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WILLIAM DALLMANN

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WHY I AM A LUTHERAN

I.

I am a Lutheran because the Lutheran Church receives the Bible as God's Word.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. 3:16. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1:21. Not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. 2:13. Being the Word of God, "the Scripture cannot be broken," as Christ said, John 10:35, but is without error. The Bible does not simply *contain* the word of God; the Bible *is* the word of God to men, *through* men.

Some one might say that all Christian churches accept the Bible as God's infallible word. Would to God this were true! As a sad matter of fact not all people calling themselves Christians accept the Bible as truly the inspired word of God.

The reports of Sunday sermons in the Monday papers prove clearly that many preachers of many denominations do not hold to the inspiration of the Bible. These preachers are tolerated by their churches, and so these denominations make themselves partakers of the sin.

Amid all this dismal din of disloyal denial of God's word, the voice of the true confessional Lutheran Church rings out clear as a clarion for the inspiration of the Bible, and for this reason I am a Lutheran.

II.

I am a Lutheran because the Lutheran Church accepts the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.

I. HUMAN AUTHORITY IS REJECTED IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

On the 18th day of April, 1521, Luther faced the Emperor and the representatives of the Pope, and refused to take back his religious teachings unless refuted by the Scriptures alone.

"For I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone, because it is evident they have erred often and contradicted themselves. I am vanquished by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience is held captive in God's words: I cannot, neither am I willing to take back anything, for to act against conscience is neither safe nor upright."

That has ever been the position of the Lutheran Church.

"The Word of God should frame articles of faith; otherwise no one, not even an angel."—Smalcald Art., Part II., Art. 2: 15.

"We receive and embrace the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountains of Israel, which are the only true standard whereby to judge all teachers and doctrines."—Form. of Concord, Sol. Dec. and Epit.

The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Lutherana. The authority of a Pope, of councils or synods, is not binding on the conscience.

If it be objected that this position does not belong to the Lutheran Church alone, but to all Protestants, it may be said, in the first place, that the Lutherans were the first to take this stand, and that the others learned it from them, and thus bear witness to the correctness of the Lutheran doctrine. It may be said, in the second place, and this is of far more importance, that the others are not consistent in carrying out this principle, and that they do not really make the Bible their only rule of faith and practice.

2. HUMAN REASON OR RATIONALISM IS REJECTED IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

On Oct. 1-3, 1529, there was a conference at Marburg between Luther and Zwingli in regard to the Lord's Supper. The point at issue was practically this: What is to decide the question, the Word of God or the reason of man?

As at Worms Luther defended the authority of the Bible against the authority of man, so at Marburg Luther upheld the authority of the Bible against the authority of human reason.

Zwingli tried to show that the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is contrary to reason; Luther proved it to be according to Scripture. Zwingli held that Christ's body could not be in heaven and also on earth; Luther replied that human reason could not be a judge of God's power, and decide what God could do and could not do. Christ said, "This is my body," and Luther held that Christ meant what He said, and could make good what He said.

The Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who had paid close attention to the proceedings, said at the close: "I will now believe the simple words of Christ rather than the keen thoughts of man."

And that has ever been the position of the Lutheran Church. She believes the word of God, even when He reveals to us things beyond our reason, things that we must call mysteries.

In vain would boasting reason find
The path to happiness and God;
Her weak directions leave the mind
Bewildered in a doubtful road.

Jesus, Thy words alone impart
Eternal life; on these I live;
Here sweeter comforts cheer my heart
Than all the powers of Nature give.

The various forms that men devise
To shake my faith with treacherous art,
I scorn as vanities and lies,
And blind Thy Gospel to my heart.

3. FEELING OR ENTHUSIASM IS REJECTED IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

During Luther's stay in the Wartburg, the "Heavenly Prophets" came to Wittenberg and boasted of a direct revelation from heaven, of visions and dreams, of familiar talks with God in comparison with which the Bible was a small thing. They wanted to kill all priests and wicked men and set up the kingdom of God. Churches were ruined, windows smashed, pictures torn up, altars upset, and other outrages committed.

Over against the alleged direct inspiration of these Heavenly Prophets, Luther upheld the written Word of God, and showed that every spirit opposing the Bible is not the Spirit of God.

To-day we still uphold the authority of God's written word against the claims of direct inspiration and personal revelation and against all the alleged teaching, leading, guiding, and filling of the Holy Ghost that is not in agreement with God's written word in the Bible.

