

[Walther's emphases retained; German text [here](#); paragraphing modified to break up large paragraphs]

[Thesis XVIII A](#) — [Thesis XVIII B](#) — [Thesis XVIII C](#)  
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## **Excerpt from the Discussions on Thesis XVIII of the Essay, that The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the True Visible Church of God on Earth.**

(Stenographed by Pastor J. G. Nützel. Communicated in detail by Pastor W. S. Stubnatzy).

The meeting opened with a service and then proceeded to discuss the theses on *The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church of God on Earth*, following on from the negotiations of the Western District [of 1868, **Part EC10**]. These had progressed to the [Thesis XVIII A](#). This reads: **"The Evangelical Lutheran Church gives every doctrine of the Word of God the position and meaning that it has in God's Word itself:**

**A. It makes the doctrine of Christ or of justification the foundation and core and star of all doctrine."**

It was noted:

The fact that the Lutheran Church teaches nothing false does not make it the true visible church of God on earth. This also includes giving pure doctrine the right position and meaning. And it does [**171/1**] this too. It treats the main doctrines as main doctrines, leaves the lesser ones to follow, and treats secondary matters as such. Thus the Lutheran Church "makes the doctrine of Christ or of justification the foundation, core and star of all doctrines." The doctrine of Christ is no other than the doctrine of justification and vice versa. Whoever does not teach the doctrine of justification correctly does not teach Christ correctly, and again, the doctrine of Christ is the heart of the doctrine of justification. Therefore, the doctrine of justification is also broader than many think. They think that the doctrine of justification is complete with the sentence: Man is justified by grace through faith alone for Christ's sake. But this is not the case. It also includes the doctrine of Christ, of His person and work and of the appropriation of his merit.

If, for example, according to John, the Antichrist denies that Christ came in the flesh, this does not mean that he denies that Christ is the Son of God and as such came in the flesh, but rather that he denies that Christ came in the flesh to save us. He actually denies this through his doctrine of

works. Now when we teach that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, we are only saying quite definitely that Christ alone is our righteousness, and not making faith or anything else our savior. Therefore the doctrine of justification is the doctrine of Christ, and he who preaches Christ preaches justification.

The Reformed false doctrine of the sacraments comes precisely from the fact that they do not rightly believe "that man is justified and saved for Christ's sake alone". Otherwise they would

not take offense when it is said that you are saved through Baptism and the Lord's Supper. After all, the Word and the Sacraments are, so to speak, the platters on which God brings us poor sinners what we lack and gives us the grace to accept it. We should praise the goodness of God, according to which he not only tells us that his Son died for us and that we are to be saved by grace, but also offers and gives us Christ's merit in Word, Baptism and Communion, — but we should not trample on the doctrine of justification through Reformed teachings of Word and Sacrament. The Lutheran Church, however, makes the doctrine of justification or of Christ the main doctrine. It does this (according to 1 Cor. 15:3) by first preaching that Christ died for our sins according to Scripture. This is the foundation on which everything else rests. If this is not done first, the listeners may well be given enough spiritual food to keep them alive, but they will be left in a state of perpetual spiritual famine. The sheep of Christ, however, should have the fullness. Therefore, the Alpha and Omega, [171/2] the beginning and the end, the heart and soul of all preaching is the doctrine of Christ or of justification.

**B. [The Evangelical Lutheran Church distinguishes sharply between Law and Gospel.]**

In connection with the fact that the Lutheran church makes the doctrine of justification or of Christ its main doctrine, it also makes a strict distinction between Law and Gospel. It not only says that this distinction is to be made (papists and enthusiasts also say this), but it actually makes this distinction and thus proves itself to be the true church. —

The passage in B. (Th. XVIII) John 1:17 says that the Law was given, put into the mouth of Moses by God; but grace has become, only acquired through Christ. The word "truth" stands in contrast to the types in the Old Testament, which find their fulfillment in Christ. For "the body itself is in Christ". When Christ appeared, the "shadows" had disappeared.

The Jews of the Old Testament could also be saved, just as well as we can. They were also saved in no other way than we are; but the "essence" was not yet there. Their faith was more hopeful, looked more to the future — ours looks more to the past.

