him, who has the see and faith of St. Peter, as
the perpetual successor of St. Peter, and the general
vicar of Christ". Luther answers: "That the
Roman Church is superior to all others is proved from
the most valueless decrees of Roman pontiffs, against
which stand the text of divine Scripture, the approved
histories of eleven hundred years, and the decree of
the most holy Nicene Council."

Opening his Re­
solutio with these two opposing theses, Luther makes it
clear that the real issue is the divine right of the Papal
primacy and the authority of the Roman Church. He will
not deny nor dispute that the Roman pontiff is, has been,
and will be first (primum), but only the arguments by
which this primacy is supported. He acknowledges the

1) W.II, 185, L.1.
2) Ibid. L.7.
Pope’s primacy, because the will of God has allowed him to reach that position. It is the will of God that we submit to human ordinances and government. The Papacy is such a man-made office, strengthened under God’s disposition. But the passages of Scripture used in support of the Papal primacy are wrongly interpreted. They disprove any primacy in Peter. In Matth. 16, 13 Christ asks not Peter alone, but all the disciples: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man am?" When Peter answers, he answers as the mouth of all the apostles and the head of the group, as Chrysostom says. Christ receives the answer of Peter as the answer of the entire society of Apostles and disciples. To put it briefly, as we found in the consideration of the keys, Christ speaks to Peter as the representative of the Church, and through him delivers the keys to the Church. And this is not the Church of Rome, but the "communion of saints," the "body of Christ."

1) Ibid. P. 186, L. 5.  
3) Ibid. P. 188, L. 37.  
4) W. II, 190, L. 5-26, Cf. supra.
Likewise they misinterpret the words, "upon this rock I will build my Church". The rock cannot refer to Peter, the Pope, or the Roman see, as certain decretais affirm. But it is the faith which Peter confesses in the name of the whole Church; since the universal and Catholic Church existed long before the Roman Church. 1) Matth. 13, 17ff. explains Christ's words in chapter 16. When he says "If he neglect to hear the Church, etc.", He is speaking neither to Peter nor to the Apostles, but to the Church. If the words, "I will give unto thee the keys etc.", refer to the Pope and the Roman Church, then so do also the words immediately following, "Get thee behind me, Satan." 2) Luther will not accept the Pope's claim to infallibility and to the sole right to interpret Scripture. For the Pope is a man even as other bishops. 3) 4)

With the denial of Papal primacy comes logically a denial of the claim that the Roman Church is the mother of all Churches. Paul, in Rom. 15, 25ff., makes it clear that he regards the Church at Jerusalem as the mother, the source, and the root of all churches in the world.

1) Ibid. L.27ff.  
2) Ibid. 191, L. 1ff.  
3) Ibid. L.21ff.  
including the Roman Church. Surely the Church of the Gentile is of later origin than the Church of the Jew. If the "rock" were the Roman Church alone, then what of all the other Churches? What of the Church that existed long before the Roman Church was born? Christ says "my"Church. Every Church which is a Church of Christ is surely built upon the same rock, and there is no precedence in any one. All that the Roman Church has by divine right, that every Church has, no matter how small it may be. Thus Paul says, "All things are yours.... But ye are Christ's."

Luther distinguishes between a primacy of honor and a primacy of power. No one denies that Peter ranked first as regards the former. He was the head of the Apostolic society. So also the Roman Popes have always been honored as Peter's successors and as heads, and rightly so. But Peter was given no primacy of power. For we find the other Apostles preaching and ordaining bishops without any command from Peter.

There follows in the Reasolutio a brief discussion

2) Ibid., 206, L.27ff.
3) Ibid., 208, L.17.
of the relative power of Pope and Emperor. That fantastic theory which compares Pope and Emperor to sun and moon is a monstrous fiction. The Emperor, says Luther, is supreme in all temporal things, including sacred things, and that by divine right. This supremacy he may keep or surrender. Thus, since Constantine we find the Church granted tax-exemption. The Emperor is free to withdraw this concession, and it would be sin to resist such action. Peter submitted himself and his flock to the Emperor and temporal authorities. Likewise Paul bade every soul be subject unto the higher powers, and he did not except the Pope. Grant the Pope supremacy in spiritual things. In administration of Word and Sacrament he is above all, for these are spiritual things. But in temporal things, offices, customs, tribute, taxes, and all charges of the State, the Pope and clergy are subject to the government by divine right, unless exempted by the grace of this human authority. For it bears not

1) Ibid. P.220, L.9ff.: "Imperator in temporalibus omnibus praecellit, etiam sacris, idque iure divino."
2) Ibid. 221, L.4-24: "in verbo et sacramento tradendo (haec enim sunt spiritualia) pontifices sunt super omnes: verum in temporalibus rebus, officiis, tributo, censu, vectigali et omnibus oneribus temporales rei publicae prorsus pontifices et clerici sunt magistratibus subjecti iure divino nec exempti nisi beneficio huius humanae creaturae."
the sword in vain (Rom. 13, 4); neither can the Pope command that this sword be sheathed or unsheathed.
The power of the sword is granted the Emperor by God himself, and that in all things, be they temporal or spiritual.

The Resolutio is a powerful testimony of Luther's developing principle of individual liberty over against ecclesiastical authority. He weighs the evidence on both sides. He sets their authorities up against his own. He finds that their authority is built on a foundation of Papal decretals. They do quote Scripture, but they will see nothing in it except what is interpreted in the decretals, and that interpretation is wrong. They claim it must be right, because the Church says so in the decretals. Luther says it is wrong because he interprets Scripture by Scripture through the eyes of faith, and not by decretals. These are a treacherous foundation on which to try to build a Church. If Christ's words to Peter referred to the Roman Church, and Christ built his Church over this

1) Ibid. 223, L.14: "Nec verum est, quod in manu papae sit iubere gladium eximi vel condis libera est potestas gladii a deo collata, sicut et supra dixit, quod in temporalibus eam habeat imperator, ubi 'in omnibus' dicere debuit."
rook, it follows that the universal Church is not built upon faith but upon the power of the Roman Church.

Over what then is the Roman Church built? Not upon the rock, i.e. its own power, nor upon faith, therefore upon nothing. The Church must be built on a more solid foundation. It must be built upon the faith of its members. Faith is the essence of the Church, and where faith is, there is the Church. Therefore faith is the guiding principle of the individual, and he is no longer bound by the shackles of ecclesiastical authority. And so Luther repeats Augustine's principle, according to which every Pope must yield to the judgment of an individual believer, particularly in matters of faith.

2. The Head of the Church.

Having arrived at that conclusion, there is no room

1) Ibid. 202, L.29: "si per verbum Christi potestas rhomanae ecclesiae intellegeretur, ... et Christus super hanc petram ecclesiam suam se aedificare promittat, sequitur, quod universalis ecclesia non super fidem sed super potestatem rhomanae ecclesiae aedificata est: super quam tunc ipsa rhomanæ aedificata est? non super petram, id est suam potestatem, nec super fidem, ergo super nilium."

2) Ibid. 209, L.5: "(fidei), quae est ecclesiae substantia."

3) Ibid. 203, L.25: "ubi... fides, ubi ecclesia."

4) Ibid. 205, L.3: "Caeterum iuxta Augustini regulam et rhomanus et omnis pontifex subiacet cuiuslibet fidelis etiam iudicio, maxime in materia fidei."
for the Pope as the head of the Church. But Luther hesitates to go that length. He carefully says, he does not know, whether the Christian faith can countenance the presence on earth of another head of the universal Church enthroned beside Christ. There are those who relegate Christ to the triumphant Church, that they may constitute the Roman Pontiff head of the militant Church, against the expressed word of Matthew: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and in Acts: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me". So the Church is called a kingdom of faith, because our king is not seen, but believed, as we read in 1 Cor. 15: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet," and then he delivers the kingdom to the Father. These make it a kingdom of present things, while they set up a visible head. For even when the Pope dies, the Church is not without a head. Why not let Christ be the sole head while the Pope is living? Does He yield to a living Pope and succeed a dead one as any other Pope? But if He is head while
the Pope is living, why then do we have two heads in the Church."

In essaying to answer this argument at Leipzig, Eck delivers himself of the traditional Roman conception of the head of the Church.

After a week's debate with Carlstadt, he opens the disputation with Luther by an attack on his now well-known thesis. There is in the Church of God, he says, a monarchy and a chief place, existing by divine right and instituted by Christ. This Church Militant is one body and is instituted after the pattern of the Church Triumphant. As the latter has one head, even God, so a similar order was established by Christ on earth. It was made a monarchy by divine right, and who else could that monarch be than the Roman pontiff.

Luther in answer admits that the Church Militant is a monarchy; but its head is not a man. It is Christ, Himself, and that by divine right.

1) Ibid. 239, L.23ff.
4) Ibid. P. 257, L. 9: "Monarchiam ecclesie militantis prorsus confiteor euisque caput non hominem sed Christum ipsum idque auctoritate divina."
Thus, according to St. Paul, "he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet," and just preceding, "Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule" (1 Cor. 15, 25, 27). St. Augustine, too, says that the head speaks for its members. Wherefore we ought to give no heed to those who would crown Christ out of the Militant into the Triumphant Church, since it is a kingdom of faith, i.e., because we do not see our head, and yet we have it. St. Paul in Eph. 4 distinctly calls Christ the Head of the Church, and that the Church Militant. And in 1 Cor. 3, 5; 1, 13, he clearly precludes any head other than Christ. For the Church to be without a head would indeed be a monsterity, as Eek asserts, but the latter cannot produce any other head than Christ. Because if the Pope be the head, then at his death the Church is without a head. Yet if Christ is the Head until another is elected, which is more monstrous, that Christ yield to a living Pope or

1) Ibid., L.18: "Quare prorsus audiendi non sunt, qui Christum extra ecclesiam militantem trudunt in triumphantem, cum si regnum fidei, hoc est, quod caput nostrum non videmus et tamen habemus."
succeed a dead one? It is not the ecclesiastical hierarchy he will deny; the dispute concerns "the head of a Monarchy, not of a Hierarchy."

In further proof of this Luther again asserts, that the Roman Church must yield its claim to being the Mother Church to the Church at Jerusalem. Neither is Jerome rightly interpreted in support of the monarchical power of the Roman Church. This power, since it is not given by divine right, could only be granted by the consent of all the faithful throughout the world. But the Greek Church has never consented to such power, either in the Roman Church or in the Pope, yet it has never been held heretical. Likewise the African Church would have to be adjudged heretical if the monarchy of the Roman Pontiff existed by divine right. For an African council's decree says that the bishop of the see is not called the chief of priests or high-priest or anything of that sort, but only bishop of the first see; he is called neither universal nor Roman pontiff.

1) Ibid. 258, L.4ff.
2) Ibid. 257, L.39: "non enim Hierarchiam ecclesiasticam, sed de capite disputamus Monarchie, non Hierarchie."
3) Ibid. P. 258 and 259.
the unity of the Church does not depend on the Roman primacy, but, according to Eph. 4, on unity of faith, baptism, and lordship. Neither does the authority of the Fathers remain uncorrupted among the Romans alone. 1)

3. Luther linked with Bohemian heresy.

Eck has one purpose in view, to link Luther with those arch-heretics who preceded him. Wyclif said it was not necessary to salvation to believe that the Roman Church was supreme. Hus held that Peter was not the head of the Roman Catholic Church; that there was no proof that there must be one head ruling the Church in spiritual things; that the dignity, yea, the very institution itself of the Papacy emanated from the Emperor. Marsilius of Padua asserted that Peter was no more the head of the Church than the other Apostles. Eck desires to hear Luther's opinion as to these heretics. Luther calls it an affront that Eck has labelled him a friend of the Bohemians. 2) He has always been opposed 3)

1) Ibid. p. 266, l. 25.
2) Ibid. p. 275, l. 3.
3) It is now quite generally agreed, that Luther's doctrine of the Church had little connection with that of Hus. This is evidenced by the facts: 1) that at the beginning of the Leipzig Disputation Hus's De Ecclesia was unknown to Luther, and 2) that the notion of the congranatio praedestinatorum played no decisive part in Luther's theology.
to any kind of schism, and always will be. The Bohemians do wrong, when they separate themselves from the established authority and general unity, even though they do have the divine right. For the supreme divine right is charity and unity of spirit. What a stain on Christian charity to drive out of the Church and out of heaven the thousands of martyrs and saints who have been members of the Greek Church for fourteen-hundred years! Eck cannot deny that the Church of Christ was founded twenty years before Peter's Roman Church. (Gal. 1, 18, 2, 1.) How can the Roman Church then be called the first, the supreme head by divine right? Then the bishops of Alexandria and of Constantinople and countless saints would be damned as heretics and Bohemians. What blasphemy! 1) "I marvel", he concludes, "that of so many accusers and enemies of the Bohemians, not one deigns

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with fraternal charity to refute their error to the glory of the Roman Church!"

It is certain, he continues, that among the articles of Hus and the Bohemians there are many that are entirely Christian and evangelical, which the universal Church cannot condemn, as this one: "there is only one universal Church." This article is wrongly condemned, since the universal Church (universitas ecclesie) prays: "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy, Christian Church, the communion of saints." This exalted article of faith they number among the articles of John Hus. The article, that "it is not necessary to salvation to believe that the Roman Church is superior to all others", whether it belongs to Wyclif or Hus, he does not care. This he knows, however, that Gregory Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Epiphanius Cyprius and countless other Greek saints were saved, and yet they never held that article. Neither is it in the power of the Roman Pope or of inquisitors of heretical perverseness to establish new articles of faith, but to judge according to those already established. Nor can a faithful Christian be forced to anything beyond sacred Scripture, which is properly the divine law, un-

1) Ibid. P.278, L.29.
less a new and approved revelation shall have come. Indeed by divine law we are prohibited from believing anything except what is approved either by divine Scripture or manifest revelation. For, he repeats, the opinion of one private individual prevails over Pope, council, or Church, if supported by better authority or reason. So if Eck will urge the example of the Bohemians, not yet a hundred years old, Luther offers him the example of the Oriental Church, the greater part of the universal Church for fourteen hundred years. If they are heretics, because they do not acknowledge the Roman Pope, he will accuse his adversary of heresy, who dares to assert that so many celebrated saints throughout the universal Church are damned.

4. Fallibility of councils, - a council "has erred."

Eck seizes on these statements to direct the course of the discussion into the desired channel. Luther's defense of the Bohemians and attack on their persecutors Eck terms an attack on the Council of Constance. Against the judgment of this holy Council, gathered with so great accord of all Christendom, Luther has dared to say that

1) Ibid. P. 279, L.lff.
some of the articles of Hus and Wyclif are most Christian and evangelical, which the universal Church cannot condemn. Luther interrupts, saying, "It is not true that I have spoken against the Council of Constance." Eck continues unperturbed, claims Luther is defending the Hussites so they will soon say that if the Council erred in these two articles, their authority totters in other articles too.

