

LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 28

COMMENTARIES ON
1 CORINTHIANS 7
1 CORINTHIANS 15
LECTURES ON
1 TIMOTHY

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Editor

ISBN 13: 978-0-570-06428-2

ISBN 10: 0-570-06428-7



Theology / Historical Theology

15-1770

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CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
Saint Louis, Missouri

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 55-9893

ISBN 0-570-06428-7

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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General Introduction

THE first editions of Luther's collected works appeared in the sixteenth century, and so did the first efforts to make him "speak English." In America serious attempts in these directions were made for the first time in the nineteenth century. The Saint Louis edition of Luther was the first endeavor on American soil to publish a collected edition of his works, and the Henkel Press in Newmarket, Virginia, was the first to publish some of Luther's writings in an English translation. During the first decade of the twentieth century, J. N. Lenker produced translations of Luther's sermons and commentaries in thirteen volumes. A few years later the first of the six volumes in the Philadelphia (or Holman) edition of the *Works of Martin Luther* appeared. Miscellaneous other works were published at one time or another. But a growing recognition of the need for more of Luther's works in English has resulted in this American edition of Luther's works.

The edition is intended primarily for the reader whose knowledge of late medieval Latin and sixteenth-century German is too small to permit him to work with Luther in the original languages. Those who can, will continue to read Luther in his original words as these have been assembled in the monumental Weimar edition (*D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe; Weimar, 1883 ff.*). Its texts and helps have formed a basis for this edition, though in certain places we have felt constrained to depart from its readings and findings. We have tried throughout to translate Luther as he thought translating should be done. That is, we have striven for faithfulness on the basis of the best lexicographical materials available. But where literal accuracy and clarity have conflicted, it is clarity that we have preferred, so that sometimes paraphrase seemed more faithful than literal fidelity. We have proceeded in a similar way in the matter of Bible versions, translating Luther's translations. Where this could be done by the use of an existing English version — King James, Douay, or Revised Standard — we have done so. Where

it could not, we have supplied our own. To indicate this in each specific instance would have been pedantic; to adopt a uniform procedure would have been artificial – especially in view of Luther's own inconsistency in this regard. In each volume the translator will be responsible primarily for matters of text and language, while the responsibility of the editor will extend principally to the historical and theological matters reflected in the introductions and notes.

Although the edition as planned will include fifty-five volumes, Luther's writings are not being translated in their entirety. Nor should they be. As he was the first to insist, much of what he wrote and said was not that important. Thus the edition is a selection of works that have proved their importance for the faith, life, and history of the Christian Church. The first thirty volumes contain Luther's expositions of various Biblical books, while the remaining volumes include what are usually called his "Reformation writings" and other occasional pieces. The final volume of the set will be an index volume; in addition to an index of quotations, proper names, and topics, and a list of corrections and changes, it will contain a glossary of many of the technical terms that recur in Luther's works and that cannot be defined each time they appear. Obviously Luther cannot be forced into any neat set of rubrics. He can provide his reader with bits of autobiography or with political observations as he expounds a psalm, and he can speak tenderly about the meaning of the faith in the midst of polemics against his opponents. It is the hope of publishers, editors, and translators that through this edition the message of Luther's faith will speak more clearly to the modern church.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN
HELMUT LEHMANN

Introduction to Volume 28

IN this volume we have brought together three shorter commentaries on Pauline epistles by Dr. Martin Luther: a 1523 commentary on 1 Corinthians 7 in the form of “wedding present” for a friend, a 1534 commentary on 1 Corinthians 15 in the form of a series of sermons, and the 1527–28 lectures on 1 Timothy.

The first of these is an exposition of 1 Cor. 7 with special emphasis on the blessings of Christian marriage and on the freedom to marry or not to marry.

Luther had not himself deigned to write a specific answer to John Faber’s 1521 *Opus adversus nova quaedam et a christiana religione prorsus aliena dogmata Martini Lutheri*, newly reprinted in Leipzig in April 1523, after it had already drawn from Erasmus the comment: “Faber is bold to utter whatever comes into his mouth, but eventually he will meet an avenger, and the dagger will be put to the whetstone.” It fell to Justus Jonas to take up the gauntlet, for as a newlywed he was particularly touched by detailed defense of the celibacy of the priesthood in Faber’s book. Faber had set out to write a refutation of Luther’s defense for his thesis concerning the authority of the pope and the jurisdiction of the church of Rome, but it was the treatment of celibacy in Faber’s book that aroused special interest. It was at this point, too, that the reply to Faber scored best. The coarse directness of the Jonas style was felt to be refreshing over against the class-conscious, sophisticated, learned diatribe of the cleric. Faber, who admitted that he was anxiously awaiting Luther’s own reply to his book, must have been especially chagrined to have Jonas taunt him with the statement that he had accomplished what neither pope nor schoolmen nor ecclesiastical orders had been able to do so far, to silence Luther – but only because Luther’s friends had begged him to spare the poor man.