In order to understand this text properly, we must strictly adhere to how Scripture otherwise speaks of the difference between the Old and New Testaments, contrasting Moses and Christ. It should also be noted that John does not say in the passage in question: The precepts of the law,

the precepts of the gospel - for the gospel is not a new law, but spirit, power, life, grace and truth. —

Concerning Romans 10:4 ([p. 112](#)) [[Mueller, p. 97](#)] it was remarked:

The word "end" (τέλος) means on the one hand the fulfillment of the Law, and on the other that the Law no longer binds the Christian — it lives in the Christian, the Christian lives in it.

The next meaning of the word "end", however, was put forward as the "purpose of the Law". God only gave the Law to prepare and educate people for the appearance of his Son. The Jews, who, by the way, made no distinction between the various laws, but wanted to be saved by the ceremonial law as well as by the moral law, by sacrifice as well as by

love of enemies, sought their righteousness from the Law. They did not know that the Law was only there so that they could recognize their sins from it and make it a disciplinarian for Christ. Not a hypocritical, pharisaical righteousness, but Christ alone is the aim or intention of the law. Only this interpretation of the word "end" fits exactly into the context. [172/1]

C. 2 Tim. 2:15: [Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.]

If in the two preceding proof-texts the difference between Law and Gospel is testified to, here it is said that the righteous worker must make this distinction: He who rightly divides, etc. He who does not make this distinction (dividing) is not a righteous worker. — Word of truth in this passage means: true word. — What the apostle demands here is fulfilled by the Lutheran church; for this reason, too, it is the true church of God on earth.

From the "testimony" of the Formula of Concord [Ep. V, 2; Mueller p. 97] it was emphasized that it not only simply testifies to the difference between the Law and the Gospel, but also calls it a "particularly glorious light". When this light was lost, the church fell and the Antichrist arose. Where it shines, the church is helped. Because the papists did not distinguish between the law and the gospel, they drove people into monks' robes and onto pillars. That is why papists and sects are still called "stylites" today. But whoever has this "glorious light" shining in his heart will take the right position towards all demands, threats, etc. of the law (through which papists and enthusiasts are driven to the "pillars", to monasticism, to the penitential bench, etc.) and say: The Lord Jesus is the rock of my salvation.

[[See this blog post](#)]

Because they do not recognize "the difference between the Law and the Gospel" "as a special glorious light", many pastors in Germany and here do not make a proper distinction between the acquisition of salvation and the appropriation of the same. That is why you often hear them preach: You are saved if you believe, instead of saying: You are saved so that you might believe. Nor does one of the sects teach that Christ has already acquired everything

and that man only has to accept by faith what God offers him. Rather, they say: God's Son came to earth and accomplished a so-called work of redemption, thereby bringing about that God can accept man as his child if man changes and improves. But this is a godless, shameful doctrine of the pope. It is important to keep the right distinction between the law and the gospel. After all, Christ has [172/2] accomplished everything. We do not have to do the slightest thing. What Christ has acquired, we should appropriate through faith. Then we will also become other people who return to the first commandment and live holy lives out of love, not out of fear or desire for reward. Let us therefore remember that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be preserved as a particularly glorious light with great diligence in the Church. Only if we do this will we fulfill our task. —

Luther's testimony ([p. 112-113](#); [[Mueller, p. 98](#)]) the sentence: "This difference between the Law and the Gospel is the highest art in

Christianity.” —

It was emphasized and remarked:

It is not an art to learn the statement: the Law is the doctrine of good works — or that: the Gospel is the good news of the grace of God in Christ Jesus; but it is the highest art to understand the distinction between the Law and the Gospel correctly, when it is a question of the *causa materialis* and the *objectum*, i.e. to whom the Law is to be preached and to whom the Gospel. This is where the great difficulty arises. One man preaches excellently on the subject: What is the difference between the law and the gospel? But when he has to deal with individuals (*causa materialis*), he will, because he is not skilled in the highest art, comfort those whom he should frighten and frighten those whom he ought to comfort. Therefore it is certainly true that "the Holy Spirit must be master and teacher here", so that we may learn to whom we must preach the law and to whom we must preach the gospel. But this art is greatest when we ourselves are the *causa materialis* of the law; then it is the most difficult of all the arts to learn. But it is also the most important art. Without it one cannot arrive at the certainty of one's state of grace. That is why not only preachers, but all Christians must be able to do it. But the one who still comes to the penitent, i.e. the one who says: I am lost, what shall I do to be saved? - still comes with the law and does not preach the gospel to him, he cannot do this supreme art, but is a murderer of souls.