Luther reiterates his position, that either the Roman primacy is not established by divine right, or else the saints of the whole oriental Church are eternally damned. Again he refutes Eck's traditional argument which bases the primacy on Matth. 16. Eck has also cited Augustine as holding his interpretation. But Luther shows Augustine to have said, that Peter was not the rock, but his confession was the rock. He returns to the articles of Hus and challenges Eck to deny them. He cites two articles: "There is one holy, 

1) Ibid. P.283, L. 14ff.
2) Ibid. P. 286, L.3: "Stat ergo adhuc invicte, quod Romanus Primatus aut non est iure divino formatus aut totius orientalis ecclesie sanctos esse inernum damnatos."
3) Ibid. L.12.
universal, Church, which is the universality of the pre
destined", and "The universal holy Church is only one,
even as the number of all the predestined is one."

These articles do not belong to Hus, but to Augustine,
supported by John and repeated by Peter the Lombard.

Luther further answers Eck's complaint that if one
error in a council be admitted, the whole authority of the
council totters. Eck based this conclusion on Augustine.
But, says Luther, Augustine argued from divine Scripture,
which is the infallible Word of God. A council is a
creature of that Word. Therefore this conclusion does
violence to the Word of God, since it is admitted that
a council can err. Paul says, "Prove all things". The
Roman Pope and councils are men. Therefore they ought
to be proved. Eck insists that whatever is determined
by a council legitimately gathered ought to be accepted
in faith, according to Matth. 18, 20.

To make sure his good German people are not being
deceived by Eck's charges, Luther turns to the German
language long enough to deny again the thesis which is
the real issue in the debate, namely that the primacy

P. 4. "The holy universal church is one, the church which
is the totality of the predestinate, including all, from
the first righteous man to the last one to be saved in the
future."
3) Ibid. p. 296, L. 2ff.
of the Roman Church exists by divine right. Let it be understood, that it is not his purpose to impugn the primacy of the Roman Church or to urge disobedience to it. He reverts to the Latin and to further discussion regarding general councils.

Luther has questioned matters determined at the venerable Council of Constance. Eck rightly understands this as an assertion that this Council had erred. This was the step at which Luther had hesitated. But he realizes that he has taken it in fact, so he goes the whole way, that there may be no question as to his meaning. "I agree with the doctor," he says, "that in matters of faith the decrees of councils ought to be esteemed in every way. This alone I reserve, which ought to be reserved, that a council occasionally has erred and can err, at least in matters not of faith. Nor does a council have the authority to establish new articles of faith."

4) Cf. P. 299. - "Quamvis d. Eckius dixit, veram esse eam esse controversiam, an primatus Ecclesie Romane sit de de iure divino."
1) Ibid. P. 299, L. 3.
2) Cf. Kolde, Luther's Stellung. P. 49: "Im weiten Herlauf der Disputation bedient sich Luther einmal der deutschen Sprache, um sich wegen der ihm von Eck vorgeworfenen Volke zu rechtfertigen."
3) Ibid. P. 303, L. 16: "Consentio cum d. doctore, quod consiliorum statuta in iis que sunt fidei sunt omni modo amplexenda: hoc solum mihi reserve, quod et reservandum est, consilium aliquando erasse et aliquando posse errare, praesertim in iis que non sunt fidei, nec habet concilium autoritatem novorum articulorum condendorum infide."
This statement takes virtually the last vestige of authority away from the councils. It infers in the very reservation itself that even in matters of faith a council can err. And the last sentence annuls whatever reservation the above leaves to a council. If it cannot establish new articles of faith, furthermore, there is not much left to justify the calling of a council.

It is a flat contradiction of Luther's stand in the Resolutiones, as we have noted, and as some see it, also of the opening sentence of the last quotation. In extracting this assertion from Luther, Eck had gained the victory he sought. His comment on this statement was: "If you, reverend father, believe that a council, lawfully assembled, errs and has erred, you are to me a heathen and a publican."

5. Conclusion.

The end of infallible ecclesiastical authority for Luther.

Led on by Eck, Luther has knocked the last props of authority from under the Roman Church. If Pope and

1) Kolde, in Luther's-Stellung, sees such a contradiction. He is right if the verb amulector can be taken to mean annnehmen, as he translates it. If we translated it with a weaker word, esteem, or cherish, in which meaning it is often used, the contradiction, strictly speaking, disappears. For though Luther insists that a council can err and has erred, yet he does not cease to regard its
Council alike could err, what authority was left in the Church? Only, one authority existed for Luther from now on, and that was the inerrant Word of God. From this alone could Pope or Council draw any authority. On this foundation alone could the Church of Christ endure. But would not the Church totter and fall when the old authorities, accepted for centuries, were literally swept away? No lesser man than Erasmus saw the possibility of that. The medieval conception of the Church had been shaken, and to many the Church of Christ seemed to hang in the air, its foundations gone. But Luther was not content to destroy. Even while he was engaged in demolishing the authority of what he saw as a man-made hierarchical system, his theory of the Church as an invisible communion of believers, was growing into a workable doctrine. The elements of his doctrine we found to be pre-

findings with the greatest respect. We may admit with Kolde, however, that his statement here shows a certain vacillation. "Der Consensus mit Eck den Luther hier behauptet, ist also nur ein scheinbarer, von Seiten, Luther's hervorgegangen aus einer unwissen Unsicherheit, die sich noch scheute, mit dem allseitig anerkannten höchsten Tribunal der Kirche zu brechen."

2) Ibid. P. 311: "Hoc dico vobis, reverende pater, si creditis concilium legitime congregatum errare et erasse, estis mihi sicut ethnicus et publicanus."
sent long before the conflict with Rome began. And yet the years of controversy were a fertilizer, which gave growth and strength to these fundamental principles. Having liberated himself from the shackles of traditional authority, Luther was free to collect these principles into a unified and complete doctrine of the Church.
Part III.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE

CHURCH MATURES.

Chapter I.

THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH.

Luther's break with Roman ecclesiastical authority 1) was complete at Leipzig. The subsequent Papal Bull and Luther's burning of the same were a mutual, formal recognition of the fact. From Leipzig he goes home to Wittenberg and takes up his pen. During the period leading up to Worms, he reaches the height of his productivity. Treatises, tracts, and sermons literally pour forth from his tireless pen. Their quantity is only surpassed by their quality. More than one of the works of the period are masterpieces of literary style. Their political significance is second only to their theological

1) Köstlin, Luther's Theol. I, 184: "Und hier (Leipzig) vollzog sich nun vollends offen, ganz und für immer Luther's Bruch mit jenen kirchlichen Autoritäten, indem er nicht bloß die des Papes, sondern auch die der Konzilien verwarf."
importance. It is evident that Luther feels he has cast off the bonds of ecclesiastical authority; for he writes with an abandon which bespeaks a conscience that is free and an intellect that is unfettered. The same circumstances give a new color to his works. The destructive note, which necessarily predominated in his controversial writings, gives way to a constructive one. He has destroyed; now he will build. The transition, as it were, appears in his great work of June, 1520, on the Papacy at Rome. Here he not only exposes the Roman doctrine of the Church to a devastating attack; but on its very ruins he builds his own doctrine of the Church in its third and last stage.

"I welcome the opportunity," he says in the introduction, "to give the laity some explanation of the nature of the Church, and to contradict the words of these seductive masters" (meaning Friereias, Eck, Emser, etc., and their mouthpiece, Alveld). He refrains

2) Ibid. 286, L.24. Transl. by A. Steimle in The Works of Martin Luther. Holman, Phila. 1915. We follow the latter's translation throughout the work, also in the rendering of the term "Christenheit". The translator comments on this difficult word in a note vol. I. P. 339: "Luther carefully avoids the use of the word "Church" (Kirche). The reason will appear in the argument which follows. In many places, however, the word 'Christendom' would not render Luther's meaning, and there is, for the modern reader no such technical restriction to the term 'Church as obtained among Luther's readers." Where the
from naming them, "lest they achieve their purpose and
boastfully regard themselves capable of arguing with me
in the Scriptures".

With this introduction he proceeds to state the issue.
"This then is the question: Whether the papacy at Rome
possessing the actual power over all Christendom (as they
say), is of divine or human origin, and this being decided,

word Christenheit is rendered otherwise than as Christen-
dom it is so indicated in a foot-note in Holman, and we
follow his method. Kattenbusch (in his biographically
valuable work, Die Doppelgeschichtigkeit in Luther's
Kirchenbegriff, which has just appeared in Lutherana V,
Theol. Stud. und Krit. 1927-28, P. 285) finds in Luther's
"Sprachgebrauch", "dass sich seit 1518 bei ihm eine gewisse
Surdickhaltung gegenüber dem Worte 'Kirche' entwickele.
Im Lateinischen Bleibt er bei ecclesia. Im Deutschen
fängt er an, 'Christenheit' zu bevorzugen. Das steht in
einer gewissen Übereinstimmung damit, dass er die Doppel-
geschichtigkeit der Sache bemerkt." This is a general-
ization favorable to Kattenbusch's thesis; but it is
hardly substantiated by the evidence. The works which
concern the Church, notably the response to Emser, W.WII,
614, show no particular hesitation on Luther's part to employ
the word Kirche. He is, however, without a doubt correct
in the following assumption: "So wie ich sehe, ist es ihm
gelauf, besonders dann Christenheit zu sagen, wenn er das
Wesenhaftes an der Gemeinde Christi, also den Vollsumm der
communio sanctorum im Auge hat, Kirche, eher, wenn er die
Kultgemeinde vor sich sieht".
whether it is possible for Christians to say that all other Christians in the world are heretics and apostates, even if they agree with us in holding to the same baptism, Sacrament, Gospel, and all the articles of faith, but merely do not have their priests and bishops confirmed by Rome, or, as it is now, buy such confirmation with money and let themselves be mocked and made fools of like the Germans. Such are the Muscovites, Russians, Greeks, Bohemians, and many other great peoples in the world. The issue, it appears, resembles that debated at Leipzig. Nevertheless, we have already seen from Luther's introduction to the work that he aims beyond a mere rehearsing of old arguments against the Papacy. His purpose is to explain the true nature of the Church and to expose the false Roman doctrine of the Church. This he proceeds to do by presenting the two conceptions in contrast to one another. His opponent, Alveld, has given him the traditional Roman theory of the Church as the visible, outward, Roman Catholic Church with its head at Rome. In answering Alveld's attack Luther pre-

sents his doctrine of the nature of the Church, as the invisible, spiritual, communion of saints.

Before launching upon the main argument, Luther disposes of Alveld's first argument, the argument ad hominem. In the argument of abuse he yields the palm to Alveld with the biting retort: "Inasmuch as this Romanist himself writes that the Jews had overcome Christ on the cross with such arguments, I, too, must surrender, and acknowledge that as far as cursing and scolding, abuse and slander are concerned, the Romanist has surely beaten Dr. Luther. On this point he doubtless wins". Alveld's mistake was that he did not confine himself to this argument. For as regards the main issue he shows an astounding lack of grasp and understanding. "I had not believed it possible to meet such dense, massy, and stubborn error and ignorance in any man, much less in a saint of Leipzig. For the benefit, therefore, of this numskull, and of those led astray by him, I must first of all explain what is meant by these things - the

Church, and the One Head of the Church.

1. The communion of saints.

To Alveld the Church is the external, visible organization. To Luther it is the invisible, spiritual communion of believers. The unity of the Church to Alveld depends on outward membership in the Roman Catholic Church. To Luther it is a unity of faith in one Lord. While Alveld finds three uses for the word Church, Luther can find only one in Scripture. There the Church is called the assembly of all the believers in Christ upon earth, just as we pray in the creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, a communion of saints. It is this spiritual Church which alone is the object of faith. No one says: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, one Holy Roman Church, a Communion of Romans. This community consists of all those who live in true faith, hope and love; "so that the essence, life and nature of the Church is not a bodily assembly, but an assembly

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1) Christenheit.
3) As noted above, the terms, communion of saints, and communion of believers, or faithful, are used by Luther practically as synonyms. So Kattenbusch, 200.
4) Christenheit.
6) Ibid. 300, L. 34. H. I, 361.
of hearts in one faith, as St. Paul says, Ephesians 4, 'one baptism, one faith, one Lord'. Though far separated they constitute "an assembly in spirit because each one preaches, believes, hopes, loves, and lives like the other. So we sing of the Holy Ghost: 'Thou, who through divers tongues gatherst together the nations in the unity of the faith'. That means in reality a spiritual unity, because of which men are called a communion of saints. And this unity is of itself sufficient to make a Church, and without it no unity, be it of place, of time, of person, of work, or of whatever else, makes a Church.

This spiritual unity, which alone "makes a Church," is not eternal, as the Romans make out. Christ's words to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world", clearly makes the Church separate from all temporal communities and from anything external. "And this blind Romanist makes of it an external community, like any other. Christ says even more clearly, Luke 17,

1) Ibid. 293, L. 1. H. I, 349.
2) From Veni Sancte Spiritus.
3) Ibid. L. 5.
4) Christenheit.
5) Ibid. L. 13ff.: "Das ist yhe ein klarer spruch, damit die Christenheit wirt ausgetzogen von allen Weltlicken gemeynen, das sie nit leiplich sey."
'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo, here, or lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."  The source of this perverted Romanist conception is a failure to study and understand Scripture. "I am astounded", Luther exclaims, "that such strong clear words of Christ are treated as a farce by these Romanists. For by these words it is clear to every one that the kingdom of God (for so He calls His Church) is not at Rome, or here, or elsewhere. It is a nauseating lie, and Christ is made a liar when it is said that the Church is in Rome, or is bound to Rome - or even that the head and the authority are thereby divine right."}

The unity of the Church is completely misunderstood by the Romanists when they make it a matter of external membership. It is a cruel error, "when the unity of the Christian Church, separated by Christ Himself from all material and temporal cities and places, and transferred to spiritual realms, is included by these preachers of

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1) Ibid. L. 16.
2) Christenheit.
3) Ibid. L. 20.
4) Christlichen gemeyne.
dreams in material communities, which must of necessity be bound to localities and places. How is it possible, or whose reason can grasp it, that spiritual unity and material unity should be one and the same?" Rome is deceiving the people in teaching them that membership in the outward unity of the Roman Church places them in the spiritual unity of Christ's Church. For there are many "who are in the external assembly and unity, who yet by their sins exclude themselves from the inner spiritual unity. Therefore, whosoever maintains that an external assembly or an outward unity makes a Church, sets forth arbitrarily what is merely his own opinion". Alvaerd and the other Romanists make God and Scripture liars by explaining everything that is written concerning the Church as meaning the outward show of Roman power. "And yet he cannot deny that the large majority of these people, particularly in Rome itself, because of unbelief and evil lives, is not in the spiritual unity, i.e., the true Church. For if to be in the external Roman unity made men true Christians, there would be no sinners among them, neither would they need faith nor

1) Christenheit.
2) Christenheit.
3) Christenheit.
the grace of God to make them Christians; this external unity would be enough:"

Luther concludes from this that "just as being in the Roman unity does not make one a Christian, so being outside of that unity does not make one a heretic or unchristian." External fellowship with the Roman Church is not commanded by divine law, hence is not vital. "To be in this place or that, does not make a heretic; but to be without true faith makes a man a heretic." Faith is spiritual and invisible and mere outward membership in the Church does not reveal its presence. "To be a member of the Roman communion does not mean to be in true faith, and to be outside of it does not mean to be in unbelief; otherwise those within it would all be believers and truly saved, for no one article of faith is believed without all the other articles. Therefore all those who make the Christian communion a material and outward thing, like other communities, are in reality Jews (for the Jews likewise wait for their Messiah to establish an external kingdom at a certain definite place, namely, Jerusalem), and thus sacrifice

1) W. VI, 293, L. 35ff. (Hr. 330).  
2) Samlung.  
3) Evnickeit ooddar gemeyne.
the faith, which alone makes the kingdom of Christ a thing spiritual and of the heart."