But even though Luther did not reply to Faber but contented himself with appending a letter of encouragement to the reply of Justus Jonas, he probably was moved more than ordinarily by the effusions of Faber to study particularly 1 Cor. 7, the chapter on which, ever since

Jerome, the church had confidently based its views concerning the pre-eminence of the celibate life. Melancthon had already given a commentary on this chapter in 1522, had criticized Jerome as "superstitiously extolling celibacy," and had emphasized that "neither celibacy nor marriage is prescribed" but that "either one is to be chosen without sin."¹ But his commentary was too brief to provide convincing exegetical proof, and so Luther felt obliged, in spite of a busy schedule, to supply what was needed — an exegetical study of the whole chapter. He completed his work in August 1523 and dedicated it to Hans von Löser as "a Christian epithalamium" for Löser's wedding, which took place the following year and at which Luther performed the ceremony. There was a Catholic answer, though not until 1527, when Conrad Kollin, the prior of the Dominican monastery at Cologne issued his *Refutation of the Lutheran Wedding Song*.² Luther apparently never took note of it.

Our second item is a series of sermons on the Christian view of death. These sermons form a running commentary on 1 Corinthians 15. Luther's activities as a preacher in 1532 suffered many interruptions on account of recurring poor health. For weeks at a time he was not able to do any work, so that he complained, "I eat, drink, and sleep, but I cannot read, write, or preach. I am nothing but a bother to the world." For a while his preaching was confined to his own house, but eventually he was able to resume his full schedule of sermons. The death of Elector John the Steadfast on August 16 and the presence in Wittenberg of his son and successor, John Frederick I, occasioned an additional special series of sermons in the castle church from August 18 to September 6, especially the funeral sermon on Sunday, August 18, on 1 Thess. 4:13 ff., and a continued exposition of this text the following Thursday.

The first of this series of 17 sermons on 1 Cor. 15 was preached August 11, in the afternoon, and the series continued, mostly Sunday afternoons, with some interruptions, until April 27, 1533. George Rörer preserved both the dates and the sermons themselves. Caspar Cruciger freely edited and published the set of sermons in German and dedicated the collection to Elector John Frederick, saying in his dedicatory preface: "May it please your Grace to lend the association of your name to these sermons . . . for it is of the utmost importance

¹ Cf. *Corpus Reformatorum*, XV, 441.

² *Eversio Lutherani epithalamii*.

to promote the Word of God in every way before the ungrateful world to attract and draw insolent hearts to it."

The lectures on 1 Timothy complete the series of shorter lectures (together with lectures on Titus, Philemon, and 1 John [*Luther's Works*, Vols. 29 and 30]), which Luther held at Wittenberg during the period August 1527 to March 1528, when the university was officially in residence at Jena, having left Wittenberg on account of a plague. Among the few who chose to remain in Wittenberg with Luther and Bugenhagen throughout these trying months was George Rörer, that faithful auditor and recorder of Luther's lectures and sermons. He incidentally provided our only external witness concerning time and place of these lectures when in a letter of February 26, 1528, he writes to Stephan Roth that in spite of the well-meant advice of Roth and also of Bugenhagen that he should seek a "change of air" because of recent delicate health he cannot see his way clear now to leave Wittenberg "before Dr. Martin puts the finishing touch on the First Epistle to Timothy," but that he is thinking of leaving right after Easter (April 12). Thus the return of the university to Wittenberg would approximately coincide with the conclusion of these lectures.

Rörer's persistence provides us with a full transcript (but also the only one) of these lectures. His characteristic interest also provides notations of the dates on which the lectures were held, except that Rörer apparently neglected to enter one date between March 9 and 12, for the material assigned to March 9 is approximately twice the volume of a normal lecture. The lectures began January 13 and ended March 31. The week of January 27 no lectures were held because Luther was away at Torgau, and between March 16 and 30 there were no lectures because of trips to Altenburg and Torgau.

But Rörer obviously did not have opportunity to revise and prepare this transcript for publication. The manuscript reveals problems similar to those encountered in the commentaries on Titus and Philemon of about the same time (cf. *Luther's Works*, 29, p. x). Most bothersome are those sentences which end abruptly with "etc." What Rörer did not supply (either because of Luther's fast dictation or because of Luther's abrupt style) is not always self-evident, as the "etc." would suggest. We have either indicated as conjectures such additions as seemed reasonable or transmitted the original without additions when more than one solution to the problem seemed possible.

