
DISPUTATION OF DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER
ON THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF
INDULGENCES

OCTOBER 31, 1517

Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

In the Name our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Poenitentiam agite, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests.
3. Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers mortifications of the flesh.
4. The penalty [of sin], therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues; for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope does not intend to remit, and cannot remit any penalties other than those which he has imposed either by his own authority or by that of the Canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.
7. God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same

time, humble in all things and bring into subjection to His vicar, the priest.

8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to them, nothing should be imposed on the dying.

9. Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us, because in his decrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.

10. Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those priests who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penances for purgatory.

11. This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept.

12. In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.

13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties; they are already dead to canonical rules, and have a right to be released from them.

14. The imperfect health [of soul], that is to say, the imperfect love, of the dying brings with it, of necessity, great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater is the fear.

15. This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.

16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as do despair, almost-despair, and the assurance of safety.

17. With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.

18. It seems unproved, either by reason or Scripture, that they are outside the state of merit, that is to say, of increasing love.

19. Again, it seems unproved that they, or at least that all of them, are certain or assured of their own blessedness, though we may be quite certain of it.

20. Therefore by "full remission of all penalties" the pope means not actually "of all," but only of those imposed by himself.

21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved;

22. Whereas he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to the canons, they would have had to pay in this life.

23. If it is at all possible to grant to any one the remission of all penalties whatsoever, it is certain that this remission can be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to the very fewest.

24. It must needs be, therefore, that the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.

25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish.

26. The pope does well when he grants remission to souls [in purgatory], not by the power of the keys (which he does not possess), but by way of intercession.

27. They preach men who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory].

28. It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money-box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.

29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it, as in the legend of Sts. Severinus and Paschal.

30. No one is sure that his own contrition is sincere; much less that he has attained full remission.

31. Rare as is the man that is truly penitent, so rare is also

the man who truly buys indulgences, i.e., such men are most rare.

32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.

33. Men must be on their guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to Him;

34. For these "graces of pardon" concern only the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, and these are appointed by man.

35. They preach no Christian doctrine who teach that contrition is not necessary in those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionals.

36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.

38. Nevertheless, the remission and participation [in the blessings of the Church] which are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are, as I have said, the declaration of divine remission.

39. It is most difficult, even for the very keenest theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the abundance of pardons and [the need of] true contrition.

40. True contrition seeks and loves penalties, but liberal pardons only relax penalties and cause them to be hated, or at least, furnish an occasion [for hating them].

41. Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love.

42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy.

43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons;

44. Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.

45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.

46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons.

47. Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.

48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting pardons, needs, and therefore desires, their devout prayer for him more than the money they bring.

49. Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God.

50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.

51. Christians are to be taught that it would be the pope's wish, as it is his duty, to give of his own money to very many of those from whom certain hawkers of pardons cajole money, even though the church of St. Peter might have to be sold.

52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, even though the commissary, nay, even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.

53. They are enemies of Christ and of the pope, who bid the Word of God be altogether silent in some Churches, in order that pardons may be preached in others.

54. Injury is done the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons than on this Word.

55. It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.

56. The "treasures of the Church," out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.

57. That they are not temporal treasures is certainly evident, for many of the vendors do not pour out such treasures so easily, but only gather them.

58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the Saints, for even without the pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man.

59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church were the Church's poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.

60. Without rashness we say that the keys of the Church, given by Christ's merit, are that treasure;

61. For it is clear that for the remission of penalties and of reserved cases, the power of the pope is of itself sufficient.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last.

64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.

65. Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.

66. The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they

now fish for the riches of men.

67. The indulgences which the preachers cry as the "greatest graces" are known to be truly such, in so far as they promote gain.

68. Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of apostolic pardons, with all reverence.

70. But still more are they bound to strain all their eyes and attend with all their ears, lest these men preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.

71 . He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!

