

The Pope—The Antichrist

By: P.E. Kretzmann

Chapter One: The Biblical Background

Among the strange phenomena in the field of doctrinal controversies in the Lutheran churches of America there is none more peculiar in its nature and implications than that connected with the clear teaching of the Lutheran Confessions that the pope, as the head of the papacy, is the “very Antichrist” according to Scripture. There nothing uncertain or dubious about the ten passages in the Lutheran Confessions which make the declarations about the pope. The statements to which we have reference are: Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art IV, *Conc. Trigl.*, 475 (repeated, with approval., in the Formula of Concord, *Trigl.* 1059); Smalcald Articles, “Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope,” *Trigl.*, 515 (twice); Smalcald Articles, “Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops,” *Trigl.* 521; Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. II *Trigl.* 469; Part. III, Art. XI, 499; Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. VII (VIII), *Trigl.* 227, also 235; Art. XV (VIII), 319; Art. XXIII (XI), p. 371. How do these declarations of the Lutheran Confessions agree with Holy Writ, the infallible and inviolable source and norm of all doctrine?

We here remind ourselves, first of all, of the fact that Luther (whose position in the promises we shall take up in a special chapter) finds a strong support of his teaching even in the Old Testament, in Daniel 8:23-25, his exposition being presented in his “Reply to the Book of Ambrosius Catharinus” of 1521 (St. Louis Ed., 18, 1434ff.) The great Reformer found, in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, the exact type and counterpart of the pope as the Antichrist, showing that the individual characteristics given by the prophet agreed exactly with those noted in several letters of St. Paul. Luther’s conclusion is stated in just a few words. “Because he (the pope) always sets the opposite, places sin instead of grace, law instead of faith., why will you still doubt that he is the true Antichrist, the abomination that stands in a place where it should not be?” (Col. 1551.) Luther also refers repeatedly to the last verses of Daniel 7, as containing a description of the Antichrist and his kingdom.

In the Book of Revelation Luther likewise finds descriptions of the pope as the Antichrist, especially in chapter 17, where the kingdom of the Antichrist is the great harlot, and in chapter 18, where the fall and destruction of Antichrist’s kingdom is delineated and the blow given by the Lutheran Reformation is definitely indicated. Every significant item in the history and in the teaching of the papacy is referred to in some manner, so that the true searcher for the truth is bound to draw the right conclusions concerning the identity of the Antichrist.

But let us turn to the passages of the New Testament which are most explicit in their teaching concerning the Antichrist. The main passage and proof text is found in one of the earliest letters of St. Paul, namely in 2 Thess. 2:3-12. The points which are enumerated in this *locus classicus* on the doctrine of the Antichrist are the following. The apostle speaks in verse 3 of the apostasy, of the falling away from the truth, of a denial of such proportions that it is particularly designated by the use of the specific article. Not only was this apostasy to precede the coming of the Last Day, but also the revealing of the man of lawlessness as the one responsible for the great apostasy, a man who would be characterized by his rebellion against the Law of God, against the divine truth and will. This representative person is then called the son of perdition. As he peculiarly belongs to sin, is the representative of sin or its personification, so he is the son of eternal condemnation and destruction, one who is destined to eternal damnation on account of his rebellion against God. It is further said of the Antichrist that he sets himself, and vaunts himself above, all that is called God or is a true object of worship, so that he sets himself into the temple of God, showing himself forth that he is God. Holy Writ ascribes the title “god” not only to the one true God, who is above all, but also to the principalities and powers of heaven (Ps. 97:7 cp. with He. 1:6) as well as to rulers on earth, who govern as the higher powers ordained by God (Ps. 82:1, 6; cp. with John 10:34; Ex. 22:28). Above all these, who are honored by the designation “gods”; yea, above the one true God who alone bears the title with full right, the Antichrist would exalt and vaunt himself. (The historical proof for this statement will be offered in a later chapter.) The “man of lawlessness” would do the same with regard to every *sebasma*, every object and every form of worship. So great would this

pride and usurpation finally become that the Antichrist would even presume to occupy the temple of God and to exercise the prerogatives of God. (This point will also be presented detail in a later chapter.) It is significant that present participles are used throughout this verse, indicating the enduring nature of the phenomenon, and that the temple of God referred to is evidently not one built of wood or stone but a spiritual structure, as is frequently done in the New Testament. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

The description continues in verse 6: And now you know what withholds that he may be revealed in his own time. At the time when the Apostle Paul was writing to the Thessalonian Christians there was still some power, some hindrance, which was restraining the Antichrist from being revealed before his appointed time. This restraint was in keeping with the purpose of God., for it was His intention to make known, to expose the Antichrist at the time appointed by him. The apostle next explains why and in what sense he speaks of a “revealing” of the man of lawlessness: For the mystery of lawlessness is active even now, only until he who restrains for the present is out of the way. The apostle saw before him the scat scattered, shapeless mass of ungodliness, of lawlessness, which was to gain form and personality in the Antichrist. The movement which later culminated in the reign of the Antichrist was at that time still hidden and covered; it had not yet come out into the open; one could not as yet point out specific instances of its destructive power. It was indeed at work; it was active in certain phenomena and developments, in certain usurpations of power, in certain tyrannical excrescences instigated by unruly spirits. Against a clear and unmistakable manifestation of power, however, another force was at that time active, one which made it impossible for the lawlessness of the Antichrist to carry out his design. The *ho katechoon* is clearly not an individual person, but a representative of a power (*to katechon*) whose activity extended over some time. In the same way the mystery of iniquity is spoken of as a representative person, for the mystery of iniquity finally found its culmination in the Lawless One.

This is spoken of in verse 8: And then the Lawless One shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and He shall make an end of him by the appearing of His coming. Here both the revelation and the final disposition of the Antichrist are included in one short statement. Then, or at that time, namely when the restriction shall have been removed which was still interfering with the open execution of the *anomia*, then the proud one, the Lawless One, would appear before the eyes of the world without any cloak or covering. Throughout the last aeon of the world the Lawless One would then be active, until the Lord would bring upon him his final destiny, His great *parousia*, when He would destroy, or consume him with the breath of His mouth. Meanwhile, however, the Antichrist would continue his nefarious activity: Whose coming is after the working of Satan in all power and signs and lying miracles and in all deceitfulness of unrighteousness to them that are lost, because they did not accept the love of the truth that they might be saved, vv.9 and 10. So the man of lawlessness, or wickedness, was to derive his power, or energy, from Satan. The strength that he was to wield would be that of a lie, just as the signs and wonders would be products of lies and frauds, executed by the power of the Evil One. At the same time he would continue in all deceit of unrighteousness, having a glittering show of righteousness and holiness, with good works, pomp, and show flaunted before the eyes of the world at all times, so that his influence and power would have results among those who would be perishing, since all those who would actually support the system, with a knowledge of its falsehood, would thereby forfeit their claim of salvation.

On account of their perversity, as a just recompense for their refusal to accept the truth, the Lord would give the adherents of the Antichrist up to their aberration and obduration: And for this God sends them working of delusion that they should believe the falsehood, that all might be judged who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. God would punish all those who would be deliberately disobedient to Him and His Word by giving them up to the lie which they would choose by preference. A power, a strength, of deception would enter their hearts until they would refuse to return to the truth, since a devilish perversion would take hold of them. And the end would be the condemnation of the Lord, the plunging of the Antichrist and his adherents into eternal perdition. Such is a brief exposition of the words of the apostle in 2 Thess. 2.

Let us now turn to the pertinent texts in the First Letter of John. In 1 John 2:18, 22f. the Apostle John addresses his readers in his customary way as *paidia*, little children, and then continues: The last hour it is, and

just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, and now many antichrists have appeared; whence we understand that it is the last hour Who is the liar except he who denies that Jesus is the Christ; this is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. Every one who denies the Son does not have the Father either. Chap 4:3 And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not of God, and this that (spirit) of the Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he is coming.. and now already he is in the world. 2 John 7: For many deceivers went out into the world, those who do not confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh: this is the deceiver and the Antichrist.

Let us analyze the text more exactly. The apostle tells his readers that they had heard, namely as an historical fact, information that had reached them. It was a part of the instruction they had received in connection with their religious training, not mere idle gossip or an item of no permanent value. The apostle associates this information with *eschatee hora*, without the article, which gives the expression the connotation peculiar to the New Testament. It usually refers to the entire period beginning with the Apostolic Age and ending with the final coming of the Lord. The apostle, with his readers, was living at the beginning of this age, or era. Cf. 1. Peter 1:5,20.

Antichristos, without the article, practically a proper noun, a word indicating an opponent of Christ or a rival & substitute for Christ, or both together, vice-gerent or, according to the usage of the Roman Church, a vice-regent “*nicht nur ein Gegner Christi, sondern ein Gegenchristus.*”

Erchetai, literally, is in the process of coming, although he is at the same time, strange to say, already in the world. The manner of expressing the thought reminds one of John 1:9.10,31, where the Logos is spoken of as being in the process of coming into the world, namely for future full revelation, although he was already in the world, having been made flesh and dwelling in the midst of His people.

Antichristoi polloi, teachers imbued with the same spirit of Antichristianism as the one greatest exponent of this hostility against Christ, but nevertheless *pneumata, seudopropheta*, of smaller caliber, men who exhibit antichristian characteristics, but not in the same degree as the one in whom all these qualities find their highest development and expression.