H. O.

COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 7

Translated by
EDWARD SITTLER

TO THE AUGUST AND HONORABLE
HANS LOSER OF PRETZSCH, HEREDITARY
MARSHAL OF SAXONY, MY GRACIOUS
LORD AND FRIEND¹

GRACE and peace in Christ! August and honorable sir, my dear Lord and friend: I am keeping my promise to you according to my capacities and am most hopeful that you, too, according to your noble inclinations, will do as you said and no longer postpone your marriage. But that you may approach this in as Christian a way as possible, I have taken it upon myself to interpret the seventh chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians — this I do as a service to you and as an aid to all those who take a liking to it. My reason for this choice is that this very chapter, more than all the other writings of the entire Bible, has been twisted back and forth to condemn the married state and at the same time to give a strong appearance of sanctity to the dangerous and peculiar state of celibacy. And to tell the truth, none have given themselves such airs with this chapter as the very people who have been least chaste. I, too, once considered chastity as ordinary as they pretend it to be. But, thank God, the last three years have taught me how little chastity there is in the world outside marriage, both in convents and monasteries.

But God has laid it upon me to preach about marriage and to tear the veil from the chastity which is of the devil, so that there may be less fornication and our poor youth may not be so pitiably and dangerously misled by falsely glorified chastity. Therefore I must take particular care that this chapter, which is their principal defense, no longer remain to cover their shame but be understood according to the true meaning of St. Paul. And so I should like to give you this on the occasion of your wedding;² thus I, too, shall once have sung a Christian epithalamium, or wedding song, as they used to do in the

¹ In 1531 Luther dedicated his exposition of Ps. 147 to the marshal of the elector of Saxony. In 1533 Löser, together with Melanchthon and Jonas, was a sponsor at the baptism of Luther's son Paul. Cf. *Luther's Works*, 14, p. 110; 54, p. 184.

² Not until December 1524 did Löser marry Ursula von Portzig. Luther performed the ceremony at Pretzsch in the presence of Amsdorf, Melanchthon, and Jonas.

olden days, so that your plans may be carried out to the honor of God and for the promotion and fulfillment of your own blessedness. With this I commend you and your dear bride to the mercy of God. Amen.

Wittenberg, in the year 1523
Martin Luther

PREFACE¹

WHAT a fool is he who takes a wife," says the world, and it is certainly true. And many learned scholars have decided that a wise man should not take a wife, even if she were wisdom personified. This, too, is true and well said, for those who believe that there is no life after this one (as such people do) act almost wisely in falling back on free fornication and not tying themselves to the labor of married life. In this way they have at least fewer evil days in this life. Our clergy have also grasped this point and have neatly committed themselves to chastity, that is, to free fornication, as Dan. 11:37² prophesied of them when he said: "They will neither regard nor desire women."

But on the other hand the Spirit says: "He is a wise man who takes a wife." This, too, is certainly true, and this truth leads to the conclusion that a wise man should take a wife, even though she were foolishness personified. This, too, is right and well said, for since a Christian man is waiting for another life after this one, it is a matter of wisdom that he should have fewer good days on earth so that in eternal life he might enjoy only happy ones; and this seemed good to God when He created man and woman and brought them together.

In other words, there are two different views of matrimony: one derives from the smart alecks and sophisticates, that is, the principal fools and blind men in the sight of God. These fellows view the state of marriage as a superfluous, presumptuous human thing that one could dispense with and do without, just as I can do without an extra jacket or coat. Then they fill the world with their foolish and blasphemous scribbling and screeching against the married state, advising all men against it, although they themselves feel – and abundantly demonstrate by their actions – that they cannot do without women, these being created specifically for marriage; instead they run after and plague themselves with whores day and night.

Of this kind is that arch-fool, Johann Schmid of Constance,³ that

¹ Only the Latin translation of 1525 has this heading.

² The Weimar text has Dan. 8, but the Erlangen edition, following the Wittenberg edition, has Dan. 12.

³ Johann Heigerlin of Leutkirch, the son of a smith and therefore also called Fabri, Faber, or Schmid, had been rewarded with the canonicate of Constance for his defense of the papacy against Luther. His *Opus adversus nova quaedam et a christiana religione prorsus aliena dogmata Martini Lutheri*, originally pub-

renowned whoremonger, who has written an immense book, recently printed in Leipzig, against the state of matrimony. He tries to talk everyone out of it but says nothing more than that there is much effort and labor connected with it, as though this were not sufficiently known throughout the world and as if this ass must first teach us what every village peasant knows. If I were chastity herself, I could think of no greater and more unbearable shame and disgrace than to be praised by such rascals, whoremongers, and enemies of chastity. They rail against us, charging that we are enemies of chastity and promoters of marriage who prefer to see men married; and we are to consider them extremely wise, though they cannot but devote themselves to incessant fornication and though they praise chastity with their pens only and defame the married state.