Thus membership in the true Church is a matter not of the body, but of the soul, that is, of faith. "As the body is a figure or image of the soul, so also the bodily community is a figure of this Christian spiritual community. If the Church were a bodily assembly, you could tell by looking at the body whether any one were Christian, Turk or Jew; just as you can tell by the body whether a person is a man, woman or child, or whether he is white or black. Again, I can tell whether one is gathered in temporal assembly with others in Leipzig, Wittenberg, or elsewhere; but I cannot tell at all whether he is a believer or not. Whosoever would not go astray should, therefore, hold fast to this, that the Church is a spiritual assembly of souls in one faith, and that no one is reckoned a Christian for his body's sake; in order that he may know that the true, real, right, essential Church is a spiritual thing, and not anything external or outward, by whatever name it may be called". So the

2) Christenheit.
3) Christenheit.
4) Christenheit.
membership in the Church is a spiritual thing, and nothing will make a man a Christian and a member of the Christian Church except faith. "It is in this wise, and never in any other, that the Holy Scriptures speak of the Holy Church and of Christendom.

Contrary to this conception, which Scripture gives us, another conception of Christendom and Church has arisen. This gives the name Church to an assembly in a house or a parish, a bishopric, an archbishopric, or the papacy, in which assembly external rites are in use, such as chanting, reading, vestments. Violence is done to the words "spiritual" and "Church" by applying them to priests and bishops, not on account of their faith, but on account of their ordination, duties, garb, etc. These are external things, while these two words concern only faith, which works in the soul and makes right and true spiritual and Christians. This misuse of terms has perverted many souls and induced them to believe that such outward show is the spiritual and only true estate in Christendom or the Church.

2) Christenheit.
3) Geistliche.
Luther challenges the author and his friends to produce one letter of Scripture to prove this theory. The "Church" they speak of is not the Church of Scripture. Therefore he will call the two churches by different names. "The first, which is the natural, essential, real and true one, let us call a spiritual, inner Christendom. The other, which is man-made and external, let us call a bodily, external Christendom: not as if we would part them asunder, but just as when I speak of a man, and call him, according to the soul, a spiritual, according to the body, a physical, man; the Apostle is wont to speak of the inner and of the outward man. Thus also the Christian assembly, 1) according to the soul, is a communion of one accord in one faith, although according to the body it cannot be assembled at one place, and yet every group is assembled in its own place." 2) This Church according to the body is composed of popes, cardinals, priests, and all who in external things are taken to be whether they are Christians Christians at heart or not. Membership in this external body does not make them Christians, for it does

1) Gemeyns.
not mean that they have faith. "Nevertheless this communion is never without some who at the same time are true Christians, just as the body does not give the soul its life, and yet the soul lives in the body and, indeed, can live without the body". Members of the external community who have not faith are outside of the spiritual community and are dead in the sight of God.

Luther's terminology in the preceding paragraph is rather misleading. In an unguarded moment, he begins to speak of two Churches. This and similar statements in Luther have caused frequent and lengthy discussions among scholars on what Kattenbusch calls the Doppelschichtigkeit in Luther's doctrine of the Church. In its simplest form, it is the problem of the visible and the invisible Church. The notion has become not a little prevalent, that Luther held there were two churches, one visible, the other invisible. Even some scholars are not free from conveying this impression. Much confusion exists because this

1) W. VI, 297, L. 10. (He 355ff.
3) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte IV, 289, thus speaks carelessly when he says: "Also die Kirche ist einerseits eine äuszere sichtbare Gemeinschaft", though he does add: "Aber das ist nicht die rechte Kirche, die gelehnt wirt". So Holl occasionally appears to speak of two churches, which, as Kattenbusch says, "nicht der Klarheit bei der Vorführung des in der Kirchenidee bei Luther liegenden Problems dient." (Op. cit. 243 n. 1).
problem has not been discussed strictly within the sphere of the nature of the Church. If the question is approached from that angle, Luther's conception unfolds itself logically and clearly. It at once becomes impossible to hold that Luther ever conceived of the Church as being, in nature, a visible body. It is hardly necessary to add more evidence to the preceding pages, to show that the Church to Luther was, in its very nature, invisible. The evidence is abundant, and Luther's own words should testify for him. He speaks more specifically on the invisibility of the Church in two succeeding works. In a reply to Emser and Murner, he opposes to their visible Roman Church, the invisible, spiritual Church. The Church, he says, is not to be found and seen in a certain place. "All Christians in the world pray 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints'. If that article is true, then it follows that no one can see or feel the holy Christian Church, nor say Lo, here, Lo, there. For what one believes one does not see or find, as Saint Paul teaches in Hebr. 11. Further, what one

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sees or feels one does not believe”. 1) He contrasts the two, “the holy Church of Christ and the made Church of the Pope”. 2) “The holy Church of Christ says: ‘I believe in a holy Christian Church’. The mad Church of the Pope says: ‘I see a holy Christian Church’. The former says: ‘The Church is neither here nor there.’ The latter says: ‘The Church is here and there’. The former says: ‘The Church rests on no person’. The latter says: ‘The Church rests on the Pope’. The former says: ‘The Church is not built on a temporal foundation’. The latter says: ‘The Church is built on the Pope’. 3) Is it not clear, then, that the Church cannot be pointed at, but only believed? In spite of Murner and all the Papists the Church is and will continue to be a spiritual city, invisible in the Spirit, and built upon Christ Himself.

He answers Ambrosius Catharinus in the same tone. The Church of which Christ speaks in Matth. 16 is the one true spiritual Church, built on Christ, the rock, and not on the Pope or the Roman Church. “Just as the rock is without sin, invisible and spiritual; so must the Church, which is without sin, be invisible and spiritual

1) Ibid. 684, L.20ff.: “was man aber scheinet oder empfindet, das glaubt man nit”. 2) Ibid. 685, L.3: “Nu halit sie kegen ander, die heylige kirche Christi unnd die tolle kirchhe des Bapsts”. 3) Ibid. L.4.
to be grasped only through faith." So far from being the "rock", the Pope is the "servant of the devil and the Pope's Church a school of the devil", while Christ, the righteous one, is a king of righteousness and his Church the communion of saints. And when we confess "I believe in a holy Christian Church", we confess openly that the Church is not visible, for faith does not concern itself with what is visible.

From the above it seems clear that Luther knows only one Church, and that the invisible, spiritual Church, which is the communion of all believers, He does not admit the distinction between a visible and an invisible Church, nor does he permit the statement that the Church is visible. The whole problem seems to be much overworked by scholars, as some of them are frank to admit, and a further discussion of it would hardly be profitable. The question, however, naturally arises how we may know that the Church is

3) Ibid. 710, L. 4: "sicut dicimus: 'Credo Ecclesiam sanctam Catholicam', at fides est rerum non apparentium."
4) Köstlin, Luther's Lehre von der Kirche, 107: "er (Luther) macht den Unterschied zwischen einer sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Kirche nicht. Da er überhaupt den Ausdruck, die Kirche sei sichtbar, nicht zulasst...."
5) So Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 296, n. 3: "Der eine seitlang heftig geführte Streit, ob Luther den Ausdruck unsichtbare Kirche, kenne, war von vornherein müßig. Es ist richtig, dass das Wort unsichtbar (oder vielmehr, wie Luther sagt, unsichtlich) sich nicht allzuhäufig bei ihm findet. Aber Luther gebraucht ganz im gleichen Sinn das Wort geistlich. Und geistlich hat er die Kirche Christi an unzähligen Stellen genannt".

There is a considerable literature on the question. Fundamentally the conclusions of scholars do not differ greatly. Some of the discussions, however, stray from the realm of the nature of the Church and lose themselves inaa juggling of terms. Köstlin was one of the first to investigate this question in his Luther's Lehre von der Kirche. He lacked the material which later research has furnished, yet that seems almost to have been an advantage in this case. For instead of being confused by the contradictory speculations of scholars, he was forced to go straight to Luther's own works. This left him with a clear impression of the unity of Luther's doctrine of the Church. A. Ritschl followed with a treatise, Über die Begriffe: sichtbare und unsichtbare Kirche, Stud. u. Krit., 1859, Bd. 32, 189ff. Ritschl distinguishes between two uses of the adjective "visible". "Denn nicht blosz der 'äußerlichen Christenheit' kommt das Prädicat der Sichtbarkeit zu, sondern auch der von Luther so genannten geistlichen und innerlichen" (P. 199). Luther, he says used the word differently, according to whether he was speaking theologically or politically and apologetically. "Für dem Glauben und in theologischdogmatischen Sinne ist die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen an sich erscheinend durch Evangelium und Sacramente. Dagegen, wenn man, wie nach der römisch-katholischen Ansicht, die Kirche nur nach politisch-juristischen Merkmalen messen will, so bleibt das wahre Wesen der Kirche und der Werth ihrer wirklichen Merkmale verborgen" (P. 200). Thus to Ritschl Luther conceives, not of a visible and an invisible Church, but rather of the visibility and invisibility of the Church, the visibility of it always referring only to the perception by faith. Ernst Ritschl, Luther's Anschauung von der Unsichtbarkeit und Sichtbarkeit der Kirche, Stud. u. Krit., 1900, Bd. 73, P. 404ff., continues the discussion where Ritschl leaves off. He emphasizes the one Church in Luther, and the adjectives "visible" and "invisible" distinguish, he holds, between "Inhalt" and "Form". The importance of his work lies in the fact that he sees Luther's Church essentially as a matter
which concerns faith. Faith yearns for the communion of other believers and comes to its full consciousness only when it finds itself in this communion, which is the Church. Faith then practically eliminates the notion of a distinction between a visible and an invisible Church. Luther's distinction is not between an outward Church of Word and sacraments and the communion of saints, "sondern er unterscheidet von der Susseren, rechtlich organisierten Gemeinschaft, die nicht Kirche ist, die wahre in wort und Sakrament erscheinende Kirche. Von irgendwelcher 'Differenzierung' in Luther's Kirchenbegriff ist auch hier keine Rede" (Rietschl, p. 410). Pietsch sees more clearly than many of the others, that Luther is arguing with a Romanist and therefore holds up on the one hand the "Church" in the Roman sense, on the other hand the "Church" in the Scriptural sense. These are, one may say, two different churches. In fact, says Luther, the former is not a church at all. "Von dieser Kirchen, wo sie allein ist, stet mit ein buchstab in der heyligenn schrift." As Sohm puts it: "Luther unterscheidet also die Kirche im Sinn der Schrift von der Kirche im Sinn des Kirchenrechts. Die erste ist ihm die 'naturlich, eigentlich, rechte, wesentliche', 'wahrhaftige' und zugleich 'geistliche, innerliche', die andere eine 'gemachte und gusserliche', 'fleibliche' Christenheit. Diese andere, äussereiche, rechtlich verfasste Kirche kommt als solche nach Luther... in der Schrift gar nicht vor und trägt nur 'zur Verführung der Seele' den Namen Kirche. Die Kirche im Sinn des Kirchenrechts ist als solche ('wo sie allein ist') vielmehr keine Kirche, sie stellt nicht die Kirche Christi dar". - Kirchenrecht I, 470, anm. 23. The clearest and probably most correct explanation of the difficulty is given by Pieper, Dogmatik, III, 471: Neuer Lutheraner reden auch von zwei Seiten der Kirche, einer 'sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Seite'. Wort und Sakrament sollen die sichtbare Seite der Kirche sein. Aber auf dieser Weise werden die Kennzeichen der Kirche (notae ecclesiae) mit der Kirche selbst verwechselt. Zwischen der Kirche und den Gnadenmitteln ist zwar ein notwendiger Zusammengang. Die Kirche ist durch die Gnadenmittel. Aber der Gnadenmittel sind deshalb ebensowenig die Kirche selbst oder ein Teil der Kirche als z. B. Luft und Speise der Mensch selbst oder ein Teil des Menschen sind, obwohl der Mensche ohne Luft und Speise nicht leben kann. Notae ecclesiae hingegen werden Wort und Sakrament mit Recht genannt. Wie der Weisen dort zu finden ist, wo er gesetzt wird, so ist die Kirche dort und nur dort zu finden, wo Gottes Wort verkündigt wird. Gottes Wort heiszt der Same des
present.