These facts gave John and others the understanding that the last period of the world had begun, for so the Lord Himself had prophetically stated, Matt. 24:23,24.

Antichrist in the full sense of the word is designated as *ho pseustes*, the liar in the most absolute and comprehensive sense, the culmination of whose false teaching would actually subvert the very foundation of the Christian religion, one who would undermine the essential facts of even Christology and Soteriology.

These characteristics of Antichrist are further enlarged by the statement., chap. 4: 3, that every spirit, everyone professing to be a teacher of the Church, who would vitiate and neutralize the full Biblical confession of Jesus, definitely did not have his origin from God. And, with a slight shift of connotation, which identifies the spirit in the false teacher with the man himself, this is the spirit of that particular Antichrist to whom John had referred in chapter 2 as the one great opponent of Christ, one who would attempt to occupy the position as the substitute of the one and only Savior. Even then this spirit was already in the world. Yet he was also in the process of coming, the text thus indicating that no individual person is meant, but an exponent of Antichristianism who would unite in himself all the most insidious opposition to the Christian religion throughout the last hour of the world.

This thought is brought out also in 2 John 7, for whereas according to the apostle many deceivers had gone out into the world, namely by forsaking the company of the true confessors, with whom they should have remained in unity of faith and confession, yet this one culmination and personification of all hostility against Christ, would prove to be the deceiver, the Antichrist ‘*kat’ exochen*, the very embodiment of the spirit which is in diametrical contrast to the core of the Gospel, the doctrine of the person and work of Christ.

These considerations are further strengthened by a comparison of the pertinent passages in the letters of John with 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12. We find there a parallelism which has been quite commonly acknowledged by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians and commentators. Note this similarity:

The John Passages

- Erchetai*
- Antichristos*
- Pan pseudos er tees aleetheias*
ouk estin (pseustees)
- Arnoumenos, planos*

2 Thessalonians

- Ean mee elthee*
- Ho antikeimenos*
- Hyios thees apoleias, en pasee*
dynamei pseudous
- Teen agapeen tees aleethelas*
ouk edexanto

Even those commentators who are not in the Lutheran camp have commented on the parallelism, although some of them do not draw the conclusion that the only phenomenon meeting all the details of both descriptions can be none other than the Papacy. Pieters (in *The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon*, p.199) says "From the earliest times the Antichrist of St. John and the Man of Sin have been regarded as one and the same. This is now so well established that it is assumed in all modern discussions. I have not found any writer who even raises the question." He makes this statement, although he does not share the view.

Braune, in the Lange-Schaff Commentary, has almost an entire paragraph on the obvious similarity, although he also is not ready to identify Antichrist with the Papacy. Luthardt, in the Strack-Zoeckler Commentary, notes the parallelism, as does Daechsel in his *Bibelwerk*, Erich Haupt in his *Der erste Brief des Johannes*, Clarke's *Commentary* (which refers it to the Papacy), and the *Pulpit Commentary* (which indicates that the Papacy is meant). Buechsel (*Die Johannesbriefe*) writes: "*Die Gestalt des Antichristen wird uns greifbar zuerst 2 Thess. 2:3ff.*" Huther states (in Meyer's *Kommentar*); "*Mit Recht haben fast saemtliche Ausleger angenommen dass Johannes unter diesem Feinde denselben versteht von dem Paulus 2 Thess. redet: die Zuege, die in der Schilderung des Apostels Paulus und die in den Andeutungen des Johannes hervortreten, entsprechen einander zu sehr, als dass daran gezweifelt werden durfte.*"

This is also the position of Lutheran commentators who are nearer to the traditional orthodox position in their adherence to Scriptural doctrine and share our concentration of the Antichrist. Luther's statement is clear and unambiguous: "Just as pious teachers have predicted, thus now heretics are arising, such as the Cerentians, Ebionites, and others, whom they have designated by the fitting word *antichristoi*. Therefore, when Paul says: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth (hinders) will until he be taken out of the way; and then shall that Wicked be revealed, 1 2 Thess. 2:7, he thereby gives one to understand that the true Antichrist would be here shortly and was even then revealing his heresies. For this Antichrist battles against the person of Christ, another against His humanity, a third one against His deity. These are the antichrists in part, who are opposed to Christ in certain parts, such as the fanatics are. Another is against the entire Christ, and he is the head of them all, such as the Papacy. For the chief article of the Christian doctrine is this that Christ is our righteousness. He who attacks this doctrine, takes away from us the entire Christ and is the true Antichrist: the others support him in this. Any one who promotes heresy against the person of Christ is not as great a heretic as one who establishes a heresy against the atonement of Christ." (IX: 1435.)

We shall find that Luther's position on the pope as the Antichrist is shared by orthodox Lutheran theologians through the centuries, their considered conclusion, on the basis of Scripture, being that the Papacy presents the only phenomenon that does full justice to the teaching of Holy Writ.

If we now take the points given in the passages from John's epistles and those contained in 2 Thess. 2, we have the following list:

1. The Antichrist is not any particular individual, but a representative person, a power represented by a person or in a person.
2. He was in process of coming, or development, as early as the middle of the first century, when the mystery of lawlessness was already at work.
3. He is not an outside person or power, but arose in the -midst of the Church, in the temple of God.
4. The revelation of his lawlessness was hindered by a power headed by a restraining person,

5. After the removal of this hindering influence the Antichrist came out openly with its claims and was also revealed in his true nature.
6. He was exposed before the world, but continued his activity as the son of perdition.
7. He claims divine prerogatives for himself, vaunting himself and raising himself above constituted authorities.
8. His doctrine is, in the last analysis, a denial of the Father and of the Son as revealed in both their persons and their work in the Holy Scriptures.
9. He presumes to direct every object and every form of worship.
10. He operates with lying wonders, that is such as are based upon lies and are intended to spread lies.
11. He is constantly deceiving people who give credence to his false claims.
12. He will not be destroyed until the Lord's great *ousia*.

We shall take up the arguments presented by Luther and other sound Lutheran teachers in a later chapter. But there is one point that must be noted even in this connection. It has recently been stated, upon various occasions, and it has been announced before the world by a leading theological faculty that the statement: "The pope is the very Antichrist," is not a Scriptural teaching, but "an historical judgment based upon Scripture." In other words, the teaching of Holy Writ and of the Lutheran Confessions has been rejected. What proof have we to offer in defense of the truth?

We declare, and we propose to defend this position against all who reject its validity: Among the various forms of argumentation employed in Holy Writ is the principle or the law of identification. This process, according to prominent writers on logic and the procedure of thinking, is not one of induction, but "a gathering up and piecing together in one the facts of a series of observations, which is only another form of colligation, one without generalization, or what is better, it is a discovery of identity establishing a minor premise." The author then gives some further explanations to show just how the principle of identification is applied. For example: "The sailor knows: A land soon sailed about is an island. He discovers: This land is land soon sailed about; which discovery merely identifies this land with the notion of land soon sailed about, thereby establishing a minor premise and enabling him to conclude: This land is an island. Here is both discovery and deductive proof. No generalization, and therefore no induction, is involved. Similar instances of enlarged discovery by identification abound. When, after the induction of the laws of magnetism, other metals besides iron, as nickel, cobalt, manganese, chromium, were discovered to be magnetic, the magnetic laws were at once transferred deductively to these metals. Franklin, by use of a kite, identified lightning with electricity. It follows that whatever was inductively true of the one was true of the other. Questions of identity to establish a minor premise are necessarily a part of scientific research, but they should not be confused, as they often are, with a precedent process of inductive generalization establishing a major premise or a general law, nor with subsequent induction to which they give rise." (Davis, *Elements of Inductive Logic*, 17-19.)

Writing on the adequate source and basis of religion, theology, and dogmatics Hoenecke states: "If we say that the Holy Scripture is the only principle of theological cognition it is to be noted that not merely that is regarded as a theological truth which directly, with syllables and words, or *kata rheton*, is found in the Holy Scripture, but also that which by rightful and necessary deductions must be concluded from Holy Scriptures. As even Basilus says, there is much contained in the Holy Scripture which is not expressed in letters. Our Savior Himself, in Matt. 22:23-32, proves the resurrection of the dead from Ex. 3:6, although the text there does not speak *expressis verbis* of the resurrection, and He says of those who do not acknowledge that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is contained therein, that they do not know the Scriptures....But what is a legitimate conclusion? One which 1) does not militate against the laws of logic; 2) does not even in the least deny any statements of Scripture; 3) takes its premises from Scripture itself; 4) does not state what is not implicitly contained in the Scripture." (*Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* 1, 333 f.) The author then points out in what manner some modern theologians transgress the rules of logic in presenting their false views.

There can be no doubt that the principle of identification, as pointed out by logicians presents a valid form of argumentation, also in the teaching of Scripture. It is not a matter of induction, but of identification on the basis of colligation. In the well-known prophecies in the second part of the Book of Daniel we have one statement after another which offers sufficient marks of identification for definite conclusions. Thus in chap. 8:21 f., Alexander the Great and his four successors are not mentioned by name, and yet no one can escape the conclusion that they are definitely meant. We do not here include the apocalyptic predictions included in the Book of Daniel.

