

[See [this blog post of 2021](#) offering old version translation of 1870 Eastern)]

[NOTES: 17: non-fundamental article; 20-21: good listing of why this is important; 21: Jews & Jesus, Iowans & Antichrist “everything here depends on history”; Cp. to LC-MS [official statement](#): (McCain and/or “Mobbing” Edward Engelbrecht?): “It is important, however, that we observe the distinction which the Lutheran Confessors made between the office of the pope (papacy) and the individual men who fill that office. The latter could be Christians themselves. ~~We do not presume to judge any person's heart.~~” — “Concerning the historical identity of the Antichrist, we affirm the Lutheran Confessions' identification of the Antichrist with the office of the papacy [NOT with all individuals] whose official claims continue to correspond to the Scriptural marks listed above”;]

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Proceedings of the Synod.

Of the two papers submitted to the Synod for discussion, the first contained eleven theses on the following question: "Is the confession of the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the constitution of a body a sufficient testimony that it is truly Lutheran?" The other contained 32 theses on the doctrine of the Antichrist. After hearing both, the Synod decided to deal first with the theses on the Antichrist, and in the discussion of these it came to the 14th thesis incl. the "Antichrist".

Theses on the Antichrist.

I. Thesis. [\[ToC\]](#)

Although the doctrine of the Antichrist is not a fundamental article of the Christian doctrine of faith, without the knowledge of which the saving faith could neither be generated nor maintained, it is nevertheless of extremely high importance.

Johann Gerhard: "4. Nor do we take our assertion that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist to be such a fundamental article of faith, the knowledge and confession of which would be so necessary to all Christians of all times and places that a lack of that knowledge and confession would in and of itself be utterly condemnable. For before the Antichrist was revealed, many teachers of the Church, without compromising their salvation, held, taught and wrote about the Antichrist other than that he was to be sought in Rome. But even after the revelation of the Antichrist there are many Christians who know nothing of the Roman Pope, but all the less reject the papal heresies as anti-christian. But this question, whether the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist, belongs to the true and thorough explanation of the prophecies which the Holy Spirit would have recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially in the prophet Daniel, in the epistles of Paul, and in the Revelation of John, for the consolation of the Church." (*Conf Cath. I. II. art. III. cap. V. de antichr. 581b. No. 4. cf. H. No. 5.*)

Quenstedt: "It is not a question of a fundamental article of faith, the ignorance or denial of which condemns, but of a non-fundamental article of faith. — A distinction is made between fundamental articles of faith, which belong to the saving faith, and non-fundamental articles, the knowledge of which is also handed down in God's Word, which belong to the dogmatic or historical faith. To this (latter) class we include the doctrine of Antichrist because of the prophecies of Scripture revealed to us by the Holy Spirit in the prophet Daniel, in St. Paul, and in the Revelation of John. But we do not say that this question of Antichrist is one whose decision is necessary for all Christians to know for salvation, or that ignorance of it is in itself condemnable; since there have been many Christians in earlier centuries, and there are many today, who are by no means devoted to papist errors, who without knowledge of this truth will undoubtedly be saved. For many church fathers have put forward opinions of the Antichrist that are not in agreement. Because they were too far removed from the fulfillment of these prophecies, they gave themselves somewhat freely to their opinions, or seized and spread somewhat carelessly the uncertain opinions of others." (*Pars IV. cap. XVI. sect. II. § 1. p. 1687 and éx9. 1. p. 1688.*)

Luther: "Although the Pabst's diabolical abomination is in itself an infinitely unspeakable jumble, I have, I hope, whoever will let him say (for myself I am sure), the first part: ... whether it is true that the pope is head over Christendom, lord over emperors, over kings, over all the world, so clearly and powerfully that, praise God, no good Christian conscience can believe otherwise than that the pope is not nor can be the head of the Christian churches, nor governor of God

or Christ. but is the head of the accursed churches of all the worst boys on earth, a governor of the devil, an enemy of God, an adversary of Christ and destroyer of the churches of Christ, a teacher of all lies, blasphemy and idolatry; a thief from the arch-church and a robber of the church, of the keys, of all goods, of both ecclesiastical and secular lords; a murderer of kings and an inciter to all kinds of bloodshed; a fornicator above all fornicators, and of all fornication, even that which is not to be named; an antichrist, a man of sins and a child of perdition; a real bear wolf. If anyone does not want to believe this, let him go to his God, the Pope. I, as a called preacher and teacher in the Church of Christ, and guilty of telling the truth, have hereby done my part. Whoever wants to stink, let him stink, whoever wants to be lost, let him be lost; let his blood be on his head."

Balduin: "The wickedness of the Antichrist is therefore so fully described by the apostle (2 Thess. 2.) v. 3, that we should not disregard this doctrine of the Antichrist, but make ourselves acquainted with it, and rightly recognize that great adversary of Christ. For in this way the knowledge of Christ will be all the sweeter for us, and with all the greater zeal we will avoid the Antichrist, who otherwise lures people to himself through seductive words, rewards and the lusts of this world. Revelation. 18, 3 For it helps us to realize that all the characteristics of the Antichrist which Paul enumerates fit no one so well as the Roman pontiff, so that we do not get the idea that it comes from a carnal impulse when something harsher is said against the papacy. For we see that the Holy Spirit spares it neither here nor in Revelation; nor can any human words be so bitter that its malice does not deserve more bitter ones; nor can any hatred be so perfect that it is not owed to this adversary of Christ. It would have to be that someone would think that the man of sin, the child of perdition, the proud and vile one who exalts himself above all that God is and rules in the temple of God like a god, whom the Lord Jesus will finally kill with the spirit of his mouth, should not even be insulted with a single word, let alone that he is worthy of hatred. This is to be noted against those who fear the power of the pope and his followers, and think that one must treat the popes with a gentle hand and not think of what David says: "I hate, O Lord, those who hate you, and I am angry with them for setting themselves against you. I hate them in earnest; therefore they are enemies to me." Ps. 139:21, 22 (Comm. on 2 Thess. 2. Aphor. 8. p. 1224.)

Hoe von Hoenegg: "In the Peace of Religion this is not mentioned with a single letter, and the name Antichrist is a part of our doctrine, indeed a pars fidei historicae, a part of the historical faith. For we do not say for ourselves that the Pope is the Antichrist and abominable,

but God the Holy Spirit Himself teaches this so clearly, so plainly, so manifestly that a blind man can grasp it, let alone a sighted man. Just as we consider ourselves guilty of infallibly believing everything that the Holy Spirit affirms, so we cannot refrain from believing this statement of God, the Holy Spirit, and from considering the article to be true, that the Pope of Rome is truly the Antichrist. Therefore we cannot count him among the purer personalia, much less let him fall in honor of the Jesuits or some people." (Vertheidgg. des Augapfels. Leipzig. 1673. p. 1557.)

Hülemann: "Just as those who seek to overturn the truth of the matter itself tend to begin in the other articles of faith by denying the necessary knowledge of the matter, so it happens today with the doctrine of Antichrist. For although we have already stated in our main proposition that the necessity is conditional, not unconditional; but when the condition is fulfilled, namely when Antichrist is present and the danger of deception is there, then the doctrine of the distinction of Antichrist from the true teachers is no less necessary today than the doctrine of the malice and the persecutions of devils. To this we should refer the earnest admonitions of Christ and the apostles (Matt. 7:24; Luke 12, 42 ff.; 17:35 ff.; 21:8; 2 Thess. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3 and 4; 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:4; Rev. 11:12 ff.), that one should shun the imitations of Antichrist, which admonitions cannot be obeyed without a clear knowledge of Antichrist. But just as the threat and the signs of the already imminent and already really descending flood of sin were nevertheless ridiculed by Noah's relatives (Gen. 6:4, 13; Luke 17:27), so are the mocking speeches and the signs of the Antichrist. The sneers and mockeries of the papists and Calvinists, who accuse each other of plotting against the Antichrist in trivial and false matters, are not wrongly regarded as mockery of the thing itself, just as if someone were to call another a Polyphemus, a Medusa, a Charon, or by some other name of this kind, when he himself does not believe that they really exist. Calixt declares that he considers the Roman pope to be the most important of the Antichrists, not the Antichrist per se, but with the qualification that he arrogates to himself the dignity of a governor of Christ by divine right alone. This, however, contradicts our symbolic books, to which he (Calixtus) and Hornejus (his party companion) have sworn." (Praelect. e. 22. p. 1229. 1231.)

Comments on Thesis I.

The doctrine of the Antichrist is not a fundamental article, i.e. it does not directly touch the foundation of faith. The word foundation comes

from the Latin *fundamentum*, i.e. reason. A fundamental article must therefore be such a part of the doctrine on which our faith is based, with which it stands or falls. The doctrine of Antichrist is not such an article of faith. But the Iowa Synod deceptively tries to make this doctrine out to be so insignificant that it does not have much to it, since it is not a fundamental article. It is true that the belief in justification by grace has nothing to do with the doctrine of Antichrist; but it is another question whether it is not of great importance in other respects. That even our ancients did not regard so-called non-fundamental articles as indifferent can be seen from the fact that they include the following among such articles: The doctrine of the fall and eternal expulsion of a number of angels; of the unforgivableness of sin in the Holy Spirit; of the burial of Christ; of the visibility or invisibility of the Church; of the marks of the Church; of the freedom of the Church in regard to ordinances. But who can say that these doctrines are therefore of little or no importance?

The importance of this doctrine can be seen from the following:

1. It is a clearly stated doctrine of the divine word; even the papists and all enthusiasts admit that the doctrine of the Antichrist is written in God's Word.
2. Holy Scripture has prophesied and revealed this fact of a future Antichrist; but now many things are not said in Holy Scripture which seem to us to be important, but certainly nothing unnecessary is said; therefore what is revealed must also be necessary and important for us to know.
3. Holy Scripture itself indicates the importance of this doctrine in explicit terms by describing the Antichrist as extremely dangerous, cunning and pernicious, as one who will usurp immeasurable power and deceive countless people.
4. Holy Scripture pronounces a curse on all those who allow themselves to be deceived by the Antichrist and accept his mark. They will experience the wrath of God and be tormented with fire and brimstone; the smoke of their torment will rise for ever and ever. Revelation 14:9 ff.
5. According to Scripture, the discovery of the Antichrist is also to be connected with the reformation of the Church. Whoever therefore denies that the Pope is the Antichrist must also be in doubt as to whether Luther's reformation is the divine work prophesied.
6. According to the Scriptures, the Antichrist will be revealed before the Last Day. Whoever therefore denies that the pope is the Antichrist will also have doubts as to whether the Last Day could come at any moment.

7. Finally, for a Lutheran this doctrine is important because it is clearly stated in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church (especially the Smalcald Articles). He would therefore not stand with his fathers in the One Faith if he wanted to deny it. In short, this doctrine does not have the weight of a *necessitas medii* (because it is not immediately necessary for salvation); but it does have the weight of a *necessitas praecepti* (because it is revealed in Scripture).

Considering that a Hoe von Hoenegg lived in the midst of the Thirty Years' War, when it was considered a crime of majesty to declare the pope to be the Antichrist, because the emperor was fighting for him and strengthening his empire, it is easy to see how deeply he must have been imbued with the importance of this doctrine. It is therefore not enough to lament the fact that this testimony has been almost completely silenced in our day, even though the Antichrist is now raising his head ever more powerfully in Rome. While the people are asleep, the Antichrist is always drawing several crowds to himself; conversions to the Roman Church hardly arouse any astonishment here.

From Luther's quotation we see how firmly he held that the pope was the Antichrist. And indeed, if he had been mistaken in this doctrine, he would not only have been a terrible fanatic instead of a reformer, but would also have uttered the most horrible slander that can ever be uttered against a human being. But next to the treasure of pure doctrine, the revelation of Antichrist is the greatest good deed of the Reformation; there the truth that saves us, and here the discovery and revelation of Antichristian error.

Although the Iowans say that everything here depends on history, the Jews could have said to the apostles in exactly the same way: we first want to see how it goes with your Christ, for it is indeed written in the Bible that a Christ is to come, but not expressly that it is precisely this Jesus of Nazareth. But we say quite rightly that anyone who will not believe in Christ until he is revealed on the Last Day is lost. Thus the characteristics of the Antichrist are also clearly laid down in Scripture. Whoever believes this will also be able to recognize the Antichrist; and whoever does not recognize him after this will not remain simple-minded in His Word; he will be like the Jews in Christ's day, who did not know Him even though He had already come into their midst. And why did they not know Him? Because they did not believe the divine prophecies.

Even Spener, who is otherwise so lax against pious false teachers, considered it the duty of every righteous Lutheran preacher to testify against the Antichrist in Rome; he himself not only considered the Pope to be the Antichrist, but also wrote an entire book against him.

It has also been remarked that the antichristian nature is a mystery of wickedness, and is therefore hidden from all those who do not accept God's revelation of it. He who does not recognize the mystery of godliness

cannot recognize its opposite, the mystery of wickedness. Therefore we should not be surprised that so many do not accept our testimony, or despise it. We live in the age of unionism and indifferentism. It is thought to be enough for one to live a pious life; if such indifferents now notice that in the Roman Church Christ is also regarded as the Son of God, the Bible as the Word of God, etc., and if they find that these people even surpass others in outward, worshipful exercises and penances, they wonder what kind of Christianity must be hidden there. They do not even suspect that in this righteousness of works lies hidden the greatest enmity against Christ and his gospel, that the Antichrist wants to boast of the flesh of his subjects, and deludes them as if one could earn salvation by mechanical means and exercises.

Thesis II. [\[ToC\]](#)

The word Antichrist is used by our Lutheran church teachers in a broad sense, according to the usage of Scripture. 1 John 2:18. In the broader sense it generally denotes false teachers and heretics, but in the narrower sense it denotes the great Antichrist, whereby our Fathers again speak of an Oriental and an Occidental Antichrist, of one outside and one inside the Christian Church. It is the latter that we are dealing with here.

