

LUTHER'S WORKS

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LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 76

CHURCH POSTIL

II

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INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 76

THE present volume brings the winter portion of Luther's *Church Postil* to completion.¹ The sermons through Epiphany were originally published in 1522,² while the sermons for the Sundays after Epiphany and for Lent were first published in 1525.³ Here in the American edition we are presenting Luther's own revision of these sermons as they were published in 1540,⁴ along with footnotes detailing significant passages that Luther changed in the 1540 edition. In the footnotes:

"1525" refers to the Wittenberg *Lent Postil* printing⁵

"1528" refers to Luther's 1525 *Winter Postil*, in a 1528 printing by Hans Lufft (1495–1584) in Wittenberg⁶

"1532" refers to the 1532 printing of this same edition by the same printer⁷

The St. Louis edition of Luther's works and the English translation of the *Church Postil* by John Nicholas Lenker (1858–1929) include paragraph numbers. We have chosen to include these paragraph numbers in our

¹ For the introduction to the Luther-Cruciger *Church Postil* (1540–44), see LW 75:xiii–xxxi.

² *Auszlegung der Episteln vnd Euangelien die nach brauch der kirchen gelessen werden vom Christag biß auff den Sonntag nach Epiphanie* (Wittenberg: Johann Grunenbergk, 1522), WA 10/1.1:1–728 [VD16 L3936]; John M. Frymire, *The Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions 147 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 539; WA 10/1.2:xiii–xiv. The *Winter Postil* is imprecisely labeled *Kirchenpostille* in the running heads of WA 10/1.1, though it is only one part of the *Church Postil*.

³ *Auslegung der Episteln vnd Euangelien von der heyligen Dreykoenige fest bis auff Ostern gebessert durch Mar. Luther* (Wittenberg: [Lukas Cranach & Christian Döring], 1525), WA 17/2:3–247 [VD16 L3971]; for other editions, see Frymire, *Primacy of the Postils*, pp. 539–40; WA 10/1.2:xv–xvii.

⁴ *Auslegung der Episteln vnd Euangelien vom Aduent an bis auff Ostern. Durch Doctorem Martinum Luther. Auff new corrigirt* (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft, 1540), E² 7:25–369; 8:1–172; 10:3–482; 11:1–187 [VD16 L3965]; for other editions, see WA 10/1.2:xxi and Frymire, *Primacy of the Postils*, p. 541, nos. 24–47.

⁵ VD16 L3971 or L3972.

⁶ VD16 L3956.

⁷ VD16 L3961.

edition, since they are useful for making comparisons among editions and for locating specific passages. Locating the individual sermons of Luther's postils in other editions can indeed be difficult. To help readers locate the sermons from this volume in Lenker and various German editions, we have included a cross-reference chart (see below, pp. xiv–xv).

Translating and publishing Luther is a team effort. James Langebartels served as assistant editor and translator for this volume. Christopher Boyd Brown and Margaret Arnold contributed to the annotations as well. Dawn Mirly Weinstock was the production editor and brought the volume together. Countless other colleagues at Concordia Publishing House contributed to make this volume possible. The undersigned bears responsibility for any errors in the final form of the translation and annotations. To God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory.

