

Proceedings^[1] of the Synod.

Of the matters submitted to the Hon. Synod for discussion, those drafted by Herr Professor Walther,

Theses

on Communion-Fellowship with Those of Another Faith,

were, by resolution, taken up, initially at the first session and then at three subsequent ones. These theses, which had been distributed in printed copies among the synod members present, were first read out one after the other in context and then individually explained, discussed, and proven from the attached scriptural passages. In addition, the author also demonstrated from various passages from our symbols and the writings of orthodox fathers the complete agreement of the above theses with the doctrine and practice of the evangelical-Lutheran church.

Thesis 1.

The true visible church in an unrestricted sense, or a part of it, is that in which God's Word is preached purely and the holy Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution.

It is important to hear why the doctrine of the true visible church is taken as a basis here. A burning question of this time, and at the same time the bitter accusation of many who have fallen out of the bonds of a crude, unveiled union into a modern, new-faith Lutheranism against us and other faithful Lutherans, is this: Why do we not accept people of other faiths to Holy Communion? — They want nothing to do with the unholy theory according to which, falsely invoking the word of Christ: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28), everyone should be admitted to the Lord's Supper as well as to the sermon; rather, they call this theory a downright sin and distortion of the Word of God and exclaim indignantly: One should not throw pearls before swine and the sanctuary before dogs. Nevertheless, they want to admit to Holy Communion all those who are not openly unchristian, regardless of their special confession. This unionist error is also held by the leaders of the so-called *Church-Council*, among others, who erroneously refer to a passage in our symbols.² We must therefore, they say, admit to Holy Communion all those who prove themselves to be dear Christians. — But this almost unionistic principle is rooted in their erroneous doctrine of the Church. Our opponents do not wholeheartedly believe that there is a true visible church on earth in an unrestricted sense. — It is

1 [Fünfzehnter Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts der deutschen evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten. Anno Domini 1870. (Fifteenth Synodical Report of the Western District of the German Ev.-Luth. Synod etc.) (St. Louis, Mo.: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri etc., 1870), pp. 21–73.]

2 For it says in the Preface to the Book of Concord: "For we have no doubt whatever that even in those churches which have hitherto not agreed with us in all things many godly and by no means wicked men are found who follow their own simplicity, and do not understand aright the matter itself, but in no way approve the blasphemies which are cast forth against the Holy Supper as it is administered in our churches, according to Christ's institution, and, with the unanimous approval of all good men, is taught in accordance with the words of the testament itself." [Par. 20; *Triglot*, p. 19.]

therefore all the more necessary that we bring this doctrine to our clear awareness in order to justify our doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper. If the opinion of the leaders of the "Church-Council" and their spiritual comrades were divine truth, we Lutherans would be committing a grave sin with our ecclesiastical separation from all other Christian fellowships. For if people of other faiths also belong to our Lord's Supper, they actually also belong to our church, whose bond of unity and sign of confession is precisely the sacrament; we must therefore necessarily unite with them ecclesiastically in all other things as well. But our thesis gives us correct information about the true visible church. It speaks of such a church in an unrestricted sense. One can also speak of a true visible church in a non-unrestricted sense, just as one can speak of a cripple as a true, real human being. However, just as a person who is healthy in all his parts is called a normal person, a person as he should be, so here a true visible church is understood in an unrestricted sense to be such a church as it should actually be according to God's will and foundation, a normal one. However, it should be noted that we are not talking here about *the Church* in general, but about a visible church. A true visible church in an *unrestricted* sense is a group of Christians who are always mixed with evil and hypocrites, but with whom the pure, unadulterated Word of God and Sacrament can be found. A true visible church in a *restricted* sense, on the other hand, is what we call a similarly mixed group in which God's Word and Sacrament are only essential. Such a church, for example, is the Reformed church. It is a community that has come together with the intention of practicing God's Word and Sacrament among themselves. But because it does not have these means of grace pure and unadulterated, one cannot speak of it as a true visible church in the unrestricted sense. However, praise be to God, there is such a church, and that is the evangelical-Lutheran church. We happily confess this and hold with a firm conscience of faith that our dear church is the Church planted by the Lord Christ and his apostles 1800 years ago, because our faith, doctrine, and confession agree in all things in the most exact way with the Scriptures, the words of Christ and the apostles. The Lutheran church is therefore not only a *real* church, but *the true* visible church of God on earth, insofar as *true* means nothing other than: as it should be according to God's Word. The less we can or want to boast of our pious walk before other churches, the more we can and must boast before others of the pure doctrine which, thanks to God's undeserved grace, shines on us poor sinners like the clear, bright sunlight. — But the leaders of the "Church-Council" deny this. To them, our church is only the best among many good ones, not the orthodox one next to the false believers, not the true visible church in an unrestricted sense. For these theologians, the difference between our church and other churches is therefore only a gradual one, not a specific one. That is why they only ever speak of "denominations" and thus prove themselves to be a sect whose claim to be the best must appear quite ridiculous. This term *denomination* or "evangelical denominations" for all Protestant parties, except Unitarians, serves our opponents in the "Church-Council" as a substitute for the expression of vulgar Unionists, that all Christians who are not papists or gross rationalists are to be regarded as orthodox, and that all these orthodox must also maintain ecclesiastical fellowship among themselves. — But this designation is as wrong as this form of expression. For example, one cannot call the Reformed church an *evangelical*-Reformed church, since it is not reformed by the pure Gospel. The predicate *evangelical* belongs to our church alone. We appropriately put the word *evangelical* in front of the name *Lutheran* because we do not believe in Luther, but in the pure Gospel taught by Luther. We are not Lutherists [Lutheristen]. Our adversaries know this very well and yet our doctrine of the orthodox Lutheran church is basically an abomination to them. They reject it as arrogant, intolerable presumption when we say that we Lutherans alone are in possession of the full truth. One can see that their unionist practice of the Lord's Supper is also rooted in the miserable theory of open questions. If there are doctrines in the

Lutheran church itself that can be answered with Yes and No by Lutherans, why would one not also want to hold Communion with non-Lutherans who hold this or that special doctrine! — Our theologians of doubt only ever want to seek the truth, but have never found it, and in doing so place themselves alongside those pagan sages who always sought the truth but never found it and therefore called themselves philosophers, i.e., lovers of the truth. — But since Christ and His Gospel appeared on earth, the eternal, complete, saving truth has also been on earth, and for everyone. Anyone who denies this and does not yet have the truth is truly a miserable, pitiful creature and certainly not a Christian. — How clearly, distinctly, and comprehensibly, even for a child, are contained in God’s Word, for example, the doctrines of Baptism, of the Lord’s Supper, of the eternal, universal will of God! — Anyone who only holds his reason captive under the obedience of faith and does not willfully resist can and must be made divinely certain of the truth here and convinced that the counter-doctrine is of the devil. — Would our adversaries dare to accuse those apostolic congregations [*Gemeinden*] of arrogant self-conceit if they had refused the hand of brotherhood and communion in the sacrament to insidious false spirits, against whose poison of the soul the holy apostles had warned them verbally or by letter, and had declared to them: “We have the truth and you do not, but a doctrine of devils”? — They would not. But they do not want to grant us precisely what they must grant to those apostolic congregations. Why not? Because, as they say, we do not have the apostles as teachers, but only Luther. But O foolish objection, which reveals to us their unbelief in the Word of God! For do we Lutherans not still today have this holy Word of God “pure, well and right by his power, described in Holy Scripture”? Does not St. Paul still speak to us in the Bible in exactly the same way as he preached and wrote to his congregations at that time? Do we not therefore still have the eternal, full, infallible truth today? And would it not be a very false, wretched feeling of shame, stirred up by the devil, to think that it would be arrogant and self-conceited to say: I have the truth, because I stand on the rock of the Word of God, and I reject the contrary doctrine as a lie of Satan! — May God in his grace preserve us from such a sense of shame and all admiration for the spirit of unionism.

Incidentally, the reason why so many shy away from faithful adherence to the Word of God and pure doctrine is that they can easily and rightly conclude from this that faithful adherence to a life that is exactly in accordance with the Scriptures is just as detestable to them as pure doctrine. On the other hand, an orthodox Christian who has correctly recognized the doctrine of original sin has respect for God’s Word in general, as well as only for that piety which agrees with the Word.

We see that the great seductive powers within the Church today are, on the one hand, the *Pope*, who alone considers himself infallible, and, on the other, the [*Prussian*] *Union*, which finds infallible truth nowhere. Against both, we Lutherans hold that there is indeed an infallible truth, but only in the *Word of God*, and that we certainly possess it *as long as we stand on the Word*. Or should this be too much of an assertion, and not place us alongside the Roman Antichrist, who claims infallibility in matters of faith, morals and discipline for himself alone? No, never. For there, in Rome, they claim infallibility apart from, without, and even contrary to God’s Word by the devil’s instigation, but here we profess to be infallible, despite all our own personal capacity for error, because and as long as we speak as God speaks in His infallible Word. That is the enormous difference. Our spirit is, praise God, different from that of the Pope, but also from that of the Methodists. For while the latter blaspheme and condemn us because of our doctrine of the only orthodox Lutheran church, they now claim to be the only true church of God because they alone live piously. — Therefore, they are affected by what St. Paul writes 2 Tim. 3:1–9 about the glorious, arrogant, pompous, and hypocritical people of the last abominable times, while we are told what

is written in the 14th verse: “But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.”

Listen to what *Luther* says about the form of the true visible church and the infallible truth of its doctrine: “The Catechism [*Kinderglaube*] says that there is a *holy* Christian church, and St. Paul says (1 Cor. 3:17): ‘The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are; but if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy’^[3]; therefore the holy church *cannot suffer lies or false doctrines*, but must teach *only* that which is *holy and true, and that means God’s Word*; and if it teaches only one lie, then it is already idolatrous. . . . But here someone who is good-natured (as people say) may reply: What harm would it do if we would adhere to God’s Word but would *retain* all these things (papistic abuses and errors) or also some others that are tolerable? I reply: Such persons may be called good-natured, but they are wrong-hearted and susceptible to seducement; for, as you hear, the church must not teach anything else than God’s Word, serve anyone else than God, place another light beside the [true] Light (placed by God in the darkness). It is indeed a will-o’-the-wisp and error even though it were only a single untruth, *for the church should not and cannot teach any lies or error, not even a single one*. If it teaches a single lie, it is already altogether wrong, as Christ declares in Luke 11:35: ‘Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light,’ having no part dark, ‘the whole shall be full of light.’ That means the whole must be light and no part must be dark. *The church must teach only God’s Word and truth, and neither error nor lies*. And how could it be otherwise since God’s mouth is that of the church? Again, God cannot lie and therefore neither can the church. . . . The church must teach only God’s Word and must be sure of it, for on this account it is called the pillar and ground of the truth, built upon a rock, holy and without blemish. That means, *as it has been rightly and well said: The church cannot err, for God’s Word, which it teaches, cannot err. But what is taught otherwise or in doubt whether it is God’s Word dare not be a doctrine of the church. . . . Duke George, of unblest memory, once said that he knew well that many abuses have crept into the church, but that it could not be condoned that a single monk of a diminutive burg should venture to reform it. Very well, he admitted (and not only he) that your church is full of abuses; and that means it is not a pure, true church, for that should be holy and pure and without any additions, not to say, without any abuses.*” (*Wider Hans Wurff*. 1541. Walch XVII, pp. 1682 ff. Walther: *Die evang.-luth. Kirche u. f. w.*, pp. 43–45. [*The True Visible Church* etc., pp. 36–37.])

Of course, these words of Luther are not meant to imply that there are not often poor, weak, erring Christians in the orthodox church as well; but as soon as they are convicted of their error by God’s Word, they abandon it, fall in line with God’s Word and confess the truth. But those in the Lutheran church who stubbornly cling to their error must eventually be expelled. It is different in the Reformed church. For this church, in its distinctiveness, stands precisely on error and, for example, in the doctrine of Holy Communion, does not listen to the clear Word of God, but to its foolish rational thoughts. One is therefore infallible and free from error wherever one holds fast to the Word of God. For as certain as the Bible is the Word of God and inspired by the Holy Spirit, as certain as Christ is the Son of God and the mouth of eternal truth, it is also certain that we cannot err if we hold to the letter of Holy Scripture. He who does not believe this has neither strength and victory in the temptations of the devil, nor comfort in the terrors of death, and must miserably perish. His faith is nothing but a ghost. For true faith, as Luther says, dies a thousand times over because it has the truth. It makes us infallible. We do not say that a Lutheran Christian cannot err even in one thing contained in Holy Scripture, but only this we assert, that he has the full truth in *all articles of faith*, which are so clearly and distinctly revealed to everyone in Scripture, so that

3 [Luther’s rendering]

he can live and die happily on them. It is also a great deception of the false spirits when they claim that only *this* or *that* doctrine of faith, such as that of the deity of Christ, is clearly and distinctly revealed in Holy Scripture, while others, such as certain doctrines of distinction, are not, and that therefore one cannot attain the infallible truth in the latter. To this we say: No. All the doctrines of faith are clearly and unmistakably revealed in Holy Scripture, and in confessing these doctrines our church is the infallible mouth of God, an assertion which, as we have said, is an annoyance to our adversaries, but a very great comfort to us. — But what we confess in the thesis we prove from the Scriptural passages appended to it. *John 8:31, 32: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my speech [Rede], then are ye my true disciples [meine rechten Jünger]; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

According to the basic text, the first part of this passage actually reads: “If ye continue in my word [Worte] (λόγῳ), then are ye indeed my disciples [in Wahrheit meine Jünger],” and from this we can clearly see that the Lord Christ declares those to be his true disciples, that is, the true Church, who hold fast to his word, namely to the simple understanding of it. This is what the Lutheran church does. Indeed, this also applies to the children of God living in false churches, for although they err here and there, they do so unwittingly. But as soon as they realize their error, they abandon it and remain with the speech or words of Christ. Nor do they cling with their hearts to the error, but only to Christ their Lord. But now the same Lord says of all those who abide in his word: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Whoever therefore does not want to make Christ Himself a liar must confess hereafter that the true visible church of God on earth, that is, the evangelical-Lutheran church, and every Christian who abides in the Word, has found and really attained the infallible truth. The following passage

John 10:4, 5 reads: “*The sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*” — What, then, is the Church? The totality of the sheep or disciples of Christ. What is true of these is also true of the Church. A sheep hears its shepherd’s voice and follows him. So does a Lutheran Christian follow his shepherd Christ. He believes His Word, however incredible it may seem to his reason. Furthermore, a sheep does not recognize the voice of a stranger, but rather flees it. This is how a Lutheran Christian condemns false spirits and their heresies, no matter how sweet and acceptable they may sound to his reason.