2. **Notae Ecclesiae. - Word and sacraments.**

We have seen that the Church is not visible to the eye, but only perceptible through faith. In other words, only a believer can know that the Church is present. But even he must have some outward signs by which to recognize this presence. These signs, says Luther, are the Word and the sacraments. Baptism, the bread, and above all, the Gospel; "these three are the symbols, watch-words, and marks of Christians." Wherever these are found, in whatever place, among whatever people there we can be certain that the Church is. For in

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Reiches Gottes und hat die Verheisung das es Frucht bringen soll. Durch die notae ecclesiae wird aber die Kirche selbst, die Gemeinde der Gläubigen, nicht sichtbar, weil der konstitutive Faktor, der Glaube, unsichtbar bleibt." Bossuet seems rather to beg the question when he says, "Pour montrer que l'Eglise dont il est parlé dans le Symbole devait être toujours visible, j'ai dit que 'tous les Chrétiens entendaient par le nom d'Eglise une société qui fait profession de croire la doctrine de Jésus Christ, et de se gouverner par sa parole; d'où il s'ensuit qu'elle est visible', et liée par une communion sensible et externe." - *Reflections sur un Écrit de M. Claude.* Ouvres Complètes de Bossuet, Bar-le-Duc, 1862, V, 374-375. 1) *Ambros. Cathar.* W. VII, 720, L. 32ff.: "Ubi enim Baptisma et panem et Evangelium esse videris, quocunque loco, quibuscumque personis, ibi Ecclesiam esse non dubites."
these signs it is the will of Christ that we shall be one, as we read in Eph. 4, "one faith, one baptism, one lord". Where the same Gospel is, there is the same faith, the same hope, the same love, the same spirit, and all truth. 1) Now we understand better the "unity of spirit" which Luther emphasized so strongly. This is the unity of spirit which Paul bids us preserve so jealously, which is not a unity of place, of person, of property, or of bodies. 2) That is what the Romanists make of it. Therefore Luther hammers away at the same arguments in practically the same words to both Alveld and Ambrosius Catharinus. To Alveld he says, "Where baptism and the Gospel are, no one may doubt that there are saints, even if it be only babes in their cradles. But neither Rome nor the papal power is a mark of the Church, for that power cannot make Christians, as baptism and the Gospel do; and therefore it does not belong to the true Church and is but a human ordinance". 3) This then is the criterion for a true mark of the Church:

1) Ibid. L. 38.
2) Ibid. 721, L. 3.
that it is life-giving, it "makes Christians". Yea, "the Church owes its life to the Word of promise through faith, and is nourished and preserved by this same word. That is to say, the promises of God make the Church, not the Church the promise of God." 1)

Against the "visible", sacramental Roman Church, Luther emphasizes that the sacraments are of far less importance in the Church than the Word. Where the Word is not found, (as we see in the Synagog of Papiats and Thomists), there we can be sure "that the Church is not", even though they baptize and partake from the altar. But there we may know Babylon is present. For the Gospel is above bread and baptism, the "most certain and noble symbol of the Church, since through the Gospel alone it is conceived, formed, kept alive, born, brought up, nourished, clothed, adorned, made strong, armed, preserved, in short, the whole life and substance of the Church is in the word of God, as Christ says, 'In every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'". 2)

This Word, by which the presence of the Church may

be known, is not the written, but the spoken Word. "I speak" he says, "not concerning the written but spoken Gospel. Not concerning any old harangue, which is declaimed from a platform in temples, but concerning the unadulterated and genuine word, which teaches the true faith of Christ, not the deformed Thomist faith, which has become silent throughout the whole world, extinguished and suffocated by the Pope and the Papists". Christ demanded nothing from His Apostles with so much importunity as that they should preach the Gospel. He bade Peter, in the person of all pastors, feed his sheep, that is, teach the Gospel "viva voce". Therefore he who teaches the Gospel, he is Pope, he is the successor of Peter. He who does not, is a Judas, a traitor to Christ. For it is only by the publicly preached Gospel that it may be known, where the Church and the mystery of the kingdom of heaven are.

1) Ibid. L. 15: "Non de Evangelio scripto sed vocali loquor, Nec de quavis contione, quae in templis de suggestu declamatur, sed de germano et genuine verbo, quod fidem Christi veram, non informem et Thomisticam doceat."
2) Ibid. L. 18.
3) Ibid. L. 32.
4) Ibid. 722, L. 3.
Thus with all the emphasis he places on these outward signs of the Church, Luther never for a moment means that they are to make the Church visible. They are only to make it perceptible to faith, that the believer may know where to find his own. For even as the protruding ends of the staves led God's people to believe that the ark was present in the holy of holies (1 King. 3, 8), thus "no one sees the Church, but only believes through the sign of the word, which can only resound in the Church through the holy spirit". Therefore the Church in Ps. 9 is called Almuth, hidden, and an article of faith confessing that we believe in the holy Catholic Church, confesses that the same is nowhere and never visible. It separates it from every place and person, as Paul says: "In Christ Jesus is neither male nor female Barbarian nor Greek ... But ye are all one in Christ Jesus".

Though Luther reacted against Roman sacramentalism, and though he gave the Word the first place, nevertheless he by no means put the sacraments on the shelf. This is not the place to discuss his doctrine of the sacraments. But they did have a bearing on his doct-

1) Ibid. L, 4.
rine of the Church. Of particular importance is the sacrament of the altar, or the **panis**, as he often calls it. Here the weak believer could cling to the external signs and feel himself transported into perfect communion with Christ and His body, the Church. His burdens become their burdens. And as we saw, if his sins terrify him, he shall let himself be carried to the Lord's Table in the arms of the Mother Church, as the paralytic on his bed, and the Lord will receive him in the faith of his fellow-believers. For the faith of the Church will not permit him to perish any more than an infant which is brought to baptism and saved through the faith of others.

The greatness of this sacrament for the believer is brought out most beautifully in Luther's treatise or sermon on the sacrament and the brotherhoods. Luther's own words need no further comment. "The significance or purpose of this sacrament is the fellowship of saints, whence it derives its common name **synaxis** or **communio**, that is, fellowship; and **communicae**

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2) Ibid. L. 25.
means to take part in this fellowship, or as we say, to go to the sacrament, because Christ and all saints are one spiritual body, just as the inhabitants of a city are one community and body, each citizen being a member of the other and a member of the entire city. All the saints, therefore, are members of Christ and of the Church, which is a spiritual and eternal city of God, and whoever is taken into this city is said to be received into the communion of saints, and to be incorporated into Christ's spiritual body and made a member of Him... To receive the bread and wine of this sacrament, then is nothing else than to receive a sure sign of this fellowship and incorporation with Christ and all saints."

This fellowship entails both privileges and obligations. Who can estimate the blessings to be found there? The "fellowship is of such a nature that all the spiritual possessions of Christ and His saints are imparted and communicated to him who receives this sacrament; again, all his sufferings and sins are communicated to them, and thus love engenders love and

unites all".  

How sorely the struggling believer needs this blessed fellowship! For it is the unfortunate man who receives the comfort of the sacrament. "It is given only to those who need strength and comfort, who have timid hearts and terrified consciences, and who are assailed by sin, or have even fallen into sin. What could it do for untroubled and falsely secure spirits, which neither need nor desire it? For the Mother of God says, 'He filleth only the hungry, and comforteth them that are distressed'. To such a one the "immeasurable grace and mercy of God are given in this sacrament". For "if anyone be in despair, if he be distressed by his sinful conscience or terrified by death, or have any other burden on his heart, and desire to be rid of them all, let him go joyfully to the sacrament of the altar and lay down his grief in the midst of the congregation and seek help from the entire company of the spiritual body." No trouble is too great, no burden too heavy to ask the

1) Ibid. L. 27. H. II, 11.
communion of believers to share it with you. "Though I am a sinner and have fallen, though this or that misfortune has befallen me, I will go to the sacrament to receive a sign from God that I have on my side Christ's righteousness, life and sufferings, with all holy angels and all the blessed in heaven, and all pious men on earth." Greatest of all is the comfort of this fellowship in our final hour. "If I die, I am not alone in death; if I suffer, they suffer with me. I have shared all my misfortune with Christ and the saints, since I have a sure sign of their love toward me".

The fellowship of believers, which is the Church, can only be complete, however, if everyone realizes his obligations toward the others. As Luther says, "there are those ... who would share the benefits but not the cost", who would gladly accept the assistance of all the saints, but who, "because they fear the world, are unwilling in their turn to contribute to this fellowship, to help the poor, to endure sins, to care for the sick," etc. "No, we on our part must make others' evil our own, if we desire Christ and His saints to make our evil their own." We must be "willing to share all the burdens and misfortunes of Christ and His saints, their sorrow and joy." "Then will the fellowship be

2) Ibid. 747, L. 26ff. H. II, 17.
3)
complete and justice be done to the sacrament".

That such speech was not a mere abstract theory to Luther appears from the fact that he wrote in the same terms to a dying man. To his friend the Elector he brought the comfort of fellowship with Christ and all the saints. "This is the communion of saints in which we glory. And who will not take pride in it, even in the greatest distress, who believes...that the blessings of all the saints are his blessings, and that his trouble is theirs?" Is it not good to be here, where, if one member suffer, all the members suffer, if one rejoice, all rejoice? "Thus while I suffer, I no longer suffer alone, Christ and all the Christians suffer with me. The faith of the Church succors my agitation, their purity suffers the temptation of my wantonness, their poorness is my gain.... Such a thing is the communion of saints and the Church of Christ."

Whoever does not believe this, he says, is an infidel and denies Christ and the Church. We confess:

"I believe in the holy ghost, the holy Catholic Church".

2) Tessaradectas Consolatoria pro laborantibus et oneratis. 1520. W.VI, 99. Fredrich was thought to be dying shortly after his return from the election of the Emperor, but he recovered.
3) Ibid. 131, L. 7-29.
and "what is to believe in the holy Church except to believe in the communion of saints. But where do the saints commune? Obviously with good and wicked; all things are of all, just as the sacrament of the altar is fashioned in bread and wine, there, we are told by the Apostle, is the one body there the one loaf, there the one cup. For who offends a part of the body, without offending the whole body? What does the smallest toe suffer, which the whole body does not suffer? What benefit is conferred on the feet, in which the whole body does not rejoice? And we are one body. Whatever another suffers, I suffer and bear; whatever good comes to him, comes to me. Thus Christ says, What is done unto the least of His, is done unto Him. Who, in receiving the smallest particle of the bread of the altar, is not said to have received the Bread?" Wherefore, if we grieve, suffer, and die, we do it not alone; but Christ and the Church grieve, suffer and die with us. We fear nothing henceforth, for "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about the people from henceforth even for ever"; 1)

1) Ibid. 131; L. 30-132, L. 24.
In conclusion we do well to remind ourselves again that in spite of his emphasis on these outward signs of the Church, Luther will not have them understood as making the Church visible or perceptible to the senses. In fact this fellowship must of necessity be invisible to be effective. In Luther's own words, "it is profitable and necessary that the love and fellowship of Christ and all saints be hidden, invisible and spiritual, and that only a bodily sign of it be given us. For were this love fellowship and help known to all, like the temporal fellowship of men, we should not be strengthened nor trained thereby to put our trust in the invisible and eternal things, or to desire them, but should much rather be trained to put our trust only in the temporal, visible things and to become so accustomed to them as to be unwilling to let them go and to follow God onward; we should thus be prevented from ever coming to Him, if we followed God only so far as visible and tangible things led us. For every-
thing of time and sense must fall away, and we must learn to do without them, if we are to come to God"
Chapter II.

THE UNIVERSAL PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

A. The Universal Priesthood and the Ministry.

I. Origin and development of the doctrine in Luther.

One naturally inquires what form this invisible communion of saints takes, when it goes into action, as it were. Can it form a visible organization aside from that mixed body which we call Church, but which is composed of non-believers as well as believers? Up to the Diet of Worms, Luther makes no attempt to answer this trying question. Hence it must be left unsettled. Even were we to go beyond Worms we would search long for a definite answer. Indeed Luther never laid down any rule on the matter, nor even attempted to do so. As one author puts it, owing to the very nature of the case no answer could be given, simply because of Luther's "innerlich" conception of the nature of the Church and the working of the spirit therein. 1) But as the notes or signs of the Church are external and visible, some form of outward organization is necessary to administer these means of grace, on which depends the very life of the Church. To discuss the form of this organization would take us far beyond Worms.
Neither is it fundamental to a discussion of the doctrine of the Church. What may be called fundamental is the relation between laity and priesthood. We find ourselves entering the realm of the outward Church. The bridge which connects us here with the invisible communion of saints is the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers.

The whole matter relates itself clearly to Luther's fundamental doctrine of justification by faith. In the communion of saints, the individual, justified by faith, has direct approach to God through Christ. Luther carries this power over to the congregation. For Christ has promised that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them; and where two agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, all shall be done that they ask. "How much more shall they obtain what they ask, when a whole city comes together.

1) Köstlin, Luther's Lehre von der Kirche, 78: "Eine aussere Regel, nach her im voraus die einzelnen Fälle sich erledigen liessen, hat Luther nie gegeben oder zu geben versucht; sich konnte überhaupt der Natur der Sache nach so nicht gegeben werden, gerade wegen seiner innerlichen Auffassung vom Wesen der Kirche und vom Winken des Geistes in derselben."

1) The term "Priesthood" is not used with reference to the Roman Catholic priesthood, but with reference to the office in general.
to praise God and to pray with one accord", or an assembly where men provoke, move and inflame one another to press close to God, and thereby attain without all doubt what they desire".

This multitude, or congregation, can approach God directly through Christ, and hence they have no need of a priest as mediator. For all the Christians therein are priests and their only mediator is Christ, who "is our priest and minister in heaven before God". This development appears most clearly in the Treatise on Christian Liberty. This priesthood of Christ was typified in the Old Testament by the firstborn, who in the birth-right received the honor of priesthood and kingship. Such was Christ, "the true and only First-born of God the Father and of the Virgin Mary, and true King and Priest not after the fashion of the flesh and of the world".

Holman I, 313.
2) Ibid. L. 14.
As His Kingship is not outward, neither "does His priesthood consist in the outward splendor of robes and postures, like that human priesthood of Aaron and of our present day Church; but it consists in spiritual things, through which He, by an unseen service intercedes for us in heaven before God, there offers Himself as a sacrifice and does all things a priest should do, as Paul in the Epistle to the Hebrews describes him under the type of Melchizedek. Nor does He only pray and intercede for us, but within our soul He teaches us through the living teaching of His Spirit, thus performing the two real functions of a priest of which the prayers and the preaching of human priests are visible types". 1)

This priesthood of Christ is imparted to all believers. "Just as Christ by his birthright obtained these two prerogatives, so He imparts them to and shares them with everyone who believes on him according

to the law of the aforesaid marriage, by which the wife owns whatever belongs to the husband. Hence we are all priests and kings in Christ, as many as believe on Christ. 1) Luther then takes up the word of Peter, "Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood and priestly kingdom, that ye should show forth the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light". (1 Peter, 2, 9). This passage in particular is the scriptural basis on which Luther builds his doctrine of the universal priesthood.

Having discussed the kingship of every believer, Luther explains the priesthood of the Christian. "Not only are we the greatest of kings, we are also priests because as priests we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another the things of God". 2) Here we see at a glance the meaning of Luther's famous introductory propositions, that "a Christian man is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none."