Nicolai: "So far we have spoken of the idolatrous, unbelieving Gentiles, as the ancients call *Paganos*, now we want to see the secret of the Antichrist.... In the Holy Scriptures, however, the word Antichrist does not refer to the Jews or Gentiles of whom we have spoken so far, but to those who want to be regarded as holding Christ in honor and cherishing his holy gospel, while they are hostile to it in their hearts, either setting it aside altogether, or falsifying, perverting and distorting it with their glosses, so that they partly adorn their own poem and paint it with a semblance of divine faith; in part, to offer it to the whole world as a new secret revealed by God, and especially to bring it secretly to the common man and to those of safe, raw hearts who have no regard for the truth of the gospel. The apostle John speaks of this in his first epistle in chapter 2. Now there have been many unbelievers, so we realize that the last hour has come. They have gone out from us, but they were not of us. By which words he implies that the antichrists boast of great mysteries, which God has especially revealed to them, and endeavor to penetrate and keep the churches as necessary. And, says the apostle, there are many such antichrists, not only the

greatest and foremost two, the Gog and the child of perdition, but also all kinds of heretics, fools and false apostles. For this reason, the word Antichrist encompasses the whole basic soup of heretics and heretics who have existed from all times, from the ascension of the Lord Christ until now, and who have secretly harmed and done great damage to the Christian churches, in addition to their public enemies: But for the sake of better understanding and correctness, this distinction must be well noted, that the antichrists are not all equal and one and the same, but are thus distinguished, that some are and are called great, but some small antichrists. Great antichrists are those who have spread the abomination of their idolatry far and wide throughout the whole world, and have thus seized great dominions and kingdoms and brought them under their control, so that they have become very powerful, mighty and terrible, and the Christian church has suffered greatly and almost been defeated by their deception and persecution. Therefore, out of the devil's instigation and inspiration, they have spewed out terrible blasphemies against God and his anointed ones, have vigorously defended their abominable, blasphemous doctrine in many kingdoms for several hundred years, and have miserably executed with sword and sword all believing Christians who would not accede to it. Two such antichrists are revealed in Holy Scripture, namely the Gog and the Child of Perdition, by which the Mahomet and the Bishop of Rome are understood." (Historia of the Kingdom of Christ. p. 43. ff.)

Joh. Gerhard: "The Roman pontiff, after the apostasy, is that great Antichrist of whom Daniel, Paul and John prophesied. ... The name Antichrist is taken in Scripture either in a general or in a special sense." (Conf. cathol. p. 581. *Lutheraner* XXIII. p. 155.)

Quenstedt: "1 Joh. 2:18. ... St. John takes the word Antichrist in two ways; 1. from that great and excellent adversary of Christ, of whom Paul writes 2 Thess. 2; 2. from all the adversaries of Christ and arch-heretics, as forerunners of that great deceiver." (*Theol. did.-pol.* IV, 16. fol. 1688. sq.)

Comments on thesis II.

The distinction between great and small Antichrists is probably found in all our dogmatists. Flacius Glossa speaks of small and great antichrists in 1 John 2:18 and in the *Clavis* under Antichristus and Kromayer *Theol. pos.-pol. art. 18 th. II. p. 1042*. The use in the broader and narrower sense is statuted by Baldwin in 2 Thess. 2. p. 1208 a.; Brochmand *Systema universae theol. l. de pont. rom. cap. 5. sect. quarta vol II. p. 306 a.*; Hülsemann *Brev. cap. 22. § 2. p.563*; Quenstedt *Theol. did.-pol. P. 4. cap.16. fol.1679*,

Baier *Comp. theol. P. III. c. 13. § 39. p 963*; Hollaz *Examen P. III. sect. II. cap. X. p. 788. vol. II. et P. IV. cap. I. vol. II. 854.* Scherzer I. 28. p. 844. distinguishes between the etymologically and the specifically so-called Antichrists.

Furthermore, our ancients again distinguish the great Antichrist into the Oriental and the Occidental. Baldwin op. cit. 1208. b. Gerhard on Revelation 6:16. p. 54. Kromayer op. cit. Hollaz op. cit. Iowa calls this insufficient (*Colloquium* p. 165) and relies on the fact that the Turk is also counted as Antichrist in the narrower sense (*ibid.* 165). But it is beyond all question that where our ancients speak of Antichrist in the eminent sense, they mean the Pope.

Thesis III. [\[ToC\]](#)

The following passages in particular deal with this great Antichrist: 1 John 2:18, 22; 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7; 2 Thess 2:3 ff. Dan. 11:36 ff., after which also 1 Tim. 4:1-3. Rev. 13:17-18.

Comments on this.

The passages where the great Antichrist is obviously and immediately recognizable are 1 John 2:18, 22, 1 John 4:3, 2 John 7:4 & 3, 2 John 7, for here we find the word "Antichrist" not only in the plural, but also in the singular, namely with the article. Furthermore, 2 Thess. 2:3 ff. deal with the Antichrist; this is probably conceded by all exegetes without exception, and although the word "Antichrist" is not found in it, it is as clear as the sun. The ὁ ἀντικείμενος [2 Thes. 2:4] (the abominable) already points to this; the whole text describes an arch-enemy of Christ, who rises up against God and Christ in the Church of God; and when John says so often in the above-mentioned passages: his readers have already heard of the Antichrist, he is referring to this very passage of the Apostle Paul, into whose activity he had entered after his death. (Hengstenberg Kztg. 1865, 217.) Dan. 11:36. many, of course, interpret it of Antiochus Epiphanes, others of the Roman empire under the consuls (Calvin), or under the emperors (Coccejus), or of individual emperors, e.g. Constantine the Great, Titus, Vespasian, etc. (Jews). Even the Church Fathers, such as Jerome and Theodoret, understood this passage of the Antichrist; likewise our symbolic books and our ancient teachers understand it almost without exception (Hülsemann in his Breviary p. 515 understands it of Antiochus, as the type of the Antichrist), and even the more pious Jews.

That this passage (Dan. 11:36) deals with the Antichrist is proved as follows. 1. v. 35. is indicated by the words: "There is yet another time", that the following is no longer

about Antiochus, but about another adversary (see Luther, Dannhauer in Geier, Calov). 2. According to Dan. 12:2, this adversary described here is followed by the resurrection of the dead, so that it cannot be Antiochus, but the Antichrist, whom the Lord will put an end to by the appearance of his future (Dannhauer in Geier, Calov). 3. The apostle Paul obviously takes our Danielic passage into account when describing the Antichrist in 2 Thess. 2, 1 Tim. 4. 4. Not everything said here applies to Antiochus (Dannhauer *ibid.*); he did not exalt himself above all gods, but only made himself equal to them; he retained the idolatry of his fathers and did not despise the love of women (Calov).

1 Timothy 4:1-3, however, lacks the name of the Antichrist, but we find here many things that are known from other passages as a characteristic of the Antichrist, e.g. apostasy, hypocrisy, the prohibition of marriage, so that we must not presume to understand this passage as referring to the Antichrist.

In Revelation 13, the beast with two horns that rises from the abyss is rightly understood to refer to the Pope and his kingdom. It appears as the image of the Antichrist through the following antichristian characteristics: Hypocrisy, deception, miracles and persecution.

Revelation 17, the harlot is the image of the Antichrist, as we see from the characteristics of the Antichrist: seduction, glittering appearance, persecution, which we find in him. (See also *Lutheraner* XXIV. p. 107.)

Thesis IV. [[ToC](#)]

We find many different human opinions about who this great Antichrist is.

Comments on this.

The Jews also expect an Antichrist, i.e. counter-Messiah, to whom they give the name Armillus, i.e. corrupter of the people; but as with them everything boils down to the flesh, they describe him as a horrible giant, twelve cubits high and broad, and so on.

In the old days of the Christian church, an Antichrist was expected in the sense that he would not be a collective but an individual. When Mohammad destroyed the Christian church of the East, many Christians were inclined to believe that he was the Antichrist.

In the Middle Ages, the papists continued to hold that the Antichrist would be an individual. Bellarmin gives the following as the Roman doctrine of this: The Antichrist will be born of the tribe of Dan in Babylon. The Jews will take him for the Messiah, he will draw men to himself through satanic arts and miracles and will dwell in the temple at Jerusalem for three and a half years; he will send his messengers into all the world and subdue Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and finally Judea. Finally, he will also abolish the daily

sacrifice of the mass. Enoch and Elijah will come out of the earthly paradise, preach against the Antichrist and perform miracles, but will be killed by him. Their bodies will lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days, but on the fourth day they will be resurrected by God and ascend to heaven in a cloud before everyone's eyes. One and thirty days after their death, the Antichrist will attempt an ascension from the Mount of Olives, but will be killed by Jesus through the archangel Michael. Now those deceived by him still have five and forty days to repent, during which time the Jews will be converted, followed by the Last Day.

But even then there was no lack of those who had already recognized the Roman Pontiff as the true Antichrist, e.g. the Waldensians, the Albigenses, the Wycliffites and the Bohemian Brethren. The Emperor Frederick II also wrote in a letter to Otto, Duke of Bavaria: "The Roman popes arrogate to themselves dominion and divinity, so that they may be feared by all no differently, indeed more than God." (op. cit. p. 196.)

In more recent times, some understand the Antichrist to be an ideal (imaginary) person, and call it atheism, i.e. unbelief or the prevailing spirit of the age, but both of these are outside the Church and have no semblance of holiness. Others understand it to mean a collective person (consisting of several or many individuals), but have described the Prussian state as the Antichrist, e.g. Prüsterer in Holland. Others, finally, understand by it an individual person, and accordingly some regarded Napoleon I as the Antichrist, and pointed the Apollyon in Revelation 9:11. to him; others regard Napoleon III. as the Antichrist, as the "Signs of the Times" (L. u. W. 6, 318), Pastor Diedrich (*ibid.* 15, 201.). But these men have neither the mark of miracles, nor glittering light, nor dominion in the temple of God. The Iowa Synod says that one could call the Pope the real Antichrist with the symbolic books, but still expect an individual as the Antichrist. (Colloquium between Missouri and Iowa, p. 174.) Not only does this not suffice apart from symbols, but it also has no ground in Scripture, hence Balduin (on 2 Thess. 2:9 & 7. p. 1217 a.) calls such an opinion *leves conjecturulas*. Gerhard (Conf. Cath. 1. II. art. III. c. 6.) rejects many Roman objections that the Antichrist is still to be expected. Indeed, he declares such an opinion to be dangerous. He writes: The papists' doctrine of Antichrist "serves indirectly to promote security. For since, according to the premise of the preachers, the Antichrist has not yet come, the world can meanwhile say with the evil servant: My Lord is not coming for a long time yet, Matthew 24:48. One cannot object that the apostle also predicted that the day of the Lord would not come before the Antichrist was revealed, 2 Thess. 2:3. and yet

for this reason he could not be reproached with having in any way nourished certainty; for there is a quite unequal relation here, because at the time of the apostle the Antichrist had not yet come; whereas it is certain from Scripture and experience that he was revealed at this our time." That the Antichrist has come, and that it is the Roman pope, is evident from the following theses.

Thesis V. [ToC]

The Lutheran Church teaches in its public confessional writings, and its teachers confirm it in their private writings, that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist.

Smalcald Articles, 2nd part Art. IV: "This piece" (that the pope wants to be *jure divino*, i.e. by divine right the supreme ruler over the Christian church) "shows tremendously that he is the very Endchrist or Antichrist, who has set himself over and against Christ and exalted himself, because he does not want to let Christians be saved without his power, which is nothing, not ordered and commanded by God. This actually means to set oneself above God and against God, as St. Paul says in 2 Thess. 2. Nevertheless, the Turk and the Tartar do not do this, as they are great enemies of Christians, but let whoever wants to believe in Christ believe in Christ and take bodily interest and obedience from Christians." [\[SA II, IV, 10-11\]](#)

Notes on this.

Our symbolic books speak very differently about the pope. Soon they say that he and his teachings are anti-Christian. Apol. Art. 24 (12) sentence 96 ff. p. 269. Smalc. Art. Th. 2. art. 2. proposition 25. p. 305. part 3. art. 11. proposition 1. p. 324. — Soon they call him a part of the kingdom of Antichrist, Apol. Art. 16 (8). Proposition 18-21. p. 208. Formula of Concord. Thl. 2. art. 10. sentence 22. p. 702. soon they call him the Antichrist, Apol. 24 (12). Proposition 51. p. 260. proposition 98. p. 270. Smalc. Art. Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope. Proposition 41. p. 336. Formula of Concord Thl. 2. art. 10. proposition 20. p. 702. Soon they refer to the fact that individual characteristics of Antichrist are found in the Pope. Thus to Daniel 11, in general Apol. Art. 7 and 8 (4). Sentence 23. f. p. 156; in particular: to the new divine service, Art. 15 (8). Proposition 18-21. p. 208. art. 24 (12). Sentence 51. p. 260; on the prohibition of marriage, Art. 23 (11). Sentence 25. p. 240; on his exaltation of God and Christ, Smalc. Art. Thl. 2. art. 4. sentence 10. ff. p. 308. Soon they say that all the marks of Antichrist are to be found in the pope, Smalc. Art. Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope., proposition 39-59. p. 336. ff. Soon

at last they call the Pope the right Antichrist. Smalc. Art. Thl. 2. art. 4. proposition 10. p. 308. and p. 339. (Cf. Der Lutheraner 10, 127. b.)

These passages are variously misunderstood. Diedrich in Jabel, for example, says that the symbols do not want to say that the Pope is the Antichrist (*L. u. W.* 15, 199.), because they also say that he is a part of the kingdom of Antichrist. The Iowa Synod also agrees with this essentially. It writes: "Because p. 209 the Apology also calls the papacy a part of the kingdom of Antichrist, and the Apology is just as well a confessional writing of our church as the Smalcald Articles, so we summarize both passages and explain the more general by the more specific and say: the pope or the papacy is the right Antichrist, more precisely a piece of the right Antichrist, thus quite antichristian." (Cited in Der Lutheraner 23, 157. a.)

Against this the following is to be said: 1. The Apology speaks hypothetically: "Thus the papacy also becomes a part of the kingdom of Antichrist; so (*si* = if) it teaches to obtain forgiveness of sins through human commandments and to reconcile God." Here the Apology does not say at all: "what it considers the papacy to be; but in order to convince even the papists how frightening it is to obtain forgiveness of sins through human commandments, it gives them to consider that the papacy... is a part of the kingdom of Antichrist, if they teach it." (*Ibid.*) Such a conditional statement must certainly not weaken the direct passage that the pope is the real Antichrist. (*Ibid.* 157. b.) This would be just as wrong as if one wanted to deny the Sonship of Jesus Christ because of the hypothetical statement John 10:35, 36. (*Ibid.*) 2. This interpretation is not only illogical, but also impossible, because of the words: "the true, right one", i.e. in the actual, narrowest, strictest sense of the word the Pope is the Antichrist, everything else is only called so in an inauthentic, subordinate, derived, general sense. Thus John 15:1, 1 John 5:20. (*Ibid.* b. c.) 3. It is true that it says: The papacy is a part of the kingdom of Antichrist. But first the nature of the antichristian kingdom, to which the Mohammedan kingdom is also counted, is described, then it is said that the papacy also becomes a part of this kingdom if it teaches in this way. Rightly so, the papacy is not the whole of antichristianity either. (*Ibid.* 157. c.) "But it follows as little from this, that the pope is not only the real, true Antichrist himself, but only a part of it, as from the fact that the faithful Christians are only a part of Christendom in general, it follows that the faithful Christians are not only the true Christians, but only a part of the true Christians; but: as the believing Christians are only a part of Christendom in general, and yet alone the right Christians and the right Christendom, so also the Papacy is only a piece of Antichristianity

in general, and yet the Pope is the right, true, sole Antichrist in the narrower, strictest sense. Hence also in that passage of the Apology where the kingdom of Antichrist is spoken of in general, Mohammed's kingdom is included in the kingdom of Antichrist, but in the Smalcald Articles, where the kingdom of Antichrist in the narrower sense, the real, true Antichrist himself is dealt with, is expressly excluded from it." (*Ibid.* 168 [*sic:* 158] a.)