Concerning the passage in the Testimony where it says: "For the law has its goal, how far it should go and what it should accomplish, namely, up to Christ, to frighten the impenitent with God's wrath and disgrace. Likewise the gospel also has its special office and work, to preach forgiveness of sins to afflicted consciences" (Luther, *ibid.*; [p. 112-113](#); [\[Mueller, p. 98\]](#)) —

Among other things it was remarked that he does not rightly divide the word of truth who uses the Law for anything other than to frighten the impenitent with God's wrath and disgrace. And if a [\[173/1\]](#) sinner, struck by the Law, anxiously asks: What shall I do? — do not preach the Law again, but bring him the Gospel, and do not let this stop the abuse that some people make of the preaching of the gospel. After all, Christ commanded us: Preach the gospel to every creature. If I do not have "dogs" and "swine" before me, from whom the sanctuary and the pearls are to be withheld, then I should not be so anxious in presenting the

glorious gospel. In their zeal to prevent abuse, many people forget to give the poor souls the bread of life. —

When asked why it is actually so difficult to learn the right difference between the Law and the Gospel, the answer was given:

Because the feeling is against it. It is as if I were told that what I see, smell, taste and feel is not there. So it is in Christianity. I feel that I am a sinner, sin stirs within me, my conscience accuses and condemns me, my heart has fallen away from me, I taste death and hell - and yet I am supposed to believe that I am a child of God. It is easy to believe the law, because our conscience, our mind and our whole being agree with it. But by nature we carry nothing of the Gospel



within us. It was hidden from the world. Only the Holy Spirit can bring us to believe the Gospel.

If there is a lack of this ability to properly distinguish between the law and the gospel, then "a Christian cannot be recognized over a Gentile or Jew, if only because of this difference". The difference between Jews or pagans and Christians does not consist in external works. They can be hypocritical, they can often be hidden from human eyes. The Jew and the Gentile rely on their good works, the Christian only on his Lord Christ. The Lord does not call those who refer to their "great deeds" pious, but evildoers, and evildoers because they do not want to be saved by grace through Christ alone, but rely on their works.

It is frightening that the Methodists in their publications always indicate the actual character of Christians with the words: "They are serious about sanctification." If we are asked: What is the character of your fellowship? — we answer: We want to be saved by grace alone for Christ's sake. That is the main thing for us. We fight and struggle for this; we do not want to be deprived of it. Even if it brings us little honor before men, we neither seek nor desire it. But unhappy are the communities that make it their main concern to be serious about sanctification. The pagan [Hindu?] Indians say the same, and are really more serious about sanctification than the Methodists and Albrechtians. But what does God ask about this? He only looks at [173/2] whether we accept his grace and let Him alone be God. Where it is indeed said: *Deo soli gloria!* there, even reason recognizes, true religion must be. And it is precisely through the doctrine of justification that God alone is given the glory.

In addition to Luther's words: "But the power lies in this, that the two words be rightly distinguished and not mixed together" (p. 112), it was noted that

It is well known how the Law is mixed with the Gospel. It is probably less well known how the Gospel is mixed with the Law. For this happens when the Law is interpreted in such a way that the transgressor of the Law thinks he will receive comfort from the Law itself. This also often happens in catechization. After the ten commandments have been interpreted quite sharply, it is said that it is not the opinion that we must do as the Law says; we are too weak for that, and God therefore looks upon good will. The latter is true, but it belongs in the Gospel. Explain the ten commandments as if there were no Gospel, no grace, but only a zealous God. Testify that

God does not relax even the slightest of his requirements in the Law. Whoever has not kept it completely is lost. In this way people will be led to recognize their sin, etc., and driven into the gospel. —