72. But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon-preachers, let him be blessed!

73. The pope justly thunders against those who, by any art, contrive the injury of the traffic in pardons.

74. But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use the pretext of pardons to contrive the injury of holy love and truth.

75. To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin and violated the Mother of God -- this is madness.

76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned.

77. It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now Pope, could not bestow greater graces; this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the pope.

78. We say, on the contrary, that even the present pope, and any pope at all, has greater graces at his disposal; to wit, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written in I. Corinthians xii.

79. To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up [by the preachers of indulgences], is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

80. The bishops, curates and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people, will have an account to render.

81. This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

82. To wit: -- "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

83. Again: -- "Why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued, and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"

84. Again: -- "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure love's sake?"

85. Again: -- "Why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?"

86. Again: -- "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is to-day greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"

87. Again: -- "What is it that the pope remits, and what participation does he grant to those who, by perfect contrition, have a right to full remission and participation?"

88. Again: -- "What greater blessing could come to the Church than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day what he now does once, and bestow on every believer these remissions and

participations?"

89. "Since the pope, by his pardons, seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted heretofore, since these have equal efficacy?"

90. To repress these arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christians unhappy.

91. If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation

(1520)

The Romanists have, with great adroitness, drawn three walls round themselves, with which they have hitherto protected themselves, so that no one could reform them, whereby all Christendom has fallen terribly.

First, if pressed by the temporal power, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them, but, on the contrary, that the spiritual power is above the temporal.

Secondly, if it were proposed to admonish them with the Scriptures, they objected that no one may interpret the Scriptures but the Pope.

Thirdly, if they are threatened with a council, they pretend that no one may call a council but the Pope ...

Now may God help us, and give us one of those trumpets that overthrew the walls of Jericho, so that we may blow down these walls of straw and paper, and that we may set free our Christian rods for the chastisement of sin, and expose the craft and deceit of the devil, so that we may amend ourselves by punishment and again obtain God's favour.

Let us, in the first place, attack the first wall.

It has been devised that the Pope, bishops, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate; princes, lords, artificers, and peasants, are the temporal estate. This is an artful lie and hypocritical device, but let no one be made afraid by it, and that for this reason: that all Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone. As St. Paul says (i Cor. xii), we are all one body, though each member does its own work, to serve the others, This is because we have one baptism, one Gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike; for baptism, Gospel, and faith, these alone make spiritual and Christian people.

As for the unction by a pope or a bishop, tonsure, ordination, consecration, and clothes differing from those of laymen-all this may make a hypocrite or an anointed puppet, but never a Christian or a spiritual man. Thus we are all consecrated as, priests by baptism, as St. Peter says: 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a holy nation (i Pet. ii. 9); and in the book of Revelation: 'and hast made us unto our God (by Thy blood) kings and priests' (Rev. v. io). For, if we had not a higher consecration in us than pope or bishop can give, no priest

could ever be made by the consecration of pope or bishop, nor could he say the mass or preach or absolve. Therefore the bishop's consecration is just as if in the name of the whole congregation he took one person out of the community; each member of which has equal power, and commanded him to exercise this power for the rest; in the same way as if ten brothers, co-heirs as king's sons, were to choose one from among them to rule over their inheritance, they would all of them still remain kings and have equal power, although one is ordered to govern. And to put the matter more plainly, if a little company of pious Christian laymen were taken prisoners and carried away to a desert, and had not among them a priest consecrated by a bishop, and were there to agree to elect one of them and were to order him to baptise, to celebrate the mass, to absolve and to preach, this man would as truly be a priest, as if all the bishops and all the popes had consecrated him. That is why, in cases of necessity, every man can baptise and absolve, which would not be possible if we were not all priests. This great grace and virtue of baptism and of the Christian estate they have quite destroyed and made us forget by their ecclesiastical law .

..