1) Ibid. L. 35.
and "a Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all". 1) He is perfectly "free" because as priest he is worthy and free to appear before God personally, with no other mediator than Christ. He is the servant of all, because he owes his fellow-believers his prayers and intercessions before God, as well as all manner of spiritual and temporal aid. "Who then can comprehend the riches and the glory of the Christian life? It can do all things, and has all things, and lacks nothing; it is lord over sin, death and hell, and yet at the same time it serves, ministers to and benefits all men". 2)

Only the believer can know this glorious communion with Christ and his fellow-believers. "This Christ has obtained for us, if we believe on Him, that we are not only His brethren, co-heirs, and fellow-kings with Him, who may boldly come into the presence of God in the spirit of faith and cry,

1) Ibid. 49, II. 22; "Christianus homo omnium dominus est liberrimus nulli subjectus. Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus, omnibus subjectus." H II, 312.
2) Ibid. 66, I. 29. H II, 338-339
'Abba, Father!' pray for one another and do all things which we see done and prefigured in the outward and visible works of priests."  

The unbeliever, even though he be a member of the outward Church, is outside of this priesthood. He is "not served by anything, nor does anything work for good to him, but he himself is a servant of all, and all things become evils to him, because he wickedly uses them to his own profit and not to the glory of God. And so he is no priest, but a profane man, whose prayer becomes sin and never comes into the presence of God, because God does not hear sinners. Who then can comprehend the lofty dignity of the Christian? Through his kingly power he rules over all things, death, life and sin, and through his priestly glory is all powerful with God, because God does the things which he asks and desires. To this glory a man attains surely not by any works of his, but by faith alone."

This last sentence, with the above paragraphs, shows the logic and continuity of Luther's doctrinal

2) Ibid. 57, L, 32. H. II, 325.
development. His three great doctrines form a complete and harmonious structure. Justification by faith serves as the indispensible foundation. Upon it rises the communion of saints, and above the two is constructed the top story, the universal priesthood of believers. Take away the foundation and the whole structure crumbles. Remove the first floor and the upper story falls with it.


Luther anticipates the question which we would ask at this point. "You will ask," he says, "If all who are in the Church are priests, how do those whom we now call priests differ from laymen?" I answer, "Injustice is done in those words, priest, cleric, spiritual, ecclesiastic, when they are transferred from all other Christians to those few who are now by a mischievous usage called ecclesiastics. For holy Scripture makes no distinction between them, except that it gives the name,

1) Holl. Gesammelte Aufsätze, 318, sees a close connection between Luther's doctrines of the universal priesthood and justification by faith. In fact Luther deliberately built up the former upon the latter. "Er hat sich erst dann zu ihm (univ. priesthood) bekannt, als ihm der Zusammenhang mit seiner Rechtfertigungslehre völlig klar geworden war". So Hausrath, Luther's Leben, I, 336:
ministers, servants, stewards, to those who are now proudly called popes, bishops, and lords, and who should by the ministry of the Word serve others and teach them the faith of Christ and the liberty of believers. For, although we are all equally priests, yet we cannot all publicly minister and teach, nor ought we if we should.

Thus Paul writes in 1 Cor. 4, 'Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God'.

The idea being established that all believers in the world or in a congregation are priests, the consequence for the priesthood become clear. Every believer in the congregation, as a priest, has the same power. And note well, that this priesthood carries with it the right and power to administer the word and sacraments.

"Der neue Gedanke war aber doch nur die Konsequenz seines obersten Prinzips, der Rechtfertigung aus dem Glauben". Köhler, Martin Luther und die deutsche Reformation, 50, sees the doctrine as a "soziologische Folgerung", which Luther drew from his doctrine of the communion of saints.

2) Luther draws this consequence in fact throughout this discussion, though he only expresses himself definitely at Wartburg in his Widerspruch seines Irrthums, erzwungen durch den allergelehrtsten Priester
No theological proof is necessary to show, as Luther says, that all cannot publicly minister, and teach. And though each has the power, yet no one should set himself up as preacher for the others. Since all have the same power, the right and proper thing is for them to elect one from their number to administer the means of grace for them and on their behalf. Holding this power from the congregation, then he is subject to them, and holds the office only at their pleasure. It is this call that makes the person a priest, not any sacrament of ordination; "just as though ten brothers, all king's sons and equal heirs, were to choose one of themselves to rule the inheritance for them all, - they would all be kings and equal in power, though one of them would be charged with the duty of ruling". There is no such thing as a "spiritual estate" of these priests, bishops, and popes as opposed to the temporal estate of princes, lords, and farmers. All Christians are of the spiritual estate, and the difference is only one of function. "We are all one body, yet every member has its own work,

Gottes, Herrn H. Emser, Erl. 27, 309; "Denn man weisz wohl, was Priesterschaft fur Gewalt mit sich bringt, namlich, predigen, Mess handeln Sacrament handeln, und des Himmels Schlussel brauchen".

whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians; for baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us 'spiritual' and a Christian people.  

Thus the elevation of the priests and prelates into a separate "Estate," as the Romanists have done, has no Scriptural foundation. Neither does the ecclesiastical ordination bestow any peculiar properties on the priest. "That a pope or a bishop anoints, confers tonsures, ordains, consecrates, or prescribes dress unlike that of the laity, - this may make hypocrites and graven images, but it never makes a Christian or 'spiritual' man". Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood, as St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2. 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom', and the book of Revelation says, 'Thou hast made us by thy blood to be priests and kings'. For if we had no higher consecration than pope or bishop gives, the consecration by pope or bishop would never make a priest, nor might anyone either say mass or preach a sermon or give absolution". Luther then puts the act of ordination on its only Scriptural

"Therefore", he continues, "when the bishop consecrates it is the same thing as if he, in the place and stead of the whole congregation, all of whom have like power, were to take one out of their number and charge him to use this power for the others". 1)

To show the sufficiency of the congregational call and the superfluity of ecclesiastical ordination Luther gives us one of his happy illustrations, "to make it still clearer", as he puts it. "If a little group of pious Christian laymen were taken captive and set down in a wilderness and had among them no priest consecrated by a bishop and if there in the wilderness they were to agree in choosing one of themselves, married or unmarried, and were to charge him with the office of baptizing, saying mass, absolving and preaching, such a man would be as truly a priest as though all bishops and popes had consecrated him. 2) That is why in cases of necessity anyone can baptize and give absolution, which would be impossible unless we were all priests. This great grace and power of baptism and of the Christian Estate they have well-nigh destroyed and caused us to forget through the canon law. 3)

1) Ibid. I, 19.
2) Thus in one remarkable sentence Luther bids farewell to ordination, as a sacrament, Apostolic succession, and celibacy of the clergy.
3) Ibid. I, 34.
Luther appeals to the early Church to prove his theory and the error of the Roman method. "It was in the manner aforesaid that Christians in olden days chose from their number bishops and priests, who were afterwards confirmed by other bishops, without all the show which now obtains. It was thus that St. Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian became bishops."

Here was a challenge to the Roman system that could not be left unanswered. It was Luther's old bugbear, Emser, who again dogged his trail. His defence we need consider no further than to quote the title: Wider das völchristliche buch Martini Lutera Augustinier's, an den Tewtschen Adel auszgangen, Vorlegung Hieronymi Emser Annemayne Hocklobliche Teutsche Nation. If the contents were mainly personalities, the title itself must have been sufficient to provoke a response from the Reformer. Emser's coat of arms, attached, bore the rather laughable inscription: "Hut Dich der book stoszt Dich". Luther could not avoid making capital of this and pens a reply under an equally formidable title: Auf das uber-christliche übergästliche und übekünstliche Buch Books Emser's zu

1) Ibid. 408, 1. 4.
2) W. VII, 260 refers to the work and to the complete text in Luther und Emser. Ihre Streitschriften a.d. J. 1521, etc. von Enders, Ed. 1, Halle 1889.
Leipziger Antwort. This exceedingly polemical work, which appeared in March, 1521, sets the two doctrines side by side, the Roman theory of a "spiritual estate" with ecclesiastical ordination and its "character indelebilis" and Luther's doctrine of the universal priesthood. We follow Luther's argument to grasp the continuity of his theory, at the risk of quoting a number of arguments he has already used in previous works.

The debate centres about 1 Peter 2, 9. Emser accuses Luther of following the letter and not the spirit of Scripture. Luther repeats that all Christians are spiritual and priests, then he launches on an exposition of the passage of Peter, "Ye are a royal priesthood, and a priestly kingdom", as he quotes it. Peter spoke these words to all Christians, as the words plainly show, whether you interpret them according to the letter or according to the spirit. And he is speaking not of an ordained priesthood, but of an inward spiritual priesthood, which comprises all Christians. Emser and the

1) Erl. 27, 221. W.VII, 614.
2) Erl. 27, 230: "dass alle Christen geistlich und priester sein".
3) Ibid. 231: "Ihr seid ein kuniglich Priester-thum, und ein priesterlich Kunigreich".
4) Ibid: "St. Peter redet von der innerlichen, geistlichen Priesterschaft, die alle Christen haben, und nit von der geweihten Priesterschaft."
Roman Church dream of a twofold priesthood, one spiritual
the other ecclesiastical. In the entire New Testament
there is only one Church, and that a spiritual Church.
Likewise there is therein only one priesthood, and that
is not an ecclesiastical, but a spiritual priesthood.

Scripture defines for Luther the true relation
between lay and priest. The Bible makes all Christians
priests. But the ecclesiastical priesthood, as dis­tin­
guished from the laity, Scripture entitles ministerium,
servitus, dispensatio, Episcopatus, presbyterium. In no
place is it called sacerdotium or spiritualia. This is
proved by many passages. St. Paul calls Timothy a
servant of God, while in 2 Cor. 11, 23, he speaks of
the "ministers of Christ". Likewise in 1 Cor. 4, 1, he
says, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of
Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God". Christ
has much to say concerning the servant set to rule over
the master's household (Matth. 24, 45-47).

1) Ibid. 232: "die er nennet ecclesiasticum".
2) Ibid. 232-233: "dasz die heilige Schrift, sonderlich
im neuen Testament, ... nit mehr denn von einem geistlichen
Priesterthum schreibt.
3) Ibid. 233: "Knecht Gottis".
Luther finds that the Scriptural terms are misunderstood by the Romanists. So he proceeds to elucidate the vocabulary. The word, priest, comes from the Greek presbyteros, which in Latin is translated senior, meaning the eldest. In the early Church the rule was given into the hands of the eldest, even as in Latin the governing body of a city was called a senatus. Consequently, the name, priest, is a designation of age, not of estate; and it makes a man neither a pope nor a spiritual man. Peter bids his fellow-elders feed the flock of Christ, and bids the younger be subservient to the elder (1 Pet. 5, 1-5).

The word, bishop, is the Greek, episcopus, Latin speculator, meaning watchman. As the watchman is to protect the town from fire and enemy, so every minister or bishop shall be a watchman, seeing to it among his people the Gospel and faith in Christ shall flourish against enemies, devils, and heretics. So St. Paul (Act. 20, 28) spoke to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, to take heed to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, to feed the Church of God. All this has nothing to do with the hierarchical system.

1) Ibid: "also ist Priester ein Name des Alters und nit des Stands, macht nit Pfaffen oder geistlichen Mann".
with its "spiritual estate" of bishops, patrons, priests, monks, etc. In Scripture bishop and priest are one and the same thing. The bishop of the Roman Church is unknown to God and Scripture and is a man-made invention. Through time this tradition has come to be regarded as a Scriptural institution.

As in the early Church, so now in every Christian community, since all alike are spiritual priests, one shall be chosen, the eldest or the most learned and pious, to be their minister, steward, trustee, and guardian of the Gospel and the sacraments. He has authority rightly acquired, even as the mayor of a city is elected by the other citizens. If plates, ordination, anointing, and dress make the priest and the bishop, then neither Christ nor the Apostles were priests or bishops. Ordination, then, does not make priests; it makes priest-slaves. And the plate, Mass, sermon, etc., do not bespeak a priest, but a minister and steward of the common priesthood. We are all priests, even without episcopal

1) Ibid, 234: "Dasz Prieater und Bischof ein Ding ist in der Schrift".
2) Ibid: "Es ist von Menschegesetzen und Ordnung also gemacht".
3) Ibid 235: "Wenn Platten, weihe, salben, Kleider, Pfaffen und Bischof macht, so ware Christus und die Apostoln nie Pfaffen noch Bischof gewesen".
4) Ibid. 237: "Paffenknechte".
5) Ibid: "einen Biener und Amptmann der gemeinen Priester- schaft".
ordination. Through ordination we are made servants, ministers, and stewards of the other priests.

The treatise on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church gives the coup de grace to the "spiritual estate", ordination, and the character indelebilis of the Roman priesthood. Neither Christ nor Scripture knows anything of a sacrament of ordination. There is no promise of grace attached to it in the New Testament, no, it is not even mentioned there. And as for the Church, it can give no promises of grace. Therefore it cannot institute a sacrament. And even if it could, it would not follow that ordination is a sacrament. The Romanists make a feeble attempt to base the doctrine on Scripture, particularly on the words of Christ, "do this in remembrance of me". Here, they say Christ ordained the Apostles to priesthood, which is an impossible interpretation, without any support among the ancient Fathers. By this vile theory, "they have set up a nursery of implacable discord, whereby clerics and

1) Ibid. "Wir alle mit dem ganzen Haufen sein Priester, ohn des Bischofs Weihe; aber durch das Weihe werden wir der andern Priester Knecht, Diener und Amtleute".
4) Ibid. 563m I. 10. H. 277.
laymen should be separated from each other farther than heaven from earth, to the incredible injury of the grace of baptism and the confusion of our fellowship in the Gospel. Here indeed are the roots of that detestable tyranny of the clergy over the laity; trusting in the external anointing by which their hands are consecrated, in the tonsure and in the vestments, they not only exalt themselves above lay Christians, who are only anointed with the Holy Spirit, but regard them almost as dogs and unworthy to be included with them in the Church. And to show how basic Luther regards this error, he adds, "in short, the sacrament of ordination has been and is a most approved device for the establishing of all the horrible things that have been wrought in the Church. Here Christian brotherhood has perished, here shepherds have been turned into wolves, servants into tyrants, 1) churchmen into worse than worldlings".

If the Romanists would examine 1 Pet. 2,9, they would realize that all who are baptized are Priests, and that therefore their priests have no right to lord it over

1) Ibid 563, § 27 o  H II, 278-279
2) Ibid 564, 1 6: "nos omnes esse aequaliter sacerdotes, quotquot baptisati sumus ".

| 1) Ibid 563, § 27 o  H II, 278-279 |
| 2) Ibid 564, 1 6: "nos omnes esse aequaliter sacerdotes, quotquot baptisati sumus ". |
the laity. For these priests "are ministers chosen from among us, who do all that they do in our name". The priesthood, according to St. Paul (1 Cor. 4,1), is nothing but a ministry. That ministry is the sole difference between a priest and a layman. And as for the character indelebilis that "has long since become a laughing stock".