They are rascals, not only on the surface but in the bottom of their hearts, and they are unworthy of an answer. And what matter if the whole world were to complain about the state of matrimony? We see right before our eyes that God daily creates not only men but also women and maintains their lives; and yet it is certain that he does not create any woman for the purpose of fornication. But since God's work and Word stare us in the face, declaring that women must be used either for marriage or for fornication, these heathenish pretenders should shut their blasphemous mouths and leave God's Word and work uncriticized and unhampered; unless perhaps they would like to teach us according to their own famed sagacity and contrary to God that all women should be strangled or banished. This would make a fine fool of God: what He does is no good; what we do is well done.

Now therefore since God created woman that she should and must be with man, it should suffice us that God is on our side, and we should honor the married state as a divine and noble institution. And if the wiseacres do not want to enter it, then let them continue in their heathenish blindness to practice rascality and fornication so long as God may allow it. We have God's Word on our side; that will remain and not be moved by such blundering Smiths,⁴ though they were more

lished in Rome in 1522 and then reprinted in Leipzig in 1523 under the auspices of Duke George of Saxony, was a sellout. The answer to this attack on Luther, though impatiently awaited even by Faber himself, did not come until later in 1523, and then from the pen of Justus Jonas, a more suitable protagonist on the subject of marriage since he had married already in February 1522, whereas Luther was still single. Luther contented himself with the incidental defense contained in the present essay.

⁴ See n. 3 above.

[W, XII, 94, 95]

numerous than the sands of the sea. Still it is a great sin and shame that we Christians have become such great fools that we first have to ponder and decide whether women ought to be married or not, just as though someone should ask whether he ought to eat and drink in this life. Now let us hear the words of St. Paul.⁵

⁵ The Weimar edition quotes the full text of Luther's German translation of 1 Cor. 7 at this point. Since that text is repeated as commented upon, we have omitted it here.

The Seventh Chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

THE occasion of the writing of this chapter was this: Those people of Corinth who became Christians, especially those converted from Judaism, held to the law of Moses in addition to the Gospel. But Moses had commanded every person to marry: every man was to have a woman, every woman was to have a man, for celibacy was condemned as an unproductive state. This all happened because Christ had been foretold as coming from the seed of Abraham, and since nobody knew which person that was to be, all Jews had to marry in honor of this seed and submit until He came.

So the Corinthians asked whether they still had to keep this law of Moses or had authority to remain unmarried, saying that they had a desire and love for chastity and had been freed from many other laws of Moses through the Gospel. Those of weak conscience found it difficult to abandon the law of Moses, to which they were accustomed. Here St. Paul answers them and says that to remain chaste is not only free but also good for those who have the will and desire for it. But he speaks rather shyly and carefully about this and persists in bringing in the state of matrimony, saying:

1. *It is well for a man not to touch a woman.*
2. *But because of the temptation to immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.*

Consider how quickly he breaks off in this statement, saying that it is well not to touch a woman, but he neither commands nor advises anybody to follow this but quickly goes over to talk of marriage as though he were afraid that such a fine thing would become rare and degenerate into general fornication, and so he orders that each should have his own spouse to avoid fornication. This, then, would be the first conclusion: that whoever does not feel that he has that precious quality but rather is inclined to fornication, he is commanded to marry. And this commandment is to be received as coming not from a human being but from God. From this it follows that nobody can vow to be chaste, nor should he keep such a vow but rather break it if he finds

or feels that he does not have that precious quality but is inclined to fornication; for such a vow is really made contrary to God's command. But one cannot vow anything against God's command, and even if the vow were made, still he is condemned who keeps it.

This touching of a woman has been interpreted so narrowly by some that they do not even want to touch the hands or the skin of a woman. For this purpose they have made many laws and regulations in order to keep themselves so far removed from women that they could neither see nor hear them, thinking that by so doing they had promoted chastity in a masterly fashion. This kind of thinking is typical of those who conceived of and founded monasteries and nunneries, or thought to preserve chastity by keeping the boys away from the girls and the girls from the boys. How this turned out and how they made room for the devil in so doing — this would be awful to hear and tell.

Such poor blinded people thought chastity could be put into people from without, whereas it is a gift from heaven and must come from within. Although it is true that there is attraction and temptation wherever men and women are together, the matter is not helped by separating them. For how does it help me if I do not see, hear, or touch a woman and still my heart is full of women and my thoughts are taken up with them day and night, thinking of the shameless things that one might do? And of what help is it to a girl to shut her up so that she neither sees nor hears a man, when her heart still sighs day and night, without ceasing, for a young man?