But the Law is mixed into the Gospel if, for example, the Christian who is lazy in good works is to be made zealous through the Law. The apostles did it quite differently. They exhorted "through Jesus Christ", through "the tender mercy of God", etc. —

Even in this there is an abominable mixture of the Law and the Gospel, if one always demands faith legalistically,

as the Pietists do. Thus it happens, for example, that in festive sermons one legalistically demands that the people should rejoice. Preach in such a way that people actually begin to rejoice. This does not mean that the exhortation and encouragement to believe is rejected, but only the legal demand. It makes a big difference whether I say: "Sit down at the table and eat your fill", or exclaim: "Eat, bird, or die!" We should also say with the apostle: "Rejoice!" But then the Gospel must be preached in such a way that the sinner thinks: "Oh, how blind you have been; God has done everything for us so that everyone should rejoice, and you sit in a corner and sulk! It should also be noted that it is not necessary in every sermon to describe faith in detail according to its fruits. This description belongs more to the Law than to the Gospel. In preaching on justification, the poor sinner should be encouraged by my showing him that the Lord Christ has also given him the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit has also acquired him and that He also wants to work faith in him. Faith is not to be demanded as a work, for [174/1] the Law demands faith, but not justifying faith; nor is faith to be demanded as a work of man. It is also extremely important to distinguish between faith in the article on justification and faith in the article on sanctification. There it is described insofar as it grasps Christ, described not according to its quality but according to its object. Here, however, it is described according to its qualitative nature, how it purifies and satisfies the heart, subdues evil desires, generates heavenly longing, in short, how it restores the image of God. —

It is also a confusion of the Law and the Gospel to direct the afflicted sinner to prayer, as the Methodists do, and to command him to wrestle with God until he feels that he has obtained forgiveness. Rather, following the apostolic example, we should say to the repentant sinner: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." I should also preach the law to the believer, which says: You must pray. But this is a sweet law, which the believer delights in, which he wants to fulfill better and better, in which he wants to become more and more eager to follow all good things and to resist all temptations. This is the third use of the law. -

Learn from Luther to preach the law as if there were no gospel, and to present the gospel as if there were no law, so that to those who do not see the matter spiritually, it appears to be a complete contradiction. -

Since it was said that, according to appearances, Christians are no longer challenged today as they were, for example, in the 16th century, it

was remarked, among other things:

Christians should not be judged according to their outward appearance. There is often much more temptation and hardship in one than is believed and shown. Whoever comes to meet us here in this free country and hears God's word, and to whom we cannot prove that he is an unchristian, we consider him to be a Christian, even if he has his infirmities and shortcomings. Only preach the law as sharply as you can, so that not only unbelievers may be frightened, but also Christians may be driven more and more into the gospel, and learn to distinguish between the

law and the gospel in their trials, and say to them: If you only want to be poor sinners and be saved through the Lord Jesus alone, then all is well.

From [Luther's testimony to part B. of Thesis XVIII](#), attention was drawn to the words where it says (p. 113): "Let not these two therefore be mingled together without falsifying the doctrine, nor one taken for the other." Accordingly, he is also a false teacher who preaches the law and the gospel correctly, but mixes one with the other. In order to be able to stand as an orthodox preacher, not only is serious study necessary, but above all the preacher must be a converted Christian. He [174/2] who is blind in himself, even if he preaches correctly, will always, when it comes to the *causa materialis*, mix Law and Gospel without realizing it. But mixing is always falsification. It is, of course, very difficult to come to the point where one always rightly divides the word of truth. Luther also says:

"I experience it myself, and see it daily in others, how difficult it is to separate the teaching of the Law from that of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit must be master and teacher here, or no man on earth will be able to understand or teach." [Mueller, p. 98]

But it should not be said that an oversight in the application of the Word to individual souls, for lack of discernment (examination of the Spirit), already makes one a false teacher. We are dealing here with the application of a certain principle. And one often has to judge from sermons in which there is no heresy, but which nevertheless leave one completely unsatisfied, that the Law and the Gospel are not rightly divided in them. —

Some believe that it is quite Lutheran when they say: "Whether the preacher is converted or not is irrelevant. So long as he teaches purely." Yes, so long as; but where are the unconverted preachers who teach purely? They can teach what is pure, and the word of God is not deprived of its power by the fact that it comes from their impure lips. But teaching the pure is not yet teaching the pure. Only those who are righteously converted can teach purity. Of this Luther says: "Therefore no pope, no false Christian, no fanatic is able to divide these two from one another, especially in *causa materiali et in objecto*."