The principle of identification was repeatedly used by our Savior in His teaching. When John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to Jesus with the question, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" the Savior did not choose to give a direct reply, but enumerated the marks of identification as given in Is. 61:1,2, merely adding the remark: "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." He did not go beyond that point. John and his disciples should draw their own conclusions as to His identity on the basis of the Messianic prophecy, Matt. 11:1-6. Jesus used practically the same way of revealing Himself, by the same principle of identification, in the incident recorded in Luke 4:16-21. He did not state, in so many words: I am the One to whom the prophet refers. The marks of identification had been enumerated by Him through the prophet Isaiah; He here repeated them with His own mouth and thereby challenged His hearers to draw the only possible conclusion. The same argument, based on the law of identification in its abbreviated form, runs through many of the discussions which the Lord had with the Jews, as related in John 5-10. The same form of argumentation is used by Peter in Acts 2:25-36; 3:17-26, and by Paul, Acts 13:22-41.

From all this we conclude: It is valid to draw conclusions on the basis of the law of identification and to present them as Scriptural teaching. Or, in other words: If any phenomenon or incident spoken of in Holy Scriptures is so limited by the description offered in the inspired account as to compel identification, the teaching presented on the basis of such identification., the doctrine thus set forth., is Scriptural. Hence our Lutheran Confessions are right in declaring that the statement: *Papam ipsum verum Antichristum esse*, is Scriptural teaching.

The Rise of the Papacy

That the Antichrist is a phenomenon whose antecedents go back even to the Apostolic and Subapostolic era, as noted by both Paul and John, was already indicated in our discussion of their prophetic statements. It is particularly significant that the apostle writes: "The mystery of iniquity doth already work," 2 Thess. 2:7. The fact that the disciples repeatedly quarreled about the rank in their midst was a shadow of the claims made at the beginning of the second century, when Ignatius of Antioch emphasized the necessity of subordination to the bishop, as in his letters, respectively, to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, and to the Smyrnaeans. It is evident that Antichristianism at that time, as today, was associated with hierarchical tendencies. Various fundamental articles of faith were lost more or less by default, since they were not stressed sufficiently by the leaders of the Church, with the exception of Clement of Alexandria., Tertullian, Augustine, the Cappadocians, and a few others, but their positive teaching was outweighed by the claims of other men, like Cyprian of Carthage.

We may gratefully record the fact that, in the days of St. Paul and even for some time afterwards, the congregation at Rome was still soundly Christian in character. Among its bishops were six martyrs and more than six writers. In its midst taught Clement., a pupil of St. Paul., author of an excellent letter to the Corinthians, which still taught the doctrine of justification by faith only. Among others the congregation had Bishop Leo (440-461) whose letter to the Council of Chalcedon was indeed included in the confession of the Church and whose intercession caused Attila, prince of the Huns, to turn back from his campaign against Rome, but who made strong efforts to have his supremacy recognized especially over against the bishop of Constantinople, his closest rival. Of Celestine I (422-432) it was stated: When Celestine occupied the summit of apostolic authority and shone as first bishop throughout the whole world." The rivalry between Rome and Constantinople

continued with increasing bitterness, so that Bishop Acacius of Constantinople excommunicated Bishop Felix of Rome in 483., and was in turn excommunicated by the latter the next year.

Hereafter the power of the West grew rapidly, so that Gregory I., the Great (490-604)., who was distinguished for missionary zeal, nevertheless became guilty of various aberrations. He not only developed the papal power, but also laid the foundation of a theological system which was built up by various theological leaders, so that the Church, as a corporate body., already showed Antichristian tendencies in a pronounced degree. And these second tendencies were further promoted by his successor, Bishop Boniface III, in the year 607, whose pride brought about a crisis. About the year 595 (while Gregory I was still bishop of Rome) Bishop John of Constantinople had assumed the title of a universal bishop. For this he was promptly taken to task by Gregory, who wrote him: Paul had carefully avoided making the members of the body of Christ subject to certain heads or rulers. "What wilt thou answer Christ, the supreme Head of the Church, in the investigation of the Final Judgment, as thou art making the effort to make all his members subject to thee by assuming the name of a general bishop? Whom dost thou follow in this but him who, with contempt of the angelic hosts endeavored to soar alone above all, so that he might seem to be subject to no one else and thus to reign alone?...To put it briefly: The saints before the law., the saints under the Law, the saints under grace were all members of the Church., and no one wanted to assume the name *generalis pater*, i.e. Pope." And in a letter to Emperor Mauritius he confesses: "I declare it with confidence: He who calls himself a Pope (*universalem sacerdotum*) or demands to be given that title, such a one is in his pride a precursor of the Antichrist, because he arrogantly places himself above others."

But Gregory had hardly been dead two years when Boniface III dared to assume the very title which Gregory I had just designated as Antichristian in nature. And in what a miserable manner he put himself into power! When Emperor Mauritius was murdered by one of his officers by the name of Phocas, when the five sons of the emperor were likewise put to death, when the empress was subjected to cruel treatment and her three daughters were beheaded, acts of tyranny which caused Bishop Cyriacus of Constantinople to rebuke the murderer, the latter was furious. At this juncture Boniface III took advantage of the situation by eliciting a declaration from the murderer that the Roman bishop was henceforth to be regarded as the universal bishop. In this way the bishop of Rome, through the temptation of the devil, had yielded to pride and made a claim which had evil consequences for all the centuries to come. It is true that the Roman bishops still lacked the power to enforce their claim, but where the wicked will is in evidence, ways and means will be found to carry out the intention.

It was about the year 751 when the powerful Frankish Duke Pippin, the son of the victor of St. Martin le beau., sent the abbot Folrad of St. Denis with a large company to Pope Zachary in Rome with the message "whether it were better for that man to be and to be king who had all the might and authority or for him who possessed the name only?" Zachary answered: "That it is better that he be called king who had the power than he who remained without regal power, lest order be disturbed." When the embassy returned in 752, the quiet Childeric, together with his son, was placed in a monastery at Sithiu, while Pippin was lifted on the shield of Chlodwig and hailed as king. Winfried Bonifacius anointed him as such in the St. Medardus monastery at Soissons. Thus the way was opened to claim the superiority of the Pope over the emperor. For it was an important service that the Pope had rendered to the son of Carl Martel. And hereafter the Popes did nothing gratis. A year after the coronation Pope Stephen III came to France. He had not shrunk back from the passage of St. Bernard in order to plead with Pippin at Pontion in Pertois on the Marne: "Help against Aistulf!" Very well! After Stephen had again anointed Pippin, the two joined in their campaign in Italy. Aistulf was besieged in Pavia and compelled to cede a triangle north of Rome, whose basis was the road from Bologna to Ancona. That was the beginning of the papal state.

Since the Pope had now received a sword into his band he made it his business to extend his earthly power, contrary to Matt. 20:26. Here indeed he encountered the power of the emperor. As long as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation had rulers like Charlemagne, and later like Henry I, the Fowler, and then the three Ottos, the relation between Popes and emperors was amicable. But when the six-year old son of

empress Agnes, Henry IV, ascended the throne, the Antichrist's hour had come, although it took almost two decades before matters came to a crisis. On April 22 in the year 1073 Hildebrand, Gregory VII, became pope. He was a highly intelligent and well educated man., but possessed of a powerful will and ungovernable thirst for power. He had noted the foolishness of Henry IV even before he was elevated to the papal chair and now waited only for the moment when he could assert himself against the weak monarch. The training which the latter had received under the tutelage of Anno of Cologne and Adalbert of Bremen had resulted in a product which could not be designated anything but a scoundrel, one who would sooner or later become guilty of some rank foolishness that would give the pope an excuse to interfere and assume the right to appoint all incumbents of spiritual offices throughout Germany. Henry played right into Hildebrand's hand. The right to make such nominations had been exercised by the emperors, but only in conjunction with the respective chapters. But Henry proceeded in an absolutely arbitrary manner, since he not only appointed incapable, unfit men, but sometimes even sold lucrative positions. As a result the idea found favor to take away this power from the emperor entirely. And then Henry added insult to injury by his cruelty over against the Saxons and his general incompetence. The situation finally emboldened the pope to cite Henry before his tribunal, and when he refused to appear, Hildebrand excommunicated him. And what is more, he acquitted all of Germany from the oath of faithfulness which they had sworn to their emperor. In other words Hildebrand in effect deposed Henry IV. Thus the Pope, who was really a subject of the emperor, became a rebel against the constituted authority, although Peter had taught that man are to be subject not only to the good rulers, but also to the froward. The papal power had gained the victory over that of the emperor.

There was apparently nothing for Henry to do but to submit. In the dead of winter he made the journey over Mount Cenis in the Alps. The cold was so severe that Queen Bertha was wrapped in the skin of an ox and let down the steep, ice-covered slopes by ropes. On January 25, 1076 the emperor appeared before the walls of the castle at Canossa, as a penitent, but Gregory let him stand for three days and three nights between the second and the third wall, barefooted and clad only in a woolen shirt. And the aftermath showed Hildebrand's true character. For after he had, at the solicitation of prominent persons, spoken the words of absolution over Henry, he staged a strange celebration. He arranged for a mass, blessed the wafer, and requested Henry to take one half of the host, provided that he knew himself to be innocent of all errors of which he was accused, the purpose of course being to discredit Henry for all times. The emperor refused to take the wafer, and from that moment he understood the character of his tormentor. Even other witnesses joined in the judgment: "Henry was dismissed in peace, such a one as Judas simulated, not as Jesus left to His own." Thus Gregory exerted his power and trampled the empire under his feet. And it was he who enforced what he called celibacy on all members of the clergy, thus attempting to make them completely subservient to him. The Antichrist was in power.