One has to have the heart for chastity, otherwise all such things are worse than hell and purgatory. Therefore these words of St. Paul must be understood in a spiritual sense and for the heart, in this way: he is spoken of as not touching a woman who because of his own heart's desire and love keeps his body away from women, but not the one who outwardly remains chaste with women yet inwardly and in his heart is full of desire and love for women. The latter is a hypocrite whose chastity is a pretense before others but lost before God, yes, a double unchastity. The words of St. Paul are spoken in the freedom of the spirit, demand a free spirit, and must be understood with a free spirit. But hypocrites are unwilling to understand them so. They make a dead letter and cowardly law of them, a law that applies force and makes their lost false chastity difficult with outward abstinence from women.

Just consider for a moment what reprehensible murderers of souls they are who want to force this outward chastity upon young people,

COMMENTARY ON 1 CORINTHIANS 15

Translated by
MARTIN H. BERTRAM

The Fifteenth Chapter of St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

PREFACE

THIS chapter deals throughout with our article of faith concerning the resurrection of the dead. This theme was occasioned by the fact that a number of factious spirits had arisen among the Corinthians who were ruining their faith and teaching that the resurrection of the dead is nothing. And there were others, as St. Paul states elsewhere, who tried to be clever and subtle and alleged that the resurrection had taken place a long time ago. As they interpreted it, we arose from sin through Baptism and entered into a new spiritual life, etc. Matters finally came to such a pass that people believed (as in the case of the Sadducees in the days of Christ) that man's years did not extend beyond this life, that man's life was comparable to that of a cow or of other animals, and that man was created for no other purpose than to live blamelessly here on earth. And thus this doctrine gave birth to many impertinent fellows who believed absolutely nothing regarding the resurrection or a future life, who only ridiculed this doctrine and mocked the Christians in every way. They acted like real heathen. St. Paul quotes their own words, as they said: "What kind of bodies will we have if we all rise again? Where will we all find room? If we all live at the same time, how can we find sufficient food and drink? How can we all have wives and beget children and perform other natural functions of this body and this life? etc." And thus others too now began to affect wisdom. They made bold to figure out with their own reason and cleverness how it would be possible if all who had ever been born were to rise again at the same time and forgather again in a life such as we now lead, etc. With such inane babble they weakened the Christians' faith in this article and perverted this article into tomfoolery. And unfortunately today we have again arrived at the point where many, both peasants and townspeople, and particularly Junker Hans of the nobility, prate so absurdly, shamelessly, and heathenishly about this when they presume to be so smart and stick their nose into the Scriptures. For now they have become so learned

through us that they are all our teachers and each one claims to know everything.

Paul had to appear on the scene against such base wiseacres, who also aspired to be acclaimed as excellent teachers, and he had to prevent this poison from spreading. He had to compose a whole long chapter in strong and solid proof of this article of faith and in refutation of their injurious prattle. Thereby he also served us in the future, so that we might be safeguarded the more strongly and be equipped to preserve this article — for the latter is so vigorously, mightily, and clearly substantiated here — especially since the apostles themselves prophesied that in these latter days many mockers would arise in Christianity who would ridicule our belief and the article pertaining to the Last Day, the resurrection, and the future life, and who would surely deride us as the biggest fools still to hope for this and to suffer every peril and privation because of it, such as we already see come to pass.

It is truly a sin and a shame, indeed a miserable plague, that the time should come in Christendom, not only in these days of the world's last dregs but even already in the time of the apostles, yes, even among those whom they had shortly before visited and taught, even where they had shortly before planted and founded Christianity, that such a calamity should befall so soon, that some of them dared to arise, such as the apostles' disciples, and publicly proclaim that there was no resurrection and no future life, and that those who professed to be Christians should deny and ridicule this article, although they were baptized on it and had become Christians by reason of this, the article on which also all their hope and consolation should be based. Thus they had forfeited everything with this and had believed, acted, and suffered in vain. For where this article is surrendered, all the others are gone too; and the chief article and the entire Christ are lost or preached entirely in vain.