However, it is Donatistic to claim that the Word of God loses its power in the mouth of an unconverted person, and thus to make the power of the Word dependent on the piety of the preacher. In this all sects follow the Donatists. But it also remains true that only he can preach the grace of

God correctly who is himself livingly seized by it. Many know that an unconverted person is converted and brought to heaven, while he himself goes to the devil: but the whole counsel of God for salvation can only be proclaimed purely by one who is himself a "spiritual man" and applies the Law and the Gospel correctly. The latter is only a gift of the Holy Spirit. Spirit. It is not for nothing that it is said: "It is from God that we are able." The Missouri Synod is thought to be orthodox, and it is thought that it only comes from the letter. But the faith of the heart has brought us together. [175/1] By God's grace, our synod is a living one. "We believe, therefore we speak." [[Pieper's motto](#)]

Thesis XVIII. C. "The Evangelical Lutheran Church strictly distinguishes between fundamental and non-fundamental articles of doctrine contained in Scripture. 1 Cor. 3:11-15 (p. 114.)

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” [Mueller, p. 99]

The following questions are involved in the interpretation of the proof:  
1. what is the meaning of the word: "That is laid"? 2. what does "gold, silver, precious stones" mean? 3. what does "wood, hay, stubble" mean? 4. what does the apostle mean by "fire" and "being saved as by fire"?

The general rule was first laid down that if there is anything questionable in a passage of Scripture, it must be clarified by other passages. Then it was noted on question 1.

We read in Scripture that God has laid the foundation in Christ and through the Word, — and therefore say: "Of course no one can lay any other foundation than this Jesus Christ; but if anyone builds on this foundation, let him consider well" how he builds on it. The builder will be blessed on this foundation, but will suffer damage to his building if he builds on the foundation of wood, hay or stubble (1 Cor. 3:11 in connection with verse 10). Christ is the foundation of the church in a threefold sense. For 1. he is the real foundation of the church, i.e. he has redeemed all so that they can be saved; 2. Christ is the foundation insofar as he is preached by the preacher; 3. Christ is laid as the foundation in the heart when the listener believes in Him. In the words of the Lord: "On this rock I will build my church", the foundation is spoken of in this threefold relationship. —

The apostle says "Jesus Christ" because our foundation is not just the promised Messiah, but Jesus, who is the Christ. —

The word "indeed" is not in the basic text — but Luther used it as an euphemism and means: “in truth”, *perfecto* (truly), in fact and truth, just as the fifth petition says: "Indeed again".

In our passage, the hope of salvation is depicted [175/2] like a house.

The foundation of this house is Christ alone. As soon as the foundation has been laid, we can continue building. He does not build on the foundation who builds with his doctrine that which disputes with this foundation, that which is taught alongside and against this foundation. The apostle does not speak of such building, for this does not build the church, but tears it down and tears it apart.

On question 2. By "gold, silver, precious stones" is meant that which is not destroyed by fire. The word "precious stones" means as much as precious stone, granite, marble and the like, i.e. the doctrine that does not perish, that time does not wash away, that endures the test of time. — He builds "gold, silver, precious stones" on the foundation that carries the imperishable teaching of the divine word.

On question 3. "Wood, hay, stubble" must be such a doctrine as can be propounded without denying, shaking, and overturning the foundation, which, however, does not exist, but is consumed by a certain fire; — these, then, are his own thoughts and opinions.