Almost every religious crank tries to palm off his notions or whims or dreams as direct personal revelations of the Holy Spirit.

When a doctrine or practice does not square with God's written word, then we know that the doctrine or practice is not of God, and we reject it. Most reverently and most decidedly we say that if any man, though it be an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that according to the Bible, let him be accursed, Gal. 1:8.

If we follow the authority of a man, we become the spiritual slaves of a man; and if we must have a Pope, let us take the Pope at Rome and be done.

If we follow the authority of human reason, we will be led into hopeless infidelity. Human reason has made many attempts in all these centuries to give us the truth in matters pertaining to God, the soul, immortality, etc., but it has made a miserable failure. At last the priests and prophets of human reason have declared their incompetence and utter bankruptcy. Huxley, Tyndall, Ingersoll, and others have confessed themselves Agnostics, which being interpreted into plain English means "Knownothings."

Ignorance with a blank, vacant stare is the fashionable religion of philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century.

If we follow our feelings or notions or alleged direct revelations of God, we will be as a ship without rudder or anchor, a toy of tides and storms, we will be led into baseless enthusiasm, vain superstition, wild fanaticism, or idle dreams. Witness Quakerism, Mormonism, Mohammedanism, Swedenborgianism, Buddhism; witness the Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Faith Curers, Divine Healers, and what not.

If we follow the written word of God as we find it in the Bible, we will be led into a sound, solid, sane, sober Christianity. Make the written word of God the foundation, source, and rule of faith and practice, and you can be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of hope that is in you," 1 Peter 3:15.

III.

I am a Lutheran because the Lutheran Church accepts God's Word as the means of grace, as the channel, vehicle, or instrument through which God's grace is brought to the sinner for his salvation.

1. Some people really look upon their hands as the means of grace. They think they are justified by their good works. They want to work or earn or pay their way to heaven. They "believe in doing what's right," and put their trust in their own good works. The trouble is that these people can never know for a certainty when they have done enough good work to pay for their passage to heaven, and so they are uncertain as long as they live. They cannot be confident of their salvation and their life cannot be cheerful; it is overcast with the black clouds of doubt and fear.

On the other hand, the Lutheran says:—

'Tis not by works of righteousness
Which our own hands have done;
But we are saved by sovereign grace,
Abounding through His Son.

"We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law," Rom. 3:28.

2. Other people look to their heart or feeling. When they feel good, get excited, and are full of enthusiasm, they begin to sing and shout and assert that they have "got religion," "feel grace," and are saved, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" If on the next day they lose this sweet feeling or sense of joy, they become cast down and begin to fear that they are lost and damned.

As the thermometer rises and falls with the temperature, so their prospects of salvation rise and

fall with their feeling. Plainly these poor people have no solid foundation for the hope of their salvation. They are really on the anxious bench as long as they live.

On the other hand, the Lutheran sings—

I cling to what my Savior taught,
And trust it, whether felt or not.

Again—

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word.

Here the Redeemer's welcome voice
Spreads heavenly peace around;
And life and everlasting joys
Attend the blissful sound.

Teach me to love Thy sacred word
And view my Savior *there*.

3. Still others look for their salvation to God's eternal decree of predestination. Islam, Fatalism. Calvinism is the sad source of their cold comfort. "Whatever will be, will be. If I am to be damned, I'll be damned in spite of all I may do; if I am to be saved, I'll be saved in spite of all I may do." "If!"—But there's the rub. These decrees of God are secret, and these people have no means of learning to which of these two classes they be-

long. They may search the heavens till doomsday, to learn the mind of God, but all in vain. If consistent, they must fall into proud presumption or deadening despair.

4. The Lutheran does not look to his hands, to his good works, for the means of his salvation; he does not look into his heart, into the state of his feelings, for the assurance of his salvation; he does not try to look into God's hidden eternal decrees for the certainty of his salvation: the Lutheran looks straight into God's Word for the knowledge of God's purpose.

The astronomer does not look up into the skies to study a star, but down into a mirror in which the telescope reflects the star.

The Lutheran does not look up to sweep the heavens to study God's mind and heart, he looks down into the Bible and sees God's heart beating and throbbing in love for him. He looks down into the Bible and sees the loving Father cradling His beloved Son in Bethlehem's manger and leading Him to Gethsemane's agony and nailing Him to Calvary's cross.