Benjamin T. G. Mayes

Sunday/Title	Name & Date of Original Postil	Date Preached	Bible Text	Alard No.	WA	SIL	E?	English Editions
First Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		2 Cor. 6:1-10	Po 51	17:2-17:8-86	12:436-47	8:130-41	Lenker 7:133-44
First Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525	1523	Matt. 4:1-11	Po 52 (cf. Po 182)	17:2-18:6-97	11:532-45	11:107-21	Lenker 2:133-47
Second Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		1 Thess. 4:1-7	Po 53	17:2-19:7-200	12:446-51	8:141-44	Lenker 7:145-49
Second Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		Matt. 15:21-28	Po 54	17:2-20:0-204	11:544-51	11:121-27	Lenker 2:148-54
Third Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		Eph. 5:1-9	Po 55	17:2-20:5-13	12:450-61	8:145-56	Lenker 7:150-61
Third Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		Luke 11:14-28	Po 56	17:2-21:3-21	11:550-61	11:127-37	Lenker 2:155-65
Fourth Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		Gal. 4:2-1-31	Po 57	17:2-22:2	12:460-61	8:156	Lenker 7:162
Fourth Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		John 6:1-15	Po 58	17:2-22:2-27	11:560-67	11:137-43	Lenker 2:166-72
Fifth Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		Heb. 9:11-15	Po 59	17:2-22:7-31	12:462-67	8:156-61	Lenker 7:163-68
Fifth Sunday in Lent	Lent Postil/ 1525		John 8:46-59	Po 60	17:2-231-37	11:566-75	11:143-50	Lenker 2:173-81
Pain Sunday	Lent Postil/ 1525		Phil. 2:5-11	Po 61	17:2-237-45	12:466-77	8:161-72	Lenker 7:169-80
Pain Sunday	Lent Postil/ 1525		Matt. 21:1-9	Po 62	17:2-24:6	11:574-75	11:151	Lenker 2:182
Meditation on the Holy Suffering of Christ	Lent Postil/ 1525	1519		Po 63 (Po 207, 408)	17:2-24:6 (cf. 2:136-42)	11:574-83	11:154-63	Lenker 2:183-92 LW 42:3-14
Confession & the Sacrament	Lent Postil/ 1525	March 20, 1524		Po 64 (Po 205, 70, Pr 444, Pr 451, Pr 452)	17:2-24:6-47 (cf. 1:5:481-505)	11:582-603	11:165-87	Lenker 2:193-214
Appendix A: Preface to Latin Advent Postil (1521)				9/1	7:463-65	11:xxx-xxxv; 21a.337-40		Lenker 1:9-12
Appendix B: Preface to Lent Postil (1525)				216/1	17:2-3-4	11:xliv-xlvii	7:1-3-14	
Appendix C: Preface to Roth's Winter Postil (1528)				773/1	21:1	11:lii-iii	7:17	

Sunday/Title	Name & Date of Original Postil	Date Preached	Bible Text	Aland No.	WA	SIL	E ²	English Editions
WINTER POSTIL (Luther 1540)								
New Year's Day	Christmas Postill 1522		Gal. 3:23-29	Po 30	10/1:1:449-503, 733	12:246-87	7:294-339	Lenker 6:267-310 LW 52:149-58
New Year's Day	Christmas Postill 1522		Luke 2:21	Po 31	10/1:1:504-19	11:284-95	10:319-31	Lenker 1:308-18
Epiphany	Christmas Postill 1522		Isa. 60:1-6	Po 32	10/1:1:519-55, 734	12:286-313	7:339-469	Lenker 6:311-38
Epiphany	Christmas Postill 1522		Matt. 2:1-12	Po 33	10/1:1:555-728	11:294-429	10:331-482	Lenker 1:319-455 LW 52:159-286
First Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		Rom. 12:1-6	Po 34	17/2:5-15	12:314-27	8:1-14	Lenker 7:7-19
First Sunday after Epiphany	Winter Postill 1540	Jan. 11, 1523?	Luke 2:41-52	Po 36 (431)	17/2:16-32	11:442-63	11:16-37	Lenker 2:31-63
Second Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525	1525	Rom. 12:6-16	Po 37	17/2:32-60	12:326-59	8:14-50	Lenker 7:20-55
Second Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		John 2:1-11	Po 38	17/2:60-71	11:462-77	11:37-51	Lenker 2:54-69
Third Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		Rom. 12:17-21	Po 39	17/2:71-72	12:360-61	8:50	
Third Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		Matt. 8:1-13	Po 40	17/2:72-88	11:478-97	11:52-73	Lenker 2:70-91
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		Rom. 13:8-10	Po 41	17/2:88-104	12:360-81	8:51-72	Lenker 7:56-75
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525	1525	Matt. 8:22-27	Po 42 (Po 176)	17/2:104-9	11:498-505	11:73-80	Lenker 2:92-99
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525		Col. 3:12-17	Po 43	17/2:109-23	12:380-97	8:72-90	Lenker 7:76-92
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Lent Postill 1525	1525	Matt. 13:24-30	Po 44 (Po 177)	17/2:123-26	11:504-9	11:80-83	Lenker 2:100-104
Septuagesima	Lent Postill 1525		1 Cor. 9:24-10:5	Po 45	17/2:126-35	12:396-407	8:90-102	Lenker 7:93-103
Septuagesima	Lent Postill 1525		Matt. 20:1-16	Po 46 (Po 179)	17/2:135-41	11:508-15	11:84-90	Lenker 2:105-12
Sexagesima	Lent Postill 1525		2 Cor. 11:19-12:9	Po 47	17/2:141-53	12:408-21	8:102-15	Lenker 7:104-18
Sexagesima	Lent Postill 1525	1525	Luke 8:4-15	Po 48 (Po 180)	17/2:153-61	11:514-25	11:90-100	Lenker 2:113-23
Quinquagesima	Lent Postill 1525		1 Corinthians 13	Po 49	17/2:161-72	12:422-35	8:116-30	Lenker 7:119-32
Quinquagesima	Lent Postill 1525		Luke 18:31-43	Po 50	17/2:172-78	11:524-33	11:100-107	Lenker 2:124-32