For after all, that is the goal of our faith in Christ, of Baptism, of sermon, and of Sacrament, that we hope for a new life, that we come to Christ, that we rule eternally with Him, delivered from sin, devil, death, and every evil. Whoever does not think accordingly, or who even denies and derides this, will surely also have a low regard for Christ and for all that He did as well as for all that He gave us and instituted for us. For what would it amount to if we had received nothing better from Him than this wretched life and if we relied on Him in vain and suffered all that devil and world can inflict on us, and if

LECTURES ON 1 TIMOTHY

Translated by
RICHARD J. DINDA

The Lectures of Dr. Martin on the First Epistle to Timothy

CHAPTER ONE

IT is the intention of Paul¹ that we should be rich in the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:5), because our adversary, the devil, prowls around (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore it is not only pleasing to God but also necessary for us that we abide in the Word of God, and we have no other weapons (Eph. 6:10-17). Lest we become lazy, then, we want to devote ourselves to our food, and while we have the light, we want to give attention to the light; because the time will come when we would be glad to study if we could. I have taken up the Epistle to Timothy, in which Paul establishes not only the bishop but all the ecclesiastical orders. The epistle is not didactic, and it does not strive to establish basic teaching. Rather, it establishes the church and sets it in order. And yet, in the midst of this process Paul does not neglect to add very important doctrinal subjects. It was characteristic of the Christians to be daily involved with these subjects.

1. *Paul, an apostle.* So also we generally write to our friends differently from the way we write to strangers. After all, our friends have observed our habits of speech, and from such habits they have looked into our heart. Paul maintains this usage to address his disciples in more familiar fashion than the rest of the churches, which he addresses quite timidly and respectfully because of his reverence for Christ. With his disciples Paul also speaks a bit more confidently. You know why he boasts this way over his calling, because it is every preacher's own certain boast that he knows he is pursuing the doctrine commanded to him and demanded of him. So those who do a bad job of teaching sin on both sides. On the one hand, they have the authority and the ministry, as in the case of the papists, but they do not teach; the factious spirits and heretics, on the other hand, run into it, but they do not have the call. When the call is present, genuine doctrine should also be present, so that one can teach, etc. The call is as significant as the doctrine. For where there is a legitimate call, our Lord God does not let the Word fail. For example, however wicked the papists may be, they still do preach Christ's suffering and

¹ Luther began these lectures on Jan. 13, 1528.

CHAPTER TWO

THE first moral work of love among Christians is toward civil office. True Christians therefore do not say no to a public officer, even though he is an unbeliever, much less to a Christian one. Our rebaptizers say that Christians cannot hold public office. On this subject Paul speaks in great detail. We must note every syllable. The first fruit of love is to be that you Christians respect every public officer in the world and that you pray for them, because you hear what it means to keep the realm in peace. When a good magistrate fails or is upset, then nothing good is left in this life. Then you will be unable to come to love, to obey parents, rear children, or support the wretched. We must forget about all fruits of love if public offices do not stand firm in peace. In time of war you must anticipate your death at every moment; the inviolacy of virgin, wife, and all property is in peril. God has His will in peace; in the opposite condition the devil has his. Therefore it is the first work of Christians that we respect all public officers. There was a time when I had so narrow a mind that I would not dare to include in my prayers such important matters as praying for kings. My mind, you see, was afraid to ask for such great things. Thus the importance of matters frequently dampens the ardor of the petitioner. It is the gift of the Lord Himself that more is given (for example, public officers) than the very gift we are asking for. We ask that He preserve all things He has thus delivered and are now actually in hand. Because our God is so great and gives such great gifts, He wants us to ask for great things. His goodness is infinite, it pours out without measure. We must pray: "I am indeed unworthy to ask. But I consider not my insignificance but Your greatness, for You give invaluable gifts." It is a shame to pray to God for a mere pittance.¹ From the very greatness of the gifts the confidence to ask for great things grows. He gave His Son. Our petitions —

¹ Luther uses the German *Parteke*, a word he seems to have introduced into literary German. It is thought to be a diminutive form developed from the Latin word *partem*, which was one of the cries used by schoolboys as they sang before the houses of citizens and begged for alms of food. In his *Sermon on Keeping Children in School* of 1530 Luther makes a special point of the fact that he, too, was a *Partekenhengst* ("crumb collector") during his student days in Eisenach. Cf. *Luther's Works*, 46, p. 250.

peace in the world, wisdom for magistrates — are far inferior to a prayer for eternal life and remission of sins. Let everyone then expand his heart and pray not to a simple little God but to the God of the heaven and earth He created. So He will give great things to those who ask for great things. Christians who understand that these are the gifts of God pray. Let this be the first fruit of love, that you pray. You see how Paul urges this fruit of the Christian faith.

1. *Supplications*. These are prayers with which we pray for evils to be averted, so that when I pray for a prince, I shall say: “God, the evils which threaten his official position are countless. There will be great danger in the Council of Ratisbon.² Satan will call the participants away from serious matters so that they discuss trifles. They will finish no business. Neither peace nor harmony will result. They will not end preparation for war against the Turk. The princes will arrange whatever pleases them.” It is the duty of Christians to see whose fault it is that nothing happens in meetings. We must pray that God would instill a good spirit so that they consider all good and salutary things. There will be infinite evils at Ratisbon if we shall not have prayed that the Lord would stimulate them to thoughts of peace. The clergy are bent on wars. Were we to pray, we would accomplish something and would do battle against Satan in the midst of the princes, even though we would be absent in body.