Now we come to the second period, that of the growth of papal power. Here we meet three powerful characters: Innocent III (1198-1216), Boniface VIII (1294-1303), and Eugene IV (1431-1447).

Count Lothar Conti, who had studied theology at Paris, was elected Pope when he was but 37 years old, and he is known as the "iron" Innocent. He had then already written a book.. *De contemptu mundi*. But just how he understood this "contempt of the world" he showed when he assumed the reins, for his idea was to bring the world into subjection to himself and to exploit it to the full. His principles are presented in his letters: "The Lord left to Peter not only the entire Church, but the entire world to rule.... Individual kings have individual kingships. But Peter both by fulness and by width is preeminent over all, because he is the vicar of Him whose is the earth and the fulness thereof." He fomented quarrels in Germany and caused Spain and France to tremble before the power of his edicts. In England he even managed to obtain the sovereignty at the time of a double election, since the younger clerics chose a certain Reginald, while the older men decided in favor of John Gray, the candidate of the king. So Innocent declared both elections to be void and made Stephen Langton, a cardinal of the Roman Church, the archbishop of Canterbury. And when King John dared to oppose him, the Pope placed all of England under the interdict, that is, he simply prohibited all church services until the king had apologized. When the barons then arose against King John, and when Philip August of France prepared for war,

John had to concede defeat. In return for the Pope's forgiveness he was compelled to turn over his country to Innocent and to pay a large sum of money in order to continue in office.

In order to increase the number of instruments which might serve his power, Pope Innocent III established two institutes, the mendicant orders and the inquisition. He made use of the simple, practically cynical piety of the young Francis of Assisi and the burning zeal of Domingo Guzman to gather thousands of fanatics under his banners. Since his time the monks were no longer the quiet ascetics who sacrificed the sweat of their brow to serve the poor and needy, but a horde of arrogant beggars and preachers who were ready at every moment to fight the pope's battles.

And the inquisition was called into being by Pope Innocent in order to search out every possible and impossible heresy in all corners of the earth. And the bishops readily took their cue from their superior. The house in which a heretic was found was immediately destined for destruction, as a council of Toulouse declared in the year 1229. If heretics of their own free will returned to the teaching of the Church, they were transferred to a neutral place, but to tell all men of their defection they were compelled to attach two colored crosses to their garment, one on the right side and one on the left. People who were ill, but under the suspicion of being heretics, were not permitted to have a physician. Concerning the unspeakable atrocities of the 14th, 15th, and 16th century one must consult the books by Charles Henry Lea. In England at this time there was a saying: "Oh how these men differ from Peter who arrogate the power of Peter to themselves." And in Germany men actually declared: "The Pope is the great dragon, who seduces the whole world, the Antichrist."

The spirit of Innocent was revived at the end of the century in the person of Boniface VIII (1294-1303), who was rightly designated as the "raving Pope." It was a clever move on the part of Boniface VIII (or rather of cardinal Benedict Cajetano., for this was his original name) that he caused Coelestine V to resign "voluntarily." It was a very clever move on his part that he managed to get the votes of all the cardinals at Christmas, 1294. But it was an act of studied cruelty that he caused the aged Coelestine to be arrested and then to be incarcerated in the rocky dungeon of Fafone, where he died after two years.

Hardly had Boniface assumed the reins of papal power when he renewed the claims of his predecessors, Gregory VII and Innocent III with regard to unconditional and unrestricted dominion. He first expelled the Colonnas, who had opposed his election. Their palaces were destroyed, their city Palestrina leveled, and the land was plowed and sowed with salt. Then the Pope interfered in the war between England and France. When King Philip objected to this interference, Boniface ordered the French clerics to refuse the paying of taxes. Philip answered by prohibiting the export of gold and silver from France. An interesting correspondence ensued. The Pope wrote: "Bishop Boniface servant of servants to King Philip of the Franks. Fear God and observe His mandates. We want you to know that you in both spiritual and temporal matters you are subject to us..those who belie otherwise we reject as heretics." King Philip replied: "Philip, by the grace of God king of the Franks, to Boniface, who pretends to be the highest priest, be a greeting moderate or none at all. May your simplicity in the highest degree know that we are not subject to any one in temporal matters,...those however, who believe otherwise we reject as simple-minded and demented." Thus the king seems to have the better of that interchange of insults.

Nevertheless Pope Boniface now regarded the opportunity as being auspicious to proclaim the great principles of Antichristianism before the whole world and in a logical connection. He therefore promulgated., on November 18, 1302, the notorious bull *Unam sanctam ecclesiam catholicam*, which to this day is an integral part of the canon law. In this document the Pope declared there is only one (visible) Church. But the Church is not a two-headed monster, rather she has only one head, namely the Pope. And this one visible lord possesses both swords, the spiritual and the temporal. This, he declared, is very plainly taught in the Holy Scripture. For, thus runs his argument, when the disciples told Christ "Behold., here are two swords", He answered "It is enough". To this peculiar Scripture proof the Pope added a word from the prophet Jeremiah: "See, I have set thee this day over the nations and over the kingdoms...to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down." He also maintained that the Apostle Paul declared explicitly 1 Cor. 2:15: "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." It would be hard to visualize a worse perversion of

Scripture. And to this Boniface added that any one who placed temporal power on the same level with the spiritual was a Manichaeon, for he taught two principles,, whereas the Holy Ghost in Gen. 1:1 declared that there was only one principle “*In principio coelum creavit et terram,*” in one principle God created heaven and earth,” whereas the very beginner in the Hebrew language knows that the text must be translated “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. Such procedures are truly diabolic.

After Pope Boniface had thus, by an unprecedented perversion of Holy Writ, tried to bolster his false claims, he made his final declaration: “Hence we declare, say., define, and pronounce that to submit to the Roman pontiff is for every human creature an absolute necessity for salvation.” But now, by the judgment of God, Boniface was completely disgraced. He was suddenly attacked by William of Nogaret and Sciarra Colonna in the city of his birth, Anagni. Three days and three nights they held him captive near the dungeon in which Coelestine V had died. And when, on the fourth day., he was liberated by his townspeople, he had lost his mind. And although his liberators supplied him with food., plied him with wine, and otherwise cared for his welfare there was nothing to be done. Boniface ran against the wall in a fit of insane fury and died. Thomas Walsingham summarized the judgment of men in general when he stated: “He entered like a fox, he reigned like a lion, he died like a dog.”

The next era indeed was a time of recession for the papacy. The tyranny of Boniface VIII had brought people and whole nations back to their senses. The Popes were forced into exile. at Avignon, where they remained fully seventy years. Then followed the period of pope and antipope, certainly a Manichaeon monster, according to the views of Boniface VIII. The bishops indeed rallied to effect a reformation, but they were helpless against the Antichrist, and even the councils of the 15th century were unable to stop the growing tyranny. How else can we explain the martyrdom of Jerome of Prague and of John Hue? For who were the leaders at Pisa, Constance., and Basel? Men like Pierre d’Ailly, Jean Charlier de Gerson., and the cardinal Cesarini, all of them too corrupt to fight under the banner of God’s Word. And Eugene IV (1431-1447) was clever as a serpent., so that he managed to hold his position as master of the Church. It was he who engineered the acceptance of the Decree of Florence, on June 8, 1439: “We decree that the holy apostolic see and the Roman pontiff holds the primate over against the whole world., that the Roman pontiff himself is the successor of the blessed Peter, the prince of the apostles and the true vicar of Christ., the head of the entire Church and exists as the father and doctor of all Christians, and that to him is transmitted, in the blessed Peter, to shepherd, reign, and govern the universal Church with full power from our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, in Pope Eugene IV, the man Gabriel as the attendants at Basel called him, the victory of Antichristianism over true reform; the papacy was truly all-powerful.