This failure of the Iowans on the symbols proves again that Iowa is not sincere about the symbols. Nothing is more clearly contained in the symbols than the doctrine that the Pope is the Antichrist, but because the above passage occurs in the Apology, which can be sophistically twisted to suit their opinion, they fall upon it and leave all other clear passages to one side. Wherever they think they can make a breach in the teaching of the symbols, they do so with pleasure. If they wanted to confess conscientiously, they would have to confess that they have a different doctrine of the Antichrist than Luther and the Fathers and the symbols. It is terrible when this noble confession is used to introduce non-Lutheran doctrines, to make clear doctrines suspect and uncertain. These hypocrites want to accuse us of being too exact about the symbols, and they secretly cling to casual statements, the *sedes doctrinae*, in order to throw the symbols and their confessors overboard. By tearing down the walls in this way, they want to spread the appearance of ecumenical liberality around them. Not the words of the Fathers, but their opinion must be adhered to, they now say, then again they cling to words and deny the opinion and meaning of the Fathers, which they express in clear words in other places.

The Synod considered it superfluous to print testimonies from the private writings of the Lutheran church teachers that the Pope was the Antichrist, given the large number of these testimonies. Only one quotation from Luther and Hüleßmann may find a place here: "When Christ walked on earth, many people who heard His word and saw His work spoke against those who would not let him be Christ: If Christ has already come, how can He do more miracles than this man does? In the same way, people are now saying: if the last Christ has already come, what more evil can he do than the pope's reign has done, and does every day? Is it not believable that if his reign were of God, he should so much corrupt himself and come out of it, and let the evil spirit reign so powerfully within? We do not yet believe until we are lost and all too fearfully recognize the end Christ." (Erl. A. 24, 161.) "Therefore I beseech you that you will certainly believe Daniel that the Pope is the real Antichrist." (*Ibid.* 60, 178.)

Hülseman: "To which man and state, which certainly exists in the present, alone fit all those marks with which Holy Scripture has painted and characterized that true, or great Antichrist, he is that true and great Antichrist, but to that bishop who is called the ecumenical and who has his seat at Rome, and to him alone fit those marks, etc." Ergo. The major is admitted by the popes themselves ... the minor is our (assertion), by which not only in the Schmalk. Articles Part 3. of the power of the pope, but also in the Apology, of the invocation of the saints, of both forms of the sacrament, of the ordination of priests, of the mass, and otherwise, it is asserted that the marks of Antichrist are indeed proper to the papacy and the Roman pope." (Prael. Form. Conc. art.18 de antichristo magno p. 919.)

If one now considers that even a Herzog and Brockhaus write in their encyclopedias on the basis of our symbols that it is the doctrine of the Lutheran Church that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist, it must be doubly surprising that the Iowans pretend not to be able to recognize this. Indeed, even the Reformed Church in its most important branches, as in the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, has constantly declared the Pope to be the Antichrist. Even Calvin cannot deny Luther the testimony that he was the most important champion against the Roman pope, whom he also calls Antichrist. But Iowa does not want to admit this truth, that the pope is the Antichrist, lest the door be closed to the doctrine of the millennial kingdom. Thus, with sacrilegious recklessness, they give away the second jewel that God gave us through the Reformation, namely the revelation of the Antichrist. This doctrine was so generally recognized at the time of the Reformation that even Calvin says of the passage in 2 Thess. 2: "It is so obvious that the pope is the Antichrist that even a ten-year-old child can see it."

Thesis VI. [ToC]

The main objection to this doctrine is that the Antichrist will be an individual or an ideal (imagined) person. However, according to the Scriptures, we should rather think of a collective person (consisting of several individuals).

Luther: "One should by no means obey those who understand this (Dan. 8:23-25) and similar passages of the prophets to refer to one person alone, ignorant of the usage and custom of the prophets, who usually refer to a whole kingdom through one person. For therefore they [papists] interpret the word end-Christ [or Antichrist] as referring to one person only, whom

St. Paul calls the man of sin and the son of perdition, 2 Thess. 2:3, when Paul would have understood the whole body and the whole swarm of the ungodly and all their descendants to be the same end-Christ [or Antichrist]." (Walch 18. p. 1800 ["*Response to Catharinus*" (1521), [StL 18, 1470](#); *Am. Ed.* vol. 71 (forthcoming)])

Comments on this.

The Iowans agree with the Papists that the Antichrist will be an individual; but that this must rather be thought of as a collective person is evident for many reasons, namely:

According to the usage of Scripture, as Luther also testifies, several persons are to be included under one person, e.g. Dan. 8:23 ff., where "the insolent, treacherous king" evidently means a whole series of such, indeed whole kingdoms are represented as one person, e.g. Dan. 2, where all the kingdoms of the world from the beginning to the end are shown to Nebuchadnezzar in the image of one man. Furthermore, Daniel 7:19, where apparently a whole series of rulers and kingdoms are meant by the fourth beast. We find the same use of language in the New Testament. Paul says in 2 Thess. 2 of One "who now (still) holds it back", that the Antichrist cannot yet come forth, but evidently understands by this the Roman world empire and thus a whole series of emperors or individual persons. Flacius: "The one who still holds it back means that the Roman emperor or the Roman empire, which was still in a flourishing state at the time, resisted him, that he could not usurp such great power.... But from this we can also see that just as the one who still held it back was not a single person but a whole empire, although he was described as one person, so also the Antichrist is that whole body of Babylonian abomination and tyranny." (Glossa to 2 Thess. 2:7, p. 1030. b.)

This use of language is still common today, for when one says, for example, that the German emperor always had a lot of trouble with the estates, the singular "der Kaiser" is obviously understood to mean not just one person, but the whole series of German emperors who had to deal with the estates. Even the papists use the word "Pope" in this sense, for example, when they refer to the dogma of infallibility with the heading: "Of the infallibility of the Roman Pope", without saying: of the Roman popes, since they understand all popes under the singular.

Now when the above Scriptures show that 2 Thess. 2:3 can be understood in this way, namely that a collective person is meant by the Antichrist, then 2 Thess. 2:8, where it says that the Lord will put an end to him by the appearing of his coming, shows that it must be understood in this way.

For as long as the Antichrist is to reign according to the Scriptures, no individual man can live; already in Paul's time wickedness

was secretly stirring, and John testifies in 1 John 4:3: "This is the spirit of antichrist, of which ye have heard that it shall come, and is now already in the world." Although it is objected that according to the Revelation of John the Antichrist is to reign only three and a half years, the fact that this is not to be understood as natural solar years already shows that no man could accomplish in such a short time what is prophesied of the Antichrist. But it also lies in the nature of the Antichrist and the devil, his father, for he is a creature of the devil. For the devil has been fighting against Christ not only for several years, but from the very beginning. As soon as the true Christ appeared, the devil hastened to oppose him with a false Christ, and just as he destroyed God's kingdom in paradise, so he hastened to destroy Christ's kingdom of grace. As surely as Christ came into the world, so surely the Antichrist could not be absent. But what would it be if he only fought against Christ for three and a half years? He would not be able to destroy many people. No, in the papacy the antichristian kingdom is revealed, as described in Scripture, where we see how for centuries millions upon millions of unfortunate people have been plunged into hell under the pretense of Christianity. Although the unfortunate are taught that there is only one purgatory for those who believe in the pope, it will eventually be found that this purgatory is the eternal fire of hell.

It has been noted that some consider the three and a half years of Revelation to be natural years, because the 42 months and the 1280 days of which Scripture speaks in other places make up three and a half years. On the other hand, it was emphasized that operating with prophetic numbers is foolishness. What about the seventy weeks of Daniel? No one could have known that these were weeks of years; only after Christ had come was this recognized. [[Johann Albrecht](#) Bengel], too, has now become a disgrace with his reckoning of time. If it were so easy to explain the prophecies, anyone could interpret the Scriptures, even without the Holy Spirit, if only they knew how to calculate well.

The Chiliasts, too, do not understand Gog and Magog to mean two persons, but a whole series of Turkish rulers. The present pope is considered by many to be too pious to be the Antichrist; he has played such a role that even the unbelievers have respect for him. Even the new believers speak of him as a "venerable old man". But do not be deceived, the devil disguises himself as an angel of light. Pius IX is rather the greatest hypocrite, the most shameful, most wicked man that the earth bears at present; for no one has raged against Christ and his Church as he did; he placed Mary in the Church as an idol; he has declared that through his canonization the deceased so-called saints have also attained a higher degree of glory in heaven, that he therefore has to command in heaven and on

earth; he has, by declaring himself infallible, made himself the God of the Church, and instead of Christ and His Word has made himself the source of truth for the Church. But of course, our time, which does not respect the doctrine of justification, allows itself to be blinded by all kinds of appearances of outward piety, and even Protestant preachers now crawl at the feet of the pope, and when the pope, whom they lick at the feet, praises and honors them for it, they think wonders how pious and loving he is. Oh yes, even the devil can play the gentleman, if only he is properly courted. The present pope, with his appearance of piety, is more dangerous than the popes who lived in sodomy, for those sinned more against the second table, but this one sins against the first table without reproach, he rages against God and man; he reveals himself as the greatest enemy not only of God and Christianity, but also of all mankind, by completely destroying the Gospel.

With regard to the word in the thesis: "or an ideal person", it was noted that the Antichrist cannot be an ideal (imagined) person, such as atheism, pantheism, etc., because Scripture makes a distinction between the spirit of the Antichrist and the Antichrist himself.

Nor should one conclude from the definite article, e.g. "the man of sin", "the child of perdition", that the Antichrist cannot be a collective person, for the definite article often precedes a generic term. Johann Gerhard: "Even by many the word man is used with the article, Matt. 12:37. Mark 2:23. 2 Tim. 3:17.... in Lev. 4 “οἱ ṫερέας” [the priest] occurs thirteen times, “οἱ ἄρχιτερεὺς” [the high priest] three times, and yet not an individual, but every high priest is designated. Against the Papists we urge that in Matt. 16:18 the singular with the definite article and the demonstrative pronoun “ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ” [“on this rock”] is found, and yet they refer that word no less to every pontiff. We also urge this, that canon law, when it names the "Pope," does not understand one [einen] man, but every Pope who is present at the time, or the whole succession of popes." (*Confess. cath. l. c. 604. a.*)

Geier: "So also otherwise the demonstrative “οἱ” is a (character *multitudinis*) sign that a majority is meant, just as the Greek demonstrative article in that word Mark 3:26 and Luke 11:18: οἱ σατανᾶς, where the multitude of devils is signified, as Mark 2:27: “οἱ σατανᾶς” [the devil] expresses the whole human race; so we find an indefinite individual Gen. 14:13. 9:24. 38:11, 1 Sam. 8:11. (the right, *מִתְּחִילָה*, of every king of the Hebrews) Gen. 4:3, 5, 6, 7, 16, 17 (*מִתְּחִילָה*: So a priest who is anointed would sin, etc.)." (Commentary on Dan. 11:36, p. 919)

Gerhard: "When the papists speak of the Pope, they do not mean any particular person, but the series of people who have succeeded one another on the papal throne. Augustine Trinuphus [a papist] writes,

'with regard to the office of the papacy and authority, all the popes who have been from the beginning and will be until the end of the world are no more than one Pope'.

The Glossographus writes in the preface to the Decretals:

... 'Thus the lord Pope can partially abrogate the provisions of his predecessors, although among equals no one has authority over the other, and this is because he is considered to be the same person as his predecessor, and no one can impose the law on himself that he is not free to deviate from his former decision'. Indeed, Cardinal Hosius writes: 'I confess that among these servants Peter is the prince, not that Simon of Galilee, who, having administered the office of Peter, has now already died, but Peter, that is, the man who bears this name, according to the authority of his office and calling instituted by Christ for the salvation of Christ's sheep, who never dies, but always lives by succession; and he is in the Church, has been, and will be to the end of the world. I believe and confess and doubt not at all that this Peter lives in Rome; all antiquity has called this Peter Pope, which is the Father of Fathers.' ...

It is therefore a powerless projectile with which the popes fight against us when they argue: 'If the Pope is the Antichrist, then there are two hundred Antichrists', which we quite rightly reverse as follows: If the Pope is the head of the church, then there are two hundred heads; if the Pope is the bridegroom of the church, then there are two hundred bridegrooms. For in the same way the Pope is the Antichrist to us, as he is to them the head of the church, the bridegroom, etc." (*Conf. cath. l. c. p. 603. a.*)

Flacius shows why the Antichrist is described to us as one person: "But he describes him in the form of one person, because only one person reigns supreme and is the head who holds that seat of apostasy, and because all are governed by one and the same spirit. One and the same prince of the evil spirit always dwells in all the those Antichrists, which is so easy to grasp that even the Romanists themselves, and indeed those who adhere to them, confess and testify that even if a mediocre person is elected pope, he at least desires the pomp and tyranny, the voluptuous life and several more tangible abuses, he will, as soon as he ascends that chair, be completely transformed and become equal to his other predecessors in all wickedness and impiety, so that one can truly say: He who knows one knows all." (Gloss on 2 Thess. 2:3. p. 1029. a.)

Thesis VII. [ToC]

If we find in a collective person all the characteristics that Scripture gives of the Antichrist, then we must consider him to be the Antichrist, even if not all the characteristics can be proven equally clearly in each individual person.

Hülsemann: "There is absolutely no reason why one should think more favorably of the present Roman bishop, Urban VIII, than that he is either not the Antichrist, or that he has not defiled himself with all the marks of the Antichrist. For as long as he does not abrogate the decrees of his predecessors, to which these marks adhere in theory and practice, but carries them out, he is the Antichrist. Nor is it necessary, in order to prove the Antichrist, that these marks should be equally marked or manifest in successive individuals, as among the high priests at the time of Christ, and afterward, one was more wicked than another; one robber more cruel than another; one heretic more shameful than another; the adder is an adder in cold and in heat, though it bites less quickly in the former." (*Brev. l. c. § 22. p. 532. Prael. §19. p. 934. q. 2. § 2. p. 918.*)

Comments on this.

Iowa [Synod] believes that even if everything that was prophesied about the Antichrist is true of the Pope, they can still expect a personal Antichrist. They therefore want to wait for the end of the Antichrist before they believe the prophecies with all their hearts. But if we do not recognize the true Antichrist from the prophecies, what right do we have to reproach the Jews for not recognizing the true Christ according to the prophecies? As well as Christ could be and has been recognized as the Messiah according to the words of the prophecy and according to His words and works, just as well can the Antichrist be recognized in our time according to the prophecy and according to his conduct and doings for what he is. It is true that there is a difference between the Popes, not all of them have all the characteristics to the same degree that are prophesied of Antichrist; but the difference between them is only a gradual one, namely that one is worse than the other and has reached a deeper degree of wickedness. But as the viper, as Hülsemann quite rightly remarks, remains such, whether in the heat or in the cold, although in the latter it does not bite so quickly, so it is with the Roman pope. The shameful life of sodomy of various Popes does not yet make them Antichrist, therefore the outwardly honorable life of another Pope is not yet proof that he is not the Antichrist. If all the characteristics of the Antichrist are found in the Pope, then he must be the Antichrist, and only recklessness can still want to wait for another. This is also the

argument of our symbolic books, when they enumerate either individual or all the marks as fulfilled in the Pope, and then conclude that he is the real Antichrist. It is also folly to think that the papacy has somehow improved; the pope has never given up a single letter of all his decrees and old pretensions, and if he does not make his malice perceptible to men, it is not because he does not have the will, but because he cannot bring his arrogated power to bear. He sits more firmly than in Rome in the hearts of 180 million Roman Catholics [[in 2024, 7 times that, or 1.28 billion](#)]; even if he is therefore driven out of Rome or deprived of his worldly kingdom, his rule is still little diminished.