On question 4. "So shall every man's work be made manifest, and the day shall make it clear; for it shall be made manifest by fire: and what manner of work soever any man's work is, the fire shall prove it. [1 Cor. 3:13] When fire arises, we see



whether a building is durable. Wood, hay, stubble burns out the fire. So there is a day when the preacher's teaching must stand the test. This is the day of temptation, the day of death and the Last Day. On these days a doctrine and faith in it are tested. —

There can be no question of purgatory here. For it is not people who are swept away, but what the preacher preaches; according to our saying, it is the works, not the people, that are to be revealed and tested by fire. But the "work" in the 13th, 14th and 15th verses is the work of a teacher. If such a one has taken gold, silver, precious stones, i.e. imperishable teaching for his building, then he has built a precious building, which will stand in the hour of temptation, in the hour of death and in the last judgment. But if he has only built wood, hay and stubble on the foundation, i.e. his own thoughts and opinions, then this is wasted effort and labor; he has only been a hindrance to God, and if he had sweated blood in his work, he would still receive no reward for it. But if he has laid the foundation and grasped it himself, he will be saved "as through fire". He will be snatched as a brand from the fire and will be like a shipwrecked man who has saved nothing but his bare life. —

A difficulty in the interpretation of our passage has been pointed out here. In the 9th verse it says that [176/1] men are God's building. In the 10th the apostle says that he has laid the foundation and another is building on it, which must be understood as a development of doctrine. In the 11th verse it is then said that Christ himself is the foundation. This seems to indicate that the apostle remains with the idea that people are what is to be built on this foundation, as he says soon afterwards: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God?" The difficulty lies in the fact that in the intermediate clauses different doctrines are meant, while in the beginning and at the end people are spoken of. —

But this was answered:

The ancients also drew attention to this. Grotius, for example, interprets the words: gold, silver, etc. as referring to people. This also has some appearance in itself. However, one often finds in the Holy Scripture, however, that an image continues to be used, but a different basic meaning is given to it. Thus Christ is the foundation in the above-mentioned threefold relationship, as person, as doctrine and as that which is apprehended by faith, and hence the different ways in Scripture of speaking of the foundation of the Church. In our interpretation of the

passage there is only the difficulty mentioned, but that interpretation has more difficulties. According to this, for example, it would also have to be the people who are not only swept away but even burned. Just keep in mind: By correctly erecting a doctrinal building, the correct temple of God is also created. Christ is the personal foundation on which Christians are built. This includes a doctrinal building that has Christ and his work as its foundation and that all the fundamental articles of faith are built on it. This creates the spiritual building in man. The foundation is laid by all the teachings through which a person is brought to embrace Jesus Christ as his Savior.

When the Indians are preached to: You are damned

sinner, as your conscience also testifies to you: but God became man. He has borne your sins, fulfilled the demands of your conscience or the Law, He is God and man. Whoever believes this shall be saved: — and if they accepted this and held on to it, they would already be saved, because they would really have been built on the right foundation. They would be in the faith that saves, even though they do not yet know, for example, the characteristic differences between the three divine persons, do not know anything about the communication of attributes, about the angels, about the image of God, about the fall of man, and the like.

Of course, God not only wants to place us on the right foundation, but also to build us up on it so that we can attain ever greater strengthening of faith and greater sanctification of life. This is brought about by the building [176/2] of gold, silver and precious stones, i.e. by the doctrines of the divine Word that are still present apart from those that lay the foundation. If, however, the foundation is left standing, but only human thoughts are built on it, which do not overturn the foundation, but also do not endure in temptation and death, then wood, hay and stubble have been built on the foundation.

The testimony from the Apology (p. 114; [Arts. VII and VIII, pars. 20-21](#); [Triglotta 233](#), [Mueller p. 99 ff.](#)) gave occasion for the following remarks on our proof:

For this reason, too, it is not possible to understand true Christians by gold, silver and precious stones, and false Christians by wood, hay and stubble, because every true preacher would have to think that he would suffer harm if he did not work enough. — Through a certain doctrinal construction, Christ must first be brought into the heart, but then the continuation must be carried on with only fireproof material. St. Bernhard exclaimed on his deathbed: *Perdite vixi!* He wanted to say: What good has been done through me has only been done by the Lord Jesus; what I have done is lost. He had to regard his life as a lost one. He was a "stubble Christian", as there are also among the sects. Such "stubble Christians" are built on Christ and are Christians and will be saved if they believe in Christ. But the stubble, such as Bernard's monasticism and the like, fall away, are consumed by the fire of temptation. In the Apology they are called [177/1] "some human thoughts and opinions" with which "they do not overthrow the foundation of Christ". But when the papists teach trust in good works, they overthrow the foundation, as they indeed do, since

they "substitute their works, orders, mass" for Christ.