The passage Rev. 3:7–11 forms part of the epistle to the bishop of the church in Philadelphia. Christ does not say to him through the mouth of John: “Because thou livest so piously,” but rather: “*Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.*” This adherence to pure doctrine was therefore his crown, which he was not to allow to be taken from him. Although it says earlier: “I know thy works,” these works here mean nothing other than faithful adherence to the word of truth, just as the bishop of Laodicea they mean nothing other than his lukewarmness and his apostasy from the good confession. And how the promise given to the church in Philadelphia has been fulfilled to this day is evidenced by the multitude of Christians still living in this city, while the Laodicean church has disappeared and its place has become a heap of ruins. If the above promise is also to be fulfilled for us and our children after us, then it is truly necessary that we also faithfully keep the word in these last times of temptation. Note also that in this epistle Christ does not call those who have fallen away “dear brothers,” who take a different and justified standpoint, but rather those who “lie.”

1 Cor. 1:10 reads: “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*” Here the divine judgment on the spirit of this time is pronounced and the Holy Spirit breaks the rod over the Union. The Lord says to it, as it were: “You are not My Church.” For the

unchurched, as is well known, one speech, mind, and opinion is an abomination, which in their opinion brings about the division and fragmentation of the Church and which they want to leave to us “Old Lutherans.” But do they not thereby bear witness to themselves that their much-vaunted unity in the Union is nothing but a whitewashed grave and a hypocritical comedy? For how can there in truth be any talk of the unity of the Church, where its members are only glued together outwardly (as in the papacy) and where *many different* beliefs and doctrines are held within it? It is not we, but they, the unchurched, who are accused of splitting up the Church, and one might well say that they have as many divisions as there are people. However, the Holy Spirit of God also condemns the leaders of the “Church Council” with the words “*the same mind and judgment.*” Although they want to have the same speech in the Church, demand the acceptance of all confessional writings of the evangelical-Lutheran Church, demand the signatures to them, they do not want to argue and argue about the “*same mind*” and “*same judgment*” for long. And yet, in the eyes of the Holy Spirit, this is no less a hypocritical and despicable union maneuver. For how can the speech of the mouth or the writing of the hands bring unity where hearts are torn and divided by *various* minds and judgments? — The passage

Eph. 4:3–6 defeats the man-made work of union. For here it says: “. . . *endeavouring to keep the unity*” (not of the body, but) “*of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*” And what does this consist of? In *one body and one Spirit* (namely, in one spiritual body implanted in Christ), so that Christians *have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.* This is the true inner unity that should exist among Christians in the Church. And where it exists in this way, diligence should be exercised to maintain it through love, and care should be taken that envy and pride among Christians do not destroy them. Thus we see how this passage, which the unionists so often and gladly cite as their motto and favorite saying, contains precisely their destructive judgment.

Thesis 2.

A fellowship in which God’s Word is fundamentally falsified or at least allowed to be fundamentally falsified is not a true, orthodox church, but a false, heterodox church or sect.

This is very clear from the passage:

John 10:26, 27: “*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*” Just as therefore according to this (cf. also the passage chap. 10:4, 5 above) only those are Christ’s sheep or true Church who hear His voice, i.e., His Word, and follow Him, so also those who do not hear His voice, i.e., do not believe the Word, are not His sheep, but a false church. Furthermore it says:

Chap. 14:23, 24: “*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings.*” In these words, too, the Lord Christ clearly indicates the characteristics of the true and false church. Those who keep Christ’s word are the true Church, in which God Himself makes His home. It is God’s house and true temple. The Lord of heaven and earth dwells in it, not only according to His nature, but also according to His presence of grace. This is the hallmark of the true Church. The false church, on the other hand, can be recognized by the fact that it basically does not keep God’s Word, but falsifies it. That is why God cannot dwell in it. It is a sect with which we do not want to have fellowship. — It is true that even within the evangelical-Lutheran

church this or that person strays from the Word of God, but because this happens out of weakness and ignorance, it does not make our church a sect. But whoever fundamentally and persistently departs from the Word of God belongs to the false church.

But it is also very important that the thesis states that even where God's Word is *allowed* to be fundamentally falsified, there is a false church. This is the case, for example, in the [Prussian] Union. For we do not deny that there may still be some in it who generally teach God's Word purely. This fact alone does not make it, the United church, either pure or a true visible church of God. On the contrary, we must confess that it is worse off than any other Protestant sect. For in these churches the situation is such that the true Christians therein, in their ignorance, think and are convinced in their hearts that their error is truth. One can therefore fight with them honestly and sincerely, just as we Lutherans do with honest Reformed Christians, on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, baptism, the Person of Christ, and so on. But in the United church one may falsify the Word of God with impunity. Here the lie is as justified as the truth, and error is permitted in an ungodly way. Pure doctrine is declared to be a matter of indifference and a life characterized by works is considered the main thing. Truly, this wretched principle of union must be condemned even by the pagan Cicero. For when he mentioned in a speech the various doctrines of some philosophers, he added: "Which of these opinions is the right one, I do not know; but one thing I do know, namely, that only *one* of them can be the right one." But the Union is also struck by Christ's terrible judgment of the bishop of Laodicea: "Oh, that thou wert cold or hot! So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:15, 16.) Just as a man who is eager for a refreshing drink of water is so disgusted when lukewarm water enters his mouth, that he immediately spits it out, so the holy God is so disgusted by those who regard His revealed Word as an indifferent thing and equate error with truth, that He rejects them from His presence. — The theory of different directions leading to one goal, invented and held by unbelievers and unionistic, false Lutherans, is also nonsensical. For just as it is not possible for a number of travelers to all reach the same city if they take paths in different directions, so also is it impossible to reach one and the same destination in the spiritual realm by following different directions. Where there are different directions, a very different goal is always reached. — The orthodox Lutheran church certainly knows how to carry those in its midst who have gone astray out of weakness in order to bring them to repentance through punishment and instruction from God's Word. However, if this does not succeed and those who are stubbornly in error reveal themselves, our church no longer recognizes them as brothers, but separates itself from them. The orthodox church can therefore never tolerate or justify error or false doctrine; it can never enter into union with falsehood. If, for example, a pastor wanted to present false doctrine and his listeners tolerated it, did not protest or punish him, or did not renounce him, we would have to consider them erroneous and possibly even heretical. For one rightly judges a parishioner by his preacher, just as one judges a church by its confession. Therefore, even if we readily admit that there are some honest souls in, for example, the Reformed church whom we must consider to be dear Christians and brothers if we know them well, we can never unite with them in church. The United church, on the other hand, is the church in which false doctrines, or at least false teachers, are tolerated and regarded as brethren. It is true that the United churches object, that they also follow God's Word, that they accept the confessions of both churches, Lutheran and Reformed, where they agree, and where this is not the case, they decide according to the principle of evangelical doctrinal freedom from God's Word. But even this is nothing but a hypocritical evasion and deliberate godlessness, since the Unionists do not confess a *third* correct doctrine above the divergent doctrines in question, but rather those among them who are Lutheran hold and declare the

Lutheran doctrine to be the correct one, and those who are Reformed hold and declare the Reformed doctrine to be the correct one. Let us also listen to the fathers. First

Luther. He writes: “The holy church fails and stumbles and even errs, as this is taught by the Lord’s Prayer; but it neither defends nor justifies its error, but humbly begs for pardon and corrects its lapse. Therefore it is forgiven so that its failing is no longer accounted as a sin. *If I am not to recognize by its obedience or its hardened disobedience, nor distinguish the true church from the false, I can no longer speak of any church.* Then we may honor and regard as the holy church all heretics as also all factions and sects, for they are no worse than is the church of the pope, if indeed malicious disobedience toward God is not deleterious. But the papistic church is no better, because it maliciously disobeys God in the same way and perverts His Word; in addition, it justifies itself as being right as no other sects and heretics.” (*Brief wegen meines Buchs von der Winkelmesse* [Letter concerning My Book on the Private Mass]. 1534. Walch XIX, p. 1579. Walther: *Die evang.-luth. Kirche* x., pp. 27 and 28. [*The True Visible Church* etc., pp. 22–23.]

Furthermore *W. Baier*: “The unity of the church is opposed also by syncretism or the fusion into brotherly and ecclesiastical concord of parties disagreeing in religion, despite the disagreement, so that there are tolerated either the doctrinal errors in the dissenting part or at least the erring persons themselves within the ecclesiastical communion as brethren in Christ or coheirs of eternal life, which toleration is wrong, even if the latter are regarded as *weak* and *erring*, but nevertheless as *brethren* who participate in the same divine service. Here indeed it is certain that the unlearned who through invincible ignorance are so given to certain errors that nevertheless by God’s grace they retain the saving faith, *might be suffered* as weak brethren were they known to us. *But in this connection we speak of the dissenting part in view of the public ministry and the doctrine of faith and life, as it is publicly preached, as also in view of the sacraments as they are administered, namely, corruptly, so that therefore the members of such a visible communion are regarded per se, inasmuch as they are members of it, and not in view of that which belongs to them per accidens [accidentally].* — *Such toleration of errors, first, is in opposition to the Scripture passages which command us to preserve the whole Christian doctrine free from error* (2 Thess. 2:15), to keep the good thing committed unto us (2 Tim. 1:14), that is, to keep it intact, uncurtailed and unadulterated, and to continue in the things which we have learned (2 Tim. 3:14). But the doctrine will not be kept pure if opposing errors are tolerated at the same time and in an equal manner or are permitted to become mingled with it. Secondly, such toleration is in opposition to the duty of *reproving* imposed upon faithful teachers by God, through which [errors] are rebuked and condemned (cf. Titus 1:9, 13; 2 Tim. 4:2; 3:16), to which correspond the examples of Christ (Matt. 5:12 ff.; 16:6) and of Paul (Gal. 1:6). Thirdly, such toleration is *very dangerous*, for those errors and corruptions, unless they are restrained, assailed, and condemned, will spread ever more widely; the truth of the doctrine is rendered doubtful and suspicious, or at least it is regarded as a matter of indifference; and finally those that err are confirmed, and the deceivers are given a chance to infect ever more [people]. *But the toleration of erring persons, since it pertains not merely to the unlearned, but to the entire communion, and therefore at the same time to the very public ministry and the heretical teachers, is in opposition to the commands to convince, rebuke, and avoid false teachers and propagators of errors* (Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 6:14, 17; Gal. 1:8; 5:12; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Tim. 6:3; Titus 3:10).” (*Comp. theol. posit.* [part] III, [chap.] 13, 37 [pp. 665, 671]. Walther: *Die evang.-luth. Kirche* x., pp. 34–35. [*The True Visible Church* etc., pp. 28–29.]

Thesis 3.

Every man is obligated to confess the true visible church and, if he has the opportunity, to adhere to it.

This thesis is therefore also important for our purpose. Whoever is convinced that there can, should, and does exist a true visible church, as stated above, must also admit that every person has the duty to join it. But the opinion that one has the freedom to join this or that church flows from unbelief that there really can be such a true visible church of God. But what does David say in

Ps. 26:6–8: “I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord: that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.” So the prophet is referring here to the true Church. In this alone dwells the glory of God, because 1. here only is His Word valid and because 2. here only is it taught that we are justified by grace alone through faith in the Gospel, which is heard here in preaching, absolution, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. In the false church of the works-righteous, on the other hand, God is deprived of his glory. It would be just as absurd as godless to say: I have contributed something to my physical life, to my creation, through my own works or merits. But it is even more frightening and ungodly to say: I have contributed something, even if only the slightest, to the attainment of spiritual and eternal life. Anyone who thinks this way is a robber of God’s honor and is cursed. And yet this happens in the false church. Here people do not thank and praise God, but themselves. But the true Church is the church of thanksgiving, and in it all the miracles of the Lord are preached. That is why David loves this church so much and sticks to it. The passage

Matt. 10:32–33: “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” — is likewise a main passage to prove that one should adhere to the right, i.e., the true visible church; not because, as the papists erroneously claim, it is only through this that one is in the Church at all, a Christian and saved, but because it is a duty to *confess*. And this is necessary, not for the sake of God, but for the sake of ourselves and our fellow redeemed. For it is God’s will that all men should be saved through the Gospel. Christians, however, are to preach it to and confess it before the world, not as though they all had a duty or a necessity to be public servants of the Church, but in such a way that they adhere to the true visible church, hear the pure Gospel in it, with it confess and defend the same against opposition. In this way the Church is a wholesome leaven in the world.