Since then the temporal power is baptized as we are, and has the same faith and Gospel, we must allow it to be priest and bishop, and account its office an office that is proper and useful to the Christian community. For whatever issues from baptism may boast that it has been consecrated priest, bishop, and pope, although it does not beseem every one to exercise these offices. For, since we are all priests alike, no man may put himself forward or take upon himself without our consent and election, to do that which we have all alike power to do. For if a thing is common to all, no man may take it to himself without the wish and command of the community. And if it should happen that a man were appointed to one of these offices and deposed for abuses, he would be just what he was before. Therefore a priest should be nothing in Christendom but a functionary; as long as he holds his office, he has precedence of others; if he is deprived of it, he is a peasant or a citizen like the rest. Therefore a priest is verily no longer a priest after deposition. But now they have invented characteres indelibiles, and pretend that a priest after deprivation still differs from a simple layman. They even imagine that a priest can never be anything but a priest-that is, that he become a layman. All this is nothing but mere ordinance of human invention.

It follows then, that between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, or, as they call it, between spiritual and temporal sons, the only real difference is one of office and function, and not of estate. . . .

. . . Therefore I say, Forasmuch as the temporal power has been ordained by God for the punishment of the bad and the protection of the good, we must let it do its duty throughout the whole Christian body, without respect of persons, whether it strike popes, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or whoever it may be....

Whatever the ecclesiastical law has said in opposition to this is merely the invention of Romanist arrogance. . . .

Now, I imagine the first paper wall is overthrown, inasmuch the temporal power has become a member of the Christian body; although its work relates to the body, yet does it belong to the spiritual estate. . . .

The second wall is even more tottering and weak: that they end to be considered masters of the Scriptures. . . . If of our faith is right, 'I believe in the holy Christian church,' the Pope cannot alone be right; else we must say, 'I believe in the Pope of Rome,' and reduce the Christian Church to one man, which is a devilish and damnable heresy. Besides that, we are all priests, as I have said, and have all one faith, one Gospel, one Sacrament ; how then should we not have the power of discerning and judging what is right or wrong in matters of faith ? ...

The third wall falls of itself, as soon as the first two have fallen; for if the Pope acts contrary to the Scriptures, we are bound to stand by the Scriptures to punish and to constrain him, according to Christ's commandment . 'tell it unto the Church' (Matt. xviii. 15-17). . . . If then I am to accuse him before the Church, I must collect the Church together. . . . Therefore when need requires, and the Pope is a cause of offence to Christendom, in these cases whoever can best do so, as a faithful member of the whole body, must do what he can to procure a true free council. This no one can do so we as the temporal authorities, especially since they are fellow-Christians, fellow-priests. . . .

The German Mass and Order of Divine Service, January 1526

(i) The Preface of Martin Luther

Above all things, I most affectionately and for God's sake beseech all, who see or desire to observe this our Order of Divine Service, on no account to make of it a compulsory law, or to ensnare or make captive thereby any man's conscience; but to use it agreeably to Christian liberty at their good pleasure as, where, when and so long as circumstances favour and demand it. Moreover, we would not have our meaning taken to be that we desire to rule, or by law to compel, any one. Meanwhile, there is on every side great pressure towards a German Mass and Order of Divine Service: and there is great complaint and offence about the different kinds of new Masses, that every one makes his own, some with a good intention and others out of conceit to introduce something new themselves and to make a good show among others and not be bad masters. As then always happens with Christian liberty, few use it for anything else than their own pleasure or profit: and not for God's honour and the good of their neighbour. While, however, every man is bound on his conscience, in like manner as he uses such liberty himself, not to hinder nor forbid it to any one else, we must also take care that liberty be servant to love and to our neighbour. Where, then, it happens that men are offended or perplexed at such diversity of use, we are truly bound to put limits to liberty; and, so far as possible, to endeavour that the people are bettered by what we do and not offended. Since, then, in these matters of outward ordinance nothing is laid upon us as matter of conscience before God, and yet such ordinance can be of use to our neighbour, we ought in love, as St. Paul teaches, to endeavour to be of one and the same mind; and, to the best of our power, of like ways and fashion; just as all Christians have one baptism and one sacrament, and no one has a special one given him of God.