Regarding the testimony from the Large Catechism (p. 115.)

“ In the first place, the Creed used to be divided into twelve articles. Of course, if all the thoughts contained in the Scriptures and belonging to the Creed were gathered together, there would be many more articles, nor could they all be clearly expressed in so few words.” [[Part II, par. 5; Mueller, p. 100; Triglotta p. 679](#)]

It was noted: The "Helmstadtians" in the 17th century claimed that the true church was everywhere where the Apostles' Creed was held. With those who only did this, one could confidently hold church fellowship, they could otherwise teach what they wanted, because in the Apostles' Creed one had, *summa summarum*, all the articles necessary for salvation. Many still share this view of the Helmstadters and ask: Why do you not want to hold church fellowship with us, since we are basically in agreement? But we say: No, the Apostles' Creed contains the most important articles, but not all those that

are necessary for salvation. However, one must demand more from those with whom one is to hold church fellowship.

For this, one must be united in the foundation of faith. But what this is and what belongs to it was shown in Quenstedt's testimony (p. 115 [Mueller p. 100]). According to this, our church distinguishes between fundamental and non-fundamental articles contained in Scripture. We must now consider what is a foundation and what is a fundamental article, what is an article but not a fundamental article.

"A foundation" (according to the actual meaning) "is generally that which is first in every building, which is a support to the whole building and is not supported by anything else." But there is also more to a building, e.g. the walls. These are supported by the foundations and they in turn support the roof. The roof is also part of the building, but it is only supported, it carries nothing. So in the teaching. There is 1. a foundation on which the doctrinal building rests; 2. there are doctrines that are supported by the basic doctrines and again support other doctrines; 3. still others do not support any doctrines at all, but are supported by certain doctrines and serve as decoration.

"Thus the foundation of faith is that which serves as a basis for faith and therefore for the whole of Christianity, like a house to be built and maintained." — Quenstedt's testimony then briefly states the following: The essential foundation is Christ, grasped [177/2] through faith; the instrumental foundation, by which that foundation is laid, is the Word of God.

"The fundamental articles are divided into primary and secondary."

It was noted:

There are certain doctrines that a Christian must believe if he wants to be a Christian and be saved. But then there are also doctrines that one does not know and yet can have a faith that leads to salvation. Still others one does not necessarily have to know, but must not deny them. Others you may also deny and still remain a Christian. Just keep the image of the house clearly in mind. Many Christians before the Reformation, for example, had only a limited knowledge due to a lack of Bibles. But they learned the Ten Commandments, the Three Articles [of the Creed], the Lord's Prayer, and in doing so they clung to their Savior alone. They had the primary fundamental articles through which faith can be generated. But if you have nothing else, the foundation can easily be shaken. There

are even more articles to strengthen the foundation. Someone could not know these and still be saved, but they cannot be denied without loss of salvation. For example, the doctrine of Holy Communion. Communion. One can be saved without knowing about it. But if he hears that the Lord instituted Holy Communion and said so. Communion and said: This is my body, etc. — and he says: I do not believe this, it is against my reason, — he could not be saved. And this is not because something else besides Christ is necessary, but because he overthrows the reason. He believed in Christ because he believed God to be true. But he no longer does.

Question:

Why is it not detrimental to the salvation of all Reformed people if they deny that the body and blood of Christ are in Holy Communion? Lord's Supper?

Answer:

Because they do not know that the words of institution must be understood in this way. If they knew this and still denied it, they would be condemned. — To the foregoing belongs what Baier says (p. 118. et seq.): "Although the developed knowledge (of a secondary fundamental article) is not with all simple-minded believers, yet the denial of it cannot stand with faith and salvation on the part of him who denies it, unless there be a particularly great simplicity and lack of insight into the conclusion by which that denial is logically opposed to the very foundation of faith.