In *Luke 9:26* the Lord Christ says: “*For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father’s, and of the holy angels.*” All those who do not profess the church of the pure Word, or who adhere to a false doctrine, such as the Reformed, are ashamed of the words of Christ. An excellent example of faithful confession and adherence to the true visible church, on the other hand, is given to us by the first Christians in Jerusalem, of whom

Acts 2:41 and 42 testifies that they continued steadfastly not only in the apostles’ doctrine, but also in the *fellowship*, i.e., they professed the orthodox church, even though doing so was associated with great danger to life and limb. They realized that it was not enough to believe the pure truth for themselves, but that they were also obligated to confess this truth publicly. — Therefore, if Nicodemus had remained as he once was when he came to Jesus by night, in woeful shyness of confession, he would not have been a Christian and would not have been saved — which is why, precisely with *this* visit in mind, the Lord Christ said to him: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (*John 3:3.*) The passage

Heb. 10:24, 25 reads: “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” The “forsaking” here does not refer to staying away from a church meeting or a public worship service, but rather to keeping away from the fellowship of the orthodox church in general, although it is certain that anyone who misses the worship service and the church meeting is also already leaving the Church.

In Matt. 18:17 the Lord says: “And if he shall neglect to hear them [the witnesses], tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Note this word against the enthusiasts who pretend that Christ has thrown the truth into the world, as it were, and that anyone who wants to accept it can do so. But that is wrong. Christ has established a kingdom through which to save the world, and, according to His word and will, there really should be a visible church whose voice one is to hear and to which one should profess allegiance.

1 John 2:19 says: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” This passage should be held up to those of other faiths who come to us and speak commendably of us and our confession, but who wish to remain quietly with their faith and in their church, because, as they think, they could also be saved without joining us. Tell such people: If you really held with us, you would also come to us. Either your praise is just hypocrisy or you are acting against your conscience. In the place

2 Tim. 1:8 the apostle writes to Timothy: “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.” This passage provides the proof that and reason why we should also call ourselves “Lutheran.” Paul calls on Timothy to confess not only the word of Jesus, but also him, *Paul*. Whoever confesses Jesus should also confess those who preach Jesus correctly. Some who consider our Lutheran confession to be right deny it before our enemies by denying the Lutheran name. Even if we can take comfort in such denials, these people are hypocrites to whom Christ will one day say: You have betrayed Me! for you have betrayed my faithful witnesses. Or have you never read: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of my brethren and servants, ye have done it unto me”? Of course, we are only talking here about those who consciously deny the true church. For it may well be possible for someone to leave the evangelical-Lutheran church outwardly and yet still remain a true Christian. For example, an awakened Christian lacking in knowledge may come here from Germany to a Lutheran congregation, but, enchanted by the sham spirituality of the Methodists, he may think that true, living Christianity can only be found in that community, and may then join them without having lost his Christianity. — But we see from all this that it is not enough to believe the pure doctrine, but that one must also publicly confess one’s allegiance to the orthodox believers. Also writing about this very well is

Luther: “I see that it is very necessary to admonish those whom Satan is now beginning to persecute. Among them there are some who think that they, when attacked, might escape danger by *if they say: ‘I do not adhere to Luther nor to anyone else but cleave to the holy Gospel and the holy or Roman church; for then we shall remain unmolested.’ And yet they retain my doctrine in their heart as evangelical and hold to it.* Truly, such a subterfuge will not help them, and it means as much as denying Christ. Therefore, I beseech them earnestly to beware. It is true that you by no means should say: ‘I am a Lutheran or a papist,’ for none died for you nor is your Master than Christ alone, and you should regard yourself as a Christian. *But if you believe that Luther’s doctrine is evangelical and the pope’s unevangelical, you must not cast Luther aside; otherwise you will cast aside his doctrine, which you regard as that of Christ.* So you must say: ‘Luther may be a scoundrel or a saint, for that I do not care; yet the doctrine is not his but that of Christ Himself.’ For you see that the

tyrants have in mind not [merely] to kill Luther but to destroy his doctrine. *It is on account of his doctrine that they attack you and ask you whether you are a Lutheran.* Here surely you must not reply evasively, but you must frankly confess Christ, whether He be preached by Luther, Claus, or George. The person you may ignore, but the doctrine you must confess. For thus St. Paul writes to Timothy 2 Tim. 1:8: “Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our *Lord*, nor of *me*, who am bound for his sake.^[4]” If it would have sufficed for Timothy [merely] to confess the Gospel, Paul would not have commanded him not to be ashamed of himself, yet not of the *person* of Paul, but of Paul *as a prisoner on account of the Gospel*. If then Timothy would have said: ‘I hold neither to *Paul* nor to *Peter* but to *Christ*,’ though he knew that *Peter* and *Paul* taught Christ, he thereby would have *denied Christ Himself*. For Christ says Matt. 10 of those who preach Him: ‘He that receiveth you receiveth me; he that despiseth you despiseth *me*.’^[5] Why is that? Because in thus treating His *messengers* (who bring His Word), it is as if they treated Christ Himself and His Word in the same way.” (*Meinung von beider Gestalt des Sacraments zu nehmen* [“Opinion on Receiving the Sacrament in Both Kinds”]. 1522. Walch XX, 136. 137. Walther: *Kirche und Amt*. 1852. Pp. 164–65. [*Church and Ministry*, pp. 139–40.]])

Thesis 4.

Every man is obligated to avoid heterodox churches and, if he belongs to one, to renounce it and leave it.

This we learn from:

Ps. 26:4, 5: “I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked.” — The vain persons from whom David keeps his distance are precisely the false spirits who stand on their own vain wisdom and righteousness and not on the Word of God. Further it is said:

Psalm 94:20: “Thou wilt never be one with the throne of iniquity, which frameth mischief by a law.” — *Throne* [Stuhl] here means “teaching-chair” [Lehrstuhl] or “pulpit.” With those who misinterpret, i.e., falsify the law, i.e., God’s word in general, God will never agree, but is their Enemy. But if He is their Enemy, how could we maintain friendship and unity with them? Therefore, not only with those who, as unbelievers, do not want to know anything at all about God’s Word, but also with those who misinterpret this Word or turn it into false teaching, we should and must disagree. We are commanded the very same also in

Jer. 15:19: “If thou holdest to me, then will I hold to thee, and thou shalt remain my preacher: and if thou teachest the righteous to separate themselves from the wicked, thou shalt be my teacher: and before thou shouldst hold to them, they must first return unto thee.” Here, in fact, we are also commanded to separate from the ungodly. People object: Are all members of a false church ungodly? But to this we reply: Certainly not all; there are also Christians among them, but the ungodly — namely the false teachers and stiff-necked defenders of error — are precisely to blame for the fact that such a heterodox fellowship exists and remains, and that is why we must renounce it and keep away from it. From the passage

Rom. 16:17: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” — we see, however, that it is not we who, when we separate ourselves and keep away false believers, disrupt the unity of the Church and cause it to splinter, as we are

4 [Luther’s rendering]

5 [Luther combines Matt. 10 and Luke 10.]

falsely accused of doing, but rather them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary* to the pure, wholesome doctrine of the Word of God.

In 1 Cor. 11:19 St. Paul says: “*For there must be also heresies [ῥοτten] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*” — Heresy, according to the original text (αἵρεσις), means a fellowship of people who hold an erroneous doctrine against one or more articles of faith, that is, a sect. But the one who separates himself from such sects is revealed to be an orthodox Christian. Christians who unknowingly remain among them may well remain Christians through God’s wonderfully gracious preservation, but they are not revealed to us as such.

1 Cor. 10:18 says, among other things: “*Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*” From this we learn what is necessary for our separation from the false church: namely, that we abstain from all worship fellowship with it.^[6] For just as those Corinthians who ate of the pagan sacrifice to idols entered into fellowship with the pagans, so even now a Christian enters into fellowship with the false church through participation in false worship.

Matt. 7:15 is the well-known but unfortunately little-heeded warning of Christ: “*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*” Some who listen to false teachers say: “We pick out the best of what they preach,” but we ask: “Is that what it means to beware of them, or is that running right into the gaping maw of the wolf?” Christ says: Do not listen to them! And truly, if they were not heard, they would have to stop preaching. After all, most of them are also belly-servers who preach only for the sake of good money. Luther could say that all he needed to overthrow the papacy was a great sack of money. — The chief proof texts for our thesis are also:

1 Tim. 6:3–5: “*If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud [verdüßert], knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*”

Titus 3:10: “*A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.*” — A heretical person is precisely such a one who stubbornly errs in an article of faith.

Acts 20:30 and 31: “*Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.*” — The Unionists also want to reject manifest unbelievers, but not the heterodox. This idea, however, is contradicted by this passage, in which we are warned against fellowship with those who hold perverse or false teachings.

2 John 10, 11: “*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*” This is a chief proof text. People like to call John the disciple of love, but if he were to preach this passage to the world today, they would stone him to death. But he speaks divine truth. He also says beforehand: “*Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.*” That is why one also should *not bid* such people God speed, i.e., not as though he should avoid civil courtesy towards them and the most necessary interaction with them, but rather that he should avoid all such contact with false believers from which they could infer our sympathy with them, for that would mean denying Christ. Marriages with those of other faiths are therefore dangerous, especially if the man is the heterodox party. What a heavy cross the orthodox party then has to bear, and how many thereby often succumb and lose their faith and good conscience completely! Even overly close business connections with false believers are not advisable. The apostle

6 [Note that Walther does not limit this discussion to *communion*-fellowship: aller gottesdienſtlichen Gemeinſchaft.]

even says of such a person: “*Receive him not into your house,*” i.e., such people, except in the case of their being in dire need, should not be entertained in a friendly manner, nor given any support whatsoever for their ecclesiastical purposes.

Finally, 2 Cor. 6:14 reads: “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?*” Many people think that this passage does not apply to the *heterodox*, since it is talking only about *unbelievers*. But they are mistaken. The Union is based on nothing but unbelief, in that it accepts, authorizes, or even tolerates the *heterodox* and those who publicly teach against God’s Word. It is therefore actually the *unbelievers* who build the Union temple. Whoever joins the Union also joins the wicked and *unbelievers* who are in it as a *matter of principle*. An orthodox Christian should and must therefore seriously flee such communities and prefer never to receive communion or rather die than enjoy a Zwinglian communion. We are well aware that the false believers accuse us of taking great pleasure in disputes and quarrels over pure doctrine and in disunity in the Church. Oh, they do not suspect that it is a heavy cross for us. Yet God’s Word binds us. The Savior says: “*He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*” (Matt. 10:37); yes, He says: “*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*” (Luke 14:26.) In these latter words the Lord means to say: Whoever is not resolved to do, does not actually do, something out of love for Me which might perhaps be regarded by his own parents or other relatives as an act of hatred, cannot be a true Christian. Thus a faithful Lutheran may have a father who is tender, but blinded by heterodoxy, and who approaches him with many moving words and pleas, yes, with tears and entreaties, that his son might not belong to the Lutherans, that (in his father’s eyes) stiff-necked, harmful sect, that he might not, by accepting or defending the Lutheran name and confession, cover his father’s gray head with shame and bring him down with sorrow to the grave. And yet, in this case, such a Lutheran Christian must not yield or give way; he must not look to his father’s sorrow and sighing, but only to the Word of his God. But how will the blind world judge this obedience to Scripture? It will condemn his act as the most shameful hatred and malice against his physical father. — To endure this is no small thing, but it is necessary.

The Smalcald Articles in the Appendix [Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope] say: “This being the case, all Christians should beware most diligently that they do not make themselves partakers of such godless doctrine, blasphemy, and unjust tyranny, but they should flee from and curse the pope and all his members or adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist, as Christ has commanded: ‘Beware of false prophets.’ And Paul commands that we should avoid false teachers and execrate them as an abomination. And 2 Cor. 6 he says: ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what communion hath light with darkness?’ etc. *It is indeed difficult for us to separate ourselves from so many lands and people and teach a different doctrine. But here is God’s command that everyone should take care and not consent to those who teach false doctrine or intend to uphold it by tyranny.*” (Müller *Symbolischen B[ü]cher* 336–37. [Par. 41, 42; *Church and Ministry*, p. 116.]) and

Luther: “Because so many and great warnings and admonitions of God have been addressed to them (the sacramentarians), . . . I must let them go and avoid them as the *ἀυτοκατακρίτος* [*autokatakritos*] Titus 3:11. For knowingly and maliciously they want to be condemned. *Nor will I have fellowship with any of them, nether by letters, writings, words, nor deeds, as the Lord commands Matt. 18:17, whether he be Stenkefeld [Schwenkfeld], Zwingli, or whoever he may be. I regard them all as one ilk [R[uch]en], for they refuse to believe that the Lord’s bread in the Holy Supper is His true or real body, which the wicked and Judas*

receive orally as well as St. Peter and all [other] saints. Whoever refuses to believe this (I declare), let him not molest me with letters, writings, or words. Let him not expect me to have fellowship with him, since that will never happen.” (*Kurzes Bekenntniß vom heil. Sacrament wider die Schwärmer* [“Brief Confession of the Holy Sacrament against the Enthusiasts”]. 1544. Walch XX, 2211. 12. [*Church and Ministry*, p. 126.]

Thesis 5.

Even in heterodox fellowships there are true Christians who remain so out of weakness of knowledge.

Read *Gal. 1:2*, where the holy apostle still calls the Galatians a *church* [*Gemeinde*], Greek *ἐκκλησία*, or German *Kirche*, although in chap. 3 he must speak of them as foolish people who did not obey the truth and had become a sect. But he calls them a “*church*” for this reason: because there were still *true Christians* among them. Furthermore

Rev. 2:24: “*But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.*” — Earlier, the Son of God speaks to the same church (v. 20): “*Notwithstanding I have a small thing [ein Kleines] against thee*” and so forth. This is holy satire. What you regard as a *small thing*, Christ wants to say, is something great, namely a terrible sin, “*that thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.*” So the church at Thyatira was obviously sectarian. Nevertheless, our text above now follows as clear proof indeed that there are those in the sects who have not taken false doctrine into their hearts, but are stuck in the sect because they have not known the depths of Satan.