more resentful toward his tutor the more harshly he is punished and his will is forbidden.³⁰ This hatred and resentment is nothing other than an increase of his evil and forbidden will; that [hatred and resentment] would never have arisen if his will had not been opposed.

32. Thus, before the Law [comes], man in his evil nature simply sins of himself, without thinking of the Law. But when the Law comes and restrains and threatens, then first his nature becomes hostile and resentful toward the Law; he³¹ begins not only to love sin but also to hate righteousness. This is the way the Law works in the sinner with his sins. St. Paul describes this as “sin became mightier through the Law” [cf. Rom. 5:20]—to say nothing of anyone being justified through it. Whoever understands and knows this is blessed. The work-saints do not at all understand this; they do not ascribe such wickedness or hatred of the Law to [human] nature, but find much good in it. Therefore, they do not understand even a letter in St. Paul, who never speaks otherwise about the Law. If we want to speak honestly, [we confess that] we find the same thing in our hearts.

33. He also says “to Christ,” or until Christ “the Law was our tutor” [Gal. 3:24], so that no one would take up any other faith than in Christ. The Law presses us to Abraham’s Seed, Christ, on whom all saints from the beginning have believed, as stated in the preceding Epistle.³²

34. Therefore, it does not help the Jews and the Turks to believe that God created heaven and earth. Whoever does not believe in Christ does not believe in God either. Even if it were true that Christ is not God—which is impossible—still those who do not believe in Christ do not believe in God, for God promised His grace in Abraham’s Seed. That Seed is Christ, as the Jews, Turks, and all the world acknowledge. Therefore, whoever does not believe in Christ also does not believe God’s promises. Therefore, he also does not believe in the God who created heaven and earth, since no other God made that promise to Abraham, and blessing and faith have gone out and been preached in all the world in the name of no Seed of Abraham except this Christ.

35. Therefore, outside of Christ there is no blessing or justification, not only because of the Law but also because there is no other faith.³³ God wants

³⁰ Cf. the *Church Postil*, sermon for Sunday after Christmas on Gal. 4:1–7, paragraphs 38 and 41 (LW 75:376, 377).

³¹ 1522 and 1528 add: “now”

³² See the *Church Postil*, sermon for Sunday after Christmas on Gal. 4:1–7, paragraphs 36, 59–60, 64 (LW 75:375, 383, 384); see also the *Church Postil*, sermon for Sunday after Christmas on Luke 2:33–40, paragraph 72 (LW 75:419–20).

³³ *nicht allein des Gesetzes halben, sondern auch aller andern Glauben*. Luther’s German in this place defies coherent translation; we have followed the Latin translation of Martin

to keep His promise made to Abraham, to whom He promised blessing for all the world in his Seed and in no one else's seed [cf. Gen. 22:18]. Therefore, He will not sanction a new or different faith for anyone, or let His promise be a lie or recall it. Therefore, faith in Christ justifies, as Paul says, "Christ is the end of the Law; whoever believes in Him is righteous" (Romans 10 [4]). What does that mean? Nothing else than that all who believe in Christ are justified through faith and receive His Spirit and grace. With that there is an end of the Law, so that he is never under the Law. This is also the final purpose of the Law, as follows:

But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the tutor. [Gal. 3:25]

36. Although it is easy to understand from the preceding words what being under the Law or under a tutor means, yet because this doctrine and these words have fallen completely out of use, enough cannot be said about them. Briefly, to be under the tutor or the Law means to be a hypocrite, to do many good works and yet not be godly, to lead a good life without ever being righteous, always to teach and preach and never to learn or understand anything. The reason is that those who are of this kind do not do good out of their own free will and with love, without fear or seeking a reward. Therefore, they are slaves driven by the Law, which always remains their master and driver. So they always remain its debtors and subjects.