Since it was said that it could well be explained why many were still saved in the sects, since the instrumental foundation, the Bible, was not only recognized by them, but also used; but how it stands in the papacy, since the Bible is forbidden, Christ is only presented as a judge, and no other means of grace actually penetrates into the people than [178/1] holy Baptism? Baptism, so that if someone comes to faith, it can only happen in a way that is officially denied and rejected by the conciliar decrees? —

The reply:

One must distinguish between the papacy and the Roman Church. There is still enough in the Roman Church that people can be saved. The Roman priest has a twofold function. When he baptizes children, he is Christ's servant, but when he reads mass, he is the devil's servant. The doctrine of the papacy, however, is not Christian, but overturns the whole of Christianity. Whatever Christian doctrine is still to be found under the papacy is not the doctrine of the papacy, but of the Christian Church. It is difficult to believe, however, that anyone could hear from the mouths of Roman priests the "dogma of faith necessary for all men to believe" (p. 117. et seq.) in such a way that he would really get those articles into his heart. But for once it is certain that the elect souls under the papacy find it unclear what is said about Mary, fasting, praying, the rosary, etc. They leave that alone and hold on to it. They leave this to themselves and simply adhere to the Lord Jesus, to his blood and death.

And on the other hand, even now, as in Luther's time, there is still a Staupitz and that old monastic brother, here and there a priest in the

papacy, who just cannot get out of the bonds of papal dominion, but who not only comforts himself in his Lord Christ, but also turns the people who come to him in auricular confession to Christ. It is also still preached in the Roman Church that Christ died for us. The Holy Spirit forms this in the heart. Spirit forms this in the heart, and simple-minded souls forget the other. So we must not deny the possibility that souls can be saved not only under the sects, but also under the papacy. But we should also not forget that God's Word alone, especially in justification, is the way to salvation; that false doctrine is a poison and, as much as there is of it, becomes an obstacle on the way to salvation. We praise God that He



still saves so many people despite the many poisons, but we also remember our sacred duty to testify against every false teaching wherever we can.

In the words at the bottom of [page 116](#) [[Mueller p. 102](#)], where it says [from Quenstedt]: "Secondary, however, are those about which one can be ignorant without prejudice to the ground of [[178/2](#)] faith, but which one cannot deny, much less dispute. The difference between the two is that some articles cannot be unknown without prejudice to faith and salvation, e.g. that God wants to have mercy on all people who have fallen into sin, that Christ has redeemed all people. —

The question was asked: Can a decided Calvinist be saved?

Answer: A resolute Calvinist overturns the foundation of faith. For how can a person believe that he belongs to those who will be saved if he does not know from God's Word that God wants to save all and that Christ has redeemed all men? If he pretends that he is certain of his salvation by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he is a fanatic; if he does not pretend this, he cannot be certain of his salvation either. Look at the doctrines mentioned in p. 118 above, and ask whether he can be a Christian who does not believe this. —

Baptism is not mentioned among the doctrines listed on [page 118](#). It was therefore asked whether one who wanted to be saved should not also know something about Baptism? It was answered that this was not absolutely necessary. If a preacher preached the gospel to the Indians without mentioning the doctrine of Baptism, but after this sermon he was shot by an Indian, those of the audience who had heard the sermon and believed in Christ would certainly be saved, even though nothing had been said to them about Baptism. -

But if the preacher had not touched on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, how then?

Answer:

Even if they do not know the characteristic features, they must know that the Holy Spirit is there and works in them, no matter how dark their ideas about it may be. They must believe in the triune God, for whoever does not believe in him believes in an idol. After all, the Lord Jesus calls us to be baptized in the name of the triune God. They do not need to know the word triune, nor what the person actually means; but they must know that there are three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However vaguely this

may have been expressed and received, they must have the basic concept, the substance of it. The Lord Christ says: "But this is eternal life, that they may know you, that you alone are true God, and the one you have sent, Jesus Christ." The example of the jailer and the thief cannot be used here. The latter heard the apostles praise God, speak of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit, and the thief called Jesus Lord. —