Still, I do not wish hereby to demand that those who already have a good Order or, by God's grace, can make a better, should let it go, and yield to us. Nor is it my meaning that the whole of Germany should have to adopt forthwith our Wittenberg Order. It never was the case that the ministers, convents, and parishes were alike in everything. But it would be a grand thing if, in every several lordship, Divine Service were conducted in one fashion; and the neighbouring little townships and villages joined in the cry with one city. Whether in other lordships they should do the same or something different, should be left free and without penalty. In fine, we institute this Order not for the sake of those who are Christians already. For they have need of none of these things (for which things' sake man does not live: but they live for the sake of us who are not yet Christians, that they may make us Christians); they have their Divine Service in their spirits. But it is

necessary to have such an Order for the sake of those who are to become Christians, or are to grow stronger; just as a Christian has need of baptism, the word and the sacrament not as a Christian (for, as such, he has them already), but as a sinner. But, above all, the Order is for the simple and for the young folk who must daily be exercised in the Scripture and God's Word, to the end that they may become conversant with Scripture and expert in its use, ready and skilful in giving an answer for their faith, and able in time to teach others and aid in the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. For the sake of such, we must read, sing, preach, write, and compose; and if it could in any wise help or promote their interests, I would have all the bells pealing, and all the organs playing, and everything making a noise that could. The Popish Divine Services are to be condemned for this reason that they have made of them laws, work, and merit; and so have depressed faith. And they do not direct them towards the young and simple, to practise them thereby in the Scripture and Word of God; but they are themselves stuck fast in them, and hold them as things useful and necessary to salvation : and that is the devil. For in this wise the ancients have neither ordered nor imposed them. Now there are three different kinds of Divine Service.

[1] The first, in Latin; which we published lately, called the Formula Missae. This I do not want to have set aside or changed; but, as we have hitherto kept it, so should we be still free to use it where and when we please, or as occasion requires. I do not want in anywise to let the Latin tongue disappear out of Divine Service; for I am so deeply concerned for the young. If it lay in my power, and the Greek and Hebrew tongues were as familiar to us as the Latin, and possessed as great a store of fine music and song as the Latin does, Mass should be held and there should be singing and reading, on alternate Sundays in all four languages-German, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. I am by no means of one mind with those who set all their store by one language, and despise all others; for I would gladly raise up a generation able to be of use to Christ in foreign lands and to talk with their people, so that we might not be like the Waldenses in Bohemia whose faith is so involved in the toils of their own language that they can talk intelligibly and plainly with no one unless he first learn their language. That was not the way of the Holy Ghost in the beginning. He did not wait till all the world should come to Jerusalem, and learn Hebrew. But He endowed the office of the ministry with all manner of tongues, so that the Apostles could speak to the people wherever they went. I should prefer to follow this example; and it is right also that the youth should be practised in many languages. Who knows how God will make use of them in years to come? It is for this end also that schools are established.

[2] Next, there is the German Mass and Divine Service, of which we are now treating. This ought to be set up for the sake of the simple laymen. Both these kinds of Service then we must have held and publicly celebrated in church for the people in general. They are not yet believers or Christians. But the greater part stand there and gape, simply to see something new: and it is just as if we held Divine Service in an open square or field amongst Turks or heathen. So far it is no question yet of a regularly fixed assembly wherein to train Christians according to the Gospel: but rather of a public allurements to faith and Christianity.