The Law demands a free, joyous, and eager will; they do not have this and cannot have it of themselves. Faith in Christ alone produces it. Where that is present, the Law ceases its demands; it is satisfied that enough has been done and it has been fulfilled. The student now knows what he ought to know and what the tutor demands that he know; therefore, [the tutor] leaves him, no longer makes demands on him, and is never [again] his tutor, but [only] his good friend and companion.

37. Thus faith redeems us from the Law not in a bodily way, so that we go here and the Law goes there, and thus we part ways from each other so that we are never under it. Rather, [faith redeems us in such a way] that we have done enough [to satisfy] its demands. We now know and have what [the Law] wants us to know and have, namely, the Holy Spirit, who causes us to love it. The Law does not want to be worked, and it is not content with works; it wants to be loved and is satisfied with love. Without love it would not set us free nor be paid off. Thus we had to remain under it with all our loveless works; we had no peace in our conscience toward it; it always punished us as sinners and transgressors, and threatened us with death and

Bucer (1491-1551): Martin Luther, *Enarrationes Qvas Postillas Vocant*, 2nd ed. (Argentorati [Strassburg]: apvd Iohannem Hervagivm, 1528), fol. 116r [cited as Bucer's translation].

hell—until Christ came and gave us His Spirit and love through the faith which is preached in the Gospel. Then we were set free from the Law, so that it never demands, never punishes, but lets the conscience rest, never terrifies with death and hell, and has become our kind friend and companion.

38. Just as the tutor does not leave the boy in such a way that he dies or goes off elsewhere, but [he leaves him] spiritually when the boy has become different and knows what the father wanted him to have through the tutor, so also the Law does not leave us in such a way that it ceases to exist or is abolished, but it leaves us spiritually when we have become different and have what God wanted us to have through the Law.

39. Therefore, I have said³⁴ that this picture of the boy and the tutor is a beautiful and bright indication of how rightly to understand Law and grace in us. The first use of the Law (that it locks us up and makes us externally godly) is so deeply established—and promoted by all teachers and books and also by [human] nature indeed—that it is hard and difficult for us to understand its second use, that it inwardly increases sin. Therefore, I can compare it to scales, in which one pan is empty and the other loaded.

So the Law, when it makes us externally godly, increases sin inwardly. It imposes as much inwardly through hatred and indignation as it removes externally in works, and even more. St. Paul says that “through the Law sin is sinful beyond measure” (Romans 7 [:13]) and sins all too much. Each one’s experience has to confess all of this.

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. [Gal. 3:26]

40. Whoever is under the Law and works reluctantly is entirely a slave, as was said in the previous Epistle,³⁵ but whoever works eagerly in faith is entirely a child, for they have obtained God’s Spirit through Christ.³⁶ However, the apostle points to Christ and indicates a faith which believes and remains in Jesus Christ. No other faith is sufficient and correct, no matter what he believes about God.

41. There are some, especially among the new Scholastics, who say, “Forgiveness of sins and justification by grace depend entirely on divine imputation”—that is, on God’s reckoning—and that to whomever God reckons sin or does not reckon it, [that one] is thereby justified or not

³⁴ See above, p. 3, paragraph 1.

³⁵ See the *Church Postil*, sermon for Sunday after Christmas on Gal. 4:1-7, paragraphs 25-26, 52 (LW 75:372, 381).