No stroke of Luther's wound greater havoc to the hierarchical system than his doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. It did more than discredit ordination and the distinction between clergy and laity. It had far greater possibilities, and Luther was quick to draw the consequences of the doctrine. It was the final proof of the right of individual judgment in spiritual things and individual interpretation of Scripture. For, as he says in the Address to the Nobility, "if we are all priests, and all have one faith, one Gospel, one sacrament, why should we not also have the power to test and judge what is correct or incorrect in matters of faith?" Now he sees the real meaning of St. Paul's words (1 Cor. 2, 15), "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man", and (2 Cor. 4, 13) "We have all the same spirit of faith". "Why then, should not we perceive

2) Ibid. 567, L.22: "Nam commentum illud Caracteris indelebilis iam olim irrisum est."
what squares with faith and what does not, as well as does an unbelieving pope? All these and many other texts should make us bold and free, and we should not allow the Spirit of liberty, as Paul calls Him, to be frightened off by the fabrications of the popes, but we ought to go boldly forward to test all that they do or leave undone, according to our interpretation of the Scriptures, which rests on faith, and compel them to follow not their own interpretation, but the one that is better. Abraham had to listen to Sarah, who was indeed subject to him in all things. Balaam's ass was wiser than the prophet himself. If God spoke by an ass against a prophet, he should now surely be able to speak by a righteous man to a pope! "Therefore", he concludes, "it behoves every Christian to espouse the cause of faith, to understand and defend it, and to rebuke all errors"

Thus it all comes back to faith. For faith is "truly able to do all things in heaven, earth, hell and purgatory". Faith alone "is the true priestly..."

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1) An den Adel, W.VI, 412, L.20. H.II, 75-76
H I, 318
office and permits no one else to take its place. Therefore all Christians are priests; the men, priests, the women, priestesses, be they young or old, masters or servants, mistresses or maids, learned or unlearned. Here there is no difference unless faith be unequal. "For the faith which rests on the promise of Christ never deceives nor fails."

B. The Universal Priesthood and the relation between the temporal and spiritual powers, with special reference to the Address to the Christian Nobility.

1. The issue.

The doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers became basic in Luther's theology, not only for his theory of the nature of the Church and the Ministry, but for his conception of the relation between Church and State. Some writers claim that the question of Church and State was unknown in Luther's time. They say it was a question, not of the relation between two organizations, State and Church, but of the relation between two powers, the spiritual and the temporal, both within the same larger organism, which is called Christendom, or the corpus christianum. This

1) Sohm, Kirchenrecht, 548: "Die Begriffe Staat und Kirche im heutigen Sinne sind noch unbekannt. Der grundlegende Begriff ist der der Christenheit. In der Christenheit sind zwei Schwerte (zwei Regimenter) von Gott gesetzt: das geistliche und das weltliche. Beide haben die Aufgabe, die Christenheit zu regieren, aber mit verschiedenen Zielen und edarum mit verschiedener Gewalt, das eine mit der geistlichen, das andere mit der weltlichen Gewalt. Das Wesen dieser beiden Schwerte und damit ihr gegenseitiges Gewaltverhältnis gilt es zu bestimmen. Das hat Luther getan. Seine...Lehre von der Trennung der zwei Regimenter stellt lediglich die reformierte Lehre des Mittelalters von den zwei Schwerten dar. Sie stellt klar die Frage nicht (wie wir sie heute zu denken pflegen) nach dem Verhältnis zweier Organisationen (Staat und Kirche), sondern lediglich die Frage nach dem Verhältnis zweier Gewalten (der geistlichen und der welt-
is no doubt a proper conception, but the terms are not used strictly as Luther used them. Christendom to him was, as a rule, the communion of saints, as we saw in the tract, *Vom Papstthum zu Rom*. The same is true of the term, *corpus christianum*. At the same time we do well to remember, that the idea of Christendom in the wider sense and that of a Church organization fade before Luther’s conception of the Church as the invisible communion of saints. It becomes to a great extent a question of terms, what we would call the larger society, which includes Church and State, or, if you will, the temporal and the spiritual powers. Some call it the Kingdom of God. At least the world knows what relation one is speaking of, whether one calls it Church and State or temporal and spiritual power. The latter is more exactly the terminology of Luther, therefore we employ it. As for the inclusive

lichen), welche demselben einen grossen Organismus der Christenheit angehören”.
2) Troeltsch, *Soziallehren*, 523f.
society, Luther used all of the above terms without much discrimination. What really concerned him was the separation of the two spheres of power, the temporal and the spiritual.

The Roman Catholic Church had compelled Luther to face this question from both sides. The first phase of the question that presented itself was, "What right had the spiritual power to interfere in temporal affairs"? This question need hardly be discussed.

Through the years of controversy since 1517 Luther had fulminated against Rome's interference in temporal affairs, which were affairs of State and not of Church. It was one of the abuses that had the most far-reaching effect, therefore Luther never missed an opportunity to attack it. The Church should concern itself with matters of faith and good morals, and leave temporal matters to the temporal authority. Temporal matters should therefore cease to be taken to Rome, and should be "left to the temporal authorities". For the Pope's business was "To administer affairs which concern the faith and holy life of Christians, to hold the primates and archbishops

1) Mackinnon, Luther, II, 180: "He, indeed, distinguishes sharply between the State and the Church".
2) Particularly in the Leipzig Disputation and in the Resolutio super propositiones XIII.
to these things, and to help them in dealing with and
caring for these matters." 1) The Corinthians incurred
the severe criticism of St. Paul for their concern with
worldly things. The same applies to the officiales, or
judges in the bishops' courts, who cite into their
courts causes which are no concern of the Church. This
should be stopped, "so that they may attend to nothing
else than matters of faith and good morals, and leave
to the temporal judges the things that concern money,
property, life and honor". 2) Luther sums it up in
a sentence. "Spiritual authorities should have rule
over spiritual goods, as reason teaches; but spiritual
goods are not money, nor anything pertaining to the
body, but they are faith and good works". 3)

The burden of the proposals for reform is aimed
directly at driving the Pope and his cohorts out of
temporal affairs, back to their Bibles and prayer-
books. 4) It is, therefore, quite clear, that Luther
denied the spiritual power all right to meddle in temporal
affairs. The other side of the question was far more
exacting. What right has the temporal power to inter-

2) Ibid. L. 17.
are in affairs of the Church? A full discussion of this would take us far beyond Worms, which closes our period, and the enormous scope of the subject easily demands a separate treatise. Luther's fundamental principles in this regard, however, may be gleaned from an examination of the Address to the Nobility. There it is particularly this second phase of the question which claims Luther's attention.

It is an emergency situation which draws Luther into this field. The Church is sick and needs attention. It is sick mainly because the spiritual authorities and leaders are not concentrating on spiritual matters. They have been dabbling in temporal affairs, until they have become more worldly than the temporal powers themselves. The abuses growing out of this tendency are incalculable. "The distresses and oppression," he says in the opening address, "which weigh down all the Estates of Christendom, especially of Germany, and which move not me alone, but everyone to cry out time and again, and to pray for help, have forced me even now to cry aloud that God may inspire someone with His Spirit to lend this suffering nation a
Luther sees in this situation a challenge to reform. "The time to keep silence has passed and the time to speak is come". Therefore Luther pens this epoch-making tract "touching the re-form of the Christian Estate".

How is the reform to be brought about? Luther does not turn to the temporal power as a matter of course. Only the Gospel can bring a true reformation. Therefore it must be given free course through the Church. It is the Church's business to keep its own house in order. If it is to act, however, the Church must be brought together. That means that a general council must be convened. Luther still holds the medieval conception, that a council is the proper agency to correct abuses in the Church. The question then arises how such a council may be called. Again it is an affair for the Church, for the spiritual authorities. But Luther finds himself in a hopeless situation. He looks to the Pope. Could there be the slightest hope

1) W. VI, 405, L. 15.  
2) Ibid. 404, L. 11.  
3) Ibid. L. 13.  
4) Ibid. 413, L. 10.  

H. II, 63.  
H. II, 61.  
H. II, 77.
of reform through a council called by the Pope?
History gave ample evidence of what reforms could be
expected from a council in which the Pope was inter-
ested. "Oft times the councils have made some pre-
tence at reformation, but their attempts have been
cleverly hindered by the guile of certain men and things
have gone from bad to worse." It was too simple
a matter for a Pope to pack a council; and such a
body could hardly be expected to pass reforming legis-
lation which affected, among other things, the Roman
Curia. Luther then looks to the clergy. But, alas,
they, "to whom this task more properly belongs, have
grown quite indifferent".

Where, then, was Luther to turn to get a free
council convened? For nothing but a free council
could be of any service. The Papists are too clever.
"Even when they have been compelled to hold a council
they have weakened its power in advance by previously
binding the princes with an oath to let them remain as
they are. Moreover, they have given the pope full
authority over all the decisions of the council, so

1) Ibid. 405, L. 20. H. II 63. - Undoubtedly a re-
  ference to the reforming councils of Constance and of
  Basel.
that it is all one whether there are many councils or no councils, — except that they deceive us with puppet - shows and sham-battles. So terribly do they fear for their skin in a really free council".

It is clear that Luther must go elsewhere than to the spiritual authorities to get a free council convened. He goes the only other place there is to go, to the Christian laity. And to be sure of effective action he goes to the most influential members of the laity, the temporal authorities.

Rome, however, has anticipated just such an appeal to a power outside of the Church. She has entrenched herself behind three walls. "First, when pressed by the temporal power, they (the Romanists) have made decrees and said that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the other hand, that the spiritual is above the temporal power. Second, when the attempt is made to reprove them out of the Scriptures, they raise the objection that the interpretation of the Scriptures belongs to no one except the pope. Third, if threatened with a council, they answer with the fable that no one can

call a council, but the pope. In this wise they have slyly stolen from us our three rods, that they may go unpunished, and have ensconced themselves within the safe stronghold of these three walls, that they may practice all the knavery and wickedness which we now see. 1)

To dislodge the Romanists from their entrenchments and thus open the way for a reformation of the Church, Luther appeals to the temporal power. With consummate logic he lays first a theological foundation which will justify the appeal. Then he tells them what to do and how to do it. 2)

2. Theological foundation for the temporal power's right to act.

a. Its right to act in general.

The basis of the temporal power's duty to act is

1) W. VI, 406, L. 21.

2) There is abundant evidence throughout the work, that the appeal to the Nobility was meant as an appeal to the rulers, to the temporal power. Thus W. VI, 419, L. 9: "deutsche Nation, Bischoff und Fursten." 420, L. 2: "Fursten umd Adel". 421, 16: "edeln fursten und hern". In effect, says Kohlmeyer, it was an appeal to the Reichstag. - Die Entstehung der Schrift Luther's An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation. Gütersloh, 1922, P. 20: "Dasz die genannten ständischen Autoritäten in der Tat nichts anderes bedeuten als den deutschen Reichstag, sagt Luther später in der 1524 erschienenen Schrift 'Von Kaufshandlung und Wucher'", Mackinnon (Luther, II, 226) takes the same view.

3) In spite of one or two repetitions in parts two and three, the development of the Address is so logical, that it is difficult to believe it was a piecework affair, as Kohlmeyer (Entstehung 13-14) and Mackinnon (Luther II, 224).
the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers. He denies the Romanist distinction between the "spiritual estate", composed of pope, priests, bishops, and monks, and the "temporal estate", to which belong all others, such as princes, lords, artisans, and farmers. For "all Christians are truly of the 'spiritual estate', and there is among them, no difference at all but that of office". That is what Paul teaches when he says (1 Cor. 12, 12), "We are all one body, yet every member has its own work, whereby it serves every other, all because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all alike Christians". For "baptism, Gospel and faith alone make us 'spiritual' and Christian people." This baptism makes us all priests, as Peter says (1 Peter 2, 9), "Ye are a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom", and the book of Revelation (5, 10), "Thou hast made us thy blood to be priests and kings".

This theory Luther now applies to the temporal power. "Since, then, the temporal authorities are baptized with maintain: 1) K. Müller, Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther. Tübingen, 1910, P. 13: "Der Grund der Verpflichtung ist auch in dieser Schrift auf allen Seiten derselben sie hängt, wie bei allen Christenpflichten, daran, dass die weltliche Obrigkeit Mitglied des christlichen Körpers, getauft und damit geistlichen Standes ist". 2) W. VI, 407, L. 10ff. H. II, 66. 3) Ibid. L. 22.
the same baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community. For whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, though it is not seemly that everyone should exercise the office.  

There is, then, no essential difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops. What the Romanists make a difference of "estate" is merely a difference in "office". For they are all of the same spiritual estate, though not engaged in the same work. "Christ has not two different bodies, one 'temporal', the other 'spiritual'. He is one Head, and He has one body". Priests, bishops, and popes are not different from or better than other Christians, except as regards their work and office, which is to administer Word and sacraments. "So it is with the temporal authorities, - they bear sword and rod with which to punish the evil and to protect the good". That is their office, even as the cobbler's business

1) Ibid. 408, L. 8. H. II, 68.
2) Ibid. L. 26ff. H. II, 69.
is to make shoes. Each has his office, but they are all alike priests. From this a most Christian conclusion follows. "Everyone by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another". To say that the temporal power cannot punish the so-called "spiritual estate", is to say that "the hand shall lend no aid when the eye is suffering. Is it not unnatural, not to say unchristian, that one member should not help another and prevent its destruction?"

By this theological foundation, Luther justifies his appeal to the temporal power. Did that mean that Luther now had given the latter "carte blanche" to step in and do anything and everything that might improve the condition of the Church? Not at all! Nowhere, here or elsewhere, does Luther give the temporal power any right to interfere in spiritualia. "It has nothing to do with matters of faith". These are the business of the Church, even as the business of the temporal power, is to protect its subjects and punish evil-doers. As we follow Luther's

1) Ibid. 409, L. Iff.
2) Ibid. L. 12. H. II, 70.
3) Mackinnon, Luther, II, 180.
argument it will become quite clear, what Luther wanted the temporal power to do. The growth of the Church and the promotion of the Kingdom depended on the free reign of the Gospel, whether in the hands of layman or priest. The temporal authorities, as "fellow-priests", must clear the way for the forward march of the Gospel. This in no way involved any interference in spiritualia, as will become apparent.

The right of the temporal power to give the impetus to a reformation being established, the question arises as to the method and extent of their activity. It appears from the Address, that Luther grants them a two-fold function, by which they shall open the way for a real reformation of the Church.

Firstly, the temporal power shall bring about the calling of a council and give it a push, so to speak. It is the council, as we emphasize again, which is charged with actually effecting the reforms which Luther enumerates. This right of the temporal power to call a council Luther bases squarely on the doctrine of the universal priesthood.