[3] But the third sort [of Divine Service], which the true type of Evangelical Order should embrace, must not be celebrated so publicly in the square amongst all and sundry. Those, however, who are desirous of being Christians in earnest, and are ready to profess the Gospel with hand and mouth, should register their names and assemble by themselves in some house to pray, to read, to baptize and to receive the sacrament and practise other Christian works. In this Order, those whose conduct was not such as befits Christians could be recognized, reprov'd, reformed, rejected, or excommunicated, according to the rule of Christ in Matt. xviii. Here, too, a general giving of alms could be imposed on Christians, to be willingly given and divided among the poor, after the example of St. Paul in 2 Cor. ix. Here there would not be need of much fine singing. Here we could have baptism and the sacrament in short and simple fashion: and direct everything towards the Word and prayer and love. Here we should have a good short Catechism about the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. In one word, if we only had people who longed to be Christians in earnest, Form and Order would soon shape itself. But I cannot and would not order or arrange such a community or congregation at present. I have not the requisite persons for it, nor do I see many who are urgent for it. But should it come to pass that I must do it, and that such pressure is put upon me as that I find myself unable with a good conscience to leave it undone, then I will gladly do my part to secure it, and will help it on as best I can. In the meantime, I would abide by the two Orders aforesaid; and publicly among the people aid in the promotion of such Divine Service, besides preaching, as shall exercise the youth and call and incite others to faith, until those Christians who are most thoroughly in earnest shall discover each other and cleave together; to the end that there be no faction-forming, such as might ensue if I were to settle everything out of my own head. For we Germans are a wild, rude, tempestuous people; with whom one must not lightly make experiment in anything new, unless there be most urgent need. Well, then: in the name of God. The first requisite in the German system of Divine Worship is a good, plain, simple, and substantial Catechism. A Catechism is a form of instruction by which heathen, desirous of becoming Christians, are taught and shown what they are to believe, to do, to leave undone and to know in Christianity. Hence mere learners who were admitted to such instruction, and were acquiring the rudiments of the Christian faith before their baptism were called catechumens. This instruction or information I know no better way of putting than that in which it has been put from the beginning of Christianity till today: I mean, in those three articles of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. In those three articles is contained, plainly and briefly, all that a Christian needs to know.

(ii) Of Divine Service

Now since in all Divine Service the chief and foremost part is to preach and teach the Word of God, let us begin with the preaching and teaching.

[1] On Holy Days and Sundays we would have the usual Epistle and Gospel to continue, and have three sermons. About 5 a.m. or 6 a.m., some Psalms should be sung, as for Mattins; then a sermon on the Epistle for the day, chiefly for the sake of servants that they also may be provided for and may hear the Word of God, if they are not able to be

present at other sermons. After that, an antiphon with Te Deum or Benedictus alternately, with Our Father, Collect, and Benedicamus Domino. At Mass, about 8 a.m. or 9 a.m., there should be a sermon on the Gospel, as found according to the season. In the afternoon, at Vespers, before Magnificat, sermons in regular course. The reason why we have retained the division of the Epistles and Gospels into portions corresponding with the season of the [Church's] year is that we have nothing particular to find fault with in such arrangement. It has been the case at Wittenberg up till now that there are many there who are to learn to preach in the districts where the old apportionment of Epistle and Gospel still goes on and will probably continue. As, then, we can be of use to such and help them thereby, in our judgement, we suffer the custom to continue; without, however, finding fault with those who adopt the books of the Gospels as a whole. Hereby we provide that the layman has preaching and teaching enough : but, if a man wants more, he may find it on other days.

[2] Thus on Monday and Tuesday mornings there should be a lesson in German on the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, on Baptism and the Sacrament; so that on these two days the Catechism may be kept up and grasped in its proper sense. On Wednesday morning a lesson in German, for which is appointed the Gospel of St. Matthew. The day is to be kept specially for this Gospel : for Matthew is a fine evangelist to teach the people by, and he relates Christ's good Sermon on the Mount, and makes much of the practice of love and good works. But the evangelist John, who teaches faith with special force, should also have his own day-Saturday afternoon at Vespers. And so we have two Evangelists in daily use. On Thursday and Friday mornings there are the daily lessons week by week of the Apostolic Epistles and the rest of the New Testament. This makes sufficient provision for lessons and preaching, to set the Word of God going, except it be for lectures in the Universities to the learned.