³⁶ See the *Church Postil* for Sunday after Christmas on Gal. 4:1-7, paragraph 32 (LW 75:374).

justified from his sins. They think the words read: “Blessed is the man to whom God does not reckon his sins” (cf. Psalm 32 [:2]; Romans 4 [:8]).³⁷

If this were true, then the entire New Testament would be nothing and to no purpose. Then Christ would have labored foolishly and uselessly when He suffered for sins. God Himself would have pursued a mere sham and trickery without any need, since He certainly could have forgiven and not reckoned sins without Christ's sufferings. Then a faith other than faith in Christ could have justified and saved, namely, a faith which relied on the gracious mercy of God, that his sins would not be reckoned to him.

42. In contrast to this abominable, horrible understanding and error, the holy apostle always points to faith in Jesus Christ and names Jesus Christ so many times that it is almost a miracle if someone is not aware of the necessary reason for this. People even say that every other word in St. Paul's Epistles is “Jesus Christ.” The heathen masters have shamelessly destroyed and been silent about Him with their abominable and hellish misleading dreams.

43. For that reason, our highly learned people in the universities now no longer know who Christ is, or why He is necessary and useful, or what the Gospel and the New Testament are. They think Christ is only a Moses, that is, a teacher who gives laws and commandments about how we should be godly and live well. From there they go on with their free will and natural works and want to prepare and make themselves fit for grace, even to take heaven by storm.

44. If God gave His grace to these workers who are prepared by their own diligence, then Christ would have to remain a scarecrow.³⁸ What do they need Him for if they can obtain grace in their own name and by their own activity? They not only publicly teach that but also fight for it with

³⁷ Luther is referring to the nominalist salvation theology of William of Ockham (ca. 1285–ca. 1348) and Gabriel Biel (ca. 1410–95), according to which God could have chosen to save humanity in any way, not necessarily through the incarnation of Christ and atonement described in the New Testament. See Heiko Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 255–60; Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 37–39; Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), p. 29.

³⁸ *Hanfputzen*. Luther often used the scarecrow image to describe emptiness, deception, or unreality. See *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer* (1519), LW 42:25; preface to Briesmann, *Response to Schatzgeyer* (1523), LW 59:27; *Instructions for the Visitors* (1528), LW 40:271; *Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15* (1532–33/1534), LW 28:158; letter to Elector John Frederick, February 9, 1537, LW 50:163, no. 279; afterword to the *Donation of Constantine* (1537), LW 60:172; *On the Councils and the Church* (1539), LW 41:36.

papal bulls³⁹ and all their strength, and condemn the contrary doctrine as the highest and worst heresy. Therefore, I have warned and still warn everyone so that they know how the pope and the universities have thrown Christ and the New Testament farther out of the world than the Jews or Turks ever did. Therefore, the pope is the very Antichrist,⁴⁰ and his⁴¹ universities are the devil's own taverns and brothels. What is Christ supposed to do if I can obtain God's grace through my own natural preparations? Or what more do I want to have if I have grace?

45. Therefore, let us guard against this hellish poison and not lose Christ, the consoling Savior. Christ must be above all things. It is true, as David and Paul say, "Blessed is the man to whom God does not reckon his sin" (Psalm 32 [:2]; Romans 4 [:8]). But St. Paul cites this to make the point that this divine reckoning happens only to the believer in Christ, not to the free will or [human] nature for the sake of their works. He introduces Abraham, whose faith was reckoned as righteousness when he believed the divine promise about his Seed [Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:9]. Although God does not count our sins against us out of pure grace, yet He would not want to do that unless His Law and His righteousness had first been satisfied fully, and more than fully. This gracious reckoning of His righteousness must first be purchased and obtained for us.

Therefore, because it was impossible for us, He appointed for us one in our place who took on Himself all the punishment we had deserved and fulfilled the Law for us; He thus turned divine judgment away from us and appeased His wrath. Thus grace was given to us free of charge, so that it cost us nothing; but it cost another very much for us. It was acquired with a countless, infinite treasure, namely, God's Son Himself [cf. 1 Pet. 1:18–19]. Therefore, it is necessary above all things that we have Him who did this for us. It is impossible to obtain grace other than through Him.