Thesis VIII. [\[ToC\]](#)

Among the following characteristics of the Antichrist we mention first:

The Antichrist has fallen away from the faith. 1 Tim. 4:1. 2 Thess. 2:3, 11. Dan. 11:36-38. 1 John 2:18 ff. Revelation 17 and 18. This must also be confessed by the Pope.

Hüleßmann: "The nature of the Roman apostasy from the faith of the apostles and the apostolic universal church becomes clear from a comparison of the confession of faith prescribed in the Council of Trent and the religious rites [*cultus*] determined in the Missals and Marialia with the confession of faith found in the Gospels, apostolic letters and ecumenical creeds. Nowhere is the same catalog of canonical books found in the Council of Trent. Nowhere that the Roman traditions are to be received with the same reverence as the Gospel of Christ. Nowhere that the Roman bishop alone is the universal and infallible judge of all controversies of doctrine and life. Nowhere that there are neither more nor less sacraments than those handed down by the Roman Church. Nowhere that man is formally justified by good works. Nowhere that he is made blessed and glorious because of good works. Nowhere that the Mass is a true and real sacrifice, reconciling the living and the dead. Nowhere that in the Lord's Supper there is a transformation of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ. Nowhere that the true sacrament is taken under one form. Nowhere that one must constantly believe in purgatory. Nowhere that the souls of the faithful are tormented there. Nowhere that they are delivered from there through the intercession of the survivors. Nowhere that the saints who live in heaven should be invoked with the service of dulia (veneration), Mary with the service of

hyperdulia (super veneration). Nowhere that their images should also be worshiped. Nowhere that the Roman bishop has a treasure of superfluous merit of Christ and the saints, and at the same time the power, for the sake of that merit, to give others remission of punishment or guilt. Nowhere is it denied that concupiscence is really sin. Nowhere is the cup denied to anyone who is permitted the communion of bread in the Lord's Supper. Nowhere that all priests are absolutely denied the right of marriage, or the right to live conjugally with the wife taken before ordination; and numerous other dogmas (doctrines) affirmative (affirming) and negative (denying), which are prescribed to be believed or denied under pain of the curse by the Tridentine Conciliar, and are contained in the profession of faith which all priests, schoolmasters, scholars (pupils), doctors, licentiates, etc., must make by virtue of a bull of Pius IV. ... are commanded to make." Brev. l. c. § 10. p. 519.)

Scherzer: "The apostasy is described according to its size and the number of the apostates in Revelation 13:14-16, 17:1, 2, 8. Now this apostasy fits none other than the Roman sect. The papists themselves, with Bellarmin, boast to the little group of Lutherans ... of the extent of the (namely deceived) kingdoms, provinces, duchies and almost the whole world. But the greetings of error and heresy have so far emerged from the whole theological system. For 1) the Roman pope declares the Scriptures to be useless; 2) he idolatrously places the saints in worship next to God; 3) he desecrates sinless nature, while he blasphemers that the spark of evil was put into it by the Creator himself, and forbids the consumption of food against the Creator's will; 4) he diminishes offenses and sins; 5) he imputes powers to free will; 6) he argues with Pelagius and the Semipelagians against grace; 7) he opposes the ministry of Christ; 8) he mixes the Law with the Gospel; 9) he confounds true penance with fictitious pardons and indulgences, and reviles justifying faith; 10) he makes more of the sacraments, robs them of their true effect, and takes away the blood of Christ in an ecclesiastical robbery; 11) even now he reviles justifying faith; 12) he ascribes merit to works, and imposes an intolerable yoke on Christians by the ordinances of men; 13) he defiles charity with the condition of works; 14) he arrogates to himself the government of the church; 15) he exalts himself above all authority; 16) contrary to natural and divine law, he forbids marriage and permits it in degrees which God has forbidden." (L. c. § 7. p. 853.)

Comments on this.

The apostasy with which we see the Antichrist associated, 2 Thess. 2:3 and 1 Tim. 4:1, is not an outward, but an

inward one. For when someone departs so far from the rule of faith that he can no longer stand in justifying faith, Scripture calls this apostasy. This great apostasy took place in the Roman sect. For since there is talk here of apostasy, and yet at the same time of being within the bounds of the church, it must be an apostasy not from the outward church fellowship, but from the faith, that is, an inward one; but this is true of the great sect of the Pope [*Pabst*], while the unbelieving scoffers have also departed from the outward church fellowship. The sect of the Pope is much more dangerous than the group of unbelievers. The Pope apparently leaves the body of divine doctrine standing, but he has taken out the heart, Christ. While the unbelieving mockers have also lost the appearance of having the body of divine doctrine, the Pope preserves this appearance in order to seduce the elect with it, for otherwise he could do little. He does it like a man who wants to catch mice, such a man is careful not to lose his bacon in the trap, otherwise he cannot catch mice; thus the Pope uses the appearance of Christianity as a bait to catch, where possible, the elect for the devil's kingdom.

(Incidental remark:) We Lutherans write Pabst [Pope] with a "b" at the end, like our fathers, while the Romans write it with a "p". The latter thus indicate that they consider the Pope to be the true Papa, i.e. Father of the Church; we, however, deny this with our spelling.

Thesis IX. [\[ToC\]](#)

The Antichrist cancels out the merit of Christ 1 John 2:22, 4:3, 2 John 7. We find this in the Pope.

Calov: "These liars, whom he calls altogether antichrists, deny that Jesus is that promised Messiah, that is, the eternal Son of God, who was to be anointed with the Holy Spirit for the salvation of the world, or that he offered himself for us as the one High Priest of the New Testament, as the King of kings, ruling and protecting his whole Church with all authority in heaven and on earth, and reigning in the midst of his enemies, proclaiming as prophet the will of God and all counsel of salvation. This is opposed by those who minimize either the eternal deity of the Son of God, or the true humanity, or his glory and majesty, or his priesthood and one sacrifice, or his royal or prophetic office. " (*Biblia illustr.* on 1 John 2:22. p. 1622.)

Calov quotes (probably Nicolaus) Hunnius' works on our passage and makes them his own: "The word 'JESUS Christ' does not denote the mere, but the incarnate Logos (Word) and includes both his natures together. Furthermore, the 'coming'

here does not mean that he, formerly spatially absent, now comes near from a distance; but then one says: Jesus came into the flesh when the Word comes forth from his, as it were, hidden seat and reveals himself on earth through the assumed visible flesh. And because he did not come into the flesh without a cause, but for the sake of that great ministry of redemption, the ministry for the sake of which that incarnation took place is also logically included; so that this is the opinion of that apostolic canon: every spirit, i.e. every teacher or preacher who truly and heartily confesses that Jesus Christ came into this world, not by descending from heaven in space, but by appearing visibly in the assumed flesh, and that he came for the purpose of delivering us men from eternal death: that spirit or teacher is truly from God and teaches and confesses this from God." (Bibl. illust. on 1 John 2:22. p. 1644 h.)

Luther: "This is the doctrine and belief of the Pope, the Turks and the Jews, which completely destroys faith in Christ, and which completely destroys trust in Him. For thus it has been preached: You must do this; Christ is no longer your Savior and Savior alone, but your angry Judge, for whose judgment seat you must appear and give an account of all your sins. Therefore call on Mary, St. Annam or other saints, give alms, make pilgrimages ... and thus the gospel has been abolished, which God the Father has given us through his Son Christ, and promised us through Christ: that whoever believes in the Son has eternal life." (Erlang. ed. 45, p. 134 [[StL 7, 1310, 1311](#)])

Doctrines by which the Pope cancels the merit of Christ.

The pope denies original sin, see "Geheimniß der Bosheit" by Fick p. 8 ff.; he denies that all the works of the unregenerate are sin, ib. 14; he maintains that those who are in the grace of God can keep the law perfectly, 16; that by good works we merit heaven, 17; that fasting, praying, almsgiving serve for the redemption of sin, 19; that there are superfluous good works, 20; he condemns the doctrine of justification by faith, 23. (cf. Colloquium with Iowa, p. 162. Synod Report of the Western District 1868, 42.); he makes grace and salvation uncertain, Fick 29. ff.; he makes the Mass a propitiatory sacrifice, 43. (cf. Lutherans 29, 118. ff.); he teaches that through repentance one earns forgiveness of sin, 44. ff.; he makes absolution a judicial act, 47. ff.; he teaches that human pardons absolve sin, 51.; indulgences remit the deserved punishment, p. 68.; Mary should be venerated, 69. ff. (cf. Luther's "Geist aus der Schrift" § 7632.); in purgatory one must atone for sin, p. 90. (cf. Lehre und Wehre 13, 346.)

Luther: "No one has fulfilled the characteristics of the Antichrist so

cunningly and slyly as the Pope. Manichaeus, Marcian and Valentinus were also crude when they said that the flesh of Christ was only a sham, and only appeared as if it were flesh; and the enthusiasts say: Christ's flesh is of no use, but the Pope's spirit is the most subtle of all, for although he recognizes the future of Christ and retains the apostolic words and apostolic sermons, he has taken out the core, which consists in the fact that he came to save sinners; therefore he has filled the world with sects; he has left everything for appearance, but has taken everything with fact and truth. This requires art and deceit, to defile everything under the best pretense, and to say that Christ suffered for us, and yet at the same time teach that we are doing enough. All other heretics are only antichrists in certain respects; but this one is the only and true Antichrist, who is against the whole Christ." (Walch IX. 1013 [[StL 9, 1474-1475](#)])

Remarks.

Concerning 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ, that is the antichrist which denieth the Father and the Son?" it was remarked: to believe that Jesus is the Christ is not merely to repeat these words, but to accept Christ with complete confidence as the person in whom all grace is found, to take him to one's heart as the foundation of all salvation, as the only refuge of all sinners, as the only foundation of salvation. Does the pope declare him to be such a rock of salvation? By no means. He teaches that he himself is all this, saying that whoever does not obey him, the pope, as such, has no hope of salvation; keeping his laws is absolutely necessary for the salvation of souls. Pius IX publicly declared that the pope is the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father without him. Everything the pope does basically has the sole purpose of eliminating Christ and removing his merit from the eyes of men. The text does not say that the Antichrist will deny the existence of Jesus Christ, but that he will deny that Jesus is the Christ, i.e. the Anointed One of God, the Savior of the world, who gives eternal life by grace to all those who believe in him. Just as the pope does not call himself a god, but nevertheless presents himself as God, so on the other hand he calls Jesus Christ, but fraudulently takes away what makes him Christ, his merit. Thus the rationalists also call God the Wise, the Good, and yet deny the true God, for he who does not have the Son does not have the Father who sent him.

Concerning 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

is not of God, and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it shall come, and is already now in the world", it was noted: Jesus Christ signifies the Word made flesh, the divine and human nature of Christ. To confess him as the one who has come means to accept him as the mediator and redeemer; for he did not come in vain, but in order to fulfill the office of a mediator. Although, therefore, the pope does not deny the fact that Jesus came, he denies the very thing that is here said of the Antichrist, that he will deny it, namely, the incarnate Son of God, by denying the purpose for which he came. According to the Greek, not only the coming in the flesh is to be the object of faith and confession, but both the coming and the being of Christ; for it actually means that the spirit of Antichrist will deny, i.e. not confess, "JEsum Christum come in the flesh".

No heresy is conceivable that does not finally come up against this saying, i.e. attack the article of Christ. The Reformed, for example, deny that Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper in the form of bread and wine, and that He is distributed and received there. They also do not emphasize faith, but rather the vitality of faith, which is carried up to heaven and, as they say, unites with Christ who is seated there. They believe that Christ is locked up in heaven according to his humanity. This false doctrine is contrary to the article on the incarnation of God. For if they believed from the heart that God truly became a man, they would not doubt his omnipresence, even according to his humanity, because then the human nature of Christ must also have acquired divine attributes, or the human nature would only have been a figurehead of the divine nature, but would not have been included in the divinity, which is what happened by virtue of the personal union in which both natures stand. However, this did not degrade the divine nature, but rather exalted the human nature. Therefore Christ was already omnipresent after his humanity, while he was still walking on earth; as he says in John 3:13: "No one goes to heaven except the one who comes down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." His humiliation did not consist in the fact that he did not have divine attributes and majesty according to his human nature, but in the fact that he did not use them, Phil. 2:5 ff.

He who believes the mystery of God's incarnation from the heart will not doubt its merit, let alone deny it by doctrine and life, as the papists and enthusiasts do. After he has grasped this miracle in faith and adoringly holds on to it, there is, as it were, nothing more miraculous for him in the fact that absolution

really brings him forgiveness, that baptism really makes him a child of God, that he receives the true body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and thus forgiveness of sins; for Christ has acquired all this for him, everything is already there, forgiveness, God's grace, salvation. If Christ has redeemed us, we are certainly redeemed, for as God he has not half done his work. He who rightly grasps the miracle and believes that God became a man to redeem us is not surprised that forgiveness is really there and is now offered to everyone as if on a platter through the means of grace. The means of grace are not intended to first create something in man that could move God to forgive his sins; they are only intended to communicate what is already there. This is not to deny that the means of grace require and give faith, but only that more is necessary for justification than grasping the merit of Christ. God gives by grace alone; man grasps what is given to him by the hand of faith.

Just as the Jew who lived in Christ's time, and who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the Messiah and Son of God, could not be surprised that He performed glorious miracles everywhere, so the Christian cannot be surprised that Christ, through His Word and Sacrament, still today gives life to those who are spiritually dead, and so on. For if he is true God, he must also do divine works. Anyone who can still wonder with Nicodemus that if a few drops of water are poured on his head in the name of God, he will be born again and become a child of God, has not yet believed that Christ has really accomplished the work of redemption and that his merit is all-sufficient.

Let us not doubt what the means of grace want to bring and offer and appropriate to us. After all, after God has offered His Son for us, He must also give us His merit through certain means, otherwise it would have been in vain. Will someone who has paid 10,000 pounds for his friend not tell him this, not give him the receipt? God does not throw the merit of his Son out of the window, but gives it to us in the means of grace, and whoever believes has such a precious treasure and ornament.