[3] We come now to practising boys at school in the Bible. Every week-day, before the lesson, let them sing some psalms in Latin, as has been customary hitherto at Mattins; for, as we have said, we wish the young to be trained and practised in the Latin tongue, through the Bible. After the psalms, the boys two or three in turn, according to its length, should read a chapter in Latin out of the New Testament. Then let another boy read the same chapter in German for practice, and in case any layman were there to hear. After that, go on, with an antiphon, to the lesson in German of which we have spoken above. Then let the whole lot sing a German hymn, followed by the Lord's Prayer said silently; and let the parson or chaplain say a Collect and conclude with the Benedicamus Domino, as usual. In the same way at Vespers, let them sing the Vesper Psalms as sung hitherto, in Latin, with an antiphon ; then a hymn, as there is opportunity. Then let them read, two or three, by turn, in Latin, out of the Old Testament, a chapter or half a chapter according to its length. Then let one boy read it in German. Next, Magnificat in Latin, with an antiphon or chant. Then Our Father silently and the Collects with the Benedicamus. So much for Divine Service daily throughout the week in towns where there are schools.

(iii) On Sundays for the laity

The Mass vestments, altars, and lights may be retained till such time as they shall all change of themselves, or it shall please us to change them: though, if any will take a different course in this matter, we shall not interfere. But in the true Mass, among sincere Christians, the altar should not be retained, and the priest should always turn himself towards the people as, without doubt, Christ did at the Last Supper. That, however, must bide its time.

[a] At the beginning then we sing a spiritual song or a psalm in German, in primo tono, as follows : Ps. xxxiv.

[b] Then Kyrie eleison, to the same tone, but thrice and not nine times. . . .

[c] Then the priest reads a Collect in Effaut in unisono, as follows : 'Almighty God,' &c.

[d] Then the Epistle, in the eighth tone. . . . The Epistle should be sung with the face turned to the people, but the Collect with the face turned to the altar.

[e] After the Epistle is sung a German hymn, 'Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist,' or some other, by the whole choir.

[f] Then is read the Gospel in the fifth tone, also with the face turned towards the people.

[g] After the Gospel the whole congregation sings the Creed in German, ' Wir glauben all' an einen Gott,' &c.

[h] Then follows the sermon, on the Gospel of the Sunday or Holyday: and I think that, where the German Postills are in use throughout the year, it were best to order the Postill of the day, either whole or part, to be read out of the book to the people; not merely for the preacher's sake who can do no better, but as a safeguard against fanatics and sectaries,--a custom of which one may see traces in the Homilies at Mattins. Otherwise, where there is no spiritual understanding, and the Spirit himself speaks not through the preacher (though I set no limits to the preacher; for the Spirit can teach better than any Postills or Homilies) the end of it will be that every man will preach what he likes; and, instead of the Gospel and its exposition, they will be preaching once more about blue ducks! There are further reasons why we keep the Epistles and Gospels as they are arranged in the Postills, because there are but few inspired preachers who can handle a whole Gospel or other book with force and profit.

[i] After the sermon shall follow a public paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, with an exhortation to those who are minded to come to the Sacrament, in this, or some other better, fashion, as follows: 'Dear friends in Christ, as we are here gathered together, in the name of the Lord, to receive His holy Testament, I exhort you, first, to lift your hearts to God and to say with me 'Our Father' according as Christ our Lord hath taught us, faithfully promising that we shall be heard: ['Our Father,' &c., in paraphrase]. Next, I exhort you in Christ that with right faith ye take heed to the Testament of Christ: and specially that ye hold fast in your hearts the Word whereby Christ gives us His body and

blood for remission of sins; that ye bethink you of, and thank Him for, the infinite love which He has shown us in that through His blood He has redeemed us from God's wrath, from sin, death, and hell: and then take to yourselves outwardly the bread and wine, which is His body and blood, for an assurance and pledge thereof. In such wise will we, in His name and as He commanded in His own Word, handle and use His Testament.' Whether this paraphrase and exhortation should take place in the pulpit, immediately after the sermon, or at the altar, I leave free to every man's discretion. . . .