Secondly, the temporal power, itself, is authorized

1) Mitpriester.
to effect certain reforms directly, particularly if the council neglect its duty. This right the temporal power has *qua* temporal power, according to its divinely ordained function of protecting its subjects and punishing evil-doers.

b. *Its right to act through a council.*

The calling of a council occupies the foreground in Luther's thinking. The temporal power itself plays an emergency roll, in case the council follows in the footsteps of its predecessors. But here Luther encounters another "Roman Wall". The Romanists claim that the Pope alone can call a council. Common sense tells him, that a "Pope's council" would never prosecute the Pope and the Curia. Hence he must go to the Church, as Scripture authorizes. Christ, in Matth. 18, 15, commands every member to care for every other, and to bring a wayward brother before the Church. But for this purpose the Church must be brought together. History shows that councils have not always been called by Popes.

1) Müllcr, Kirche, Gem. und O., 20-21: "es ist... deutlich, dass überall im Hintergrund der Gedanke steht: tut das Konzil seine Pflicht nicht, so müssen die weltlichen Obrigkeitcn eigriffen.... Aber das Konzil steht doch in erster Linie: eine allgemeine Reform kann nur von ihm kommen."

W. VI, 413, L.,16: "die weyl es schedlich ist der Christenheit, yhn mit straffen durch ein concilium". When we come to consider the abuses and reforms, this conclusion will appear to be justified.
It was not St. Peter, but the Apostles and elders, who called the Apostolic Council (Acts 15, 6). It was the Emperor Constantine who called the greatest of all councils at Nicaea. These two councils will hardly be called heretical, yet they accomplished more than all the Pope-called councils.

Luther therefore calls in the doctrine of the universal priesthood. Every Christian has an obligation toward his fellow-Christians. Hence, "when necessity demands, and the pope is an offence to Christendom, the first man who is able should, as a faithful member of the whole body, do what he can to bring about a truly free council. No one can do this so well as the temporal authorities, especially since now they also are fellow-Christians, fellow-priests, 'fellow-spirituals', fellow-lords over all things, and whenever it is needful or profitable, they should give free course to the office and work in which God has put them above every man". 2

Not that they have any greater right than any other Christian. They are "mitpriester", all having equal

2) W. VI, 413: "sol ich yhn den vorklagen fur der gemeyne, szo muss ich sie ja zusammenn bringen".
1) W. VI, 413, L. 17ff.
power in the Church. Just as no one can assume the office of priest in the congregation without the consent of all, even so it is with the temporal power in the calling of a council. The words quoted make it clear; for he says, "No one can do this so well as the temporal authorities". This assumes that all have an equal right to call a council. But the most practical thing is for the temporal power to call it. Only it must do it with the consent, though tacit, of the people. For it is the "Haupt and the temporal authorities" who are to act. Since, however, an emergency exists, no one is in such an advantageous position as the temporal power.

The existence of an emergency must ever be kept in mind. Not that this gave the temporal power any rights which it did not already have. But it did call for the exercising of certain rights, which otherwise constituted the function of the Church itself. It was here a question of every office lending its parti-

1) Ibid. 408, L. 13: "Dan weyl wir alle gleich priester sein, muss sich niemand selb erfur thun und sich unterwinden, an unszer bewilligen und erwelen das zuthun, des wir alle gleochen gewalt haben".
2) Ibid. 415, L. 10: "das der hauff und das weltlich schwert dartzu thul". "Haufe" finds no adequate translation, in English. It is the Christians en masse who are meant, of course.
3) Sohn, Kirchenrecht, 570: "Es gilt, wenn das ordentliche Thatigwerden des geistlichen Amtes ausgeschlossen ist, der aus dem allgemeinen Priestertum geborene Notepis- konat der Laien".
cular service to the Church. The temporal power holds a peculiar office, "which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community". It is reasonable and right, that as "fellow-priests", whenever it is needful or profitable, they should give free course "to their office and work. Precisely at this time it was both needful and profitable. The emergency could be compared with an emergency baptism. "In cases of necessity anyone can baptise and give absolution", since all are priests. So the "priesthood" of the temporal authorities gives them the right to act, when the entire Church is in need. In case of fire should everyone stand helpless and let the town burn, because no one had the authority of the burgomaster or because, perchance, the fire was in his house? Is it not rather the duty of every citizen to arouse the rest? "How much more should this be done in the spiritual city of Christ, if a fire of offence breaks out, whether in the papal government, or anywhere else"?

If the Pope sets himself against the calling of a

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1) Ibid. 403, L. 10.
2) Ibid. 408, L. 30: "wo es not und nutz ist".
4) W. VI, 413, L. 33. H. II, 78.
council, he should be disregarded. For he thus becomes a hindrance to the edification of the Church, and "there is no authority in the Church save for edification". St. Paul says (2 Cor. 10, 8), "God has given us authority not for the destruction but for the edification of Christendom". Only the devil and Antichrist resist the things that serve for the edification of Christendom. "Let us, therefore, hold fast to this: No Christian authority can do anything against Christ". The temporal power can, therefore, go securely to the task of calling a council. Christ's Church demands a reformation, and anyone hindering it is doing the work of the devil.

c. Its right to act directly.

The temporal power's right and duty to call a council is thus established, built upon the solid foundation of the universal priesthood. But the Address, as already noted, gives the temporal power certain rights by virtue of its office. These rights

1) Ibid. 414, L. 7.
3) Ibid. L. 27.
are not wholly divorced from the above doctrine, however. The temporal power's right, on the whole, to act here 
Luther bases on that doctrine. However, it is 
evident, that the doctrine is not necessarily the 
basis of this phase of temporal power, which enables 
it to act directly, and not only through a council.

This function of the temporal power is tersely de­

defined by Luther. "The temporal power is ordained of 
God to punish evil-doers and to protect them that do 
well". This definition needs neither amplification

nor justification. The question which concerns us is 
one of jurisdiction. Does the jurisdiction of the 
temporal power extend over all of its subjects? The 
Romanists claim it does not. The spiritual power, they maintain, is above the temporal power. The "spiritual 
estate" is therefore outside the jurisdiction of the

1) Cf. supra, theological foundation.
2) A good deal of confusion has arisen because of Luther's 
rather indefinite expressions on this point. Kohlmeyer 
(Entstehung) favors divorcing this second function from 
the doctrine of the universal priesthood. P. 19: "Von 
allgemeinen Priestertum... ist dabei natürlich nicht die 
Rede, sondern von der ordnungsgemässen Ausübung der 
obrigkeitlichen Gewalt". Yet he later finds it impos­
sible to divorce the two absolutely. P. 27: "Unmöglich 
kann man den Satz vom allgemeinen Priestertum so beschränken 
dass er nur die Befugnis zur Einberufung des Konzils gebe". 
Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze, 331, finds the same difficulty 
in drawing a clear line between the two. We therefore 
cling to the conclusion that the universal priesthood re­
lates itself to both functions of the temporal power, though 
the relation is rather vague as regards this second function.
3) W. VI, 409, L. 16. H. II, 70. Cf. the treatise Von 
den guten Werken, W. VI, 258, L. 35: "Der weltlichen gewalt
temporal authority. But Luther has demolished this argument by showing from Scripture that there is no special estate of priests and popes, but that all are of the same estate. For when Paul demands obedience to the higher powers, he exempts no class from the swinging of the sword, with which they "punish the evil and protect the good". On the contrary, he bids "every" soul obey them.

The temporal power "should therefore be left free to perform its office without hindrance through the whole body of Christendom without respect of persons, whether it affects pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns or anybody else". A simple analogy shows the fallacy of the Romanist claim to exemption from temporal jurisdiction. "If the mere fact that the temporal power has a smaller place among the Christian offices than has the office of preachers or confessors, or of the clergy, then the tailors, cobbblers, masons, carpenters, potboys, tappers, farmers, and all the secular tradesmen, should also be prevented from providing pope, bishops, priests

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aber werck ist schutzen die unterthanen, dieberey, ...
straffen".

2) Ibid. L. 16.
and monks with shoes, clothing, houses, meat and drink, and from paying them tribute. But if these laymen are allowed to do their work unhindered, what do the Roman scribes mean by their laws, with which they withdraw themselves from the jurisdiction of the temporal Christian power, only so that they may be free to do evil and to fulfill what St. Peter has said: 'There shall be false teachers among you, and through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you'. 1)

As these laymen are left free to carry on their business, so "the Christian temporal power should exercise its office without let or hindrance, regardless whether it be pope, bishop or priest whom it affects; whoever is guilty, let him suffer". 2) There are no two meanings in the words of St. Paul "to all Christians: Let every soul (I take that to mean the pope's soul also) be subject unto the higher powers; for they bear not the sword in vain, but are the ministers of God for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well"; or in those of St. Peter: "Submit yourselves unto every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, for so

1) Ibid. L. 20.
2) Ibid. L. 31.
is the will of God*. These two passages (Rom. 13, 4 and 1 Pet. 2, 13, 15, respectively) are basic in Luther's attack on the Romanist claims. He sees in them the fulfillment of Peter's prophecy (1 Pet. 2, 10) that such men shall come as will despise the temporal authorities. "This has come to pass through the canon law". For it is the canon law that gives the clergy the privilege, yea the audacity, to claim immunity from temporal law in life and property, "as though the laity were not also as spiritual and as good Christians as they or did not belong to the Church".

"So then", Luther concludes, "I think this first paper wall is overthrown". The right of the temporal power to exercise its authority also over priests, bishops, and pope, is established. Therefore its function of punishing the evil and protecting the good should extend freely to all members of the whole body, unhindered by Romanist reservations. It should "punish and use force whenever guilt deserves or necessity demands, without regard to pope, bishops and priests, let them hurl threats and bans as much as they will."

1) Ibid. 410, L. 2.
2) Ibid. L. 11.
3. End, nature, and extent of the temporal power's activity.

In the opening theological discussion a foundation was laid for a sweeping activity on the part of the temporal power. Even there, however, we noted that it's main duty was to call a council and put it to work. The council was to do the bulk of the work which Luther called for. The temporal power was to stand behind it and prick it on to action, if possible. If it failed, the temporal power itself was to step in and remove the obstacles to an inner reformation in the Church.

When we approach the "abuses" and "reforms", which occupy the rest of the Address, we find the same thing to be true. The council stands out as the chief reforming agency, with the temporal power constituting the reserve force for an emergency, should the council fail. Thus, Luther introduces the second section with the words, "We shall now look at the matters which should be discussed in the councils, and with which popes, cardinals, bishops and all the scholars ought properly to be occupied day and night if they loved Christ and His Church." Plainly Luther saw and meant his

1) W. VI, L. 7. H. II, 80.
readers to see, that reformation in the Church was the business of the Church, itself, and not of the temporal power. But the emergency led him to say further, "if they neglect this duty, then let the laity and the temporal authorities see to it".

A series of abuses is then enumerated, which the council is charged with removing. They reveal the end Luther has in view, which is also to be the end of the efforts of council and temporal power. Abuses must be cleared away to give the Gospel free course.

Luther begins with the worldliness of the Pope and the cardinals and the corruption in the Curia. Thus, at once he strikes at the source of all the evil practices in the Church. He speaks from experience. He has not forgotten the shock he received on his visit to the "holy city." And here lies the main work of a council. They must clean up and exterminate that "swarm of vermin yonder in Rome, all boasting that they are 'papal'." As long as such a den of cor-

1) Kohler, Luther's Schrift an den Christlichen Adel, 320: "Wenn er in der Schrift an den Adel in schonungsloser Weise kurialistische Misbrauche geisselte, so that er es zum guten Teile auf Grund eigener Erfahrung, er sprach als Augenzeugen".

ruption spreads its vile stench over Christendom, the Gospel is silenced and the Church cannot rise. For all these things are "overthrowing the worship of God". Unless a council corrects this evil and opens the way for the preaching of the Word, no reform will ever come, and their deliberations will have been in vain.

Some of the abuses go so far as to be downright "robbery". And here the temporal power must step in and exercise directly its God-given power of protecting its subjects and punishing evil doers. The annates, papal months, and buying of benefices in general, are pure and simple robbery. Not only do they constitute a robbery of individual subjects, but a tremendous draining of national wealth, which flows South into the coffers at Rome. Surely here is a task for the temporal power. Therefore, Luther says, "the German nation, bishops and princes, should consider that they too are Christians, and should protect the people, whom they are set to rule and guard in things temporal and spiritual, against these ravening wolves, who, in sheep's clothing, pretend to be shepherds and rulers; and, since the annates are so shame-

1) Ibid. 416, L. 21 H. II, 81.

2) What Kohlmeyer calls its "Schutzpflicht", Entata-

hung, 30.
fully abused and the stipulated conditions are not fulfilled, they should not permit their land and people to be so badly robbed and ruined, against all justice; but by a law of the emperor or of the whole nation, they should either keep the annates at home or else abolish them again... Therefore the bishops and princes are bound to punish and prevent such thievery and robbery, as the law requires."

Again and again Luther appeals to the temporal power to stop this robbery. It is to its own interest and to the interest of its subjects, as well as to the interest of the Church that it act, and act quickly. Therefore he cries out, "O, noble princes and lords, how long will ye leave your lands and people naked to these ravening wolves". With the entry of the Fuggers into the field of trading in benefices, "the driving of bargains in spiritual goods has now come to the right place." Luther is led to the bitter pronunciation, "I believe we have reached the limit". And with a final appeal he concludes, "Since, then, such devilish rule is not only open robbery and deceit, and

1) W.VI, 419, L. 9: "deutsche Nation, Bischoff und Fursten".
the tyranny of the gates of hell, but also ruins Christendom in body and soul, it is our duty to use all diligence in protecting Christendom against such misery and destruction.... If we justly hang thieves and behead robbers, why should we let Roman avarice go free? For he is the greatest thief and robber that has come or can come into the world, and all in the holy name of Christ and of St. Peter!"

In the section on abuses we thus see the lines drawn clearly between the activity of council and temporal power, respectively. In the final section, concerning proposals for reform, the lines are less distinct. For while the section on the removal of abuses expressly entrusted the task to a council, the proposals for reform are delivered to "the temporal authorities or a general council". The subject matter, however, speaks for itself, so it is not impossible to find, Luther's intention in the matter. The same general thought runs through this part. A council is uppermost in Luther's mind throughout as the chief reforming agency. All inner reforms in the Church are left

1) Ibid. L. 13.
2) The third and last section of the Address is usually given the heading, Proposals for Reform.
3) Ibid. L. 33: "weltlicher gewalt odder gemeinen Concilio".
to it, while the temporal power stands in reserve, though it has certain immediate duties.