Prayers. These are requests for good things: that the Lord would remove every lamentable condition with which Germany is being oppressed; that instead of those evil men He would give prudent, wise, pious princes who are eager for peace. In this way we pray for the kings of France, England, and Bohemia.³ They are good gifts of God, but the devil is in their midst. We must do what we can.

Intercessions. These *postulations* are properly intercessions. We correctly apply them to our enemies, according to Matt. 5:44, who do

² When the political situation in Germany in the 1520s seemed to make it unlikely that the Edict of Worms (outlawing Luther and exposing him to a death by violence) would be enforced, various additional efforts were made to suppress the spread of the Reformation. A meeting and agreement at Ratisbon (Regensburg) in 1524 ostensibly aimed at reforming the church, but among its provisions was a strict implementation of the Edict of Worms. The politics of the day brought failure to this effort, too, but it was a first step toward the Ratisbon meetings of 1541 and 1546, in which the Catholic-Protestant dialog broke down completely.

³ Francis I, king of France 1515—1547; Henry VIII, king of England 1509 to 1547; Ferdinand I, king of Bohemia and Hungary since 1526 and administrator of Germany since 1521. See also *Luther's Works*, 17, p. 188.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN the last section,¹ he gathered into a sort of summary the doctrine of religion in such a way that the world and all who err and perish are without excuse. After all, the mystery of religion which ought to be preached and taught has been sufficiently declared. Therefore Paul urges this, that one should preserve sound doctrine in the church against various other theologians. Not yet satisfied with having stated the fact, he goes on with very clear words and depicts the doctrine that will develop and will be opposed to sound doctrine. To believe in Christ and to be justified by faith is the principal point of the Gospel. This idea Satan hates most of all; therefore Christ and the apostles observe it most of all. Therefore they urge that they preserve this pure point. Thus the entire epistle is directed against the spirits that are about to deny Christ. Thus Paul here describes the people who will in the future teach against the faith and this principle of religion. This happens immediately if a contempt for it develops. Nothing stirs the man whom this passage does not move. Had they read this text, they would have been careful, but, etc. He himself does not want to prophesy; he calls upon the Spirit to witness absolutely. "I am not the only one who says this, but all the apostles, the spirits, all Christians establish it. That is, it is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit, who is in the bodies of the entire church. This has been foretold not only through the apostles but also through the evangelists and theologians. That is, this has been said openly, publicly, everywhere. I am not the only one to say it." What is this?

1. *In later times some will depart.* The Greek reads: "They will apostasize." This is apostolic. The nature of this departure from the faith is that it is a stubborn departure. More than this, there is a resistance to sound doctrine, just as heretics do. Not only do they depart in such a way as to deny faith, but they also stir up opposing sects, and, as they battle against sound doctrine, they become seditious, as Korah did (cf. Num. 16). Not only did he depart from Moses in such a way that he refused to be obedient, but he also strove to abuse Moses and to establish himself. They strive and they battle so that the church is abused and destroyed as they set themselves up.

¹ The lecture of Feb. 25 begins at this point.

[W. XXVI. 67, 68]

Our Enthusiasts are not content to let us alone. If they could, they would suppress our words and not leave a syllable. In this way Müntzer left not a syllable. That is, they not only depart but sharpen their horns against heaven. That is, this point of redemption will suffer. Not only will the doctrine of redemption perish in the church, but they will do battle against it so that in its place they will establish works. This Deuteronomy could prophesy (cf. Deut. 18:22). So also we can establish this point afresh. When we have established a chapter, we have theologians who neglect the principal point and bring in new, death-dealing, iconoclastic doctrines, as those earlier theologians and Müntzer also did, who taught that this had to happen. They are so immersed in works that redemption itself perishes. To sum it all up: Where neither faith nor the Holy Spirit is present, there works are again reestablished. We feel sure that because the majority is without faith, therefore works influence the majority. Peter, who fell because of excessive conformity, declined food. There he was confirming the laws of Moses — the idea that works are necessary (cf. Gal. 2:11-21). A majority — in fact, the entire Council of Jerusalem, with the exception of Paul — had the same problem. This passage is used by St. Jerome. Gregory, too, uses it. The Pelagians forced Augustine to use it.² Otherwise it is nowhere in all the doctors. They pretended that they do not know that redemption by Christ is our righteousness, and they set up the righteousness of works and confidence in the flesh. He then explains this more broadly and beautifully in his own words. He has depicted it well elsewhere (2 Tim. 4:3-4): "They will turn away from the truth." "Their ears will itch, etc." It is the nature and experience of the masses that they acquire an aversion to sound and solid doctrine. Their ears willingly itch for something else, for they now have been prepared for and driven to the "deceitful spirits." If one is not afire and is not seriously moved by the righteousness of faith, he becomes disgusted and opens the door for the devil: "Faith is a cheap thing," because it is spoken of in terms of its itching. It is a precious thing! This is admonition enough.