1 *Kings 19:14, 18* speaks of Elijah’s lament over faithless Israel, which had fallen away from the Lord, and of God’s consolation to the prophet. So much did the false believers prevail in the Jewish church that the dear prophet in his despondency [*Anfechtung*] could believe that he alone was left. But God revealed to him that there yet remained seven thousand in Israel who with Elijah had not bowed their knees unto Baal. — Wherever *God’s Word* is still present *in its essence*, there a church also remains, and so even in the sects there still are hidden sincere Christian souls. The account in

2 *Samuel 15:11* also shows this: “*And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.*” As is well known, the nefarious Absalom secretly prepared a rebellion against his father and king David by luring and binding his subjects to himself with all kinds of deceptive words. Some good people, who did not see through his evil intentions, thought that he was gathering the people around himself as the king’s son and according to the king’s will, and so followed him with the legs, even though their hearts were set on their king David. This is an apt picture of the Christians in the sects. Absalom represents the false prophets who rebel against King David, i.e., Christ. But they do it under a pious pretense. That is why sincere Christians often do not see through their wickedness and follow them outwardly, while their hearts are set on Christ. Our confessions also testify to the truth expressed here. Thus, the *Formula of Concord*:

“As to the condemnations, censures, and rejections of godless doctrines, and especially of that which has arisen concerning the Lord’s Supper, these indeed had to be expressly set forth in this our declaration and thorough explanation and decision of controverted articles (in the *Formula of Concord*), not only that all should guard against these condemned doctrines, but also for certain other reasons could in no way

have been passed by. Thus, as it is in no way our design and purpose to condemn those men who *err from a certain simplicity of mind*, but are not blasphemers against the truth of the heavenly doctrine, much less, indeed, *entire churches*, which are either under the Roman Empire of the German nation or elsewhere; nay, rather has it been our intention and disposition in this manner openly to censure and condemn only the fanatical opinions and their obstinate and blasphemous teachers. . . . For we have no doubt whatever that even in those *churches which have hitherto not agreed with us* in all things many godly and by no means wicked men *are found*.” (Preface to the Book of Concord of 1580 [par. 19 (unmarked); *Triglot*, p. 19].)

None of our confessional writings is more reviled by our opponents as intolerant than the Formula of Concord, and yet in the quoted passage the Formula states above all that, although our church stands on the Word of God alone and not on the doctrines of men, nevertheless, our church is not to be regarded as the only one that can save, outside of which no one can be saved, but rather that there are Christians in other churches as well, and that we do not condemn these Christians, but rather only the false doctrine and its obstinate teachers and advocates. — This passage is also highly important for our current question in that (as noted above) the spokesmen of the “*Church-Council*” want to conclude from it how it is quite possible to admit simple, dear Christians or their preachers from other church fellowships to communion- or pulpit-fellowship, and how we, by excluding them from our altar and pulpit,^[7] make ourselves downright guilty of un-Lutheran practice. But how wrong it is to make this conclusion from the above passage, we will hear later.

Thesis 6.

[[]]Those who are convinced of the partial apostasy of the ecclesiastical fellowship to which they adhere, and yet remain in it, do not belong to the weak, but are either lukewarm, whom the Lord wants to spew out of his mouth, or Epicurean mockers of religion, who speak with Pilate in their hearts: What is truth?

If it is said that there are also Christians in heterodox churches, this is certainly correct; there are Christians in them, but weak Christians, namely those who are caught up in error without realizing it. But if they are convinced of the error, remain in the sect and yet want to be regarded as weak, that is hypocrisy. They are either lukewarm or Epicurean mockers of religion. For what does the Lord say? He says:

[Luke 11:23](#): “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”

Anyone who hears the truth and pretends to believe it and does not confess it publicly is not sincere in his Christianity. Neutrality is condemned in the kingdom of God. He who is not publicly for the truth is still against it; he does not gather, but scatters the Church of God, as much as is in him. Christ goes on to say :

[Matthew 10:34-37](#): “Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth. I have not come to send peace, but a sword; for I have come to provoke a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a cord against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies shall be his own household.” This may be noted in particular by those who, although they recognize the errors of their sect, nevertheless have reservations about publicly renouncing it and adhering to the orthodox church out of timidity and fear of battle, the cross and all kinds of temporal adversity. — But truly, the battle in the kingdom of God and for

7 [Walther again makes mention of fellowship other than communion-fellowship.]

the sake of the Word of God, the battle against the devil, is a holy, blessed battle. It is ordained for all true Christians; the church here is always a militant church. They are fools who think that a quiet, comfortable, outward peace is far more edifying and more conducive to the prosperity of the Church. No, nothing is more dangerous, nothing more terrible, than when a so-called peace of God prevails in the Church. — The Savior says: “I have come to kindle a fire on earth, and what would I rather have, for it was already burning!” [[Luke 12:49](#)] And his servant Luther, well experienced and tested in holy controversy, often points out the great blessing that follows when spirits burst upon one another in spiritual warfare. In Job's house it looked like a devil's synagogue because of the quarrels, crosses and mischief, and yet it was a true house of God. The unchurched hate strife for the sake of the word of God. At most they want to fight against unbelief, but not against false belief and false doctrine. They do not want to know that the latter is far more dangerous to the Church than the former. — The above-mentioned passage

[Revelation 3:15-16](#): “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot,” etc., also condemns as lukewarm those who think that it is not right at all to change one's religion. It is true that he who has the true Christian religion must not change it for another, if he hopes to be saved; but woe to him who recognizes that his faith, doctrine and church are not the right ones, and then does not change them for the true, orthodox church! — Adam would never have become a Christian or Luther an evangelical man if both had not repentantly abandoned their false religion, the former his devilish service, the latter his papism. Whoever therefore declares our Lutheran doctrine and church to be right, but nevertheless remains in the false church and does not convert to us, brings a heavy condemnation upon himself. He then knows the way of truth — but does not walk it as Christ speaks:

[Luke 12:47-48](#): “But the man who knows his Lord's will and has not prepared himself, nor done according to his will, will suffer many stripes.” — But so that no one can excuse himself for remaining in the false church because of his ignorance caused by unfaithfulness and laziness, our Lord Christ also says

[Matthew 13:12](#): “To everyone who has, it will be given that he may have the fullness; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.” So to whom God has given some measure of spiritual gifts, e.g. knowledge, and he uses them faithfully, for the honest study of God's Word, the gracious God will let them increase and grow. And conversely, he who does not have, i.e. who does not faithfully use the gifts of knowledge bestowed upon him, will fall back more and more and finally lose them completely. If, for example, a Reformed person realizes by God's grace that his doctrine is wrong in one point, and he now faithfully uses this light and investigates further, God will also help him to gradually convince himself of *all* the errors of the Reformed church and then to fall in with the Lutheran doctrine and church. If, on the other hand, he does not make proper use of the first grace, all light of knowledge will be extinguished in him again and he will become all the more deeply entangled in error. — According to [Romans 14:23](#): “But he who doubts” (namely, whether eating meat is right in itself) “and yet eats it, is condemned, for it is not of faith”, — therefore he also commits a damnable sin who is in doubt about the orthodoxy of his church and yet remains in it, for he thereby proves that he is indifferent to sin in general. Listen also to

Luther, in his conversation with George Major, says, among other things: “He who holds his doctrine, faith and confession to be true, right and certain, cannot stand in the same stable with others who teach false doctrine or are inclined to it, nor can he ever give good words to the devil and his scales. A teacher who is silent about heresies, and yet wants to be a true teacher, is worse than a public fanatic, and does greater harm with his hypocrisy than a heretic, and is not to be trusted; he is a wolf and a fox, a hireling and a belly server, etc., and may not teach, speak, believe, or be a true teacher. and may despise and hand over doctrine, word, faith, sacrament, churches and schools; he is either secretly in cahoots with the

enemies, or is a doubter and a windy one, and wants to see where it will go, whether Christ or the devil will prevail, or is completely and entirely unsure of himself, and not worthy to be called a disciple, let alone a teacher, and wants to anger no one, nor speak Christ's word, nor hurt the devil and the world." (Walch XVII, 1477. Walther: *Kirche und Amt* p. 129. 1st ed. [*StL 18, 1180; Triglotta, „Historical Introductions“, p. 94; not in Am. Ed.*]) Very important is also what J. Spener, the mildest of all Lutheran theologians of the 17th century, who is often called the grandfather of the United church, says in this regard:

“Since Christianity has been divided into more parts by God's providence because of false doctrine that has crept in, I can name no other brethren than those who profess the Lutheran church.” (Agreement with the Augsburg Confession p. 226.)

The same: “As far as the external brotherhood is concerned, which is based on the fellowship of the faith that one believes, or the religion, all Lutherans are my brothers, since they profess and hold to one faith; but no Reformed person, as long as he remains such, is my brother, for he professes another, and indeed such a religion, in whose teaching I believe to recognize dangerous errors.” (Last Theological Concerns. Cap. II, p. 605.)

How gravely do those sin who seek their worship in false churches, especially here, where there is complete religious freedom and where they only have to suffer the expense and inconvenience of traveling to hear God's pure Word in a Lutheran church!

Thesis 7.

Although the primary purpose of the holy Sacraments is to be instruments and means by which the promises of grace are offered, communicated and appropriated, as well as seals, testimonies and pledges by which these promises are sealed, it is also a subordinate purpose of the sacraments to be distinctive signs of confession and bonds of fellowship of worship. Communion fellowship is therefore church fellowship.

This thesis is so necessary here because, as already noted above, our opponents say: If you Lutherans acknowledge that there are Christians in other churches, you must also admit that they also share in your sacraments, for these are, after all, pledges and seals of the divine graces that belong to all Christians. On the other hand, we now say that the sacraments are this, first and foremost, and you would be right if they were nothing other than this. But they are also distinctive signs of confession and bonds of worshipful communion. We therefore certainly allow Catholics or pagans as such to hear the Word of God with us; but those who are allowed to partake of the sacraments must be recognized as being in the true Christian faith, for in so doing we are, as it were, impressing upon them a seal of brotherly fellowship. This applies both to Holy Baptism and to Holy Communion. And Christ also ordained both sacraments for this purpose. For the Gospel is not a philosophical system, but a fruitful power of God. It is preached so that there may be a church in which the faithful come together in unity. And the sacraments are, as it were, the sacred bands and fences within which Christians face the world. So in the Old Testament, for example, of circumcision, it says

Gen. 17:11 says: “But you shall circumcise the foreskin of your flesh. This shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you.” Likewise

[Rom. 4:11](#): “But he received the sign of circumcision” (Abraham) “as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he still had in his foreskin.” From this we see that it was not by the outward hearing of the word of God in Israel, but by circumcision, that membership of the people of God was to be recognized. Whoever wanted to belong to the people of God had to be circumcised. And if he then stood in righteous faith in the promised Messiah, this circumcision was the holy covenant sign and seal of the righteousness of faith that had been attained. And it was the same with the Passover.

[Ex. 12:43, 48](#): “And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'This is the way to keep the Passover; no stranger shall eat of it. But if a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the LORD, he shall circumcise every male; then he shall prepare himself to do so and be like a native of the land, for no uncircumcised person shall eat of it.'” The Passover was therefore also a sign of the covenant between Israel and the Gentiles. The latter were allowed, indeed expected, to come to the proclamation of the word of God, but no one, not even a believing proselyte, but only a circumcised Israelite was allowed to partake of the Passover meal. The same applies to the sacraments of the New Testament. Of holy baptism. Baptism it says in [1 Cor. 12:13](#): “For we are all baptized into one body.” Whoever is baptized is thereby declared to be a member of the same mystical body to which I belong as a Christian, and through baptism I bear witness to a baptized person: you are my dear fellow Christian, my brother in Christ. It is the same with Holy Communion. Holy Communion.

[1 Cor. 10:17](#) reads: “For if we are one bread, we are many, one body, inasmuch as we are all partakers of one bread.” Thus, by eating of the one bread of the sacrament, all Christians become mystically, that is, spiritually, morally, or representationally one body, and through the act of eating together a person is declared to be one in Christ with all Christians. For just as bread is baked from an infinite number of little grains of flour, so that it is impossible to separate these little grains from one another again, so also all Christians are one in Christ through the Lord's Supper and are many thousand times more intimately united than even body and soul into one organism. They are in fact one. One God dwells in them, one Spirit reigns in them, they all have one Savior in them and one Lord Jesus speaks from them. — And now consider the atrocious sin committed by those who serve communion to such people and profess to be one and brothers with them, even though they are of a different faith and confession.