The main duty of the temporal power here is to drive the spiritual power out of temporal affairs and back into its own realm of spiritual things. The spiritual power cannot guide the Church and at the same time conduct an international banking institution. Its attention must be concentrated on one or the other. The trafficking in benefices must be abolished as well as the whole financial network, which has grown up about it. Since the temporal power is ordained "to protect the innocent and prevent injustice", "every prince, nobleman and city should forbid their subjects to pay the annates to Rome and should abolish them entirely". The Pope has made of them "a robbery, to the injury and shame of the whole German nation". The Pope becomes ever more the arch-enemy and the object of Luther's reforms. Since his shameful trafficking is destroying both body and soul of the people, "the Christian nobility should set itself against the pope as a common enemy and destroyer of Christendom, and should do this for the salvation of the poor souls who must go to ruin through his tyranny".

2) Ibid. 427, L. 35.
Almost as great as the financial evil is Rome's usurpation of the powers of the temporal courts. The taking of temporal causes to Rome must cease, and these must be left to the temporal authorities. For it should be the duty of the pope, as the man most learned in the Scripture and most Holy, ... to administer affairs which concern the faith and holy life of Christians.1) Unless the Pope, as chief turns over a new leaf, nothing can be expected from the rest of the clerical machine. The Pope's concern should be "to hold the primates and archbishops to these things, and to help them in dealing with and caring for these matters." Not only does he set a vile example for all bishops and priests, but he drags them all into his temporal entanglements. The result is that those who would preach the Gospel are not only not encouraged, but are actually hindered from doing so. No reformation can come until these impediments are removed.

The Pope's temporal activities are not confined to finance and causes at law. His holding of Naples, Sicily and much other territory, is unjustifiable plunder. He should "take his fingers out of the pie", for it is sheer "plunder got by violence, like almost all

1) Ibid. 430, L. 5. H. II, 103.
2) Ibid. L. 9.
his other possessions". Here the Emperor, himself, should intervene, "and should point him instead to the Bible and the prayer-books, so that he may preach and pray, and leave to temporal lords the ruling of lands and peoples especially when no one has given them to him". The Pope's meddling in temporal affairs is contrary to all the commands of Christ and St. Paul. He must therefore "be helped out of them and allowed to attend to his knighthood". The great task of the temporal power thus stands out clearly. It shall drive the Pope out of the temporal realm, out of high-finance, out of the courts, and out of politics, back into the spiritual realm, where he belongs.

There follows, with point 11, a series of reforms of a different nature. The life and morals of Pope, clergy, monks, and people are taken up. Naturally this is work for the council. While not referring each separate point to the council, Luther twice calls on the council in this group of reforms, and once on "common Christian order and everyone's better judgment". These appeals concern the most important points in the section. The "scandalous pride" of the Pope, whether revealed in foot-kissing or in the manner of receiving

2) Ibid. 442, L. 4. H. II, 123.
the sacrament, is "antichristian", "against God and against all Christian doctrine". To put away this abominable offence to all Christians, Luther cries out, "God help a free Council to teach the pope that he too is a man, and is not more than God, as he presumes to be".

The other great evil which Luther here refers to a council is the celibacy of the clergy. Ministers are to "live and be at home among the people". Therefore they "should be granted liberty by a Christian council to marry". As to those who are not yet married, he leaves the question, whether they should marry, "to common Christian order and to everyone's better judgment".

The last great question of this group, which concerns the reform of the mendicant orders, is sandwiched in between these two points. It is fair to assume, then, that that question too, is referred to a council.

In connection with the abolition of saints' days, Luther makes a sweeping statement which shows his attitude throughout the proposals for reform. "If a

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2) Ibid. L. 37.
3) Ibid. 441, L. 24. H. II, 120.
thing is opposed to God, and harmful to man in body and soul, any congregation, council or government has not only the right to abolish it and put a stop to it, without the will or knowledge of pope or bishop, but they are bound on their souls' salvation to prevent it, even against the will of pope and bishop, though these ought to be themselves the first to forbid it. It would appear from this that Luther would have all reforms begin in the Church, here represented by a council. If the council fails to do its duty, it is the duty of every Christian authority in the State, therefore especially of the temporal power, itself.

In this group of reforms appear one or two which are not left to the council, but entrusted to the temporal power. For the protection of its subjects begging shall be regulated by the appropriate temporal authorities, and a law should be passed in that regard. Furthermore they should "drive out of German lands the papal legates with their 'faculties', which they sell us for large sums of money, though that is sheer knavery". These are both clearly duties of the temporal power.

A third group begins with point 24. In the negotiations for reunion with the Bohemians, "the emperor and

1) Ibid. 446, L. 14. H. II, 127-128. The words used are, "gemeyn, rait odder ubirkeit".
princes should send to the Bohemians some pious and sensible bishops and scholars. The temporal power, thus, only makes the appointments, while the actual negotiations are carried on by representatives of the Church. The reformation of the universities is given to the pope and emperor, as "there is no work more worthy of pope or emperor than thorough reformation of the universities, and there is nothing worse or more worthy of the devil than unreformed universities".

A program of restricting the number of students to the more select men should be put in the hands of princes or city councils.

As Luther brings this great treatise to a close, he delivers a parting word to the two reform agencies, the temporal power and the council, including all the servants of the Church. He is reminded, near the close of the immorality and rottenness brought into the Church by the rule of celibacy. "This", he says, "should be the chief concern of pope, bishops, lords and councils". To the temporal power the final question of economic and social reforms draws a parting admonition. "In this, and in the other matters above mentioned, I have tried to point out how many good works the temporal government

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3) Ibid. 468, L. 23. H. II, 163.
could do, and what should be the duty of every government, to the end that everyone may learn what an awful responsibility it is to rule, and to have a high station. What good would it do that an overlord were in his own life as holy as St. Peter, if he have not the purpose diligently to help his subjects in these matters. His very authority will condemn him! For it is the duty of the authorities to seek the highest good of their subjects. "God give us all a Christian mind, and especially to the Christian nobility of the German nation a right spiritual courage to do the best that can be done for the poor Church".

The Address is not free from difficulties and apparent inconsistencies. These all fade in the light of the one broad, clear line of thought, which runs through the work. We see first what Drews calls Luther's "Idealbild", the vision of an ideal Church, with the sun of the Gospel giving it strength and beauty. But the picture is bespattered with mud, flung from the sink of corruption, whose source is at Rome. The beauty of the Church is marred and its growth stunted; for the rays of the Gospel are deflected and weakened by ecclesi-

1) W. VI, 467, L. 27. H. II, 162.
2) Ibid. 469, L. 15. H. II, 164.
astical abuses. The Pope has forsaken the propagation of the Gospel and has built a network of vile temporal projects. Bishops and priests are caught in the meshes of the net. Their time and energy are put to promoting the trafficking in benefices. Instead of being ministers of the Gospel they are become brokers of the Holy See. Even those who would preach the Gospel cannot or dare not. They must do the business of the Pope.

The remedy is a far-reaching reformation. Until the Gospel is again preached throughout the Church, no reformation can come. For the Gospel alone has power sufficient to give life, be it to the soul of the individual or to the soul of the Church. Therefore, all that hinders the free course of the Gospel must be cleared away. All the countless abuses, great and small, must be strangled; for by them the Church is being strangled.

Who is to apply the remedy? The Church should apply it, but it is bound, hand and foot, by the shackles of misused ecclesiastical power. Therefore, every Christian must assert his priesthood and rise to succor the Church. So the temporal powers, as fellow-priests and bearers of the God-given authority to protect their subjects, shall lend their office to the service of the Church. Their task is to remove the shackles that bind the Church, to
clear aside all the Roman abuses, which prevent the free preaching and working of the Gospel. They shall call a council to effect the necessary inner reforms in the Church. They themselves shall correct the external abuses and drive the Pope out of temporal affairs, back to the Bible and the prayerbook.

The temporal power was given no authority to interfere in spiritualia. As Luther so often reiterated, that heresy was a spiritual affair, not to be corrected by force, so he here consistently limits the temporal power to external and temporal things. Theirs is a preparatory work, paving the way for a true reformation carried out by the Church herself. Luther had already said in the treatise, Von den guten Werken, "this would be the best, and also the only remedy remaining, if kings, princes, nobility, cities and communities themselves began and opened a way for reformation, so that

1) A considerable debate has been carried on regarding the question of how far the temporal power was to act alone, and how far it was to entrust reforms to a council. Holl and Müller are in accord with the conclusions drawn herein. Kohlmeyer and Mackinnon question the distinction drawn between the activities of the council and the temporal power. Mackinnon, Luther, II, 245, holds that, "in reality the Reformation is carried out by the temporal authority which, in virtue of necessity is empowered to undertake the task". He sums up the situation of the debate thus: "The contention of Karl Müller and Holl that in the Address Luther restricts the activity of the State to the removal of abuses of an economic and political character and assigns to the Council that of the more purely ecclesiastical evils, is, as Kohlmeyer has shown, not conclusive". Cf. Kohlmeyer, Entstehung 17f.
the bishops and clergy, who are now afraid, would have reason to follow."

We here meet Luther, the practical Churchman, whom we have learned to know mainly in theory up to this time. Here we meet Luther, the patriot, thundering against the Roman leech, which is bleeding his country white, and electrifying princes and people with the new thrill of a national consciousness. But above all, we see before us Luther melted by grace, refined by controversy, and moulded by the hand of God, - Luther, the Reformer.

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2) So in the Address, W. VI, 455, L. 21. H. II, 142; "We should vanquish heretics with books, not with burning". Köstlin, Luther's Lehre von der Kirche, 180; "Dagegen verwahrt sich Luther wieder...gegen die Anwendung auszser Gewalt überhaupt in Dingen, welche geistlich gerichtet werden müssen". Cf. Mackinnon, Luther, II, 180.

2) Köhler, Luther's Schrift An den chr. Adel, 326: "Sie (Luther's Schrift) ist...das Werk eines Praktikers, der, in seiner Zeit stehend, aus ihr lernend und aus der Vergangenheit, Rathschläge giebt, wie besser zu machen sei, was sich als fehlerhaft erwies".

3) L.H. Waring, The Political Theories of Martin Luther, New York and London, 1910, P. 129: "Luther's appeal was a plea on behalf of a people of one race to become united in civil government and establish a national state. It was, indeed, the first definite call for a united Germany".
CONCLUSION.

As we leave Luther before Worms, we leave his doctrine of the Church in mid-stream, so to speak. Great violence is often done to Luther by those who draw all their material from one section of his life, and from that attempt to paint a life-size picture of the Reformer. Luther was no opportunist, but he had a remarkable ability to meet every problem as it arose, on the spur of the moment, as it were. Hence, by taking single pronouncements of Luther, we could make him the author of the most monstrous theories. On a larger scale the same is true. The early Luther must be balanced by the later Luther. One might be tempted to conclude from the early Luther, that he was an idealist and a theorist. The later Luther is the most practical of reformers. His doctrine of the Church up to Worms was to a great extent pure theory, and we search in vain for Luther's conception of a visible Church organization. But the later Luther showed that his theories were adequate to meet the practical situation, and that his Church was not a dream, but a reality.

What we do find in our early Luther is a complete conception of the spiritual nature of the Church.
Standing at the threshold of Worms, he had already given the people a new doctrine of the Church. New it was to his world, where people were taught to pawn their souls with God's broker at Rome. But a new doctrine it was by no means. It was the old idea which those early Christians held, who first confessed, "I believe in a holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints". It was the beautiful plant which Augustine had nearly brought into the sun, which succeeding centuries had smothered, and which had again begun to see the light through the preaching and writing of Occam, Marsilius, Wyclif, Hus, and Wessel. But to Luther it was given to clear away the hierarchical underbrush from it and restore to it the fuel rays of the sun. "Luther convinced men that the salvation of each soul was dear in the sight of God, and he convinced them that nothing, and no one, must stand between the soul and its Creator. Thereby he effectually got rid of the priesthood in the old sense, and thereby he broke the monopoly of the Church of Rome". Thereby he also invited precious souls to transfer their allegiance from a worldly Church to a heavenly Church, from a visible organization to an in-

visible communion of saints, from a temporal Church to an eternal Church, from the Pope to Christ.

Need we wonder that men thronged under such a banner, thirsting for this fellowship with Christ and his saints to replace the tyranny of hierarchical authority? Men are attracted by the beautiful in religion. Luther's doctrine of the Church was beautiful, - why? Because it was the doctrine of Christ and of Paul. Luther knew the beauty of the true Church of Christ, and he yearned to clothe all men in the lovely robe of membership in this Church. No more beautiful picture of the Church has been drawn by man than Luther himself draws in one of his Table-Talks: "The amaranth is a flower that grows in August: it is more a stalk than a flower, is easily broken off, and grows in joyful and pleasant sort; when all other flowers are gone and decayed, then this, being sprinkled with water, becomes fair and green again; so that in winter they use to make garlands thereof. It is called amaranth from this, that it neither withers nor decays.

I know nothing more like unto the church than this flower, amaranth. For although the church bathes her garment in the blood of the lamb, and is coloured over with red, yet she is more fair, comely, and beautiful than any state and assembly upon the face of the earth.
She alone is embraced and beloved of the Son of God, as his sweet and amiable spouse, in whom only he takes joy and delight, and whereon his heart alone depends; he utterly rejects and loathes others, that contemn or falsify his gospel.

Moreover, the church willingly suffers herself to be plucked and broken off, that is, she is loving, patient, and obedient to Christ her bridegroom in the cross; she grows and increases again, fair, joyful, and pleasant, that is, she gains the greatest fruit and profit thereby; she learns to know God aright, to call upon him freely and undauntedly, to confess his word and doctrine, and produces many fair and glorious virtues.

At last, the body and stalk remain whole and sound, and cannot be rooted out, although raging and swelling be made against some of the members, and these be torn away. For like as the amaranth never withers or decays, even so, the church can never be destroyed or rooted out. But what is most wonderful, the amaranth has this quality, that when it is sprinkled with water, and dipped therein, it becomes fresh and green again, as if it were raised and wakened from the dead. Even so likewise the church will by God be raised and wakened out of the grave, and become living again; will everlastingly praise, extol, and laud the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, his Son
ther with the Holy Ghost. For
kings, kingdoms, and principalities
and like flowers soon fall and
which is so deep rooted, by
ved or wasted, but remains eternally."

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and our Redeemer, together with the Holy Ghost. For though temporal empires, kingdoms, and principalities have their changings, and like flowers soon fall and fade away, this kingdom, which is so deep rooted, by no power can be destroyed or wasted, but remains eternally."  

Finis.

1) William Hazlitt, The Table Talks of Martin Luther, London 1900, P. 172, No. 376.
ABBREVIATIONS.

W. - Weimar Edition of Luther's works.

Erl. - Erlangen Edition of Luther's works.

Opp. var. arg. - Erlangen Edition of Luther's Latin works pertaining to the history of the Reformation.

H. - The Works of Martin Luther edited by A. J. Holman Co.
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