And here we are bound to add another fact, especially in view of the position taken by recent “theologians” who refuse to accept the statement of 2 Thess. 2:4, declaring that the proof of the Pope’s “showing himself that he is God” was lacking. Over against this appeasement attitude we quote only a few of the many passages which in a most unmistakable manner ascribe divinity divine attributes and authority to the occupant of the papal chair. In a monograph by Woods which bears the title *Our Priceless Heritage*, (p. 35ff) we find the statement: “Has not the Church of Rome been guilty of this great sin in paying to the Pope the reverence due to God alone? It has been guilty of this great sin. In a gloss of the Roman canon law the words ‘Our Lord God the ‘Pope’ appear. It declares that “to believe that our Lord God the Pope has not power to decree as he has decreed is heretical.” (*Extravagantes* of Pope John XXII, *cum inter*, Tit.cap.iv, *Ad Callem Sexti Decretalium*, Paris, 1685.) In this connection writers on the canon law have said: “The Pope and God are the same; so he has all power in heaven and earth.” (Barclay, Cap. XXVII., p. 218.) Pope Nicholas I (died 867) declared “The appellation of God was confirmed by Constantine on the Pope, who being God cannot be judged by man.” (*Labb-Dist.96 Can 7*) The Doge of Venice was not reproved by the Pope when he declared he would honor Clement VII “as a deity on earth.” (Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. IX, p.246.) The Pope in 1929, referring to the political troubles in Malta, which had been caused by the unjustifiable demands of the Roman church authorities there, declared to the Maltese citizens that “to be with the bishops and the Pope meant to be with Jesus Christ, of whom they must think when they looked at a bishop, and that whosoever is not under the

protection of the Pope shall be overcome!" Pope Leo XIII blasphemously said "I occupy the place of Almighty God on earth." (See also Dwight, *Theology Explained and Defended*. IV, 10) For further testimonies on this subject see Calov, *Biblia illustrata*, N.T. Tom. II. p.908. Here we find such expressions as: "The Pope is that Lord of whom Paul speaks in Eph. 41; "The power of the Pope extends to heavenly, earthly, and infernal matters, that to the Pope are committed all the activities of the entire Spiritual machine, that the Pope is all in all." Various Messianic prophecies are applied to the Pope, as "the Lion out of the tribe of Judah", "the root of David," "all the kings of the earth shall adore him, all nations shall serve him." etc. (See Mansi, *Amplissima Collectio*, 32, 00, 803. 892. 924.) One is involuntarily reminded of Acts 12:21, 22.

We now come to the era which may be said to have begun with Leo X (1513-1521). We shall briefly sketch conditions in the first part of this period, reserving the discussions concerning the developments of the last century for a later chapter.

It was in 1516 that Pope Leo X, during the Lateran Council, issued to order that no one use to preach about the coming of the Antichrist. (*Sessio xi*, Dec. 19, 1516. See Caranza 671. Ed. of 1679.) Yet it was only the next year that Luther began to reveal the Pope as the Antichrist. However, events came to pass which corroborated the truth of the apostle's words that whereas the Antichrist would be revealed and exposed before the whole world, his final judgement would not take place until the Lord's great *parousia*. This became evident, first of all, at the Council of Trent, at which strictly speaking, the Roman Catholic sect was first established. Up till that time, that is, during the entire era of the Canon-Catholic Church, the three Ecumenical Creeds had been the only symbols officially acknowledged by the Church. But in the sessions of the Council of Trent, from 1545 to 1563, the representatives of the Church which refused to be reformed drew up resolutions, largely in answer to the Lutheran Confessions, which are now the confessional platform of the Pope's Church. Many sections of the decrees and resolutions of this council cannot be fitly characterized but by the term "blasphemous," as even a novice in the Christian doctrine will see at first glance. The concluding section of this great confession use confirmed in December, 1563. And in order to establish and safeguard the papal power and to offer further proof for the fact that the Pope is truly the Antichrist, Pope Pius IV immediately published the so-called *Professio fidei Tridentina*. This is an oath which is required of all clerics who desire a position in the Roman Church. It puts them under obligation to render a blind and unconditional obedience to the Pope.

There was indeed for a while a recession of papal power due to the political and economic changes in England, France, and Germany. But a change for the worse came again when Pope Pius VII (1800-1823) occupied the throne of the Antichrist. It was he who anointed Napoleon on December 22 1804, in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, but it was also he who condemned Napoleon as the robber of the papal dominions and then after the overthrow of the Corsican regained practically all his former power. He advanced the same claims and made use of the same tools. Of the rulers who opposed him he said that they were to understand "They are to subject themselves to our rule and to the throne of Christ, since it was not right for the Spirit to yield heavenly things to carnal and earthly things." And as for the ancient tools, Pius VII reintroduced the inquisition and the Jesuits. And a further upsurge of papal power came in the middle of the nineteenth century, as we shall see later.

The Position Taken by Martin Luther

It is historically not true that the nature of the papacy as the Antichrist was not recognized until Luther appeared on the scene as the Reformer. As a matter of fact individual observers had, even in the early centuries, characterized the bishop of Rome as the Antichrist prophesied by John and Paul. In the exposition by Irenaeus on the apocalyptic number 666 we have a sketch of the most important features of the Antichrist. As early as the 10th century certain teachers did not hesitate to point to Rome as the seat of the Antichrist. In the "Revelations of St. Bridget" who died in 1373, we find the open declaration: "The Pope and his clergy are forerunners of Antichrist rather than servants of Christ." Among the forerunners of the Reformation we find that Wyclif in England (d.1394) and Matthias von Janow in Bohemia (d.1394) declared that the Pope, as the spiritual head of the Church, was the Antichrist. In a treatise entitled "The Lantern of Light," written in England about 1400,

three chapters deal with the Antichrist, who was even then emphatically identified with the Pope's court at Rome, he being the head, the prelates the body, and "those clouded sects, as monks, canons, and friars, the venomous tail of Antichrist." Whoever the author of the book was, it certainly must have taken a great deal of courage to make such a bold statement in England about that time.

But it remained for Luther to reveal the depravation of the papacy in all its glaring colors, to declare in unmistakable terms that the Pope is, according to the Scriptures, the Antichrist. This is all the more remarkable because Luther grew up in the midst of the papacy and that he, even into his thirties, spoke of the Pope and dealt with the Pope with the utmost deference. But when his study of the Word of God gave him a deeper insight into the real nature of the papacy Luther, at first timidly and cautiously, but later with increasing fearlessness, stated his conviction that the Pope is the very Antichrist (*Widerchrist, Endechrist*). We shall here follow the chronological sequence of the most characteristic statements in the various writings of the Reformer.

1518.-On December 11 of this year the impression which Luther had harbored for some time concerning the Pope as the Antichrist is brought out in a letter to Wenceslaus Link. He writes: "I shall send you some of my shorter writings..in order that you might see whether my conjecture is correct, namely that the true Antichrist, as Paul portrays him (2 Thess. 2:3 ff.) is ruling at the Roman court; that he nowadays is worse than the Turk I believe I shall be able to prove." (St. Louis Ed., XV, 2430.)

1519-That Luther's conjecture concerning the identity of the papacy with the Antichrist was constantly being strengthened is apparent from his long "Exposition of the Thirteenth Thesis" of the series against Eck. (XV 720-019.)

1520—In Luther's essay "Reason and Basis of All Articles Which, without Justification, were Condemned by the Roman Bull", he refers to the false doctrine of absolution as found under the papacy, and concludes the section with the sentences: "May God ruin you and give you a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28) because you are constantly opposing the divine truth, so that you may receive your well-deserved reward. Now let him who will doubt that the Pope, who propagates more than enough of such errors in the world and takes the money and goods of all lands for it, is the true, chief, final Antichrist: I thank God that I know him." (XV, 1517.)

1521-During this year Luther's conviction regarding the identity of the Pope and the papacy with the great Antichrist of Scripture appears in the illustrated pamphlet entitled "*Passional Christi und Antichristi*" in which he applies 2 Peter 2:1,10; Rev.13:15; Is.56; 12; 1 Tim 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3 ff.; and Rev. 19:20, 21 to the papacy.

1523-In a sermon on 1 Peter 5:3-6 Luther has the following paragraph: "Therefore it is necessary that the unlearned comprehend this verse and others like it well and compare it with the rule of the pope, so that if one would question and examine them, they may answer and say: Thus and so Christ taught and wrought, but the Pope teaches and acts directly contrary to it. When Christ says yes, the Pope says no. Since therefore they are contrary to each other, one of them must be lying. But now Christ does not lie, therefore I conclude that the Pope is a liar and in addition the true Antichrist. Thus you must be equipped with the Scripture, so that you win not merely call the Pope an Antichrist, but that you will know how to prove this clearly, so that you may die in this firm knowledge and in death take your stand against the devil." (IX, 1104. Cp. col. 1279)

1524-In his sermonic expositions of the Book of Genesis, Luther says on Gen.49: 16-18: "The Antichrist is not to come from the Jews; we have the true one present with us, of whom Paul (2 Thess.2:3) speaks, the Pope at Rome." (III, 638 f.)

1525-In his commentary on the Book of Micah, on chap. 3:7, Luther remarks “He does not say anything about the office and call, for that he acknowledges, just as we in our days do not deny the Popes and bishops our obedience, as though they did not have a rightful call and office, since Paul (2 Thess.2:4) expressly says that the Antichrist will have his seat in the Church.” (XIV,1041.)