Looking down into the Bible the sinner sees enacted before his eyes God's great work of redemption condensed in the words: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.

Scientists tell us that electricity is everywhere;

yet we cannot get it anywhere but through the wire that conducts it to us. In like manner God is everywhere, and yet I cannot find Him anywhere but in His Word. In His Word He may be found. That is the meeting-place He has appointed for an interview with me. Christ says:

"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me," John 1:39.

The Gospel is the gospel of His grace, the word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified, Acts 20:24, 32. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18; by which ye are saved, 1 Cor. 15:2; the Holy Spirit is received by the Gospel, the hearing of faith, Gal. 3:2, 5.

The Lutheran says:

Lord, open Thou my heart to hear,
And by Thy *Word* to me draw near.
Thy *Word* doth move the inmost heart.
Thy *Word* doth perfect life impart.
Thy *Word* my soul with joy doth bless,
Thy *Word* brings peace and happiness.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts
In this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

Holy Baptism is another means of grace. Not the water indeed, "but the Word of God which is in and with the water, and faith which trusts such Word of God in the water." Holy Baptism is called the "washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost" whereby God saves us according to His grace, Titus 3:5. Again, Baptism is called the "washing of water by the Word" whereby Christ sanctifies and cleanses His church, Eph. 5:26. Yet again, Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts 2:38.

Christ's command is to baptize "all nations," to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them, Matt. 28:19. By this general command children are not excluded, but included.

Furthermore, St. Paul clearly teaches that New Testament baptism takes the place of Old Testament circumcision. As children were included in the Old Testament covenant, so are children included in the New Testament covenant. We therefore reject the error of the Baptists, who deny Holy Baptism to infants.

Furthermore, Christ does not say that we must be immersed, and so we reject the error of the Baptists, who say that unless you are immersed you are not baptized.

The Lord's Supper is likewise not an empty ceremony in which we receive mere bread and

wine as empty symbols or emblems representing the absent body and blood of the Savior, but with the consecrated bread and wine the Lord's body and blood given and shed for the remission of sins is really communicated to the communicants as a seal and pledge and guarantee of the remission of sins. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Cor. 10:16.

The Lutheran Church rejects the Romish doctrine of Transubstantiation, and also the doctrine of Representation or emblems as held by the other denominations; she does not teach Consubstantiation nor Impanation, as she is so often falsely accused; she teaches the Scriptural doctrine of the Sacramental Presence, the objective Real Presence of the true body and blood of Christ with the earthly elements of bread and wine.

The Lutheran Church rejects the doctrine that the Holy Ghost is received in some secret, immediate manner outside of the Gospel and the Sacraments. By this error faith is robbed of its God-given foundation and becomes a baseless illusion.

The Gospel and the Sacraments are the means appointed by God through which He would win souls, bring them to Christ, forgive their sins, bring people into the Church, and keep them there.

All means that do not directly or indirectly serve to apply these means of grace are self-appointed new measures and do not build up the Church. At best they are useless and thus hinder the work; usually they are positively harmful, tearing down instead of building up the Church.

These means of grace confer the same grace and all grace. The word of the Gospel forgives sins, gives life and salvation; the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper do the same and seal the forgiveness to the individual believer for his comfort.

Every one asking the question, in one form or another, "What must I do to be saved?" must be directed to use the Gospel and the Sacraments, and to use nothing else. As in a mirror, God's heart is revealed in the Gospel and in the Sacraments. From these you can learn unmistakably how God is disposed toward you. As Christ has earned the grace for all mankind, so this grace is offered to all mankind, in the means of grace. And God earnestly desires all mankind to make this grace their own by faith, and this needed faith He will kindle and strengthen through these means of grace, to-wit, the Gospel and the Sacraments.

On the other hand, we do not teach that the means of grace are effectual in any mechanical manner, and hence we reject the Romish doctrine that the mere outward use of the means, without faith, is of saving effect. Though the grace of

God is really offered to all people using the means of grace, the grace of God is given to those only who believe the word and promises of God.

IV.

I am a Lutheran because the Lutheran Church teaches that God through the means of grace works faith in a man and thus makes him a Christian.

There are but two religions: The one right, the other wrong; the one God-made, the other man-made; the one that God saves man, the other that man saves himself; the one the Christian religion, the other the heathen religion in its various forms.