[1 Cor. 11:20](#): “When ye come together, do ye not hold the Lord's Supper?” The apostle rebukes the Corinthians for celebrating the Lord's Supper without practicing the brotherly fellowship in love that it testifies to. So here too we see that the Lord's Supper is also to be a bond of divine fellowship. Everyone should come to the sermon, but only Christians who confess the one true Christian faith with their mouths should come to the Lord's Supper. Therefore, anyone who goes to Holy Communion in a Lutheran church He publicly testifies before the world: “I adhere to this church, to the doctrine preached here, to the faith professed here and to all the confessors belonging here, and the pastor who administers the sacrament testifies to the same. And so it is that

[Acts 2:42, 46](#) and chapter [20:7](#). The Holy Spirit praises how the Christians in Jerusalem and Troas in Asia Minor proved their unity of faith and brotherhood in the breaking of bread, i.e. in the celebration of Holy Communion. If Christians of false faith come to our Lord's Supper with our knowledge, they and we are hypocrites. They appear to be Lutherans and yet they are not. —

All these passages of Scripture thus confirm the truth of our thesis. If the leaders of the “*Church-Council*” would accept them, they would have to give up their false principles and practices, but they do not accept them until they have recognized that there really is a true visible church of God in an unrestricted sense. They do not tell their communicants of other faiths that by partaking of Holy

Communion they are joining us. They leave them in error and plunge them and themselves into the sin of hypocrisy. As necessary and important as it is, therefore, to testify above all to the Reformed and the unchurched that the sacraments are true means of grace and pledges of our faith, the time has also come when we must confess to the Unionist Lutherans that the sacraments are also signs and bonds of worship and brotherly fellowship. Our church also confesses this in its symbols. Thus the Augsburg Confession: “Of the use of the sacraments it is taught that the sacraments are instituted, not only to be signs, so that Christians may be known outwardly.” (*‘Notae professionis inter homines’* = signs of confession among men). [Art. 13 \[Triglotta, p. 49\]](#) The Apology adds in the corresponding article: “Like watchwords, color of the court.” [\[Triglotta, p. 309\]](#)

Apology: “The Christian church is not only in the company of outward signs, but is especially in communion with the eternal goods in the heart, such as the Holy Spirit, faith, fear and love of God. And yet this same church also has outward signs by which it is known; namely, as God's Word goes forth purely, where the sacraments are administered according to it, there certainly is the church, there are Christians, and this same church alone is called in Scripture Christ's body.... We have said nothing new. For Paul, speaking to the Ephesians in chapter 5, immediately says what the church is, and also sets forth the outward signs, namely the Gospel and the sacraments. For thus he says: “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, and purify it by the washing of water in the word.” (Art. 7 [\[Of the Church, 5-7; Triglotta, p. 227\]](#)).

Luther: “That Christ, in addition to the first part, adds whoever believes and speaks of Baptism, is due to the command of the external ministry in Christendom, as he also summarizes [Matt. 28:19](#) in the two parts: Teach all Gentiles and baptize them, etc. And show first of all that nevertheless the faith of which this Gospel preaches must not remain secret and hidden, as if it were enough that each one, when he hears the Gospel, would go and believe for himself alone, and not confess his faith before others; but that it might be made manifest, not only where the Gospel is preached, but also accepted and believed, that is, where the Church and Christ's kingdom stand in the world, he wants to bring us together and keep us through this divine sign of baptism. For if it were without this, and we should be scattered without outward gathering and signs, Christianity could not be spread out, nor be preserved to the end. But now he wants to bind us together through such a divine gathering so that the Gospel will go on and on and through our confession others will also be brought to it. Baptism is therefore a public testimony of the teaching of the Gospel and of our faith before the whole world, so that one can see where and with whom this Lord reigns.” (Church Postils. Ueber das Evangelium am Tag der Himmelfahrt Christi. Walch XI, 1330. fg. [\[StL 11, 982-983; Am. Ed. ?\]](#))

The same: “To teach and practice such doctrine among Christians he has appointed that they come together and hold two ceremonies, that is, baptism and the sacrament of his body and blood; as is evident in the Gospels and St. Paul's Epistles. Paul, wherein not only such doctrine, faith, and grace are received and daily increased, but also that it may be publicly confessed as a fact before the world who is a Christian or not, and whether he will freely confess such doctrine without fear, to the honor of God and as a comforting example to his neighbor, as he himself says: These things do in remembrance of me, [1 Cor. 11:24-25](#), which is nothing other than publicly remembering, confessing, praising, and thanking him, as St. Paul interprets it, saying, “Do these things to proclaim the Lord's death.” [1 Cor. 11:26](#) These are all the things we are to do toward God, namely, preach and believe his word and receive the sacraments as a sign and confession. From this then follows the cross upon those who profess such doctrine.” (Instruction and

proof that the Gospel doctrine is to be confessed with the mouth and with the deed. To Count Albrecht of Mansfeld. 1523. X, 2720. [[StL 10, 2211-2212](#); not in *Am. Ed.*])

The same: “The sacrament is a manifest confession and should have manifest ministers, because it says, as Christ says, that it should be done in remembrance of him, that is, as St. Paul says, to proclaim or preach the Lord's death until he comes.” (Letters to Wolfg. Brauer on the Home Communion. 1536. X, 2738 fg. [[StL 10, 2225](#); not in *Am. Ed.*])

The same: “Although there has also been such abuse in the papacy that particles have been kept in houses for their own mass, etc., yet for the sake of example and other reasons I will not and cannot advise it. Because anyone would want to use it in such a way that the common church and assembly would be deserted and desolate, if it were to be a public and common confession.” (Concerns as to whether the sacrament in both forms should be administered in secret at home. 1635. X, 2739 fg. [[StL 10, 2226](#); not in *Am. Ed.*])

The same: “(Now we want to say more about the way in which the Most Blessed Sacrament is to be administered to the people. . . In this we should have the same manner or order that is observed at baptism, namely, that first of all the bishop or pastor should be informed who those are who wish to receive the sacrament, and they themselves should ask him to administer the sacrament to them, so that he may know their names and what their lives are. Sacrament, so that he may know their names and the kind of life they lead. After that, even if they ask for it, he should not admit them before they have given an answer to their faith, and especially to the question of whether they understand what the sacrament is... We want those who do not know how to answer the above-mentioned questions to be excluded and separated from the communion of this sacrament, just as those who lack the wedding garment). . . . The partaking of this sacrament in the congregation is a part of Christian confession, whereby those who go to it confess before God, angels and men that they are Christians. For this reason it must be carefully observed that some do not secretly steal the sacrament.” (Way to hold Christian mass. 1523. X, 2763 fg. [[StL 10, 2247, 2248](#); *Am. Ed.* 53, 32-34])

The same: “Thirdly, God's people or a Christian holy people is known by the holy sacrament of the altar, where it is administered, believed and received according to Christ's institution. For it is also a public sign and sacred sanctuary left behind by Christ, by which his people are sanctified, since they also practice and publicly confess that they are Christians, as they do with the word and with baptism.” (Writings of the Conciliis and Churches. 1539. XVI, 2788. [[StL 16, 2277](#); *Am. Ed.* 41, 152])

J. Gerhard lists among the purposes of Holy Communion that do not belong to the main purposes are “that we testify that we approve of the doctrine which is sounded in the church in which we eat the same bread of Holy Communion with others and drink from the same cup, according to [1 Cor. 10:17](#). Communion and drink from one and the same cup, according to 1 Cor. 10:17: One bread, we are many, one body, inasmuch as we are all partakers of one bread.” (*Loc. de s. coena*. § 214.)

The same: “As by the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments the Church distinguishes herself from secular communities which are outside the Church, so by pure preaching and by the lawful administration of the sacraments she distinguishes herself from the heretical communities which are within the Church.” (*Loc. de ecclesia* § 131.)

The Leipzig theological faculty wrote in 1620: “Thus this sacrament is also a characteristic of the Christian churches. Since we do not recognize the persistent Calvinists as righteous members of our church because of their unbelief, we may not communicate our marks to them, because no greater

annoyance can be given than when religions are thus mixed up.” (Dedekennus’ *Thesaurus*. Vol. I, P. II, fol. 313.)

Judging therefore by good works alone, but especially by the holy Sacraments Christians should prove themselves to be one Church and people of God. The sacraments are to gather the Church and identify its members. A sacrament-goer acts as a preacher by professing to belong to the true Church where he partakes of the sacrament. The spokesmen of the “*Church-Council*” themselves admit that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are marks of the orthodox church. It is therefore all the more abominable a deception, and a lie in God’s name, when they express the seal of orthodoxy to those of other faiths by accepting them for the Lord’s Supper.— In order to justify themselves, they now make the accusation against us that we excommunicate and banish, as it were, those Christians of other faiths whom we refuse communion with us. But this accusation is completely false. We have often said and say again that even in churches of false faith there are still true Christians. But they are under a false banner and sign. Now we cannot and will not give them the right spiritual emblem until they also confess it with us from the heart. Our opponents argue that the sacrament, and even the sacrament mutilated in the sects, is a distinguishing sign of confession of Christianity in general as opposed to pagans, Jews and Turks, and therefore Christians could quite well maintain communion with one another. But this is also erroneous. For if the sacraments are signs of confession, as they are, then they are signs of pure confession. So when someone comes to our altar, we first ask: Do you also believe and confess what we Lutherans believe and confess? And if someone wants to answer: Whether the Lutheran or Reformed faith is the right one, I do not know and do not want to decide, — he should know that he is either a worthless hypocrite or an epicurean scoffer. -For our part, we know that we Lutherans alone have the rightly administered Lord’s Supper. But in the event that others also have it, then it is always true that wherever someone goes to the Lord’s Supper, he professes the doctrine taught there. Our Lord’s Supper is our banner. Whoever does not hold with us Lutherans from the heart should not stand under this banner, and whoever does so nevertheless, we declare to be a traitor.

Thesis 8.

Since Holy Communion is not instituted to make people Christians, but to strengthen the faith of those who are already true Christians, it must not be served to anyone who reveals himself to be a false Christian.

This is clear from the passage

1 Cor. 11:27-30: “Whoever therefore eats of this bread or drinks of the cup of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, that he may not discern the body of the Lord.” Would the mere outward use of Holy Communion alone be salutary? If the outward use of Holy Communion alone were salutary, it would not matter much whom one added to it. But the sacraments do not work *ex opere operato*, i.e. for the sake of the mere work performed. Unbelievers, mere so-called calendar-goers, are unworthy. Unworthy enjoyment, however, leads to God’s judgment, often already, as in Corinth, in all kinds of temporal punishments.

1 Cor. 10:21 also says: “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devil at the same time; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and the devil’s table at the same time.” Of course, this is physically

or bodily possible and unfortunately happens all too often, but morally and spiritually it is impossible. This also includes

Matt. 7:6: “Ye shall not give the holy things to the dogs, neither shall ye cast your pearls before swine”, from which it appears that a preacher is not obliged to give Holy Communion to everyone. Communion to everyone. He should not give it to heretics, unbelievers and obviously carnal people, but only to those whom he cannot prove to be openly unchristian. He also writes about this

Luther: “Although up to now, according to the old custom, everyone who came was allowed to go to the sacrament; yet now it should not remain so, but should be ordered in such a way that whoever wants to take the sacrament is henceforth asked what the sacrament is and what he is seeking, and that he answers.... If you cannot do this, the sacrament should not be given to you ... The sacrament should not be thrown among the people in heaps, as the pope has done. When I preach the Gospel, I do not know to whom it applies; but here I am to take it for granted that it has applied to the one who comes to the Sacrament: I must not cast doubt on it, but be certain that the one to whom I give the Sacrament has grasped the Gospel and believes righteously.” (Church Postils XI, 840. 841. [[StL XI, 614-615](#); [Am. Ed.?](#)])

The same: “No one should be allowed to go to the holy Sacrament, unless he is specially interrogated by his parish priest as to whether he is sent to the holy Sacrament. For St. Paul says in [1 Cor. 11:27](#) that those are guilty of the body and blood of Christ who take it unworthily. Now not only those who take it unworthily dishonor the sacrament, but also those who give it carelessly to the unworthy.” (Instruction of the Visitators. 1528. X, 1943 [[StL 10, 1660](#); [Am. Ed. 40, 296](#)])

Dannhauer: “The teachers should do and go as far as they can. If they can do no more, they should nevertheless keep vexatious sinners from communion. For he who admits a stubborn sinner, of whose wickedness there is sufficient evidence, and gives him the pledge of the forgiveness of sins, sins threefold: with a lying testimony which he communicates; with the increase of damnation; and with the corruption of the body and blood of Christ.” (Catechism Milch. X, 489)

Georg König: “Can a notorious papist or Calvinist be admitted to communion by a Lutheran minister with a clear conscience? Some think that they should be admitted for a double reason: 1. because the Church and its spiritual goods are to be opened to all, closed to none, indeed, here too perhaps that word of Christ has taken place: ‘Come unto me all, and I will refresh you’. [Matthew 11:28](#); 2. because they would find the true and lawful sacraments among the Lutherans, which they lacked in their own communities. But to want to deprive them of such a great good reveals a senseless envy. But these are fables. For we do not bar anyone’s way to the Church and its goods, but we demand that everyone take the right path. But since those wavering pipes seek a road which is interwoven with invisible partitions and leads astray, what wonder is it if they wander about in the open country and never reach the door? The voice of the Holy Spirit is also known. The voice of the Holy Spirit is well known: “They forsake the right way and go astray. [Prov. 2:13](#) Nor does Christ call all to Himself without distinction, and does not promise refreshment to the unworthy as well as to the worthy, but to the weary and burdened, i.e. those who, as Theophylact interprets it, are wearied by the effects of the law and weighed down by the weight of their sins. He calls them to come to himself, not with the body, but with the heart, and if they do so, he promises them, and not others, his willing help, namely, spiritual and eternal rest. As for the other reason, we cannot, nor do we want to deny that those people receive the true supper from ours. This is because with us is the true Church, which, as it rightly believes in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to Christ's institution, so also according to Christ's will has the administration of the same in it. However, it does not follow from this that anyone who knows where the true celebration of the Lord's Supper is should

immediately be admitted to it. It is also necessary that he be a true member of the true Church and clothed in the wedding garment. An example of this is the guest [Matt. 22:11](#), who desired the heavenly marriage, and indeed appeared, and, what is more, already took his place among the guests; but he was cast out, and that through his own fault, as one who lacked the wedding garment. Therefore, if they do not wish to be rejected, let them first provide themselves with the wedding garment, namely, by conversion join our church, by true knowledge and confession of sins, as well as by true confidence in Christ and His merits, and thus examine themselves properly, etc.: then they will also be received to this heavenly banquet with joy as people who hasten after the goods of the Church.” (*Casus conscientiae. Altdori*, 1654. p. 592 sqq.)