In short, all false teachers tamper with the divine mystery that Jesus is God come in the flesh and the Christ, i.e. the Messiah, the only Savior of sinners. But in the papacy this contradiction has come to full maturity, for there confidence in the merit of Christ as the only cause of salvation is cursed under threat of excommunication. *Examen Conc. Tridcut. pars I. de justific. Canon XII.* says: "If anyone should say that justifying

faith is nothing other than trust in divine mercy, which forgives sin for Christ's sake, or that it is this trust alone by which we are justified. Let him be accursed." Herewith the whole Gospel is destroyed, the whole Christian religion cursed, and the whole so-called Protestant Church as well; for in the latter (we do not include rationalists and Swedenborgians) it is still held, though in part very obscurely, that man can only be saved by grace; only in Pabstdom is this openly denied. Therefore, as great as the corruption of the sects is, it is nevertheless infinitely surpassed by the papacy [*Pabstthum*].

It has also been remarked that what Luther here translates "and this is the spirit of the antichrist" means in Greek "τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου" i.e. literally "that of the Antichrist", so that the word "spirit" is not here in the basic text. The context alone clearly teaches that here "πνεῦμα" (spirit) is to be supplanted; as also the neuter of the article "τὸ", which refers to the neuter "πνεῦμα", indicates. Hence Luther's translation is fully justified.

Thesis X. [\[ToC\]](#)

The Antichrist is a blasphemer. Dan. 11:36. Rev. 13:12. Compare with vv. 5 and 6. The Pope also speaks blasphemies.

L. Osianer: "And against the God of all gods, that is, the true, united, supreme God, he will speak abominably, that is, he will utter astonishing and great blasphemy, not only by perverting the pure teaching of the Gospel, but also by ascribing to himself the authority that belongs only to God, the Father, the Son of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. For just as that Herod was struck by God as a blasphemer because he did not contradict the applauding people, who said of his speech, "This is the voice of God and not of man," Acts 12; so all the blasphemies of the papal flatterers, which they boast of the pope's infinite power, are, according to right and merit, imputed to the pope himself; for if he disapproved of them, he would have to condemn them by public curses, and oppose them with the utmost diligence, that such things should neither be uttered nor believed; as the apostles Paul and Barnabas opposed the people of Lystra in Lycaonia with the utmost diligence, when the people took them for gods, and wished to sacrifice to them. Acts. 14." (*Comm. on Dan. 11:36. p. 495.*)

Caloy: "The godlessness of Antiochus does not exhaust this characteristic (Dan. 11:36 ff.); for his blasphemies bear no relation to the blasphemies of the Roman Antichrist. And so here we have the third characteristic of the Antichrist, that he speaks great and terrible things." (*Bibl. illust. on Dan. 11:36. p. 689 a. b.*)

Luther. See his testimony under Thesis XIV. p. 62.

L. Osiander: "But let us at least hear some of the papal blasphemies with which the Roman popes are very pleasantly tickled; and cite most of their authors by name: 'The pope is the general father of all the faithful and of all Christ's sheep', Johannes de turrc cremat. 'The pope has the same consistory as God, and the same tribunal as Christ. Item: 'The pope is a kind of deity, as it were a visible God', Ludovicus Gomesius. 'All authority in heaven and on earth is given to the pope. Item: 'The pope can make nothing out of nothing. Item: 'The pope can do everything that God does. Decius. 'The pope is God. Telynus. 'The pope is greater than any other creature, and his power extends to what is in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Antoninius Florentinus. 'The pope can change the nature of the sacraments handed down by the apostles. Archdeacon: 'The pope is the foundation of faith', as the Canons say. 'God has subjected all laws to the pope, and no law can be imposed on his sovereignty. Fortunius Gratia. 'The pope can establish something against the epistles of the divine Paul. Carolus Ricinus. 'God has put everything under the feet of the pope. Barbazia. 'No one is equal to the pope but God. Augustine Bewius. 'The pope is the bridegroom of the whole Church. John. Finally, the papal flatterers address the pope somewhere like this: 'You are a priest and a great one and the high priest. You are the prince of the bishops, the heir of the apostles. By primacy you are Abel, by government the ark of Noah, by patriarchy Abraham, by order Melchizedek, by dignity Aaron, by authority Moses, by judgeship Samuel, by zeal Elijah, by leniency David, by authority Peter, by anointing Christ. These abominable blasphemies, which are disgraceful to the Most Holy Trinity, have, as the Roman popes know, been uttered by their flatterers in public writings, yet they do not condemn them, nor even disapprove of them, but rather rejoice in them so much that they persecute with fire and sword anyone who contradicts such blasphemies. Therefore all this is to be received as coming from the Roman Antichrist himself, because he endows such blasphemous flatterers with riches and dignities and makes them glorious for these services faithfully rendered to him." (*Comment.* on Dan.11:36. p.495.)

Cf. also Heilbrunner op. cit. p. 305; Nicolai op. cit. p. 87; Geier on Dan. 11:36; Stock on Rev. 13, 1; Luther on the abomination of the silent mass.

Comments on this.

One cannot hear without horror how the Pope allows himself to be called a visible God, the bridegroom of the Church, etc., as the

above quotations give a long list of; although his flatterers say this, but because the Pope does not condemn it, all these blasphemies must be attributed to him as if he had uttered them himself. The example of Antiochus and Herod shows that God thus imputes them to him. The Pope has a so-called index, on which he has the books placed which do not have his approval; he could therefore easily protest against them, but he does not do so; on the contrary, it is precisely these flatterers who, the more they have courted the Pope, have been rewarded by him with all the greater ecclesiastical dignities.

Such a blasphemy is also this, since the [Council of Constance](#), with the approval of the Pope, expressly says in a canon: "Although Christ may have instituted Holy Communion in two forms, the most holy Synod, assembled in the Council, considers it salutary and necessary that Holy Communion be administered in one form only."

The Pope also speaks blasphemously of the Holy Scriptures with his companions when he calls them a dead letter, a waxen nose, a heretic book and condemns the sentence: "Reading the Holy Scriptures is for everyone."

Most of the canons of the Council of Trent, which the Pope enforced with his creatures, are also blasphemies.

The blasphemies of the Jesuits must also be attributed to the pope; for although Clement XIV abolished the Jesuit order (1773), after even many Catholic princes had banished it from their lands for its wickedness, Pius VII restored the Jesuit order as the "splendor and support of the Catholic Church" (1814), and expressly declared that it should be governed according to its well-known ancient institutions. These institutions, however, contain quite satanic laws, e.g. that a friar, even if he is ordered by his superior to commit a mortal sin, must do so by virtue of the obedience he has sworn to perform with an oath. The Jesuit must not only sacrifice his will, he must also sacrifice his insight and reason, he is inculcated: "If the Church decides that something that appears white to our eyes is black, then we must also say that it is black." He is to be tempted by the novice master as God tempted Abraham. For the Jesuit, blind obedience to his superior is the highest religiousness. Should we be surprised, then, that Jesuits killed their own physical fathers on the orders of their superiors, poisoned kings, even [Pope Clement XIV](#), who abolished their order? After all, this Pope himself testified to what was to be feared from this order when, on signing the decree abolishing the Jesuit order, he said: "I know well that I am hereby signing my own death warrant"; and the consequences confirmed his fears. It is a well-known fact that the principle that "the end justifies the means" has been stated and is followed by the Jesuits. Admittedly, the Jesuits deny their shameful principles,

but it is precisely by doing so that they reveal themselves for what they are. When in 1853, in the *Lutheraner* (X. 49 ff.), many of their most shameful religious rules from their Institutions were held up to them, they declared them to be lies and slanders; and when they were further called upon to convince themselves in our printing office of the authenticity of this edition of the Institutions, or else to be branded before all the world as the most shameful liars and knaves, none appeared, knowing full well that we [**Walther!**] had told the truth. Such blasphemy is also when the Jesuit Bellarmin says that if the Pope were to err by prescribing sins and preventing virtues, the Church would be bound to consider sins good and virtues bad, if she did not want to go against conscience. (Janus, The Pope and the Council, p. 414.)

Finally, that which is pronounced in the canonical rights of the Pope is also an abominable blasphemy, where it says: "If the Pope, unmindful of his own and his brethren's blessedness, is found negligent, useless and indolent in his works, and moreover, if he carries away countless people from the good (which is more detrimental to himself, but no less to all) to whole heaps with him, as the first child of hell, who will suffer great torment with him for all eternity: in such a case no one among mortals may rebuke that sin, because the one who is to judge all must not be judged by anyone." (Voice etc. p. 462.)

Finally, on July 13, 1870, the present pope, Pius IX, uttered an appalling blasphemy with the Vatican Council by declaring himself and all Popes, who have so often contradicted each other, to be infallible. This declaration reads as follows:

"Cap. IV On the Infallibility of the Roman Pontiff.

Holding steadfastly to the tradition which we have received from the beginning of the Christian faith, we teach and define for the glory of God our Savior, for the exaltation of the Catholic religion and the blessedness of Christian peoples, with the consent of the holy Council, as a divinely revealed dogma" (doctrine of faith), "that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra, i.e. when, in the exercise of his office as pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines, by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, that any doctrine concerning faith and morals is to be accepted by the universal Church, by virtue of divine assistance,

promised to him in the person of St. Peter, is effectually invested with that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer has invested his Church in the establishment of doctrine concerning faith or morals, and that therefore such pronouncements of the Roman Pontiff are unalterable in themselves, and not by the consent of the Church. — But if anyone, God forbid, should dare to contradict this definition" (declaration) "let him be accursed." (Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Baltimore M. J. Spalding D. D. 1870.) [Cf. ["Vatican News, July, 2020](#), "Primacy and infallibility: 150 years after Vatican I"]

Thesis XI. [\[ToC\]](#)

The Antichrist establishes new worship. Dan. 11:36 ff., so also the Pope.

Luke Osiander: "Not only do those forsake the true God who turn their backs on the triune God and worship the idols of the heathen, but also those who change the true way of honoring the true God and deviate from the precepts of the divine Word. But if you compare the articles or pieces, the teachings of the prophets and apostles on sin, justification, good works, invocation of God, sacraments, secular authority, marriage and many others with the papal opinions and decrees, you will see that Antichrist has thrown away the old religion and does not care at all what the prophets and apostles, of whom he boasts as his ancestors, believed or taught. And so he respects nothing and cares nothing for the true God of the apostles and prophets. I am silent about the fact that Antichrist has introduced into the church the worship of images and the adoration of the saints (certainly an abominable idolatry)." (On Dan. 11:37. p. 497.)

J. Gerhard: "It is said in Scripture that they honor foreign gods who introduce new services which are neither prescribed nor commanded by the true God in His Word. But that the pope has introduced new divine services is evident both from the sacrifice of the Mass, which constitutes the greatest part of the divine service in the papacy, of which nothing is found in the institution of Holy Communion; and also from the various, self-chosen divine services in use in the papacy, namely pilgrimages, vigils and other such services which have been introduced into the Church through human traditions. To which it also belongs that it is taught in the papacy that even self-selected worship services are pleasing to God." (Conf. Cath. I. c. 582 a.) Cf. also Heilbrunner op. cit. 379; Hülsemann Brev. I. c. § 16 p. 528.

Comments on this.

The doctrine of good works in the papacy is nothing other than an edification and instruction for false worship. For there are two kinds of good works: (1) those that serve God according to the first table; (2) those that serve one's neighbor according to the second table, which God also wants to regard as having served him, if it has arisen from faith and obedience to him. But the pope abolishes these proper works and teaches such works that are contrary to God's Word. He says that if someone enters a monastery and there vows obedience, chastity and poverty, this is a much greater service to God and a much higher state of perfection than the common Christian state. But this is a service which the pope himself has devised and of which Christ said earlier in Matthew 15:9: "But they serve me in vain, because they teach doctrines which are nothing but commandments of men." Many people today think that the worship of a monk or a nun is not to be completely rejected, for their renunciation proves that they mean it sincerely, well and seriously, that their monastic life is only a special expression that their religiosity has taken on, and that it is in itself indifferent; but God judges quite differently, whoever does not serve Him according to His commandment does not serve Him at all, his service is vain, he serves another god and is an idolater.

Even the Jews in the desert were not so foolish as to think that the golden calf, which they themselves had cast, had delivered them from Egypt; no, this image of strength was only to be an image of the divine omnipotence which had saved them from Egypt, it was only to be a means of helping them to always remember the true God; but how completely differently God judged! (See Exodus 32) It is the same with the service of images in the papacy. The Roman theologians say that the images are only signs of remembrance, but the common people use them quite differently and see something quite different behind them; in the crucifix they do not worship Him whom it depicts, but the crucifix itself. Thus the images are more to them than mere images, for otherwise they would not pray before certain images with so much more confidence than before others; they consider some to be more healing than others. And why do they first have certain images blessed by the priest? Simply because they believe that they thereby receive a certain magical power and become helpful gods. It was mentioned here that a Roman woman, when asked why she prayed so fervently before the image of a certain saint, confessed that it was a good cattle doctor. And if one considers that the Jesuits teach of the so-called saints that they can hear everything, that they are pardoned by God to be able to grant this or that request, one should not be surprised that the Roman people look up to the so-called saints as

their gods and pray to them. This was also cited as an appalling example of Roman ignorance and idolatry: a Roman woman had scolded another of the same faith for being stupid because she complained that she had often prayed to Jesus because of an evil husband, but had not yet felt any help. Don't you know, she said, that Jesus himself is a man, and men stick together, you must pray to Mary if you want to see help.

Concerning Daniel 11:38: "But in his place he will honor his God Moussim [of forces]" and so on.

Maussim means as much as fortresses. To honor the god Maussim means to put one's trust in human fortresses, which is what the Antichrist does in Rome. The fortresses or bulwarks on which the pope relies are his false doctrines, his monasteries, his convents, his monastic orders, his false church services, especially the Mass.

Luther: "The word Maussim has so far remained uninterpreted; we will venture to see whether God will let us meet: @@@ actually means a strength or firmness, just as the castles are called strong and firm, and in the Psalter our God is often called @@@ strength or firmness... and especially the angel uses the word Maussim to refer to the great and supreme thing, the worst church abomination in the papacy, the Mass.... What then is the pope's church god, god of the Mass or God Maussim? It is not a god, and cannot be a god. For the one true God is not served with the Mass, but blasphemes and dishonors our Lord Jesus Christ (that is, God the Father Himself) in the most horrible and terrible way, as thereby faith is destroyed and holiness of works is raised up in its place. (Erlang. ed. 41, 301.ff. [StL 6, 922; not in Am. Ed.])