The very heart, kernel, life, essence, sum, and substance of the Christian religion is that God saves man for Christ's sake, by grace, through faith. The doctrine that man must in any degree or in any sense save himself is essentially heathenish.

"The just shall live by faith" means that Jesus is the only Savior of men, the only Mediator between God and men; that His life, suffering, and death is the only remedy for sinful mankind; that a living, true, genuine faith in Christ, a simple, hearty trust in His work is the only means, medium, or instrument of justification before God and of eternal life and salvation.

As the word of Christ laid the wind and wave on Lake Galilee, so this word of God laid the fierce storms and troubled waters of Luther's agonized conscience in the cloister cell at Erfurt. As at the baptism of Jesus the heavens opened and the Father said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," so this word of God opened heaven and spoke God's peace to Luther's trembling heart as he on his knees was climbing Pilate's staircase at Rome trying to do penance for his sins.

He says: "I felt myself born again as a new man and I entered by an opened door into the very Paradise of God. This text of St. Paul, 'The just shall live by faith,' was to me the very gate of heaven."

This doctrine was at once Luther's sword and trowel; his sword wherewith he smote and conquered the anti-Christ and freed thousands of souls from Romish tyranny, and also his trowel wherewith he repaired and restored to its pristine beauty, purity, and glory the Church of the living God, "built upon the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

Of this doctrine of justification by faith Luther says: "It is that which forms the Church, nourishes it, builds it up, preserves and defends it. No one can rightly teach in the Church, or successfully resist its adversary, if he be wanting in attachment to this grand truth. It is the heel that crushes the Serpent's head."

Being the very citadel of the Christian religion, the doctrine of justification by faith has always been assailed by the enemies of the Truth. And in our day there are not wanting men in various denominations, notably among the High Church Episcopalians, who denounce this central Biblical doctrine as worse than Atheism and too bad for devils!

We say with Luther: "Whereas I see that the devil, by his doctors and teachers, is incessantly attacking this fundamental article; therefore I, Doctor Martin Luther, an unworthy evangelist of our Lord Jesus Christ, do confess that faith alone, without works, justifies in the sight of God; and I declare that, in spite of the emperor of the Romans, the emperor of the Turks, the emperor of the Tartars, the emperor of the Persians, the Pope, all the cardinals, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, princes, nobles, all the world, and all the devils, *it shall stand unshaken forever!*"

Through the means of grace, the Gospel and the Sacraments, God also converts the sinner. Conversion is the work of God alone, a work of His grace and mercy and power. Conversion is in no sense, in no degree, in no wise the work of man.

The natural man looks upon the Gospel as foolishness, 1 Cor. 2:14; and he is dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1. Conversion is not an awakening from sleep, but a rising from death; not a reformation, but a regeneration.

God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love

wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. Eph. 2: 4, 5. We believe according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead. Eph. 1:19, 20.

Then why are not all men converted? It is in no wise the fault of God; He earnestly desires the conversion of all men, but, strange to say, the powerful grace of God, Eph. 1:19, 20, can be resisted by man. Christ weeping over Jerusalem said, "and ye *would not*," Matt. 23:37. Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," Acts 7:51.

Man cannot further, he can only hinder, his conversion. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Hos. 13:9.

We uphold this Biblical doctrine over against every shade of Calvinism, which denies that God does not earnestly desire the salvation of all hearers of the Word, but only of the chosen few. We uphold this Biblical doctrine over against all Synergism or Arminianism or Pelagianism, which denies that our salvation depends alone on God.

Salvation is of God; damnation is of man.

Through the means of grace I am to become certain of my election to eternal life. I cannot search the archives of eternity and see whether, according to God's counsel, my name is written in the Book of Life, or whether I am doomed to eternal damnation.

But when I search the Bible and read the will of God written in the blood of the Lamb, then "I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies."

We know that by the grace of God, for Christ's sake, through the means of grace, certain people come to faith in Christ, are justified, lead a holy life, and persevere in their Christianity, are faithful unto death and die saved. Now, all that God does for these people here in time, that God has decreed to do from eternity, and that is called God's election of grace unto life.

This doctrine is clearly taught in Eph. 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."

And again, Rom. 8:29, 30: "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

God did not elect us according to our works, but

according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. 1:9.

God did not elect us "in view of our faith," because He foresaw that we would believe; faith is not the cause of our election, but the result of our election. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48.