Even [Calvin](#), in his most famous work, the “*Institutiones*”, states: “Holy Communion is profaned by indiscriminate distribution. Holy Communion is profaned by indiscriminate administration. For he to whom the administration is entrusted, who with knowledge and will admits an unworthy person, is just as guilty of desecrating the sanctuary as if he were to reproach the body of the Lord to the dogs. Therefore, lest this most sacred secret be profaned, careful selection is required in the administration of it.” (*Institut. lib.* 4. o. 4.)

From this we see how highly important personal registration before Holy Communion is in our church, and how shamefully unfaithful and unscrupulous is the preacher who does not observe these registrations and does not use them most carefully for the salvation of his parishioners. As terrible as the idea is that the most holy body of Christ should be thrown into a puddle by a preacher, it is even more terrible if it should be partaken of by a false Christian. But he is a false Christian who will not let go of either false teaching or godless living. Even those who are considered Christians in love should not be served Holy Communion immediately under all circumstances. For example, not to those who have not yet been reconciled with the offending or offended Christian, nor to those of other faiths, as long as they have not renounced their errors and their false church fellowship and in this way reconciled the orthodox church with themselves. However, if Christians are not immediately given the sacrament in such individual cases, they have not been excommunicated, but only suspended. Someone might ask, however, how the suspension of a Reformed Christian from the Lutheran Lord's Supper is compatible with the acceptance of a lodge brother to the same, who has not yet decided to renounce the wicked fellowship. We answer: The former is in a sin of doctrine, the latter in a sin of life, and that is a great difference. Now we Lutherans, who partake of Holy Communion, are all of us. But in doctrine we are pure, despite the devil who wants to deny us that! A fellow sinner, if he is otherwise penitent, we may well admit with us, even a lodge brother, as long as he does not obviously sin willfully and his fellowship does not have any religious character — or as long as he does not participate in individual religious acts of the same, — for we must not let anyone loose even a letter of the pure doctrine and confession, because it is God's. Whoever does not keep it with us completely and totally cannot go to the Lord's Supper with us, as was said earlier.

We would be sinning terribly if we wanted to keep ourselves separate from all other communities simply out of blind preference or out of taste for our church. But this separation and special position is God's command and therefore a matter of necessity. We must not draw false believers as such into our fellowship, as our opponents in the “*Church-Council*” do and want to justify, thereby making themselves guilty of a grave sin. And for our part we will tolerate the cross that is inseparably linked to our special position, the insults of our enemies and even the unjust accusations of our erring fellow Christians all the more joyfully and willingly the more we remain mindful in faith of the high and holy purpose that God has revealed to us in His Word for the separation of His New Testament church from the world. It is precisely

out of merciful love for the world that God gives the Church a great army of preachers and living witnesses of Christ. They are to work in the world like a healing leaven. They are to be heralds who, through their faithful adherence to the pure confession, through their listening to sermons and taking communion, call out to the world, as it were: Come to us! Believe as we believe! You too, like us, are redeemed, therefore take the seal of your redemption upon you, as we do! And truly, more of God's pleasure and blessing rests on this resolute and continuous witnessing and preaching of the Church than on all church-political experiments and unionism contrary to Scripture. Or what would have become of the Lutheran church in America without orthodox synods? If 25 or 30 years ago the few Lutherans had sat down with their "faith" in the corner, there would hardly be an orthodox Lutheran church in this country today. But that there are now thousands and thousands of Lutherans here who have come to life in Christ, that faithful ecclesiastical journals are circulating, that Lutheran ecclesiastical teaching and charitable institutions have been established and are flourishing — all this has been brought about by the merciful God through the faithful witness and confession of the truth from the mouths of orthodox Lutheran Christians. And if this is already the fruit in such a small ecclesial circle as ours — how much richer must it be in the Church at large! This, then, is the blessing of the union of the Church and its separation from the world. And still more: in order that the Lord Christ may one day separate us eternally from the fellowship of the ungodly, we must also be separated from the world here.

Thesis 9.

Since in Holy Communion the body and blood of the Lord is essentially present, distributed and received by all communicants, it cannot be administered without grave sin to those who do not confess to believe this mystery.

1 Cor. 11:29 says: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, that he may not discern the body of the Lord." And

1 Cor. 4:1: "Let every man therefore count us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." — Pastors are therefore not only ministers, but also stewards of divine graces, those whom God, the heavenly Master, has bound to a certain instruction, according to which they are to administer his mysteries as treasures entrusted to the Church. And hence flow those obligations of pastors in regard to the administration of the Holy Supper, of which our thesis and the preceding and its explanation are thought. Let us also hear our public confessions and the voice of our Fathers on this subject:

In the "Questions for those who want to go to the sacrament" 13, Luther asks: "So do you believe that the true body and blood of Christ is in the sacrament?" and lets the answer be given: "Yes, I believe it."

The same man in the Great Catechism: "We are not inclined to leave and give to those who do not know what they are looking for or why they are coming."

The Augsb. Confession says: "It is unjustly laid to our people that they should have abjured the Mass; for this is public, that the Mass, without glorying, is held with us with greater devotion and earnestness than with the adversaries. In the same way, people are often taught the Holy Sacrament with the greatest diligence. Sacrament, what it is used for and how it is to be used! At the same time, instruction is also given against other wrong teachings about the Sacrament." (Art. 24.)

Luther: "It is true that where the preachers give bread and wine for the sacrament, it does not matter much to whom they give it, or what they can and believe who receive it... But because we intend to

educate Christians and to leave them behind us, and to give Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, we will not and cannot give such a sacrament to anyone, unless he is first interrogated as to what he has learned from catechism, and whether he wants to refrain from sins that he has committed against it." (Warning to those in Frankfurt a. M. to beware of Zwinglian doctrine and teachers. 1533. XVII, 2449. fg. [[StL 17, 2018-2019](#); not in *Am. Ed.*])

Thesis 10.

Since Holy Communion is also a sign of confession of the faith and doctrine of those with whom it is celebrated, the admission of members of heterodox fellowships to the celebration of Holy Communion within the Lutheran church is controversial.

1. against Christ's institution;
2. contrary to the required unity of the Church in faith and confession;
3. against the love of the one to whom it is given;
4. against love for one's fellow believers, especially for the weak, to whom this is a serious offense;
5. against the prohibition not to participate in the sins and errors of others.

The preliminary proposition of our thesis has already been proved in Thesis 7. The only question now is whether the conclusions drawn from this are also correct, namely those given under No. 1.

[1 Cor. 11:26](#) is written: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye shall proclaim the Lord's death till he come." The holy apostle herewith explains the solemn word of institution itself, which the Lord quotes twice: "This do in remembrance of me" ([v. 24, 25](#)). By the proclamation of Christ's death is meant here the whole doctrine of the atonement obtained through Christ's blood and death. Therefore, by partaking of Holy Communion, a person professes the whole doctrine of Christ's work of redemption. But a Reformed person naturally professes the false doctrine and only a Lutheran professes the one and pure doctrine. It is therefore impossible for the latter to partake of the Lord's Supper with the former without committing a grave offense against the testament of Christ. Let us hear about it:

Hülsemann: "Between us and the Socinians, Arminians and some of the Calvinists, there is a dispute as to whether the outward purpose of Holy Communion consists only in distinguishing all those who are called Christians from the heathen (which Osterod maintains in the Catechism and the Arminians in their Apology), or only in distinguishing from the idolaters all those who agree in the fundamentals of the Christian religion, but in other articles are also mutually separated from one another by an outward division (which the new unionists from among the Calvinists G. Hotton, Moses Anniwald, Thom. Morton teach). Our opinion is that, according to the institution of the Founder, no one is to be admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper who, by a public profession of faith and by joining a conspicuous schismatic group, has separated himself from the group which he considers orthodox and with which he desires to partake of this table. We prove this proposition of ours from the institution itself in the following way: 1. whatever external purpose the founder himself connected with the communion of the Lord's Supper cannot be separated from the communion of the Lord's Supper. Now the founder has

connected this outward purpose with the communion of the Lord's Supper, that the communicants through this union may become one spiritual body among themselves, and may testify that through this communion they become one mystical body. Thus this purpose cannot be separated from the communion of the Lord's Supper. The foundation is shown in [1 Cor. 10:17-18](#): 'For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. (Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?)' Now those who profess different and opposite articles of faith by different and opposite public confessions in different and opposite groups are not One Mystical Body. Therefore, according to the institution of the Founder, they may not partake of One Mystical Bread. — 2. what meaning among all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles, the eating of the sacrifice on the altar of the Jews or Gentiles had, the same meaning has the eating of the bread of the Holy Supper, according to [v. 18 and 21](#): 'Who eat the sacrifices, do they not find in the fellowship of the altar? (You cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the devil's table at the same time.)' Now among all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles, the eating of the sacrifices had the meaning that those who ate with them were regarded as members of the religion of which the person sacrificing on this or that altar was considered a member. Thus the partaking of the bread of the Lord's Supper has the same meaning according to the institution, namely, that those who eat of this bread are members of the same faith; therefore, on the contrary, those who are not members of the same faith should not partake of one and the same bread of the Lord's Supper. — 3. What the Founder has forbidden to be done is not permitted. Now the Founder has forbidden those who profess the faith of different altars to partake of one and the same communion bread. So this is not permitted. The subordinate clause is shown in [v. 21](#): 'Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils at the same time'; where 'cannot' is understood morally for 'may not' (as the legal rule is: one can do what one can honorably do, what one can rightly do); as Calvinist commentators themselves confess that even in the New Testament the word 'cannot' is very often taken for 'being unlawful, indecent', as [Matt. 9:15](#): 'How can the spouses bear sorrow while the bridegroom is with them?' (*Vindiciae S. Scripturae etc.* 1679. p. 660.)

So even 200 years ago, the enemies of the correct doctrine and practice of Holy Communion were already saying that by partaking of this sacrament, Christians were separating themselves from the pagans, but not orthodox from heterodox. But that is wrong. Every unbelief and every false teaching is a part of paganism. In Christ's foundation, communion with all people of other faiths is forbidden. As we do not consider the Reformed orthodox, the Reformed do not consider us orthodox. What a blatant contradiction and what a disgraceful mockery of Christ's institution lies in the fact that both sides celebrate communion! The Lord's Supper is also a sacrificial meal. Christ, once sacrificed for us on the cross, is enjoyed by us here. This, however, is modeled on the Levitical sacrifices, which were not to be burned completely, but were also to be partaken of, even to the end, so that by this act the eater would declare himself a fellow member of the same holy religion and congregation.

In 1656, in response to a question as to whether Calvinists should be admitted to Holy Communion, the Faculty of Wittenberg wrote the following: "Since this sacrament is a public testimony and confession of the church, and whatever faith, doctrine and religion each one professes is also considered to be the unchangeable truth, the sacraments are to be used in such a way that faith is added to those who believe the promises given through the sacraments, as the [Augsburg Confession Article 13](#) [[,2](#); [Triglotta, p. 49](#)] reminds us. But such faith is not found in those who cannot believe Christ's words of endowment and promise of the oral dispensation and bodily presence. 'There is one bread', says Paul in [1 Cor. 10:17](#), 'so we are many, one body, inasmuch as we are all partakers of one bread'. But such Calvinists, as described, are

not one body with our churches; therefore they do not belong to the partaking of this bread and of Holy Communion. Those who do not bring Christ's teaching should not be taken home, nor should they be greeted, according to St. John's reminder [2 John 10-11](#). lest we become partakers of their evil works, much less should one admit them to Holy Communion who claim that they cannot believe in the oral enjoyment and bodily presence which Christ has instituted and promised." (*Consilia Witeberg.* II, 131.)

George Koenig: "If David did not tolerate false people in his house, [Ps. 101:7](#), how should a minister in the house of God, which is the true Church, tolerate and receive among the guests of the heavenly banquet one who acts falsely in his works and with an insolent brow leans sometimes to the true, sometimes to the false church? Elijah the Thesbite once behaved differently. He, clothed with valor, did not evade the care of religion, but, appearing publicly among the people, he said: 'How long will you go on both sides? That is to say, that you want to practice a different worship, and serve partly God and partly Baal? God does not want to know anything about such mixed religion, which is supposed to be a third thing composed of pure and corrupt. 'If the LORD is God, walk after him', i.e. if the worship prescribed by the LORD through Moses is the true worship, then you should be content with this alone, forsake all other worship and follow God alone; 'but if it is Baal, walk after him', i.e. if you think that you are serving Baal, then follow him. That is, if you think that the worship of Baal is the true worship, why do you hesitate to practice the worship of Baal alone and to completely abandon the worship of Moses with all its sanctuaries and ceremonies? 1 Kings 18:21. . It is undoubtedly certain that God requires not a part of the worship, but the whole of it without interruption, and that he who would worship him partly by true and partly by false religion, neither worships God aright, nor holds religion truly fast. All altars on which Holy Communion is celebrated. All altars on which Holy Communion is celebrated should have the following distich [couplet] attached:

*Cui non mens eadem, cui non confessio simplex,
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi!*

i.e.: Whoever does not have the same faith and one and the same confession, let him know that this table is forbidden to him. (*Casus consc. p. 594 sg.*)

Count Friedrich von Württemberg and Mömpelgart, after it had been alleged about him that he had allowed the Reformed French refugees to partake of the Lutheran Lord's Supper, thereupon declared, denying this: "By God's grace we have gained such knowledge in spiritual matters concerning the salvation of our souls that we know well that the Lord's Supper, among many others, was instituted and ordained by Christ for this end, so that one can recognize by it as by a field and mark to which faith each one belongs. For whoever partakes of the Lord's Supper with a church, whatever its name may be, thereby indicates that he also adheres to the same church doctrine and does not hold with those who hold a different doctrine, but publicly separates himself from it... Therefore we have always held and still hold that the reception of the Lord's Supper is not to be trifled with, that one should confess another with the public reception of the same and have another in his heart." (*Colloquium Mompelgartense.* Translated from the Latin. Tübingen 1587. Preface ij.)