1527-In this year we have Luther’s remarks on 1 John 2:18 which are especially valuable because of the distinction which he makes as to the designation and as to the distinction in the importance of the doctrines repudiated by the papacy. He writes; “Thus when Paul says “the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth it will let, until it be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed”, 2 Thess.2:7, he wants us to understand that the true Antichrist would shortly be there and was exhibiting his heresies even then. For the one antichrist opposes and resists the person of Christ, another His humanity, another His deity. These are antichrists in part, who are opposed to Christ only in certain points, such as the enthusiasts. But another is against the whole Christ, and this one is the chief of all, that is the papacy. For the chief article of the Christian doctrine is this, that Christ is our Righteousness. He who attacks this doctrine takes from us the whole Christ and is the true Antichrist; the rest merely abet him therein. One who sets up a heresy against the person of Christ is not so great a heretic as one who establishes a heresy against the merit of Christ.” (IX, 1435.) And with reference to 1 John 2:18 Luther has the remark: “Dan.11:27 ff. given us a picture of the kingdom of Antichrist ... this god has no advice for the soul, but he knows how to put money in the box. If a person only reads the Scripture, he will readily find the Pope, his priests, and his monks in it...He will sit in his place for a considerable time and not be recognized; but finally he will be revealed and known from the doctrine of devils, which he will introduce to reconcile God. For he denies that Christ is come into the world., that men through His grace should be saved.” (IX, 1555f.)

1528-In a letter which Luther addressed to two pastors to correct a few misconceptions held by certain Reformed teachers, he says “Hear for yourself what St. Paul says 2 Thess.2:4: “The Antichrist will sit in the temple of God.” If now the Pope, as I cannot otherwise believe, is the true Antichrist, he shall not sit or rule in the devil’s stable, but in the temple of God. No, he will not sit where there are nothing but devils and unbelievers, or where there are no Christians nor Christendom, for he is to be an Antichrist, therefore he must be among Christians...Both will remain true: The Antichrist sits in the temple of God by the working of the devil, 2 Thess.2: 4,9, and yet it is the temple of God and will remain the temple of God, by Christ’s preservation.” (XVII..2191 f.) Cp. XX, 1101, 533f)

1536-In an introduction to the book by Robert Barnes, *Of the Life of the Popes* we find the following remarks of Luther: “God has changed His mercy, which was despised by men, into terrible fury, as Paul has prophesied, when he says, 2 Thess.2:11; “He shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie..., because they received not the love of the truth.” Thus in a gradual manner after Christ was removed, after His faithful witnesses had been set aside, namely the apostles, martyrs, confessors, a new Christ followed, that is the Antichrist in the temple of God with his new saints, and has taught us to pray to those whom neither our fathers, nor he himself, nor also we have known. And this precious new divinity he has decorated with indulgences, churches, gold, silver, precious stones, and all costly things, and has divided the land to the worshipers without cost, as the Spirit has prophesied in Daniel (Chap. 11:39)” (XIV, 372.) And in a later paragraph of the same document we find the sentences: “In the beginning indeed, when I was not yet well-informed and had no knowledge of history, I attacked the papacy (as one says) *a priori*, that is, from Holy Scripture; but now I greatly rejoice that others do the same things *a posteriori*, that is., from history. And I permit myself to think that I have a complete triumph, from history. And I permit myself to think that I have a complete triumph, since I, as the light

appears, find that history agrees with Scripture. For what I learned when St. Paul and Daniel were my teachers, and what I taught, namely that the Pope is the opponent of God and of all things, that history shouts to me Indeed and as it were points with the finger and indicates not merely a species and a subspecies, but the individual himself, nothing vague, as is said.”

1537-In his Foreword, written for an exposition of the ancient epistles of the church year, Luther has a number of points in criticism of the papal system. He writes among others: “For the Antichrist must finally die, not by man’s hand or mouth, that is, by man’s might and wisdom,, but through the Spirit of the mouth of Christ, as St. Paul prophecies. But Christ’s mouth is His Word and preaching.” (XIV, 376.)

1538-In his commentary on Galatians, issued in complete form in this year, Luther included these remarkable words: “Thus the Pope by spreading his divinity over the world, has completely denied and suppressed the office and the deity of Christ. It is of great value that one impress this upon oneself and consider it well, for it serves to give a right judgment of all Christian doctrine and human life, to strengthen the conscience, to understand all the prophecies and statements of the Scriptures correctly, and to have a right judgment in all things. For he who clings to this honestly can pass the definite sentence that the Pope is the Antichrist, because he teaches an altogether different service of God than the First Table prescribes; such a one can definitely understand what it means to deny God, to deny Christ, and also what Christ means when He says (Matt. 24:5): “Many will come in My name and say ‘I am the Christ’; who is the one that is the ‘son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped’; what it means that the Antichrist ‘sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God’ (2 Thess 2: 4); what it means (Matt. 24:15) that ‘the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place..’ etc.” (IX, 342). And in his remarks on Gal. 6:1 Luther apostrophizes the Pope in the words “Who has even the power, thou Roman Satan, to terrorize the hearts with unjust condemnations and to condemn them, although they are already in terrors and should rather have been restored and delivered from false terrors and brought back from the lie to the truth? This thou neglectest and (as they title reads: The man of sin and the son of perdition-2 Thess.2:3) investest guilt where there is no guilt. That is really and truly the subtlety and the deceit of the Antichrist wherewith the Pope has fortified his ban and his tyranny in a most powerful manner.” (IX, 731).

1542-As we draw nearer to the end of Luther’s life, it is most. valuable to find that he distinguishes more clearly than ever between minor opponents of the Gospel, whom he also, in agreement with Scripture, calls antichrists (such as the Mohammedans), and the one true Antichrist. In a refutation of the Mohammedan Koran, issued less than three years before his death, Luther writes “And I do not regard Mohamed as the Antichrist; he is too clumsy and has a recognizable black devil, who can deceive neither faith nor reasons and is like a heathen who persecutes Christendom from outside, as the Romans and other heathen have done. For how can he, who rejects the Holy Scripture, deceive a Christian, (also rejecting) both the Old and the New Testament, also Baptism, The Sacrament, absolution or forgiveness of sins, Lord’s Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, estimates holy marriage as nothing, and teaches murder and unchastity? But the Pope in our midst is the true Antichrist, he has the subtle, beautiful, resplendent devil, he sits right in the midst of Christendom, permits the Holy Scripture, Baptism, The Sacrament, absolution, the Catechism, holy marriage to remain. As St. Paul says, he sits, that is, he rules, in the temple of God (2 Thess.2: 4) that is, in the Church or Christendom, namely in the midst of a people that is baptized, has the Sacrament, the absolution, the Holy Scripture and the Word of God. And yet he rules so masterfully that he at the same time has his filth, his Koran, his human doctrine elevated in such a manner above the Word of God that the Christians have no value in their Baptism, Sacrament keys, prayer, Gospel, and Christ in themselves, but feel constrained to be saved, by their own works This devil does not deceive those who are willing to be deceived, as under Mohammed, but those who

would not like to be deceived yea, the elect of God, Matt. 24:24. For he continues to use all these names, God, Christ, God's Son, Holy Ghost, Church, Baptism, Sacrament, and all things that Christians believe and teach, and Mohamed rejects. And yet he, in keeping these names and having a show of truth strikes truth to the ground with his Koran, as St. Paul says (2 Tim.3: 5), Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (XX, 2282 f.)

1545-Less than a year before his death, on March 25, 1545, Luther issued his last great writing "Against the Papacy of Rome, Founded by the Devil." Every honest searcher for the truth owes it to himself and to all with whom he comes in contact to study this swan song of the great Reformer. We quote just one short section: "Here you may read for yourself in 2 Thess. 2:4 and see what St. Paul means when he says that the Antichrist is sitting in the temple of God, that is, in the Church of Christ, as though he were Christ and God Himself, as his hypocrites blaspheme and say: The Pope is not a mere man, but a person composed of God and man, even as Christ alone is. And what a man of sin is you can easily learn from the preceding sections, since he is not only a sinner in himself but has filled the world, and in particular the temple of God, with sins, false worship of God, blasphemy, disbelief, and lies, and thus is also a son of perdition, that is, one who has led himself with innumerable souls into hell and eternal damnation. The Turk also deceives the world, but he does not sit in the temple of God, does not bear the name of Christ and of St. Peter, but attacks Christendom from outside and boasts of his enmity against it. But this internal disturber claims to be a friend, wants to be called father, and yet is twice as bad as the Turk. That is an abomination of desolation or destruction, an idol who against Christ destroys all that Christ has built and has given us. Oh how terrible it is to see and hear of such abomination. (XVII, 1096)

There certainly can be no doubt as to Luther's firm belief that the Pope, the papacy, is truly the Antichrist whose coming was foretold especially by the apostles Paul and John.

The Lutheran Confessions

Every Lutheran Theologian is familiar with the condition which attaches to his becoming a candidate for the Christian ministry in the Lutheran Church. He must not only accept Holy Scripture as the verbally inspired Word of God, but he is also required to subscribe to the Lutheran Confessions, not merely *quatenus*, but *quia* that is because their doctrinal content is in full agreement with the Word of God. The *quia* does not imply that every incidental remark, every historical reference or even every interpretation of individual Bible passages (e.g., Rom.14: 23, 2 Cor. 3: 5) is correct, but it most emphatically does claim that all the doctrines treated in the various Lutheran symbols present divine truth and hence may not be denied by any Lutheran pastor.