46. Therefore, from Adam to Abraham no one was saved except through faith in the woman's Seed, who would trample on the snake's head [Gen. 3:15]; after Abraham no one was saved except through faith in Abraham's Seed. So also now no one can be saved except through faith in that same Seed of Abraham who has now come. It does not work for you to try—without

³⁹ See, e.g., Luther's frequent appeals to a papal bull (of doubtful authenticity) issued by Alexander VI (r. 1492–1503) that promised immediate access to heaven for souls who died on pilgrimage to Jerusalem: *Exhortation to All Clergy* (1530), LW 34:16; *Warning to His Dear German People* (1531), LW 47:51; afterword to Hus, *Three Letters* (1536/1537), LW 60:128.

⁴⁰ See *Smalcald Articles* (1537/1538) II IV 10 (Kolb-Wengert, p. 309; *Concordia*, p. 269). On Luther's development of the language of "Antichrist" for the papacy, see Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in a Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), pp. 97–117, 150–52.

⁴¹ 1528 and 1532 have: "the"

this Mediator—to come to God through yourself and your diligent activity, as the Jews, Turks, and Papists teach. Who will first reconcile you with God? He says, “No one comes to the Father except through Me alone” (John 14 [:6]).

During the famine, the Egyptians wanted to come and bring their complaints to Pharaoh, the king himself, but he sent them away and said: “Go to Joseph. What he says to you, do” [Gen. 41:55]. So also God listens to no one and helps no one to salvation, but we must all come to Christ, who was made Lord over all things and with whom is the throne of grace [cf. Rom. 3:25 Lut.]. He has obtained⁴² us; therefore, it is useless to seek it elsewhere. Yes, if we were without sin, as Adam was before the fall, then we would not need Christ; then we could come before God ourselves. But in the famine after the fall, we have to have a Joseph, who is without sin and yet receives us needy sinners who come to Him and desire Him.

47. From that it follows that the Papists speak and believe about [human] nature as if it were still not vitiated, as it was in Adam before the fall. They do not believe it is completely corrupted in the⁴³ sins and is God’s enemy. God is hostile to the⁴⁴ sins; so sin is hostile to God, as Paul teaches (Romans 5 [:10]; 8 [:7]). Thus they certainly do not believe what Moses writes about Adam’s fall (Genesis 3), or they regard that fall as a joke, which worked nothing in [human] nature and did not make it sinful and subject to God’s wrath. Because they do not believe Moses and do not need Christ, and thus reject the New and Old Testaments and condemn the entire living Scripture [Heb. 4:12], God has justly permitted them to become students of the dead and damned heathen Aristotle and of the devil’s latrine⁴⁵ [cf. 2 Kings 10:27], who mires them in the pope’s laws and human doctrines so that it overflows and stinks up the whole world. Nevertheless, they always remain in the darkness, so that they rush to God without this faith in Christ but with their own praying, fasting, saying of Mass, studying, and preaching.

48. Although they do name and confess Christ, they understand nothing else by that than as if God had unnecessarily made for them such a Lord, so that they would be obedient to God by having Him as their Lord. Otherwise, without such dominion of Christ, their free will could have obtained the grace of God through natural diligence. With them and for their sake Christ’s kingdom is an unnecessary thing and sheer caprice on God’s part, who wants them to have Him as their Lord along with another kingdom to

⁴² 1522 and 1528 add: “it for”

⁴³ 1522, 1528, 1532 do not have this word.

⁴⁴ 1522 and 1528 do not have this word.

⁴⁵ See *Commentary on Psalm 110* (1535/1539), LW 13:339 (WA 41:222), where the same German expression is translated “devil’s secret chamber.”

which they are subject; not that this is necessary for salvation, since they can certainly be saved without His kingdom, but because it is God's will and command for us to be obedient to this King.

Thus, for them, Christ is fundamentally not the Savior of their hearts, but rather a tyrant and a jailer. [Human] nature needs nothing from Him to obtain grace; rather, it is only more burdened, since it must have not only God as its Lord, as before, but also Christ and His commandments.

49. In former times many people foretold that at the time of Antichrist all heretics would come in heaps and destroy the whole world. That has now truly happened under the pope and the Turks. When Christ and all of Scripture is rejected and condemned, so that nothing more than only the name remains, one can easily show that all heresies, all errors, and all the darkness there has been since the beginning of the world now reign. I often fear that all people will now be condemned, except those who die in their cradles.⁴⁶ No one recognizes, bewails, and laments about the fierce wrath of God on us.