The Lutheran Church teaches an election of grace unto salvation, but not a predestination unto damnation. God did not choose any to be damned, nor did He pass any by with His grace. God's grace is universal, and it is free, and it is sincerely intended for every one. God has not a weak grace for all men in general and a strong grace for the elect in particular. To all men God offers the same grace with the same hearty desire for their salvation.

V.

I am a Lutheran because Lutherans believe that the Christians compose the Church.

The Bible is God's word; God's word is the means of grace; the means of grace produce faith; faith makes the Christian; the Christians make the Church. The Church is the "communion of saints"—i. e., the company of all who truly believe in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

This is the Church outside of which there is no salvation: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

This faith is invisible; but faith makes the Christian, and Christians compose the Church. The true Church, then, is invisible. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," 2 Tim. 2:19, but no one else can look into the heart and tell the true Christian from the hypocrite.

Wherever enough of the Gospel is preached that people can come to faith in Christ for the forgiveness of sin, there true Christians are found, and these are members of the true Church of the living God.

From the foregoing it is clearly every one's duty to search himself thoroughly in order to see whether he be a dead branch, connected with the Church outwardly only by a dead, formal, orthodox, intellectual assent and belief of the head, or whether he really be a living branch connected with Christ, the living Vine, by a true, hearty faith bringing forth the fruit of good works.

All true believers in Christ are members of the Church of God, even if, owing to the weakness of their flesh, their life is yet very imperfect; even if, owing to imperfect knowledge, they are still in connection with erring denominations.

Therefore the Lutheran Church has never laid

claim to being the only saving Church, and she has never tried to proselyte among the members of other Christian churches.

Nevertheless, the existence of the various denominations is not justified. They mix error with the truth. But God wants His word to be preached and believed in all truth and purity: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God," 1 Peter 4:11.

Hence it is the solemn duty of all Christians to forsake the churches in which false doctrine is preached and cling to the Church of the pure Word and Sacraments: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; *and avoid them*," Rom. 16:17.

We cannot put up with error, and we dare not fellowship errorists; we must condemn all forms of unionism. The Church is here not to suppress the truth, but to confess the truth. And every particle of God's truth is valuable and must be confessed.

Clearly the Lutheran Church is just as charitable as the Bible: acknowledging as Christians all who truly believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Plainly the Lutheran Church is just as reasonable and consistent as the Scriptures: denying the hand of fellowship to all who do not with her accept the plain teachings of the written Word.

"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"
Amos 3:3. Our conscience is narrow; our heart
is wide.

VI.

*I am a Lutheran because Lutherans believe that the
Church has all Church power.*

The believers are the Church, and they possess
all the rights and privileges that Christ has earned
for His Church and given to it.

To all believers Christ has given the great com-
mission to preach the Gospel, Matt. 28:19, 20; to
all believers Christ has given the keys of the king-
dom of heaven, Matt. 16:18, 19; 18:17-20; John
20:22, 23; to all believers Paul says, "All things
are yours," 1 Cor. 3:21. In view of these pas-
sages we reject all doctrines whereby the spiritual
power is ascribed originally or divinely to the
Pope or bishops or the order of pastors or princes
or councils or synods. We believe in the spiritual
priesthood of all believers and that they delegate
the office of the public ministry to a man called
for the purpose. The ministry is not an order,
but an office.

Where these truths are really held, people will
be jealous of Christian liberty and zealous of
Christian service. "A Christian man is the most

free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one," truly and tersely says Luther.

This spiritual power belongs to every local congregation, for Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to the local congregation, as we may see from Matt. 18:17-20, where Christ also expressly says: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The local congregation elected their own church officers, Acts 6:5; the local congregation was told to excommunicate the wicked, 1 Cor. 5:13; the local congregation was told to absolve the penitent, 2 Cor. 2:7; the local congregation was told to exercise care over the administration of the office of the ministry, Col. 4:17.

We hold that all church bodies have none but advisory powers over a local congregation, and only so much power as has been delegated to them by the local congregation.

We deny that it is of divine right that the local congregation is subject to synod, or to the church of the whole country, or to the universal Church. This is a serious error, in fact it is the foundation of the Papacy.

However beneficial a synod may be, it is not commanded by God, but is an institution of the Church. The only divine office in the Church is

that of preaching, and the only divine institution is the congregation which is called together by the preaching of the Gospel. All other offices in the Church are not of divine origin, but called into being by the Church in order to be helps to the preaching.