This is true also of the doctrine of the Antichrist. Small wonder that the great pupil of Luther, Doctor Walther, said at the Milwaukee Colloquy in 1867: "I cannot explain how any one can say that he would accept the Symbolical Books and yet cannot find the Pope as the true Antichrist in them, as prophesied by the apostle. 2 Thess. 2. We know that the Reformation is based thereon." (*Report*, p, 160.) Yet the former Iowa Synod, now an integral part of the American Lutheran Church, has declared (and that declaration has never been retracted) that one could well look for a personal Antichrist in the future and that the identification of the Pope with the Antichrist is not adequate. This was in agreement with a synodical declaration made by the Iowa Synod in 1858, which culminated in the sentence: "This defection in antichristianism we must expect only in the future because we understand by the man of sin not the papacy, but a definite, individual person." It was in agreement with that position that the foremost dogmatician of the American Lutheran Church stated: "It is not at all unlikely that the final Antichrist will disguise himself under the outward forms of Christianity in order to introduce a kind of worship which is the very opposite of the true worship of God. Recall, e.g. the liberalism contaminating large parts of the Church today, and its fundamental antichristian tendencies and aims," (Reu, *Lutheran Dogmatics*, II; 238) That this position did not agree with the official stand of the former Iowa Synod apparently did not occur to the venerable author, although there is an agreement as to the rejection of the

Lutheran symbols. But before we take up the various aberrations in the writings of modern Evangelicals, let us see what the Lutheran Confessions actually say on the identity of the Antichrist.

It is not a mere opinion, but an emphatic teaching of Luther and accented by the Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century when he writes in the *Smalcald Articles*: “This teaching shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ, because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God. This is, properly speaking, to exalt himself above all that is called God, as Paul says, 2 Thess.2:4...Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and Gods can we endure his apostle, the Pope, or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord. For to lie and to kill, and to destroy body and soul eternally that is wherein the papal government really consists, as I have very clearly shown in many books.” (Conc. Trigl., 475. This Judgment to repeated, with approval, in the Formula of Concord, Trigl.1059.)

In the appendix to the *Smalcald Articles*, “Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope” we read: “Now, it is manifest that the Roman pontiffs, with their adherents defend and practise godless doctrines and godless services. And the marks (all the vices) of Antichrist plainly agree with the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents. For Paul, 2 Thess. 2:3 in describing to the Thessalonians, calls him an adversary of Christ, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called Gods or that to worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God. He speaks therefore of one ruling in the Church, not of heathen kings, and he calls this one an adversary of Christ, because he will devise doctrine conflicting with the Gospels and will assume to himself divine authority.” (Conc. Trigl., 915.)

A few pages farther on, in the same treatises we find the words: “This being the cases all Christians ought to beware of becoming partakers of the godless doctrine, blasphemies and unjust cruelty of the Pope. On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist; just as Christ has commanded, Matt.7:15, Beware of false prophets. And Paul commands that godless teachers should be avoided and execrated and cursed, Gal. 1:8; Titus 3:10 ...To dissent from the agreement of so many nations and to be called schismatics to a grave matter. Put divine authority commands all (according to the German text) not to make common cause ‘with those who promulgate false doctrine or intend to maintain it with savage insistence. On this account our consciences are sufficiently excused; for the errors of the kingdom of the Pope are manifest. And Scripture with its entire voice exclaims that these errors are a teaching of demons and of Antichrist.” (Trigl. 517)

And in the other treatise appended to the *Smalcald Articles*, “Of the Power and Jurisdiction of Bishops,” we find a similar statement: “And as the rest of the Christians must censure all other errors of the Popes so they must also rebuke the Pope when he evades and impedes the true investigation and true decision of the Church. Therefore, even though the bishop of Rome had the primacy by divine right, yet since he defends godless services and doctrine conflicting with the Gospels obedience is not due him; yea, it is necessary to resist him as Antichrist. The errors of the Pope are manifest and not trifling.” (Trigl., 521.)

To these clear testimonies, which declare it to be a doctrine of the Lutheran confessors, established by the Word of God, that the Pope is the very Antichrist, we are bound to add further excerpts from the *Smalcald Articles*. In Article XI, “Of the Marriage of Priests,” Luther states: “Therefore we are unwilling to assent to their abominable celibacy, nor will we even tolerate it, but we wish to have marriage free as God has instituted (and ordained) it, and we wish neither to rescind nor hinder His work; for Paul says, 1 Tim.4: 1 ff., that this (prohibition of marriage) is a doctrine of devils.” (Trigl. 499.) In a similar way Luther condemns the papacy in Part II, Art. II. Trigl. 469. In the *Apology* Melancthon also quotes 2 Thess. 2: 4 (Trigl. 227b) and later in the same article (VII.VIII), speaking of the presumptions of the papacy, he writes (p.235a), “Besides, this definition, not of the Church of Christ, but of the papal kingdom, has as its authors not only the canonists, but also Daniel 11:36 ff. (Daniel, the prophet, represents Antichrist in this way.)” In article XV (VIII) we have the passage: “If the adversaries defend these human sacrifices as meriting justification, grace, and the remission of sins they simply establish the kingdom of Antichrist. For the kingdom of Antichrist is a new service of God, devised by human authority rejecting Christ.” (P. 319a.) Likewise in Art. XXIII (XI), Of the Marriage of

Priests, where Melancthon rejects the teaching of Papacy concerning celibacy, he states: "Daniel, 11: 37 ascribes to the kingdom of Antichrist this mark, namely, the contempt of women." (p. 371)

It is clear, therefore, that the Lutheran Confessions, in at least ten passages, definitely and unequivocally identified the papacy with the Antichrist, taking their proof both from Scripture and from history, according to the law of identification. To the Lutheran confessors there was no other phenomenon which would in every way, and in every detail, fit the description of Holy Writ than the papacy.

What About the Evangelical and the Lutheran Teachers?

It is a well-known fact that Luther feared the deterioration of his Scriptural teaching, and he was particularly concerned about the doctrines of justification and of conversion, since even during his lifetime serious aberrations took place. With regard to the doctrine of the Antichrist there seems to have been general unanimity among the theologians of the *Augsburg Confession* during the last half of the sixteenth century. They followed in the footsteps of Luther, not by a dead traditionalism but on the basis of a conviction gained from Scripture. The names of Bugenhagen, Flacius, Junnius, Lucas and Andreas Osiander, and later Balduin, Erasmus Schmidt, Quistorp, Wolf, Spener, Joachim Lange, and others certainly bear enough weight in any company of Lutheran leaders. Bengel definitely states that Paul does not portray merely some one individual person, but a series or succession of men occupying the same position and bearing the same name, and that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist, a thesis which remains irrefragable, evident, and certain. Quenstedt offers the conclusion: "These marks of Antichrist are to be taken here not apart or separately but unitedly and together, and thus taken they exactly coincide with the Pope of Rome as the great Antichrist, predicted by the Holy Ghost." (IV, 526, quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evan. Luth. Church*, 649) One of the strongest series of arguments showing conclusively that no other phenomenon in history will fit the description of the man of sin or the great Antichrist is offered by Spener in his monograph *Gerechter Elfer wider das antichristische Pabstum*. (Quoted in *Baieri Compendium* ed. Walther, III: 681 Cp. the entire section, 672 to 673.) Heinrich Brandt sums up the section of his dogmatics on the great *Widerchrist* or Antichrist in the words "These are the signs of the Antichrist which here had to be adduced and from which it can be concluded that the Roman Pope is properly adduced the true Antichrist, just as we may, from this entire section, draw this conclusion: He who in the Christian Church, in these latter days ... when the Roman Empire has gone into decline, exalts himself above God and all that is called God...he is properly the true Antichrist. For the Pope of Rome is he in whom all these traits are found expressly and clearly as the sun; hence the Pope of Rome to definitely the true, the great Antichrist."

In view of these facts it is truly strange that, during the last century, not a few rationalistic teachers have opposed the sound understanding of this doctrine. Hugo Grotius, Spitta, and J. Weiss thought of Caligula as the Antichrist, Wetstein of the Emperor Titus, F. C. Baur, Doellinger, Weizsaecker, Holtsmann, and Schmiedel of Nero; Hilgenfeld and Pfeleiderer suggested some ancient heretic, Hammond had Simon the Sorcerer in mind, Celricus referred to Simon the son of Gioras, Whitby regarded the entire Jewish race as the Antichrist Schoettgen thought of the Pharisees and the rabbis. Harduin suggested the high priest Ananias. Closely connected with this so-called historical view is the chiliastic interpretation, as held by Oslhausen, v. Hofmann, Luthardt, Baumgarten, V. Gerlach, Thiersch, V. Oettingen, Auberlen, Rigggenbach, and others. The climax and culmination of all these vagaries may well be given in the words of Kliefoth: "Only this is our claim, regardless of how many antichristian features the papacy reveals in the light of prophecy, finally another will come who will surpass these antichristian features." (See *Conc. Theol. Monthly* XIII: 265 ff., 405-409.)

Unfortunately, and in spite of the clear teaching of Holy Writ and the Lutheran Confessions some of the leading men in various parts of the Lutheran Church in America refused to accept the doctrine that the Pope is the Antichrist. To one of these we have referred above, but it must be stated as an historical fact that the Iowa segment of the American Lutheran Church has never repudiated the false position of 1867, and that the apparent concessions of recent years have not led to an unequivocal acceptance of the full truth is shown by the evasive wording of the "Common Confession." This judgment is forced upon us by the statements of various members

of the committee itself, and by the report of the “Advisory Committee and Doctrine and Practices,” which in the matter of the Antichrist flatly contradicts the *Brief Statement* (#44) by declaring the teaching that the Pope is the Antichrist to be “not a clearly expressed doctrine of Scripture but an historical Judgment based on Scripture.” And that practically brings the committee back to the position taken by the Iowa colloquents in 1867.