Of error. This point has been treated sufficiently elsewhere.³ *Of*

² In 1538 Luther is reported as saying: "Augustine writes nothing especially good concerning faith except when he fights against the Pelagians. They awakened him and made a man of him." Cf. *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*, XXII (St. Louis, 1887), 1392.

³ Luther may be thinking of his treatise of 1522 *Avoiding the Doctrines of Men*, in which 1 Tim. 4:1-7 is discussed as one of the "Reasons from Scripture for Avoiding the Doctrines of Men." Cf. *Luther's Works*, 35, pp. 136—140.

CHAPTER SIX

1. *Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor.*

You have just heard¹ that all ranks in the church have been established and how bishops and preachers teach. This is the last order — that of servants. There were some servants who had believing masters, some who had unbelieving ones. He teaches that both must learn to be content with their lot, “not only to the kind and gentle but also to the overbearing” (1 Peter 2:18). The first kind are those who have unbelieving masters. He uses this periphrasis, *who are under the yoke*. You see, he is making a concession, as if to say: “I admit that it is quite a harsh situation to be a slave or serf of others.” This is what he calls “the yoke.” But he adds the comfort: “This is not demeaning but salutary if you wear your yoke properly. Nonetheless, consider them worthy.” It is a great thing to owe honor to heathen and overbearing masters. It is a great thing not merely to serve them but also to honor them. *Honor* means not simply to genuflect, bow the head, but to respect them, to be prepared to do their every wish. The very majesty which belongs to God we must see in our corporal master. Therefore God wants them revered in His majesty. Thus this is a worthy person, etc. We must have regard for the majesty, not the person. I owe respect to Julius Caesar because he has majesty. Although David had the right to rule, yet he stayed away from the throne and continued to respect Saul. *Every honor*. They should omit nothing that relates to the respect for and obedience to their masters. In other words, they should be eager to be well pleasing and obedient to their masters. Why? They must avoid every reason for scandal. You see, if a slave were to use the pretext that Christ had freed him and thus abandon his due service, etc., he would set up Christ as a seditious teacher, who made all things free. This is not what Christ wants.² This is the way some — the Anabaptists, for instance — explain Christ. You see, they say that no one can be saved unless he leaves his spouse. They upset the established religion of God. God does not want a man to leave

¹ The lecture of March 16 begins at this point.

² For instance, in Matt. 19:29.

his wife, a child to leave his parent. He wants them to hold to each other physically but abandon them spiritually. If a situation arises in which the two majesties run into each other, then one must abandon the human majesty. If the two do not clash, he must serve the majesty of men. Whoever teaches otherwise causes sedition. All Anabaptists therefore are seditious, because they abandon wives and families. This is an offense to peace. Our saints conduct themselves in such a way that they do not mislead the heathen. There has been no nation which did not respect majesty and that. But we must live in such a way that even the unbelievers say: "I see nothing in these men. They do everything. They are obedient, except that they do not want to worship our gods. Otherwise, they do nothing for which we can accuse them."

2. *Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brethren.* This is an ambiguous text. We can relate it either to servants or to masters. Those who have believing masters should not become proud and despise their masters. Why does he say it this way? Should he not rather say this in the first verse? Because he is believing, he seems not to despise. The believing slave who has a believing master has the greater chance to despise, etc. You see, the unbelieving master is not submissive. The believing one is humble, a brother, given to love. Therefore the servant has a greater opportunity for license toward a believing master than to an unbelieving one who comes out against the servant with the sword and the law. This, then, is the greater opportunity for the flesh. You see, it thinks, "He is a Christian. Therefore he must be forbearing." This is to despise a master. The first meaning, then, is this: they use as an excuse that they are brothers of their masters. The second meaning is that servants are indeed brothers [of their masters]. I don't know which is better. It is very ambiguous. The Anabaptist relates this to slaves. I am inclined to relate it to masters because of the preceding verse. After all, if slaves must honor unbelieving masters who are not their brothers, they must honor even more those who are believers and brothers. That is what I think. This seems to me a more harmonious and suitable meaning — that Paul says this about masters. There is no great danger in this ambiguity, because both are brothers. Servants of unbelieving masters ought all the more not despise them. After all, they are brothers of the Lord. They should not give an alien uprightness as an excuse but *must serve all the better*, because they are believing brothers. *And beloved*, obviously [so named] after the One loved. *Those who*

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