[k] Then the Office and Consecration proceeds, as follows : 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the same night'(i Cor. xi. 23 ff). I think that it would be in accordance with the Last Supper if the sacrament were distributed immediately after the consecration of the bread before the blessing of the cup. So say, both Luke and Paul: 'Likewise also the cup after supper. Meanwhile, there might be sung the Sanctus in German or the hymn 'Gott sei gelobet', or the hymn of John Huss, 'Jesus Christus unser Heiland.' And after this should come the consecration of the chalice and its delivery, with the singing of whatever remains of the above-mentioned hymns, or of the Agnus Dei in German.

And for the sake of good order and discipline in going up, not men and women together but the women after the men, men and women should have separate places in different parts of the church. As to private confession, I have already written enough about that: and my opinion may be found in the little prayer-book.

[l] The elevation we desire not to abolish but to retain, for it fits in well with the Sanctus in German, and means that Christ has bidden us to think of Him. Just as the sacrament is bodily elevated and yet Christ's body and blood therein are invisible, so through the word of the preacher He is commemorated and uplifted, and in the reception of the sacrament recognized and worshipped: and yet it is all a matter of faith and not of sight, how Christ gave His body and blood for us and still daily intercedes with God to bestow His grace upon us.

[m] The Sanctus in German, 'Jesaia dem Propheten das geschach,' &c.

[n] Then follows the Collect : 'We thank thee, Almighty Lord God,' &c.

[o] With the Blessing : 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee,' &c. So much for daily Divine Service and for teaching the Word of God, specially with a view to influencing the young and alluring the simple. Those who come out of curiosity and the desire to gape at something new will soon be sick and tired of the whole thing, as they were before of Divine Service in Latin. For that was sung and read in church daily, and yet the churches are deserted and empty: and already they are prepared to do the same with the German Service. So it is best that such Divine Service should be arranged with an eye to the young and to those simple folk that may perhaps come to it. As for the rest, no law nor order, exhortation nor driving, that one can devise, is of any good to induce them to go willingly and of their own accord to Divine Service, so unwilling and reluctant are they to do so (though God takes no pleasure in forced service), so idle and good-for-nothing.

As for feast-days, such as Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, Michaelmas, Purification and the like, we must go on, as hitherto, with Latin till we have hymns enough in German for the purpose. The work is but beginning, and all that belongs to it is not yet ready. Only, as one knows, make a start one way and several ways and means will be discovered.

Fast-days, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week may be retained. Not that we would compel any one to fast; but that the reading of the Passion and the Gospels appointed for these times should be observed. But we would not keep the Lenten veil, strewing of palms, covering up of pictures, and all the other mummery, nor sing the four Passions, nor preach on the Passion for eight hours on Good Friday. Holy week must be like other weeks, except that there should be sermons on the Passion for an hour daily throughout the week, or on as many days as is convenient, with reception of the Sacrament by all who desire it. For with Christians everything should be kept in God's service that has to do with the Word and the Sacrament.

To sum up, this and every other order is so to be used that should any misuse arise in connexion therewith, it should be immediately done away with and another made: just as King Hezekiah broke up and did away with the brazen serpent, which God Himself had commanded to be made, because the children of Israel misused it. Forms and Orders should be for the promotion of faith and the service of love, and not to injury of faith. When they have no more to do, they are forthwith dead and of no more worth; just as, if good coin is counterfeit, for fear of misuse it is abolished and destroyed; or as, when new shoes have become old and dry, we wear them no longer but throw them away and buy new ones. Order is an outward thing. Be it as good as it may, it can fall into misuse. Then it is no longer order but disorder. So no Order has any intrinsic worth of its own, as hitherto the Popish Order has been thought to have. But all Order has its life, worth, strength, and virtue in right use ; else it is worthless and fit for nothing. God's Spirit and grace be with us all. Amen.