50. The need and reason why St. Paul always urges faith in Christ so much is that he anticipated this future poisonous doctrine, which dares to deal with God apart from Christ, as if God and our [human] nature were good friends with each other, as if righteousness could love sin and grant what sin wanted.

Therefore, dear friends, let us be wise and know Christ correctly, namely, that above all things we must hear the Gospel and believe in Christ, not only because He is a Lord but also because He is the man who stepped into the place of our sinful nature, who loaded onto Himself all the wrath of God which we deserved with all our works, and who overcame it. He did not keep all that for Himself, but gave it to be our own, so that all who believe this in Him and about Him will certainly be redeemed through Him from that wrath of God and be received into His favor [cf. Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9].

From this we learn how much we need and benefit from Christ, and that the devil himself invented and told the lie that man can do enough from his natural powers so that the grace of God is given to him. If [human] nature can obtain grace, then Christ is good for nothing as an Intercessor and Mediator. But if He is necessary, then [human] nature must obtain nothing but hostility. These are incompatible: being your own mediator and having Christ as your Mediator.

⁴⁶ That is, before they had grown old enough to learn heresy and error. See also *Lectures on Genesis* (1535-45/1544-54), LW 3:103.

For all of you who were baptized in Christ Jesus have put on Christ. [Gal. 3:27]

51. How beautiful is the apostle's arrangement: "Now that faith has come, we are never under the tutor" [Gal. 3:25]. Why? "For you are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ" [Gal. 3:26]. But how do we become God's children? "All of you who were baptized in Christ have put on Christ." Christ is God's Child; therefore, whoever clothes himself in God's Child must also be God's child, for he is clothed with divine adoption and that certainly makes one a child. If he is a child, then he is never under the Law, where there are only slaves. If a child is under [the Law], as a child is under a tutor, then he is just like a slave, as long as he is under it, as St. Paul says in the following words [Gal. 4:1-3] heard in the previous Epistle reading.⁴⁷

52. But what does it mean "to put on Christ"? The faithless have quickly answered that it means to follow Christ and to imitate His example. But in that way I could put on St. Peter, Paul, and all the saints, and nothing special would be said about Christ. Therefore, we will let faith speak here, which St. Paul is delightfully describing with the words "put on." It is obvious that those who are baptized have not first followed Christ, but in Baptism they begin to follow Christ. Therefore, Christ must first be put on before He can be followed. To put on Christ must be a very different thing from following Christ's example.

This is a spiritual putting-on in the conscience, and it happens when the soul receives Christ and all His righteousness as its own possession, and trusts and relies on this as if it had done and merited this itself, just as a person is accustomed to receive his clothes. This receiving is spiritually putting on; that is the nature and character of⁴⁸ faith.

53. Christ has certainly been given to us so that all His righteousness, along with all that He has and is, stand for us, as if He⁴⁹ were our own. Whoever believes that experiences what St. Paul says, "He gave His own Son for us; how will He not give us all things with Him?" (Romans 8 [:32]). Likewise: "To us Christ was made by God as righteousness, wisdom, holiness, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1 [:30]).

So whoever believes in Christ puts Him on. Therefore, faith is such a great thing that it saves and justifies a person, for it brings him all the blessings in Christ, in which the conscience takes comfort and trusts. Because of

⁴⁷ See the *Church Postil*, sermon for Sunday after Christmas on Gal. 4:1-7, paragraph 32 (LW 75:374).

⁴⁸ 1522 and 1528 add: "true"

⁴⁹ 1522 and 1528 have: "it"

that it must become happy in Christ, eager to do all good and avoid all evil. It never fears death or hell or any evil, since it is very richly clothed in Christ.

That is what “satisfying the Law” and “never being under it” means, for the Holy Spirit is there with clothes for the soul, which results in a completely different person. If [the soul] is clothed in the adoption of God, it must be a child.

54. You see, in this way you cannot put on any saint before God. It is necessary for everyone to put on Christ for himself, and he has nothing that he can give to another to put on.