Calov: "But we have here the seventh characteristic of Antichrist, the worship of the god Maussim, by which, as we do not doubt in the least, the sacrifice of the Mass is signified. This confirms.... 2. the meaning of the word, which is derived from strength and protection, on which someone relies; for what is more certain than that the sacrifice of the Mass is the true protection, indeed, the heart and soul of papism and antichristian godlessness? Which is really the castle of that aventinian Cacus, whose foundation is in purgatory, whose top is in heaven, and whose walls are on earth. Others admit that a well-fortified place is meant, because the temple at Jerusalem is also called Dan. 11:31. @@@, therefore they translate 'God Maussim' 'the god of basilicas', because he is worshipped or preserved in the pompous basilicas and the strong fortifications of temples or monasteries. Truly a wretched god who cannot protect himself, but needs walls for protection and fortification. 3. worship, for what thing is given greater honor than the bread that is transformed by the sacrificial priest, as is believed, into the body of the Lord? Or do they not give divine worship to the Mass, and

do they not make of the Mass a god, so that this is real: 'He will honor the god Maussim in his place'? For this god the Roman Antichrist has made for himself, he worships him most and to him he gives the highest honor in his place, since in the papal church nothing is honored more reverently than this god. And while it is for God alone to change the nature of things, the papists attribute this power to the pronunciation of five words in the Mass, namely that this creates the body of the Creator from the nature of the bread. What is this other than making the Mass into God? And do they not pay divine honor to the piece of bread that is enclosed in the monstrance and carried around? Do they not worship it by genuflection, kisses, prostration on the ground, incense, wreaths, flowers, singing, trust and hope for help in all needs, ascribing to it the power to reconcile the sins of the dead and the living?... 4. The outward pomp in the worship of the god Maussim. It is said of the king mentioned here that he would honor him with gold, silver, precious stones and jewels. It is not necessary to explain how this applies to the papal mass, since it is obvious and in the daytime. ... 5. the rewards which the Antichrist distributes to the worshippers of the god Maussim, that he may strengthen the god Maussim, of which three are mentioned: 1. he will do them great honor; 2. he will give them power over many, or he will make them lords over many; 3. he will give them the land for nothing or for wages. These passages clearly describe the sovereignty of the rulers and prelates of the Roman Church. For these, taken from the lowest lowest dregs of men, are held higher than kings and princes, and have often been terrible to them, and have possessed and still possess good lands, the treasures and riches of this world. It is particularly appropriate to the mass that Maussim is called a god whom the fathers did not know. For nothing of this divine service is to be found in the venerable antiquity of the Fathers, nothing of the monstrosity of transubstantiation, nothing of the church robbery of the chalice, nothing of the canon of the mass, nothing of the unbloody sacrifice which propitiates the sins of the living and the dead, nothing of the private masses, etc." (*Biblia illustr.* to Dan.11:38. p. 690. ff.)

Comments on this.

It soon becomes clear to anyone who knows the papacy that the Mass (whereby the priest pretends to offer the body of Christ in an unbloody manner for the benefit of the one for whom it is desired by the one who pays for the Mass) is praised as the highest divine service for all people in the Roman Church. With the Mass, however, it is evidently denied that Christ has perfected all who are sanctified with one sacrifice for eternity. The priests at Mass actually declare that Christ's sacrifice is not sufficient,

that they must first complete it through their daily sacrifice. They say that they sacrifice Christ, but do not consider what they are doing with it. They think they are doing a holy work, and yet they are doing an executioner's work, for it was the executioner's servants who sacrificed Christ. The mass is an abomination above all abominations; for with it 1. Christ is put to death, 2. sold for money; in the Mass the Roman party appears completely disgraced.

Thesis XII. [\[ToC\]](#)

The Antichrist usurps the primacy (supremacy) in the church, 2 Thess. 2:4, so the Pope does.

Hunnius: "The temple here does not mean a house built of stones or of some other material, as some of the Jesuit army declare and sweetly dream that (their imagined) Antichrist will sit in the temple at Jerusalem. But we should know that the apostle speaks of no other temple than the temple of God, i.e. the one which God reserves for himself in the New Testament. But this is not the temple in Jerusalem, which has been rejected and destroyed and, as Daniel testifies, will never be rebuilt in that place. For when the Jews once attempted to do so under the emperor Julian, fire burst forth from the earth and consumed the tools of those who were building it. But it is also not right to explain this from any temple of today's Jerusalem, because that whole landscape is so taken over by Mohammedan blasphemy that it is the very worst thing to dream of a temple of God there. Just as the Lord in the New Testament has no need of such a temple as the one in Jerusalem once was, because that one served as a model and shadow, so now His ministry is oriented towards Christ's appearance. But the temple of God in the kingdom of Christ under the New Testament is nothing other than the church." (Comm. on 2 Thess. 2. p. 717. a.)

Symbolic books: "Now is the day that the popes and their followers want to preserve and practice godless doctrine and false worship. Thus also rhyme all the vices which are prophesied in the Holy Scriptures of Antichrist. Scripture prophesy about the Antichrist, with the pope's kingdom and its members. For Paul, in painting Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2, calls him an adversary of Christ, who exalts himself above all that is called God or worship, so that he sits in the temple of God as a god, and pretends that he is God, and so on. Here Paul speaks of one who reigns in the churches, and not of worldly kings, and calls him an adversary of Christ, because he would devise another doctrine, that he would presume to do all these things as if he did them by divine right." (Smalcald. Articles, Appendix I. Sentence 39. p. 336. [\[Tr. 39\]](#); [\[Triglotta p 515\]](#))

Caloy: "In the apostolic writings the believers bear the name temple of God, but not a material temple, 1 Cor. 3:15, Eph. 2:20, 1 Pet. 2:9. Also, in the prophetic passages of the New Testament, as we have one here, "temple of God" does not occur anywhere other than mystically. See Rev. 3:12. also 7:19; 11:1-2; 19:14-15; 15:5-8; 16:1-17." (*Bbl. illustr.* p. 906. b.)

Hunnius: "The word 'sit' does not mean a position of the body, but a dominion, and not just any dominion, but an entirely divine one. For these are the words of the apostle according to the Greek text: 'He sits in the temple of God as a god.' Here it is clearly indicated that the Antichrist will take perfect power, such as otherwise belongs to God alone, to form new dogmas and give laws, and to impose them on the churches as the most reverent observance under the lightning of the ban and threat of eternal punishment. That is, to sit in the temple of God and pretend that he is God." (op. cit. p. 717. b.)

Luther lists the following among the articles and errors in the ecclesiastical laws and papal books, for which reason they should be burned and avoided: "IV. The pope and his see are also obliged to be subject to Christian councils and ordinances. V. The pope has full power in his heart over all rights. VI. it follows that the pope has the power to decree, change and establish all concilia and all orders, as he does daily, so that no power or treasure remains over the conciliis and Christian orders. ... XV. That the pope has power to make laws concerning the Christian church. ... XVI. that he interprets Matthew 16:19 to mean that he has power to burden all Christendom with his willful laws, when Christ does not intend otherwise, but to drive sinners to punishment and penance, and not at all to burden other innocent people with laws; as the words clearly read. XVII. That, in the case of banishment and sin, he gives orders not to eat meat, eggs, butter, this and that for several days, even though he has no power to do so and should only kindly admonish them to do so, leaving their own free will and unconditional." (Volume 24, p. 154 ff.)

Heilbrunner: ... "2. He, the pope, places himself in the temple of God as a god, ruling and reigning in the Christian church (which is the temple of God here on earth) as if he himself were God, who could not err, whom no one should judge or punish, when he has already led many thousands of souls with him into the abyss of the hells. ... Whose decrees and statutes, without any further inquiry as to whether they are in accordance with God's Word and statutes or not, are to be obediently praised as if they came from God himself. Just as the Jesuits of this time are almost unanimously endeavoring to persuade the people of this, so that this prophecy may be fulfilled, their pope may be adequately presented as the true Antichrist, and his measure may be made full." (op. cit. p. 300 ff.)

Sander: "... According to Gregory's statutes, all legislative and judicial power is vested in the pope. The bishops are to obey his legates as they obey him.... The Bishop of Speyer therefore says as seriously as he does, looking Gregory in the eye: 'As much as it was up to you, through you the bishops have been deprived of all the power ordained for them by God himself and imparted to them by the grace of the Holy Spirit, since there is almost no bishop and priest left who has begged the office from your pride by the most unworthy flattery.'" ... When Gregory curses, casts the ban on Henry and declares him to have lost the crown, it is likewise in reliance on the merit of Peter and Paul. Indeed, it goes so far with the profanation of the saint that Gregory VII promises the faithless forgiveness of all sins for adhering to Rudolph, the anti-king appointed by him." (op. cit. 125 ff.)

Comments on this.

It is curious that around 600 AD Gregory the Great still made the strange statement: whoever would call himself the universal bishop of the whole Church would be the Antichrist, and his second successor Boniface III already assumed this title, and by whom did he have himself confirmed as such? Answer: by the emperor murderer Phocas, who had murdered his predecessor and seated himself on the imperial throne in Constantinople. So here the murderer of the soul [the Pope] confirmed the murderer of the body [Phocas], and vice versa the murderer of the body confirmed the murderer of the soul. Bonifacius was therefore the first to take the name Pope, around 607. This also shows how bad the situation was with regard to infallibility, because Gregory and Bonifacius obviously contradicted each other here. The time in which the Antichrist began to reveal himself, i.e. to emerge openly, is therefore around the year 607.

The following passage can also be found in the Gratian Decrees:

"Just as Christ on earth was subject to the law, but in truth was the Lord of the law, so also the pope stands high above all church laws and can act freely with them, just as it is he alone who gives power to every law." (Janus p. 161.)

Gregory VII published a Tractatus in which he said that it should be established that only the Roman bishop is rightly called the universal bishop. The present pope, Pius IX, arrogates to himself the same power when he states in his Dogma of Infallibility: "Such a definition (declaration) of the Roman Pontiff is unalterable in itself and not by the consent of the Church."

In the passage 3 John 9, the apostle's use of the word Diotrephes is curious, for he calls him a "φιλοπρωτεύων" [preeminence], that is, one who loves primacy, as the Vulgate also translates; this is therefore a characteristic of the Antichrist, whose forerunner Diotrephes was.

The main passage against any primacy in the church is Matt. 23:8-12, where Christ says: "But you shall not be called Rabbi, for One is your Master, Christ, but you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. And you shall not be called Master, for One is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant." So Christians are all equal brothers, only one is above them, Christ. Whoever accepts another person as his master or commander in the spiritual realm, renounces Christ's mastery and denies Him. Also according to the fourth commandment, no one is obliged to be subject as a Christian, but only as a citizen of this world. The preacher has no more authority over a Christian than a baby in the cradle, and Peter had no more. It is in the church as in a republic, there is no "of", no nobility, one has as much right as another and therefore no one has anything to command the other. The fact that the president and others have more power in offices is not due to themselves, but to the free agreement of equal citizens. So in the church the preachers and ministers have no more power than is given them by the congregation. Where they cannot say: This is Christ's word, Christ's command, they have nothing to command. No one in the church should say that one must believe or accept something because he says so. But what does the Pope do? He makes himself the master, the father and the rabbi of the whole Church, whose sayings, because they are infallible, must be believed for their own sake. Anyone who accepts this has denied Christ. While the people slept, the enemy came and sowed tares. You can see that now in the papacy. It has recovered from the severe wound inflicted on it by the Reformation and is now spreading all the more, the less attention is paid to it and the less it is feared. It is a mercy from God that He has now allowed the pope to declare himself infallible before the whole world with the approval of a God-forsaken council, for this will open the eyes of many a worshiper of the papacy. Until now it was the teaching of the Romans that the pope was infallible together with the Church, but that was no longer enough for the pope; he does not merely want to be a master, he also wants to be alone, and even without the consent of the Church his definitions are to be irrevocable, unalterable and binding. He calls himself the father of the Church, the servant of all servants, and thus claims supremacy over the whole Church, and acts as if he were appointed pastor to all men; he calls himself servant, but he makes himself master.

One must not think that the so-called Conciliar Fathers of Rome, who agree with the doctrine of infallibility, also believe from the bottom of their hearts that the Pope is infallible; no, they only consider this doctrine suitable for strengthening the power and authority of their empire. The example of Pope Leo X, who shortly before his death broke

out against Cardinal Bembus with the horrible words: "O what money has the fable of Christ brought us!" Even the Romans said of him: "He crept in like a fox, he ruled like a lion, and he died like a dog. (For he died without taking communion.)

Let no one think that Peter was a prince of the apostles; everything we read about him speaks against this: Matthew 16, Acts 15. Nowhere does he appear as if he had authority over others. As often as the New Testament lists the church ministers one after the other, it never mentions a Pope. The papal religion is a totally new, shameful and diabolical invention; not a syllable, not an iota of it is confirmed in Scripture. When the disciples asked the Lord, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? You know that, that is Peter. No, he placed a child in their midst and showed them that this was the greatest in his kingdom, who was the humblest Christian. If the Pope of Rome had a right to a so-called primacy in the Church because he claims to be Peter's successor in one of his congregations (incidentally, it is not yet certain whether Peter was ever a bishop or pastor in Rome), then many more bishops could claim the same authority; for Peter probably founded hundreds of congregations, and those bishops are just as much his successors as the Pope in Rome claims to be.

That Peter did not desire a primacy, and had none, is finally shown by the fact that he calls himself the co-elder of the other bishops, thus putting them on an equal footing, which is certainly not a mere figure of speech on his part.

Thesis XIII. [\[ToC\]](#)

The Pope exalts himself above those who are called gods in Scripture, and this is a sign of the Antichrist. 2 Thess. 2:4. Dan. 11:36.

Caloy: "By everything that is called God, ... Grotius understands (namely 1 Cor. 8:6.) only the gods of the Gentiles. But neither in that place are the “λεγόμενοι θεοί” [so-called gods] only the idols of the heathen, for it is said that there are many gods, as well as many lords, not merely that they are so called, as also both the angels and the authorities are not merely gods in name, but also in reality, not indeed in nature, but in office; nor is it necessary in this place, when the apostle has referred to 'all that is called God,' to confine it to the idols of the Gentiles, since both the angels and the authorities, to whom this name is applied in Scripture, as well as God himself, are comprehended under that common name, when it is said of Antichrist,

that he will not rise above all that is called God by confession, as *Cornelius a Lapide* misinterprets it, but by power." (*Bibl. illust.* to 2 Thess 2. p. 9046.)

Among these articles Luther mentions the following: "XIX. that Pope Nicolaus the third or fourth in his final Christian decree places among many evil things: Christ with the keys gave power of the heavenly and earthly kingdom to St. Peter and his descendants." (Vol. 24, 158.) Cf. Fick, Geheimniß der Bosheit, pp. 84 f. 86 f. 87

Nicolai: "In the fifth place, it cannot be denied that the Pope elevates himself above all kings, princes and lords: for the papists write of him that he is elected as a priest and crowned as a king, that he has to command the kings as his vassals, that he surpasses all that is high in the world, that as gold is far more precious than lead, so he is also far above the kings; just as the sun is, as it were, the father and lord of all the planets, so also the Pope is the father of all authority, and just as the moon receives its light or splendor from the sun, so also the king must receive his dignity and majesty from the Pope. They also write that the Pope is a king of kings and the closest heir to the Emperor's throne, so that he is Emperor if there is no one else. He could make an alliance with the Turks; he was the head of the whole world. He may not do any honor to any man without standing up to kiss the king a little of his pleasure; all men, no matter how high they wish, must bow down before him and kiss his feet whenever they wish to do so. If the Pope wishes to sit on horseback, it is incumbent on the king to hold the grip and lead the horse with the bridle, otherwise it is incumbent on the king and kings to carry him in an armchair on their shoulders. It is the duty of the Emperor to pour water on the Pope's hands at table and to carry the first rumor to the table; indeed, he must swear an oath to the Pope that he will be faithful, obedient and submissive to him. Does this not quite mean to exalt oneself above all that is and is called God?" (op. cit. p. 78 ff.)