Under No. 2 is mentioned [1 Cor. 1:10](#) (see under Thesis 1) and [Eph. 4:3-6](#) (see there). Firstly, unity in faith is testified to in Holy Communion. Secondly, the Church should also be united in faith and doctrine. From this, however, it follows that we can only admit to Holy Communion those who profess the same pure faith with us. For whoever communes with us Lutherans is thereby issued a certificate of citizenship, as it were, that he belongs in our house. But are we not badly cheated of our ecclesiastical unity if we issue

a Reformed person this “citizen’s” and “home” license? Or who in our state would want to grant citizenship to an immigrant who declares himself to be a subject of the King of Prussia or any other sovereign? Truly, they must be treacherous, deceitful, even diabolical preachers who give Holy Communion to those who believe what they want. How the holy man of God Luther would be astonished if he could see how things are going in the midst of the Lutheran church today! He wrote in his day: “The meaning or work of this sacrament is a communion of all the saints; therefore it is also called by its common name *synaxis* (assembly) or *communion*, i.e. fellowship, and *communicare* in Latin means to receive this communion, which we say in German, to go to the sacrament; and comes from the fact that Christ with all the saints is one spiritual body. Again, *excommunicare* means to do away from the Church and to separate a member from this body. .. Thus to receive this sacrament in bread and wine is nothing else than to receive a sure sign of this communion and incorporation with Christ and all the saints. It is the same whether a citizen is given a sign, handwriting or any other password, so that he can be certain that he is to be a citizen of the city, a member of the same community! Thus St. Paul says in [1 Cor. 10:17](#): “We are all one bread and one body, partakers of one bread and one cup.” (Sermon on the Most Revered Sacrament of the Holy True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods. 1519. XIX, 523 fg. [[StL 19, 428-429](#); [AE 35, 50-51](#)])

The same: “If we should allow ourselves to be deprived of such union, we would have to permit on both sides that, if our people came to them and wanted to receive the sacrament, or, again, if their people came to us, the unpleasant error would arise that our people received vain bread and wine, and yet believed that it was the body and blood of Christ, and their people received with us the body and blood of Christ, and yet believed that it was vain bread and wine; and the abomination much more.” (Letter to Duke Ernst of Lüneburg. 1531. XVII, 2430 [[StL 17, 2003](#); not in Am. Ed.])

The same: “God does not ask whether godless people are one or not, who have no unity of spirit. It is enough for his children to have one baptism and one bread as common marks and symbols or slogans, by which they profess and practice unity of faith and spirit. The papist church seeks its unity in concord with its outward idol, the pope, though inwardly they are scattered by the most perverse errors to all the will of Satan.” (Writings against King Henry in England. 1521. XIX, 430 [[StL 19, 345](#); not in Am. Ed.])

The same: “And in summary, coming from this point, it is frightening to me to hear that in one church, or at one altar, both parts should receive and take one sacrament, and one part should believe that it receives vain bread and wine; but the other part should believe that it receives the true body and blood of Christ. And I often doubt whether it is believable that a preacher or pastor could be so stubborn and malicious, and keep silent about this, and let both parts go each in their own delusion that they receive the same sacrament, each according to their own faith, and so on. But if there is one who has a heart harder than stone, steel or diamond, he must certainly be an apostle of wrath. For Turks and Jews are much better, who deny our sacrament and freely confess it: for thus we remain undeceived by them, and fall into no idolatry. But these fellows would have to be the real high archdevils, who give me vain bread and wine, and let me take it for the body and blood of Christ, and so miserably deceive me. That would be too hot and too harsh: God will soon strike. Therefore, anyone who has such preachers, or who confesses to them, be warned against them as against the devil himself in the flesh.” (Warning to the people of Frankfurt. 1533. XVII, 2446; [[StL 17, 2016](#); not in Am. Ed.]).

Of course, some of our opponents object: A Lutheran may not go to Holy Communion with Zwinglians, but he may go with Calvinists, for they teach that the body of Christ is present in the sacrament, although only spiritually. — But this pretext is invalid, for the Calvinists deceive with their confession. If the body of Christ is spiritual in the Lord’s Supper, then it is not there at all. Do not trust the fine-sounding words of

the Calvinists. Especially with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, they also use their words to disguise their opinion and conceal their error. With such questions to them: Is the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper — is it really there — is it essentially there? as Luther already said, the fox does not yet come out with them. They will answer everything with “yes”, but always mean only a spiritual body of Christ. We must therefore go further and ask whether they believe that Judas and all the ungodly also receive the true body of Christ for oral consumption in the Lord's Supper. — They will deny this and be terrified of it as the greatest abomination. And here they prove that they make the presence of the body of Christ in Holy Communion dependent on faith and deny the presence of the true body of Christ. But it is terrible and hypocritical as well as perjured that the men of the “*Church Council*”, who have signed the confessions containing the words just alluded to by Luther, nevertheless admit people of other faiths to the sacrament. I wonder if their consciences can find peace in the Iowa consolation that by signing the symbols one does not sign everything, not even the incidental? —

It should also be noted that the Church has always separated itself not only from heretics and false believers, but also from so-called schismatics through Holy Communion. A schismatic is someone who has separated from the Church not because of a fundamental article of doctrine, but for the sake of doctrine or certain central matters. We cannot pass the sacrament to such a person either. This also testifies

Hülsemann: “The fourth proof is taken from the constant practice of the Church. The fellowship that has been, from the beginning of the Church, one that distinguishes heretics and schismatics from the true and pure believers cannot be abolished. But the communion of the Lord's Supper has from the beginning of the Church been one that distinguishes heretics and schismatics from the orthodox and the pure in faith, so that it was not permitted, under penalty of excommunication, to admit a manifest schismatic to the communion of the Lord's Supper, if he persisted in his separation, which the Magdeburg Centuries from Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Flacius in his Catalogus from the Epistle of Ignatius to the Smirnaeans and Augustine from the usage of his time in the 2nd Book of Christian Doctrine, Chrysostom in the 28th homily on the 26th chap. Matthew etc. with great agreement.” (*Vindiciae* etc. p. 660.)

Our doctrine and practice with regard to communion is that of the apostolic church up to the time of St. Ignatius. And even today, all other churches teach as we do in this regard, with the sole exception of the Congregationalists, who are then unfortunately joined by the advocates of the “*Church-Council*”. The former declare in their confession at the end: “The churches gathered and walking according to the mind of Christ, which regard others, though less pure, as true churches, may receive into occasional communion with them members of these churches who have a credible sign of piety and lead a life without offense.” (*Declaratio fidei atque ordinis ecclesiarum congregationalium*. 1658. cf. J. Hoornbeek *de independentismo*. *Ultrajecti* 1661. p. 443.)

Finally, as to the secret societies, Freemasons, Oddfellows, Druids, and whatever other titles they may have, we repeat that, with regard to their acceptance to our Lord's Supper, we make a distinction between [1] those who either remain obstinately and against better conviction in these strongholds of the devil, or who are in such “orders” or “lodges” which pursue some religious tendency, or who only take part in individual more appended religious acts within the lodges, — and [2] those with whom neither the one nor the other of the above situations is the case; by keeping those, like other impenitent and false believers, away from our altar, but we cannot refuse these, as weak and erring in life, communion with us. This correct principle, however, will only find its proper application where the individual cases are examined and weighed up with the utmost precision, given the manifold forms and colors of the secret society in this country. But let us go further. For the proof of

No. 3. we cite [Lev. 19:17](#): “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; but thou shalt punish thy neighbor, that thou bear not his iniquity.” This is a strange passage. Punishment is so often portrayed as unkindness; but wrongly, for we hear here: If you don't love someone, don't punish them. To warn one's neighbor against a wrong and pernicious way is certainly true love. But a reformer, for example, takes such a path when he desires our Lord's Supper. He does not believe in this sacred mystery. Therefore he is unworthy to partake of it. But an unworthy person eats and drinks his own judgment, as 1 Cor. 11:29 (see under Thesis 8) shows. To refuse a reformer from our Lord's Supper is certainly a work of righteous love, and woe to him who would not do it. For thus saith the Lord

[Ezek. 3:18](#): “If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you do not warn him, so that the wicked may beware of his wickedness and live, then the wicked will die because of his sin, but I will require his blood at your hand.” The following words also belong here

Luther's: “You yourselves can easily see, if we were to establish unity, that some of yours would commune with us and some of ours with you, and yet would do so in different faiths and consciences, and consequently would receive on both sides something different from what they believed: thus their faith would necessarily have to be mocked by our ministry and conscience through secret and worldly cunning, if they did not know it, but if they did know it, through an open desecration of the sanctuary (*sacrilegium*). But how godly and Christian this is, you will easily see. That is why we prefer to choose the least of two evils, even if we have to suffer one. Let us rather bear this small discord with a smaller peace.” (Letter to Martin Bucer 1531. XVII, 2396 [[StL 17, 1974](#); not in Am. Ed.]) —Further it can be said

Dedekennus: “As little as a righteous Christian, who confesses Luther's doctrine with mouth and heart, can desire the Lord's Supper from a Zwinglian and suspicious teacher with a clear conscience, but according to Luther's advice forgives himself of it for the rest of his life: just as little can a Reformed person, who understands the work and to whom his religion is a real seriousness, ever desire our Lord's Supper without the highest burden on his conscience.” (Thesaur. Vol. I. P. 2. fol. 316.) — And

Georg Koenig: “If a Calvinist requests that a Lutheran preacher serve him communion, he is either a layman or a preacher, and the latter in turn is either ignorant or well-informed. If he is ignorant, he will perhaps not know the difference that exists between us and the Calvinists with regard to this doctrine, especially since the latter [[Calvinists](#)] also want to give the appearance of teaching that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the Lord's Supper. Then one must take the greatest care not to admit him to the Lord's Supper, since he knows nothing of the matter and is still filled with his delusion. Rather, he must first be openly instructed as to how far we differ from one another in this doctrine, and be clearly instructed as to why the one part neither can nor may commune with the other, because the Lord's Supper, among other purposes, also has this, to be a sign and a watchword of the religion which each one professes. For those who commune with a church in the partaking of this sacrament thereby publicly confess that they accept the doctrine of that church and reject the opposite one, thus separating themselves from the others. It is therefore necessary that he first read our confession, reject Calvinism as erroneous and separate himself from it, if he wishes to partake of our communion. But this caution will be much more necessary if the Calvinist is a well-instructed one.” (*Casus consc.* 697. sq.)

No. 4 includes the following passage:

[Rom. 14:1, 15, 16](#): “Receive those who are weak in faith and do not confuse their consciences. — But if your brother is grieved by your food, you are not walking according to love. Dear one, do not spoil him with your food, for whose sake Christ died.” And

Matt. 18:6: “But whosoever shall offend one of the least of these that believe on me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

In 1568, the Wittenberg theological faculty gave the following as the final reason why a Lutheran preacher should not serve the Lord's Supper to a stubborn Calvinist: “Ultimately, this annoyance is to be regarded as such, which would result from this and cause a great rift. For this will strengthen many such stubborn people. Also, no doubt, many others burdened with other manifest sins will want to be untorn from the Lord's Supper like them. This would finally lead to a wild and terrible abuse of this sacred Lord's Supper and severe punishment would be inflicted on these countries. On the other hand, many pious, good-hearted people would also have to be greatly annoyed, grieved and led into manifold doubts as to whether they believe rightly with this church, because they see that even those who are of a different repugnant opinion are publicly admitted and accepted into this church communion; all of which, because it is sinful and sacrilegious, must be prevented and averted with the utmost diligence.” (Dedekennus' *Thesaurus*. Vol. I, II, fol. 310.)

You see, the old theologians believed in the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. That is why they administered it so precisely and conscientiously according to God's Word. Our soft-hearted Lutherans today, who are so liberal in their approach, may well examine whether they themselves really have the right faith in the sacrament. But by accepting other believers for their communion they commit the atrocious sin of giving offense to poor, weak Christians in their own midst; and we have seen what a terrible woe God cries out over this sin.