After putting on these clothes, the example and imitation [of Christ] follow, for man again does for his neighbor just as Christ has done for him, gives and does for him all the good he can and has, even causes him to put something on and clothes him with what he has. But he cannot give him the clothes with which he himself is clothed in Christ. No one can apply his faith to another or give him that same faith. He can certainly pray that he may be clothed with Christ, but each one must believe for himself, and Christ alone must clothe us all with Himself.

55. Whoever does not have this faith—that Christ is his with every good thing—does not yet believe correctly. He is not a Christian, and his heart is not cheerful and eager. Only faith makes Christians who are cheerful, eager, secure, saved, and God’s children, where the Holy Spirit must dwell. That is such beautiful, bright, and costly clothing, which has such exceedingly precious ornaments, jewels, and gems—all virtue, grace, wisdom, truth, righteousness, and whatever is in Christ—that St. Paul says, “I thank God for His inexpressible gift” [2 Cor. 9:15]. St. Peter says that great and costly blessings are given to us through Christ (2 Peter 1 [:4]). That is Joseph’s robe of many colors which his father, Jacob, made for him instead of for his other children [Gen. 37:3], for Christ alone is “full of grace and truth” [John 1:14]. Likewise, that is the costly clothing of the high priest Aaron, in which he serves God [Exodus 28]. Much could be said about this, since by using this word Paul points us to these histories.

56. Again, just as we put on Christ and receive Him, so He also puts us on and receives us and all we have as if it were His own. He finds nothing good in us, but only sin, which He receives and takes away from us, as from His magnificent clothing. Moreover, He prays for us and carries [our sins] before God, so that they are not eternally punished, as St. Paul says, “Christ intercedes for us with God” (Romans 8 [:34]). And in Psalm 41 [:4] He says: “I said, ‘O Lord, be gracious to Me; heal My soul, for I have sinned against You.’” Again: “Lord God, You know My folly, and My sins are not hidden from You” (Psalm 69 [:5]). All of this is spoken in our persona, as St. Paul explains from this same psalm and says that Christ carried our sins and did

not despise us nor imagine that His holiness was too good for us, “but as it is written: ‘The slander of those who slandered You fell on Me’” (Romans 15 [:3]; Psalm 69 [:9]).

57. We gladly hear that He is our clothing and mediates for us as for His clothing; but we are unwilling to tolerate it when He wants to cleanse His clothing. If we want to be His clothing, then we truly must tolerate it when He wants to cleanse it; He cannot and will not go about in dirty clothing. At the time of the martyrs, when He had just put on this clothing, when He vigorously purged it with death and all kinds of suffering, then He sat and refined the children of Levi (Malachi 3 [:3]) and was like a fuller who cleanses clothes [cf. Mal. 3:2]. Therefore, it is a good sign when He brings much suffering and does not stop cleansing His clothing with all kinds of suffering; where He does not do this, His clothing is not there.

Here there is neither Jew nor Greek, here there is neither slave nor free, here there is neither man nor woman, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
[Gal. 3:28]

58. It is sufficiently obvious that St. Paul does not mean to say that there is no Jew, no Greek, no man, no woman in nature and as far as the body's person is concerned, but in the area about which he is speaking. What is he speaking about? [He is talking] not about body or nature, but about faith, about justification, about Christ—about how we become children of God through faith in Him. All of that takes place in the soul and in the conscience, not through flesh or blood, not through hand or foot, but through the Word and the Gospel.

In this matter there is no distinction of persons, for all are of equal value, whether you are Jew, Gentile, slave, free, man, or woman. In bodily matters, the Jew has a different law and way of living than the Greek; the slave has a different one than the free; the man has a different one than the woman. The Jew is circumcised; the Gentile is uncircumcised. The man does not cover his hair; the woman wears a veil [cf. 1 Cor. 11:5, 13]. Moreover, each has his way of serving God, as people say, “So many countries, so many customs.”⁵⁰ But these ways of life and everything which is external and not faith do not make [us] righteous and godly before God; they also do not hinder justification, for faith can remain the same in all these ways of life, persons, customs, and distinctions, without any distinction.

59. Unfortunately, it sometimes happens that someone embraces such a way of life and clings to it as something by which he intends to become

⁵⁰ Wander 2:1770, “Land” no. 169.