That the Pope wants to be above the secular authorities is also evident from the claims he makes on individual countries, indeed on the whole world.

Among the articles and errors of ecclesiastical law, Luther also mentions the following 21st: "XXI. that he (the Pope) boasts that he is heir to the Roman Empire ... even though he well knows that spiritual office and secular government do not suffer one another. And St. Paul commands (Titus 1:9) that a bishop should wait upon the Word of God." (Vol. 24, 158 ff.) "XXIII That the lower classes may be disobedient to their overlords and that he may disown the kings; as he has done in many places and has often done

against and above God. XXIV. That he also wants to have the power to tear down all oaths, covenants and duties between high and low estates, against and above God, who commands that each man should keep the faith of the other." (Vol. 24, 159.) Heilbrunner op. cit. 300; Hollaz op. cit. q. 56. p. 857)

Proof of faith: "In his Syllabus published in 1864, the present Pope (23rd sentence) expressly condemns the opinion of those who maintain that the popes formerly exceeded the limits of their power and usurped the rights of temporal authority. The fact that the popes from Gregory VII onwards have repeatedly claimed that not only the spiritual but also the temporal sword (according to Luke 22:38?) was handed over to them as successors of Peter, is therefore, in the opinion of the present pope, still entirely in order and in accordance with the mind of Christ! It is, of course, a following, if not of Peter, at least of Simon, to use the sword in vain to defend the cause of Christ, and not merely to strike at the ears of the supposed enemies of Christ, John 18:10." (Vol. 6, 286.)

Sander: "The way in which papal tyranny was introduced under Gregory VII. and has continued under his successors, — by inciting revolts of the peoples against their lawful princes, by inciting sons against their fathers, by disowning oaths, by all kinds of intrigues, by terrible threats, and unworthy flatteries, by all kinds of deviations from the truth, — this manner of obtaining power and dominion has been reproved in the strongest terms even by so many venerable Catholics of ancient and modern times, that Protestants [*Protestanten*] need do nothing to shame the eulogists of the said popes and their kindred spirits, but only let these Catholic testimonies speak." (op. cit. p. 118 f.)

Heinsius: "Benedict IX (1033 to 1054) sent the imperial crown to *Petro*, king of Hungary, with the inscription: *Petra dedit Romam Petro, tibi Papa coronam*. [Peter gave Rome to Peter, the Pope gave you the crown]" (Vol. I, p. 1164 a.)

"Benedict IX also made the Polish Empire submissive in a certain way, after he did not release the heir to the empire Casimir, who had previously been a monk, from the monastery of Clugny until the republic granted an annual tax to Rome, which was called the Peters-Pfennig [Peter's Pence], and all pollacks were shorn in the manner of monks, and the nobles also allowed themselves to hang a white bandage like a stolae around their necks during mass." (Vol. I, p. 1164 b.)

"Nicolaus II (1058 to 1061) drew up a settlement with the Norman duke in Apulia, Calabria and Sicily, by virtue of which the latter had to restore the duchy of Benewent to him, recognize the Pope before his feudal lord and write himself by the grace of God and the Apostle Peter." (Vol. I, p. 1164 b.)

"Alexander II (1061 to 1073) deposed King Harold in Engelland and gave the kingdom to *Wilhelm Conquaestori* from Normandy, to whom he also sent a consecrated flag, but first had him swear allegiance and obedience, as Baronius reports." (b.) "In the same way Hildebrand (1073 to 1085) had the Imperial Crown presented to Rudolph, Duke of Swabia, with the inscription *Petra dedit Petro, Petrus diadema Rudolphi* [The Rock to Peter gave the crown, and Peter Rudolph doth renown]." (Vol. I, p. 1164 a b.)

On the treatment of Henry IV by Gregory VII, see Fick, [op. cit. p. 122 ff.](#)
— On the same historical fact, cf.

Sander: "Who can think of the scenes at Canossa without feeling indignant that in the name of the most gentle of men, whose kingdom is not of this world, a bishop should have interfered with crowns and kingdoms and thereby revealed a severity such that Gregory himself said in his letter to the Germans: 'all would have been astonished at his unusual severity and some would have seen in him not the dignity of apostolic seriousness, but the cruelty of a tyrannical savagery'. That in this dispute between Henry IV and Gregory VII the latter acted not only against the individual person, against the weaknesses and rashness of the German king, but against the royal majesty in general, and robbed it of its God-given consecration in order to make it subservient to papal absolutism, is clearly evident. — 'We find,' says Neander, 'in Gregory the idea expressed, by virtue of which the priestly power appears as the only one truly ordered by God' — who does not know, writes Gregory to Bishop Henry of Metz — 'that kings and princes have their origin from those who, knowing nothing of God, through pride, robbery, disloyalty, murder, nay, by almost every conceivable crime, incited by the prince of the world, the devil, to attempt to rule over their equals, namely other men, according to their unreasonable lust and intolerable presumption' — here, in these words, we have, as a nucleus, the newer and newest doctrine that the authorities are not from God, that kings are not kings by the grace of God. The disciples of Rousseau, the friends of Jacobin liberty and equality, will be perfectly satisfied with this theory of the origin of royal power. They will only wonder at the great inconsistency of Gregory's attributing to himself the glory which he takes from the king. — He was inclined, says Neander, to make the kingdom of the Apostle Peter an entirely secular one, and he regarded it as an insult to it that a king of Hungary, who should regard himself as a king dependent on the Apostle Peter, should have placed himself in a relation of dependence to the German empire. By spurning the sublime rule of Peter, the prince of the apostles — says Gregory — the king subjected himself to the German king, and received the name of a *regulus* (a shadow king), and thus deprived himself of the right,

which he possessed earlier, by the usurpation of the church." (op. cit. p. [124 f.](#))

On the proceedings of Alexander III against Frederick I Barbarossa, see Fick op. cit. [p. 128.](#)

For how Celestine III crowned Emperor Henry VI, see Fick op. cit. [p. 129.](#)

Heinsius: "... Otherwise one has certainly also regarded as a main test of the antichristian rule, which this pope (Clemens XI 1700-1721) tried to bring up again quite high, that he soon at the beginning of his reign opposed the elevation of Friederici III or Sapienti in Brandenburg to the royal dignity for that reason, because he was not primarily welcomed for it, and asked for permission for it. For this reason he not only sent letters of protest to various kings belonging to the Roman Catholic religion, but also to His Imperial Majesty Leopold himself, and misused the words of Hosea 8:4, which says: "They make kings, but without me, they set up princes, and I need not know. Likewise, from this very *principio* he did not want to recognize the establishment of the ninth electorate before the House of Hanover as lawful." (*Kirchenhist.* 2. Band p. 1075. a.)

The Pope is an originator and friend of the revolution. Compare how John XXII proceeded against Louis the Bavarian. (In Fick op. cit. [p. 137.](#) Also Hülsemann *prael.* l. c. q. 2. § 11. p. 927.) On the Polish revolution see Lehre und Wehre vol. 8. p. [61](#); vol. 9. p. [125](#).

Sander: "Anyone who has thoroughly studied the papacy and the history of the popes will be as little astonished by the restoration of the Jesuits by Pius VII and his Breve against the Bible Societies as by the papal instruction to the nuncio in Vienna in 1805, which literally reads: "... i.e. the subjects of a heretical prince remain absolved from all homage, loyalty and obedience to the same." (*Zeitschr. für Protestantismus* 1839. Juliheft p. 24.) (op. cit. p. 6.)

Sander: "... Let us first stop at France. Was it not here, as can be read further on in Ranke, that the doctrine of the unity of the people was preached by the Jesuits and Romanists in order to get rid of the Protestant Henry IV? The League in France against Henry III and Henry IV, the League of the Sixteen in Paris, the blood wedding in 1572 loudly welcomed by the Pope, the assassination of Henry III and Henry IV, the repeal of the Edict of Nantes, which trampled on all law, the expulsion of a million Protestants, the unheard-of cruelties against those who remained behind for a century, behold, these are the blatant sins and misdeeds that destroyed all moral feeling among high and low, especially among the nobility and the

clergy and at court itself, and dragged France down into the cloak of revolution." (op. cit. p. 65)

When the Emperor of Austria abrogated the Concordat concluded with the Pope fifteen years before, because the peace of his empire required it, Pius IX, in his Allocution of June 22, 1868, not only called the new "laws enacted by the Austrian government abominable", and "rejected and condemned" them, as he says, "by virtue of our apostolic authority", but also finally added: "by virtue of the same authority we declare these laws, together with their consequences, to be absolutely null and void and forever invalid." (Cited in *Lutheraner* Vol. 24, p. 182 [sic])

Comments on this.

It is well to note that Antichrist does not exalt himself so much by his confession as by his power over everything that is called God. That gods are to be understood as authorities is clear from Exodus 21:6, John 10:34, Jude 8, Psalm 82. When the apostle Paul says in Romans 13 that everyone is subject to the authority that has power over him, this naturally includes priests and popes. It is true that for a long time priests had the privilege that they could not be judged in secular but only in so-called spiritual courts, but this is a privilege that they do not have by divine right but only by the good will of the emperors. In the struggle against the authorities, the Pope is one with the revolutionaries, except that the latter want to turn the power to their party, but the former to his person. The extremes just touch each other, both blaspheme their Majesties. Gregory VII wrote to the Spaniards that they were well aware that Spain was the property of Peter and therefore subject to the papal see. In another place he writes: one must believe that the Pope can absolve his subjects from the oath of allegiance. Innocent III wrote to the Patriarch of Constantinople: "Christ has entrusted the entire earthly world order to the Pope." As proof he cites the fact that Peter had once walked on the sea, but the sea meant the multitude of nations, and so it was clear that the successor of Peter was authorized to govern the nations. What wonder, then, that the popes arrogated everything to themselves and seized all the treasures of the world, so that according to Spener even the Romans confessed in the 16th century that if Luther had not come, the pope and his priests would finally have made slaves of the whole world and sucked it so dry that they would finally have had to eat hay and straw. That the papacy is still in the same mind and spirit, still today exalts itself above the authorities and pretends to have the spiritual and temporal sword, is shown by the example of Pius IX mentioned above, who by virtue of his apostolic authority declares the new Austrian

laws null and void. If he dares to use such language in public, what will he not secretly instruct his priests to do! The pope is a serpent in the bosom of every earthly kingdom. To indicate his supremacy, the pope also sent a letter to the archbishops of New York and New Orleans during our last civil war, in which it says: "Do not forget to remind and exhort the people and their chief rulers in our name to accept peace with a conciliatory spirit and to love one another with uninterrupted love," and so on. In the same way he exhorted King William of Prussia and Napoleon III to peace in an epistle. One can see from this that the old spirit of the papacy, which always offers its mediation to states in distress in order to gain influence on the politics of these states and to prepare the execution of its wolfish intentions, has not yet departed from Rome. (Lehre und Wehre, vol. 9 p. 314.)

The fact that angels are also to be understood as gods is evident from Ps. 97:6, compared with Heb. 1:6. That the pope also exalts himself above the angels is attested by his canonists, when they say that his power extends "to all that is in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; he is greater than all creatures, greater than Moses, greater than an angel, greater than Paul." (A. Hunnius on 2 Thess. 2. p. 722.)

Luther writes in his interpretation of the 11th and 12th chapters of the prophet Daniel: "Clement IV once issued a bull in which he commanded the angels in heaven (as a god not only on earth, but also in heaven) that they should bring the souls of those who ran to Rome for indulgences and died on the way, from the mouth up into paradise to the eternal life of joy. He also commanded hell or the devil with such words: We will not have evil, that hellish torment should be inflicted on them. Thus the accursed abomination has not only placed himself in the temple of God here on earth, but also in heaven, over the angels, over heaven, over hell, etc." (Cited in Lehre und Wehre, vol. XIII. p. 142 f. [sic. 342 f.]) Cf. Fick op. cit. p. 139.

Thesis XIV. [ToC]

The Antichrist exalts himself above God. Dan. 11:36-37; 2 Thess. 2:4, so also the Pope. For example, by his prohibition of the Bible, by dispensations (absolution) from divine prohibitions, by forbidding the Lord's Supper in both its forms.

- A. He himself (the pope) interprets God's Word as he wishes, all others are to interpret the Scriptures in the sense of the Church, i.e. the Pope.

Luther: "They have brought it to such a pass, the wretched devil's mouths, that they boast publicly, not with blind words, but freely, that the pope and his church are over the Holy Scriptures, and that he has power to change, abrogate, forbid and interpret them as he pleases. And this was his craft, that he made a tile or a jug or shards of urine out of the Holy Scriptures as a potter makes a jar out of clay, and the way he made it was an article of the Christian faith; as they still do today with the words and institution of Christ, of both forms of the sacrament: he rules over the same word and text of Christ as a potter rules over his clay, as he liked, so it must be held, or be burned, murdered, driven out without all mercy. For they call him an earthly God, who is not a bad man, but a mixture of God and man, and would like to say that he is like Christ himself, true God and man." (op. cit. vol. 31, 353.)

Luther on Dan. 11:36: "Thus the pope also paints himself, since he boasts in his decreta that he is over the Holy Scriptures, and that these must be confirmed by his throne and receive their value. But he does this much more strongly in fact. For he has cursed, condemned and burned as heretics and children of devils all those who have ever spoken against him from the Scriptures, and still does so daily, and his own still cry out that the Church (of the pope) is above the Scriptures. This is Daniel speaking abominably against the God of all gods. And he succeeded, and was justified by God's wrath against the ungrateful world, as St. Paul says in 2 Thess. 2, that God would send strong delusions etc. For other tyrants who persecuted God's Word did so out of ignorance. This one does it knowingly, and calls the Holy Scriptures and God's Word, over which he wants to be master, and condemns them as doctrines of devils wherever and whenever he wants. Therefore he lets himself be called an earthly god, yes, God of all gods, Lord of all lords, King of all kings, not a mere man, but mixed with God, or a divine human; just as Christ himself is God and man, of whom he wants to be the Vicarius and still rises above it." (op. cit. vol. 41, 296.) Fick op. cit. p. 5 ff. shows how the interpretation of Scripture is bound to the pope's will.

Among the articles and errors of ecclesiastical law Luther mentions the 29th: "The XXIX. that the Pope has power to interpret and guide the Holy Scriptures according to his will, and to let no one interpret them differently than he wants; so that he sets himself over God's Word and tears it down and destroys it. As St. Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:30: "Let the superior man give way to the inferior man's enlightenment." (op. cit. 24, 160.)

B. The Pope gives Scripture its authority in the first place, which is why he also has the power to place apocrypha and Bible translations on an equal footing with the Word of God.