No. 5. In 1 Tim. 5:22. it is written: “...Neither make thyself partaker of other men's sins”.... This is also explained by

The Wittenberg theological faculty in 1568 gave the following as the first reason why a stubborn Calvinist should not be admitted to communion in a Lutheran church: “First of all, it is undoubtedly true that this commandment binds all men, especially pastors and pastoral workers: Do not participate in the sins of others. Now it is certain and is constantly and absolutely held in our church that the sacramentarian opinion is a grave error and sin for many reasons which it is unnecessary to relate. Since here again it is certain and indubitable that this person is finally and irretrievably afflicted with this opinion and error and, as it were, taken in, the spiritual leader and pastor cannot let him come to communion and partake of the sacrament without sin and burdening his conscience. And just as without doubt the sacramentaries as a whole do not allow anyone who is of this confession and faith of our church to come to their communion for the same reason: Thus pious and sensible pastors and pastoral ministers cannot, without noticeable sin and burdening their consciences, take upon themselves what other people, no matter who they want, sin against God and the Lord Christ by unbelievably misinterpreting the so clear and bright words of the institution of the Lord's Supper. For just as those who eat and partake of the Lord's Supper for judgment and, according to Paul's words, become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord who eat it unworthily, how much more must those who knowingly serve it to those of whose sin and unbelieving false interpretation and subsequent judgment and guilt they are convinced in their conscience be guilty of the same judgment and grave guilt.” (Dedekennus' *Thesaurus*. Volum. I, P. I. fol. 309. f.) Furthermore

Luther: “They desired brotherhood from us, which we refused them this time (in Marburg) and could not promise them. For if we were to accept them as brothers and sisters, we would have to consent to their doctrine. Although they did not like this rejection and pretended that we should show love for them until God brought them back, because we should also love our enemies. Well, whoever wants to interpret it

badly may do so.” (Narrative from the pulpit, concerning his journey to Marburg and the conversation held there with the Sacramentans. Interpretation of the 5 B. Moses. Walch III, 2617 [[StL 3, p. 1770 §12](#); **not in Am. Ed.**]) And finally

Dedekennus: “The second reason why the Calvinists are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper with the Lutherans is the office and quality of a faithful preacher. For 1. the sacraments are not the preacher's alone, but the property of the whole Church. For this reason he must not dispense them as he pleases, but because the sacraments are a common treasure of the whole Church, the same must also carry science in all ways, whoever uses the sacrament of unity with it or not. (2) Moreover, we preachers are only stewards of God's mysteries. Now nothing more is required of a steward than that he be found faithful. But such faithfulness extends not only to his teaching office in the propagation of divine truth and the punishment of error, but also to the dispensation of the sacraments, that he use good care and modesty therein, and not admit everyone without distinction, but have respect for the whole flock, keeping a distinction between the pure and the impure, the holy and the unholy. Therefore it is not justifiable to administer the sacrament to anyone on his own responsibility. In this way it would not be justifiable to deny it to papists, nor to the Photinians, nor to those who are known to have received it deliberately for judgment, since it cannot be joked about in God's matters. And a preacher is put on his guard for this purpose, that he may look and warn for everlasting harm, lest he should give account with a heavy conscience for the blood that has been neglected.” (*Thesaurus*. Vol. I, P. II. fol. 315.)

Our tenth thesis is therefore directed against the [**Prussian**] Union, this grave of the Lutheran church, and especially against its lovers and admirers in our church, against the unionistic, syncretistic preachers. We call them all shameful, unscrupulous belly-serving priests, who leave it to the conscience of their individual communion guests whether and what they believe and confess about this sacrament, falsely invoking the word: “But let a man examine himself” and so on, as if this did not apply to the laity alone, but to the preachers the word: “For this everyone considers us, namely as... stewards of God's mysteries. Now no more is sought in the stewards, except that they be found faithful.” [[1 Cor. 4:1-2](#)]

Thesis 11.

Again, members of heterodox fellowships are not excommunicated by their non-admission to the celebration of the Holy Communion in fellowship with the Lutheran church, much less are they (declared heretics and) *) condemned, but are only suspended until they have reconciled themselves with the orthodox church by renouncing the false fellowship in which they stand.

A seemingly formidable objection of our adversaries against our doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper is also that they say: How can you

*) The words in brackets were inserted by decision of the Synod.

subject yourselves and ban a child of God from other churches by rejecting him from your Lord's Supper, declaring him heretical, cutting him off from the body of Christ and thus, as it were, wounding Jesus

Himself? — That sounds terrible and, if true, would be quite terrible. But this objection is nothing but an empty, hollow scare alarm. For, as already mentioned above, just as little as we banish the Lutheran Christian (be he the offending or offended party), if, according to Christ's own words, [Matt. 5:23-24](#). “Therefore, when thou offerest thy gift upon the altar, if thou shalt think there that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift there before the altar, and go first, and be reconciled to thy brother; and then come and offer thy gift.” — likewise [Luke 17:3](#): “Beware. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him”, — keep away from Holy Communion as long as he has not yet reconciled with his neighbor — even though he may in himself be perfectly worthy to receive the sacrament; just as we do not excommunicate, cast out, accuse of heresy and condemn an heterodox Christian when we declare to him: We would gladly let you take Holy Communion with us. But there is still an obstacle in the way. This is the sin of your error in doctrine, which you have not yet recognized. First recognize it and renounce it, and keep to the orthodox church. Then you will be a dear and welcome guest at the Lord's Supper. — Of course, it is quite a different matter with obviously impenitent sinners, mockers and stubbornly erring people, the latter of whom alone we call heretics. Such are to be excommunicated according to Christ's express command. And in this matter we also agree with our orthodox fathers. For

The [Wittenberg theological faculty](#) wrote in 1638 in a statement: “There is a tangible difference between the *indignitate intrinseca* (inner unworthiness), which flows from unrecognized mortal sins, and the *indignitate extrinseca* or *accidentali* (the external or accidental unworthiness), such as the anger of the neighbor, which the confessor often does not know.” (*Consil. Witeberghens. II, 128.*)

[Luther](#): “God be my witness! I would, if it were possible, gladly run off this discord with my body and blood (even if I had more than one body). But how shall I do it? They are perhaps imprisoned with the other understanding out of a good conscience, so we will gladly tolerate them. If they are pure, the Lord Christ will surely save them. But if they want to stick to their opinion on the point of the presence of the body of Christ with the bread, and would ask that we should tolerate one another, I will gladly tolerate them in the hope that we may come into fellowship in the future.” (Advice and concerns about the union sought by the Zwinglians. 1534. Walch1 XVII, 2489 [[StL 17, 2051-2052](#); not in Am. Ed.]) And

[St. Augustine](#): “The Apostle Paul did indeed say: 'Avoid a heretical man, if he is once and again reprov'd, and sins as he has condemn'd himself'; but those who, although their opinion is false and wrong, do not defend it with any obstinacy, especially if they have not brought it on themselves sacrilegiously, but have received it from ancestors who were deceived and fell into error, but on the other hand carefully seek the truth, ready to be shown when they find it: these are by no means to be reckon'd among the heretics. Therefore, if I did not believe that you (Donatists) were such, I would not send you a letter. Indeed, we are not opposed to seeking in every possible way the correction of even a heretic who, puffed up with hateful pride and raging in obstinate contentiousness, whom we are otherwise admonished to avoid, — lest he seduce the weak and children.” (Ep. 162.)

Thesis 12.

If even the heterodox regard and declare it wrong to commune with the orthodox, it is all the more shameful if the latter give up their communion, administered according to Christ's institution, to the former.

For example, the Reformed have often forbidden their own to partake of Holy Communion in our country.

In 1539, the Reformed of Zurich forbade their students at Strasbourg University to take Holy Communion there, and in order to justify themselves, wrote to the Strasbourg church convent: "Those who hold fellowship with us through the sacraments confess through this fellowship that they have the same faith with us in the sacraments; but now our young men do not have the same faith with you." (Löscher's *Historia motuum* zwischen den Ev.- Lutherischen und Reformirten. I, 254. *) And

Calvin: "If you ask my advice as to whether it is permissible for you to take Christ's Holy Communion from the hands of those who consider us heretical because we deny that Christ's flesh is bitten with the teeth: so now, though I well see that it sets an evil example for any one to abstain from Holy Communion, yet it would be an unjust, yea, hypocritical dissimulation, by accepting the symbol of concord, even tacitly to approve that false and tasteless poem, which by pernicious

*) "*Qui sacramentis nobiscum communicant, ipsa communicatione profitentur, se eandem habere nobiscum de sacramentis fidem; atqui juvenes nostri non eandem vobiscum fidem habent.*"

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works of blindness overthrows the ground of faith, unless a clear and open-hearted confession of sound doctrine precedes it. I therefore think it best that you testify freely and openly that you are kept from partaking of the Lord's Supper through their fault, because they do not admit the pure and true doctrine of Christ." (*Epistol. etrespons. editio secunda. Lausannae, 157b. Ep. 292. p. 478.*)

In the Wittenberg Councils also it says: "Our evangelical theologians and preachers agree with each other on this, so much so that in all their opinion such a preacher must either be a hypocrite or even a secret Calvinist who knowingly admits the Calvinists to our supper. It is also found that one of the Calvinists, namely Zacharias Ursinus, in his letter to Andreas Dudithius, in which he deals with the union or fellowship of the orthodox with the erring, expressly reports that no Calvinist can go to supper with the Lutherans with a clear conscience. Let the Calvinists themselves therefore see with what conscience those who fundamentally reject our doctrine desire to partake of the Holy Supper with us Lutherans. But how much less will Lutheran preachers be able to serve the Holy Supper to Calvinists with a clear conscience? For although there are some among the Calvinists who are of the opinion that the articles still in dispute between us and them do not touch the ground of salvation, there is not one among all righteous evangelical preachers who holds with them on this point. Indeed, all those who take to heart the promotion of the glory of God and our Savior are guilty of rebuking all those who are falsely persuaded to do so. From this it is clear that a Calvinist can in no way be admitted to Holy Communion with us for the sake of it, even if he complies with our ceremonies and customs. if they do not take offense at our round communion wafers and do not insist on the breaking of bread, because they are rightly excluded from the fellowship of our church on account of the erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists, to whom they belong, and can in no way be readmitted and accepted merely because they wish to make themselves comfortable with our ceremonies. Nor can the mere use and acceptance of such means make such people fit and worthy for this work, whom the great unbelief in the most important articles of faith, as well as the subsequent separation and segregation from the inner as well as spiritual community, have already made reprehensible and unfit for it. Those who now allow such as have been described so far, prove in their

work nothing else than that they are hypocrites and lukewarm Christians in religion, who hold the points still disputed between us and the Reformed to be of bad reason and value. When Henricus Alting, a Calvin. Doctor at Heidelberg and Groningen, diligently investigates in his *Problematica theologia P. II, probl. 10. 11.*: whether the Reformed can also with good conscience go to the holy supper with the Lutherans? he requires this in particular, in case one wants to answer this question in the affirmative, namely, that the clear and distinct confession of the pure doctrine (for thus he, as a Calvinist, titles his doctrine) should precede both the preachers from whose hand one is to receive the Holy Supper and others. And yet this Alting very much doubts whether it can be done (even then) by all without any burden of conscience... How will even Lutheran preachers be able to justify in their conscience if they do not require such a confession from their penitents, especially when they are well aware that those who come to the Holy Supper are not of the same doctrine with us, and therefore let them go there with all their will without any questioning or instruction? With such a suspicious and unscrupulous admission they make it sufficiently apparent that they are nothing less than sincere Lutherans. But what will we actually call such people? Undoubtedly obvious hypocrites, syncretists and Samaritans, who think as much of one religion as of another. The ancient Christians, as often as they held the Holy Supper, used to shut the church doors, lest some one or other should come in who belonged to a different and strange religion; how much less would they then have knowingly and deliberately admitted such people, who belittle this great divine mystery and misrepresent what is rightly and well believed in the Christian Church of such high mysteries! But they were not such hypocrites.” (*Consil. Witeberg. I, 1044. f.*)

Thesis 13.

The more unionism and religious syncretism are the sin and ruin of our time, the more the faithfulness of the orthodox church is called upon not to abuse Holy Communion as a means of external union without the internal unity of faith.

The holy prophet [Jeremiah](#) calls out to the unfaithful people of Israel in chapter 2, [Jeremiah 2:10-12](#): “Go to the isles of Chittim, and see, and send to Kedar, and observe diligently, and see whether it is so there? Do the nations change their gods, though they are not gods? And yet my people have changed their glory for the sake of a useless idol. Let the heavens be astonished and terrified and tremble greatly, says the Lord.” – If even the blind pagans did not change their false religions, is it not in truth appalling when this happens today to [Christians](#), when they unite the truth of the Christian religion with falsehood, as it comes to light in the practice of the Lord’s Supper of the United churches, and want it to be justified like that in the Church? In the face of this unionist abomination, we want to hold fast to what the [Formula of Concord](#) says: “If such things are given under the title and appearance of outward adiaphora, which (even if they were painted a different color) are nevertheless fundamentally contrary to God's Word: that these should not be held as free adiaphora, but should be avoided as things forbidden by God. Just as such ceremonies should not be counted among the right free adiaphora or adiaphora, which have the appearance or, in order to avoid persecution, want to give the appearance that our religion is not far from the papist” (or Calvinist) “religion, or that the latter is not highly opposed to us, or if such ceremonies are meant, thus required or accepted, as if with them and through them both contrary religions are compared and become one body... We believe, teach and confess that at the time of confession, when the enemies of God's Word desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the whole Church of God, indeed,

every Christian man, but especially the ministers of the Word, as the rulers of the church of God, are obliged, by virtue of God's Word, to confess the doctrine and what belongs to the whole religion freely and publicly, not only in word, but also in deed and in work.” ([Art. X. of Church Rites, 5, 10](#); [Triglotta p. 1053, 1055](#))

J. C. [Dannhauer](#) also encourages us to be faithful to this confession and to be vigilant against the evil enemy. He writes: “Lax security is the mother of carelessness; therefore, if one does not guard against this enemy, there is nothing bad that one could not be affected by. Quintus Curtius rightly said: ‘Nothing is despised in an enemy without danger; for whom one does not respect, one strengthens by his negligence.’ It was precisely this carelessness that once gave birth to the Antichrist and, while the people were asleep, allowed his tares to be sown; the same carelessness, with an inactive, dull or at least insufficiently suspicious eye, also leaves unnoticed the intrigues of the syncretistic spirit, which has raised its head at this time, and there is hardly anything missing for it to rule already. Perhaps in a short time the world will marvel at having become so quickly syncretistic and consequently atheistic.” (*Liber consc. I, 139.*)

Through the security and negligence of the Church, the Antichrist once succeeded in sitting in the middle of the temple of God. Later, through the security and negligence of the Church, the false union crept in. Now it is up to us to stand up to these enemies and, in particular, to free ourselves from all the cords and strings of the syncretistic spirit of the age. May the faithful and merciful God help us and fill our hearts with hatred against the spirit of lies and with sincere and faithful love for God's Word and truth.