Because the ministry is not a special order, but an office delegated by the congregation to the pastor, it is clear that all pastors are equal of divine right. We therefore reject the Episcopalian threefold ministry of bishops, priests, and deacons. All pastors are the bishops of their congregations and all pastors are of equal grade.

By divine right all church power is vested in the congregation, and so Lutherans are congregationalists in government.

By human right a number of congregations may elect an overseer over themselves and call him a bishop, elect another overseer over several territories and call him an archbishop, as is actually the case in Lutheran Sweden. They may also adopt the Patriarchal or Metropolitan form of government of the Greek Church; yes, they may elect one as the head of the Church and call him Pope, but always with the understanding that it is a *human* arrangement and not a divine institution.

The ministry of preaching is a divine institution, hence Christians are to use the Word of God not only for private devotion and family worship,

but are also to see to it that it is preached publicly by men fitted for the office and that the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution, Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 14:23; 2 Tim. 2:2.

It is the sacred duty of every Christian to join a congregation in which the pure Gospel is preached. He that persistently stands aloof, thereby proves that he does not belong to the true Church of Christ.

The office of the ministry has the authority of God's Word, but none other. 1 Pet. 4:14. Whenever the minister preaches God's Word Christians are bound to obey unconditionally. Heb. 13:17; Luke 10:16. Should the preacher demand anything outside of the written Word of God, Christians would be bound to disobey him in order to obey Christ: "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Matt. 23:8. We therefore condemn the doctrine that the minister has the power to lay a yoke upon the disciples' neck beyond what is written.

Since all believers are told to beware of false prophets, Matt. 7:15, all believers have the right of judging doctrine; ministers, councils, conferences, synods, and others are not the only ones. Deny to the Christian the right of judging doctrine and you deliver him into the hands of man, and in his faith he becomes subject to man instead of God.

From this right flows the duty of the Christian to become well acquainted with the teaching of God's Word, so that he may be enabled to judge correctly, for he is not to judge according to his own notions, but according to God's written word.

Lutherans enjoy the greatest possible liberty. In all matters not clearly commanded by Christ, the Lutheran has but one rule: "Let all things be done decently and in order." True Lutherans cannot quarrel about ritual, liturgies, crucifixes, candles, vestments, architecture, music, paintings, statues, feast days, fast days, etc., in the Church. The true Lutheran is always satisfied. In matters of faith he loyally bows to the clear command of his Savior; in other matters he charitably accepts the verdict of the majority of his fellow Christians in his congregation.

VII.

I am a Lutheran because Lutherans want complete separation between Church and State.

Though both the State and the Church are institutions of God, they answer different purposes, and in order to gain their distinct ends, they are to employ different means.

Through the Church, God would save the souls of men, and therefore she is called the "mother" of the faithful, Gal. 4:26.

Through the State, God would protect our life, property, and reputation, preserve order and outward decency among men, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life," 1 Tim. 2:2.

The Church may not employ other means than the preaching of God's Word; she abhors the use of force, as Christ said to Peter, "Put up thy sword," John 18:11, and to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," John 18:36.

The State passes laws touching the outward civil life and justly uses the sword and other bodily punishments to enforce obedience, Rom. 13:14.

The Church is not to meddle with the politician, and the politician is not to meddle with the Church. We make no efforts to "put God into the Constitution," or Christ into the Thanksgiving proclamation; we do not want the Seventh Day Adventist put into the chain gang as a criminal for violating a *divine* command when working on Sunday; we want no Sunday laws in the interest of Christianity, but on social, sanitary and economic grounds; we do not want any one to be taxed for the benefit of the Church; we do not want the Church to escape taxation. As Christians we make no demands on the State, nor do we ask favors of the State.

We condemn the efforts of all who would use the power of the government for the benefit of the Church and would thus make of the Church a worldly power. In like manner do we condemn the efforts of all who would turn the State into a Church and govern the State with God's Word instead of civil laws, since only Christians can be ruled with God's Word.

We will be law-abiding citizens and cheerfully pay our just taxes and in a righteous war willingly give our heart's blood for our country, and thus "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's." In spiritual matters, however, we want to "render unto God the things which are God's"; we want to

"Hail the power of Jesus' name
And crown Him Lord of all."

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