Luther lists among the articles and errors of spiritual law the 30th: "XXX. That not the Pope from the Scriptures, but the Scriptures from him have credible continuance, power, and honor, as the principal article is one, therefore he deserves as a true final Christian that Christ himself should govern him from heaven with his government, as Paul proclaimed." (op. cit. vol. 24, 160.)

Luther: "There are also many who teach that he is above the Holy Scripture, no matter how he interprets and changes it; which he has done, and he boasts of his holy spiritual right that the Holy Scripture has it from him that it is called Holy Scripture and is valid among Christians, for if he had not confirmed it, it would not be valid, nor would it be Holy Scripture. But the devil bless him for this, and I hope that such a blasphemer's mouth is now a little shut, as there are still some who mock and gawk." (Vol. 31, 136.) On the equality of the Apocrypha with the Word of God, see Fick op. cit. pp. 1, 4, 5.

C. The pope abrogates God's commandments and not only makes his statutes equal to God's commandments, but also makes them even higher.

Luther: "Just as the pope has now abolished all of God's commandments and added his own, for, as we have heard, the papists teach that it is not necessary to love God with all one's heart; thus the first commandment is abolished. Again, that faith is not enough for justification, but works are enough for salvation; this is the other and the third. Again, they teach children to disobey their parents, as stated above; this is the fourth commandment. Again, they teach that it is not necessary to love the enemy; thus they teach to keep anger against the fifth. Again, he has countless ways of breaking and making marriages; this is the sixth. Again, they teach to gain and keep unjust goods, usury, interest, against the seventh. Again, all their teaching is false testimony against the eighth. So under the pope there is no longer any commandment of God, they are all abrogated. Again, he adds how one serves God and does good works through plates, caps, orders, fasting, begging, eating milk, eggs, meat, butter, singing, organs, smoking, ringing bells, celebrating, redeeming indulgences, and the like, of which God knows nothing; therefore his teaching is the right Baal Peor." (vol. 28, 159 ff.)

Luther: "If I should say who the false prophets are in our time, no one can judge or recognize that, except who has the Spirit; but in short, even if one says much about it, it is the pope with his government; for they have all taught what is against God, that would be long to prove, for you see it in almost all things, wherever you turn, but we will tell some of them. God has commanded (Exodus 20:12) that the child should honor its father and mother and be subject to them; thus the pope has expressed his opinion that a monk or nun is no longer subject to her father, but should speak:

the child is now in the clergy and in the service of God; God is more than father and mother, therefore it is no longer indebted to serve father and mother, but the father must call it a junior of grace. Now, if I say: what is divine service? they would say: dear Lord, it is ringing bells, burning candles, putting on a beautiful chasuble, and such monkey business. Yes, I say, you have hit it well; but I meant honoring father and mother and keeping God's commandments, that would be serving God. Therefore you must say here that Antichrist has taught such things, and you may well speak cheerfully: he is lying. See here how God's commandment stands freely against the prior's and abbot's commandment. God has given you father and mother that you may honor them, and serve and be subject to them; the pope gives you another, whom you honor more than your father given by God. If this is God's commandment, I do not know. So, too, with other commandments of God: do not kill, do not be angry, do not hate, which God has commanded, the pope teaches thus: the spiritual goods or the goods of the churches should be defended, and if it does not help, one should invoke the secular sword to protect the papal see and St. Peter's inheritance. Behold, these commandments are opposed to each other, as I hope everyone understands. So also with marriage: God commanded Genesis 2:24 that man and woman should be one flesh. Now the pope has many commandments against this, such as: if a woman takes a husband who has baptized her, the marriage is to be torn apart. So also, if the clergy marry, as you now see, they are to dissolve the marriage according to their spiritual law. Item, if someone falls into incest and takes her boyfriend, or someone takes his girlfriend, he commands that they remain with each other, but that they both live chastely with each other. He lets two naked people lie together in bed, and neither should have the power to demand marital duty from the other. What else is it said, if I put straw and fire together, and forbid them not to burn? God also says: Thou shalt not steal. But who steals more than the pope and his crowd, these are the chief thieves; for they take all the world's goods to themselves daily. Now let us look at the first commandment, which says that we should trust in God alone, that we should call on God alone; so their whole teaching is nothing other than that they lead us by trusting in works and calling on the saints. Do you see then that such people are the righteous, false prophets from whom we should beware? For they nullify the commandment which God has given." (Spirit from Luther's writings, § 7755 from Walch XI, 1893 [[StL 11, 1399-1401](#)])

Luther: "Since such storming against the text of the Gospel was not enough for the devil, and thus could not destroy the text of the Gospel for good, he went on and set his abomination not only against, but also over the Gospel, as St. Paul and Daniel before him had proclaimed, that the last Christ should sit in the temple of God against and over

everything that is called God or is honored. Which thus came to pass. For the commandments and teachings of the pope (which do nothing at all of the faith of Christ, as the gospel does, but only his obedience in bodily, loose, light things, such as eating meat, feasting, fasting, dressing and preaching) he has exalted and praised much more highly than all God's Word, have also been feared and kept more highly, have frightened and captivated consciences more harshly, and have made hell much hotter than both God's law and gospel. For unbelief, blasphemy, adultery, murder, theft, and all other things contrary to Christ and his commandment were regarded less, and were soon atoned for and forgiven. — But where one of his commandments is touched, there it must thunder and flash with bulls, and be called damned disobedience, and in the pope's ban, here heaven and earth must tremble and fear: but in the sins against God, in which they themselves are drowned, not an aspen leaf stirs, but had their mockery, and laughed at it for great security, as they still do to this day, persecuting and grumbling horribly at all those who keep God's commandment above their abomination's commandment. He wants to have God and His Word under him and sit over it, that is his government and nature, without which he could not be the Antichrist." (Volume 31, 352 f.)

Lehre und Wehre: "Already in the 9th century a large collection of papal laws (Isidorean Decretals) appeared; it already contained the largest part of canon law, this Bible of the papacy ... among all these laws, however, the most terrible is the celibacy commandment. Furthermore, the commandments on fasting ... finally the prohibition of the reading of sacred Scripture by the laity. This was the main lever of papal rule, for by it the people were kept back from the armory from which they could take weapons to defend themselves against tyranny. Oh, this last commandment, and the diabolical cunning with which it is still defended by the Papists today and presented as salutary, is testimony enough of what spiritual children those who issued it are. Christ says: 'Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and it is they which testify of me' (John 5:39); but the pope rebukes those who would and should read the Scriptures." (Vol. 13, 344 f.)

This prohibition of the Bible is still maintained: as Pius VII (1816), Leo XII (May 12, 1824). Pius VIII (May 24, 1829), Gregory XVI (May 6, 1844) forbade the efforts of the Bible Societies in the most severe and irreconcilable form, and the adherence to these efforts was characterized as "the highest crime against God and the Church". (Cf. Rudelbach *Zeitschr. für luth. Th. und K.* 10, 547. Sander op. cit. p. 6.)

Sander: "The thousand-year-old practice of the popes and their followers proves how this ignoring and elimination of Scripture is also demanded by the consequences of the papacy. "We forbid," says the Council of Toulouse in 1228, under

the direction of Gregory IX, 'we forbid that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament, only the Psalms, the breviary (*pro divinis officiis* and the *horae Beatae Mariae*) they may have for the promotion of devotion. But that they do not possess the aforementioned books in a translation into the local language is strictly forbidden. This prohibition has been enforced with the greatest severity throughout the centuries, down to the most recent times, as the above-mentioned condemnation of Bible societies by Pius VII in 1816 testifies. — To possess a Bible in the vernacular was a crime worthy of death in the eyes of the inquisitors; many thousands were burned at the stake for reading and daring to possess God's letter to mankind. — In Austria, after the violent suppression of the Reformation, Protestants had to hide the Bible from police investigation for centuries until the Edict of Toleration under Joseph II. — In Spain, Portugal and Italy, there was nothing to hide: the Bibles were finished with the Protestants there."

Luther writes, where he mentions the articles and errors of ecclesiastical law, etc.: "XXV. The pope has the power to take and change the vows made to God. ... Which is also against and above God. XXXVI. Whoever fails to fulfill his vow, by the Pope's command, is not guilty of the crime of the vow: ... This much is said, that the pope is above God. XXIV. That he also wants to have the power to tear down all oaths, covenants and duties between high and low estates, against and above God, who has sworn that each man shall believe the other." (Vol. 24, 159.)

"Among the oaths which converts in Hungary must take, it says under No. 4: 'We confess that everything which the pope commands is true, divine and saving, and therefore must be placed higher by the laity than the commandments of the living God'. ("Lutheraner 26, 156 a.)

D. The pope pretends to be God by teaching and preaching without the foundation of Scripture, forming new dogmas, instituting means of grace, ordering church customs and demanding faith and obedience for the salvation of souls.

1. He teaches and gives without the foundation of Scripture. cf. Luther 17, 21f., also the above quotations on this thesis.

2. He establishes new dogmas (articles of faith). Cf. Fick op. cit. p. 93. Luther vol. 26, 142. Hülsemann *Prael.* I. c. 9. 2. § 8. p. 925. Lehre und Wehre 12, 272. First now in 1854 the immaculate conception of Mary. And now again through his Jesuit Council in Rome the infallibility of the Pope.

3. He instituted new means of grace under threat of banishment. Fick op. cit. p. 32: "Whoever does not believe seven sacraments is accursed. p. 42: Whoever does not believe that the Mass is an expiatory sacrifice instituted by God is accursed. p. 53: Let him be accursed who does not believe that the Eucharist is a sacrament that communicates grace and forgiveness. p. 46: He who does not believe that confession of all sins is necessary for repentance is accursed. p. 55: Let him who does not believe that ordination is a sacrament be accursed. p. 36: "Let him who does not believe that confirmation is a sacrament, and that forgiveness is thereby obtained and the grace of baptism completed, be accursed." Cf. also Luther 32, 60 ff.

4. The pope orders church customs according to his pleasure. Fick op. cit. p. 34: "Whoever despises, omits or changes the existing church customs is accursed. p. 41: "Whoever says that one should not adore the sacrament, carry it around, etc., is accursed."

5. For the salvation of souls he demands obedience and faith. Fick op. cit. p. 94. This is also evident from all the canons (rules of faith) of the Tridentine and the now opened Vatican Council, which conclude with "let him be accursed". Rudelbach, *Zeitschrift* 10, 467.

6. The pope makes man's salvation dependent on himself. Among the articles and errors of popery, Luther mentions as IX. this: "Next to God, the blessedness of all Christendom lies in the pope, so all Christians must perish as often as the pope is evil." (Vol. 24, 155.) Cf. Hülsemann *Prael.* l. c. 9. 2. § 7. p. 923. who gives the following papal demonstration: "as the members of the body, if they are to live, depend on the head and heart, so men depend on the pope if they are to believe and be saved." Quenstedt op. cit. 1685: "In papal law, the pope is called God among men, on whom the salvation of all depends."

7. The pope not only allows himself to be worshiped by bowing his knees and kissing his feet, but also by divine adoration. Compare, for example, the case where he allowed himself to be addressed as "Christ, O Lamb of God". And is this also quite natural if, as Christ's vicar, he is entitled (? !) to everything that is due to Christ. Compare Luther "Geist aus Luthers Schriften" § 7772. Gerhard Conf cathol. l.c. 602 a. b. Lehre und Wehre 13, 306.

E. Means by which the Pope has set himself so high.

Luther: "When the devil had now set himself in such inordinate power, and did nothing but bind, catch, lie, rob, murder and blaspheme (as are his works, John 8:44), he now also began the other part, namely to redeem; not to forgive sin, but to have his laws for sale and to sell them. For he also has the power to redeem, that is, to sell for money; for he has set up a market and a market in all the world, which (I think) he would not give for the market of Venice or Antorf: There

he has for sale butter letters, egg letters, milk letters, cheese letters, meat letters, letters of indulgence, fair letters, marriage letters and everything that he has shamefully bound, and even more shamefully gives away for money. There is the turmoil and the unseemliness of his stuff, *indulta privilegia imunitates*, without measure or number. So, his laws are not only snares and bonds of poor consciences (as I said), for which he has robbed and stolen all money and goods; but also snares and nets, so that he may rob and steal what is left. Here we have purchased and graciously given our Christian freedom through Christ's blood, and must buy for our money, as Jeremiah 5:4 laments. Yet we cannot be sure whether we are doing well and right. For there was no faith that could assure us; the pope does not inquire that he only gets the money and confirms his power. Why should the pope and his god, the devil, ask for the salvation of souls? For I, who have seen much, have also been one myself; well, there are still many in the papacy who would not have relied on such buying and giving away of the pope, even if they had earned the world. And it was a much greater sin and a deeper hell for someone to eat meat on Friday than if he had committed murder and adultery. But where a coin [Münch] (as often happened) had bought his plates, caps and coinage from the pope, he was considered an apostate, an apostate Christian, whose souls would never again be in need of counsel." (vol. 26, 190 f.)

The same: "It is now said that the pallium (bishop's cloak) in Mainz costs 26,000 fl., as expensive as the hemp thread in Rome. Some say that it cannot be brought from Rome for less than 30,000 guilders. The bishop could not afford such a pallium. So he sent out a number of looters with the indulgence to collect money from people that was not his; they did it so roughly that I had to preach and write against it. So the game has been lifted over a faint thread. And no one yet knows the end of the game. May the pope be strangled and suffocated by the same thread; may my dear Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of us all, help him, praised for ever. Amen. Yes, I say, one can be a bishop without the pallium, and it is not necessary to let the arch-church thief, monastery robber, monastery eater, soul murderer of Rome be robbed of so much money, and in return give us his devilish filth and stink, vain lies, blasphemy, idolatry and eternal damnation as a reward: We Germans want to invest such money otherwise, so that the pope may not steal from us so shamefully." (Vol. 26, 221. cf. [Lehre und Wehre 13, 344.](#))

Rudelbach: "[Sixtus IV](#) (1471 to 1484) practiced even the most outrageous usury, did not give away any office or *beneficium* (privilege) without a certain amount of money, so that he always carried an exact tax on it with him. He cheated the poor professors at the *Studium Romanum* out of their wages, and when the chamberlain reminded him of the payment,

he said: 'Don't you know that we promised this money to the professors with the intention of not paying? To him, a sodomite and an abuser of boys, no moment was more agreeable than when the fencers were slaughtering each other; he ordered them to his palace, and did not order them to start until he had opened the window, then he raised his arm and gave them the benediction.'

Just as the Pope releases from the fourth commandment, it is also shown that he accepts secret engagements and confirms and blesses them as marriages. And how he then, contrary to the sixth commandment, separates what God has joined together, shows, among other things, that the pope teaches that if a man wants to become a priest, he can, if he is already married, be divorced from his wife without further cause.

This was the extent of the discussion of these theses, all 14 of which were unanimously adopted in the above version; the remaining 18 theses had to be put aside for lack of time and are not reported here because the Synod considers it unseemly to publish something in its Synodal Report before it has made it its confession through discussion and resolution.