Over against this testimony which is directly opposed to that of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, we turn with relief to the unequivocal teaching of men who were sound in their Lutheran doctrine. At the Milwaukee Colloquy in 1867 Dr. Walther told the Iowa representatives: “You have declared a number of doctrines to be problematic, although they are not, for example, the doctrines of the Church and the Ministry, of the Antichrist, of the Millennium. But these are certainly not doctrines which are not clearly revealed in the Word of God.” (*Reports* P.174f) That Walther had occasion to be strengthened in his teaching concerning the Antichrist during the next decades is evident from me of his evening lectures published under the general heading “The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel.” The ninth evening lecture (November 21, 1884) contains an introductory paragraph on the Antichrist, from which we quote: “True, quite a number, in fact the majority, of those who claim to be Lutherans refuse to believe that the Pope is the Antichrist and the papacy the antichristian power. With the entire Church of the Reformation and in accord with the Confessions of this Church the Orthodox American Lutheran Church of our time still in full earnest maintains the position that the Pope is the Antichrist. But that is, at best, regarded as an odd fancy of narrow-minded men, who refuse to keep step with the times. If you ask why this is so, I answer that it is chiefly because people no longer know what constitutes the Antichrist and the antichristian dominion. People says ‘We admit that, especially in the Middle Ages there were many Popes who were veritable abominations and even in the view of Romish writers, were swallowed up by hell. It is admitted that many shocking abominations are still practised by the papacy, but this is offset by the reminder that there is not a Church free from errors and even from Judases. It in furthermore admitted that the papacy is propagating the most horrible heresies, but over against this the fact is stressed that eve the papacy holds strictly to the three Ecumenical Creeds. For at the opening session and solemn organization of the Council of Trent, in 1545, those three creeds were recited. Our attention is also called to the fact that the Popes believe the Bible of the Old and of the New Testament to be the revealed Word of God, God to be triune, and Christ to be God and man in one person and the Savior of the world. We are told: “The papists confess, just as we do, their faith in a future resurrection of the dead, a last Judgement, before which all men will be cited, and a heaven and a hell. Far, then, from being the dominion of Antichrist,” these people say, “the papacy is rather a powerful dam shutting out the fearful deluge of unbelief that has come down on the Christian Church.’ People see the rule of Antichrist in pantheism, materialism, atheism, socialism., nihilism, anarchism, and other horrible isms to which the modern age has fallen heir. But why is it that from the aforementioned premises men will draw the conclusion that the papacy is not the rule of the Antichrist and the Pope not the veritable Antichrist? The chief reason is that people fail to consider what it means when the Pope claims to be the viceregent of Christ on earth and the visible head of the entire Christian Church. In order to be this he must, course, profess many Christian doctrines. He has to put on a mask, otherwise Antichrist could not possibly exist in the midst of the Christian Church. Moreover, he has to declare war against the enemies of all religions and against the enemies of the Christian religion to support his claim of being the viceregent of Christ. He knows that, when Christ falls Antichrist, too, must fall. For when he falls whose viceregent the Pope old claims to be, there is an end of the viceregency. When the Pope apparently fights for Christ and the Christian Church, he fights for himself and his dominion. But the point of supreme importance is this: Passing by those societies which deny the Triune God and which are outside of the pale of the Christian Church, I find that the Pope is the only one in the entire Christian Church who is an outspoken enemy of the free grace of God in Christ, an enemy of the Gospel under the guise of the Christian religion and aping its institutions.” (Translation by Dr. Dau, pp. 67-69)

But there were others of the previous generations of Lutheran teachers who held the doctrine of the Antichrist in no uncertain terms. For examples Professor Hoenecke (*Ev. Luth. Dogmatik* IV: 219 ff) has the

following sharp remark: “The great Antichrist foretold in the Scripture, the greatest enemy of the Church, is not to be expected in the future, but is present in the papacy....We do not deny salvation to one who does not believe this article but we do deny him Lutheran fellowship,” which clearly means that the author would not recognize such a person as a genuine Lutheran. Likewise, Doctor F. Pieper writes (*Christl. Dogmatik*, IV 668-670): why is it that men in our days do not want to recognize the Pope as the Antichrist? Whence this strange and sad fact that almost all the newer ‘believing’ theologians look around for the Antichrist, while he in a great and powerful way carries on his work in the Church? They do not stand firm in the living knowledge of the doctrine of justification and the importance of this doctrine for the Church. I must confess from my own experience that only then did I receive the living persuasion in my conscience that the Pope is the Antichrist, when I understood, on the one hand, what the doctrine of justification is and, on the other, that the papacy has its real essence in the denial and condemnation of the doctrine of justification and by the pretext of piety and by the claim of being the only saving Church binds the consciences to itself.” And again “Experience proves that the demand of a mere conditional liability (*Verpflichtung*) to the symbols is in most cases connected with a negative attitude against certain confessional doctrines. This is true also with regard to such Lutherans of our days as speak for a conditional liability regarding the Confessions because they hold a doctrinal position differing from the Confessions, e.g. in the doctrine of the Church, of the Ministerial Offices, of Chiliasm, also in the doctrine of the Antichrist.” (I: 340.) Hence Dr. Pieper voices this criticism, mildly enough: “Every teacher in the Christian Church is weak in theology who, although familiar with the historical revelation of the Pope, does not recognize in the papacy the Antichrist as foretold in 2 Thess. 2.” (III: 534) And Dr. A. L. Graebner writes, succinctly and emphatically: “Antichrist is come and has been revealed in the Roman pontiff.” (*Doctrinal Theology*, 229.) Many more recent utterances of orthodox Lutheran teachers could be adduced at this point but we shall let this suffice for the present. On the orthodox side the testimony is unanimous.

The Establishment of the Roman Sect and Its Progressive Deterioration

It is often said, and in fact the claim is made by the papists themselves, that the papal Church goes back to the Apostolic Period. This assertion is connected with the other claim, namely that Peter was the first bishop (and Pope) of Rome and that there is an unbroken apostolic succession from the first century to the present time. Such historical facts as the Avignon Captivity and the phenomenon of Pope and Counter-Pope are ignored by those who uphold the papal claim. But as a matter of fact, the Church of the first fifteen centuries should properly be known only as the Canon-Catholic Church, for it had as its only confessions the three Ecumenical Creeds, and all the blasphemous doctrines which are found in the Middle Ages were those of individual false teachers and of the papal curia. All the errors of these centuries were like the mud which clings to the cartwheels and may sometimes become so thick as to retard the vehicle and even to stop it altogether; yet this fact does not change the nature of the cart itself. And even as the owner of such a cart will eventually clean the vehicle of the accumulated dirt, so the Lord, through His chosen instrument Martin Luther, caused the Church to go through a cleansing process. Or, to use a comparison taken from Greek mythology, even as Hercules in one of his great labors cleaned the stable of Augias by diverting a near-by stream, so Luther swept out the accumulation of debris resulting from erroneous teaching out of the temple of the Church and thus restored it to its pristine beauty. Therefore the Church of the Reformation, now commonly known as the Lutheran Church (if it teaches the full truth) is the continuation of the Apostolic Church. Thus was the Wicked One revealed 2 Thess. 2:8; the Antichrist was exposed. But though the Antichrist, in agreement with Rev. 12-14, had received a severe blow, he still did live Rev. 13:14, for this strong delusion would be destroyed only with the brightness of the Lord’s coming, 2 Thess. 2:8.

What, then, about the events which transpired between the first denunciation of the papacy by Wiclif and Hus and others even before their time, and especially by Luther after 1517, and the close of the Council of Trent in 1563? These years are to be regarded in the same way as those during which the Lord gave His chosen people of the Old Testament the final opportunity to embrace the truth of the Savior who had appeared in the

person of Jesus Christ; in other words, between 27 A.D, when Jesus began His public ministry, and the year 70 A.D, which saw the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. This was the time of testing, of searching the hearts. We have a similar situation in the period of the Reformation. Between the last decades of the fifteenth century and the seventh decade of the sixteenth century and specifically between 1517 and 1563, the Lord gave all the members of the Church an opportunity to decide for or against the truth. The alternative before them was: Christ or Antichrist. The true Church of Christ was there of course, all the time, hidden to a large degree under the filth and the debris of the doctrines of the Antichrist, which Luther had now washed away with the limpid stream of God's holy Word. But the Antichrist and his minions, hardening their hearts against the gracious call of the Lords just as the Jews of the first century had hardened their hearts against the preaching of the apostles, gathered the filth and the debris which had been swept out of the structure of the Church and there-with built up a denomination of their own.

Let us mark, then—the Roman Catholic Church, more properly called the Romish sect, the Church of the Antichrist had its inception with the Council of Trent, and should be so dated in all sound books of church history. For the decrees of this sect, as accepted at that great council, clearly indicate that the tenets which were accepted and promulgated under the jurisdiction of the papacy within the Canono-Catholic Church before the Reformation have now been received as the official doctrines of this new denomination.

We here offer only a few examples of the Roman doctrines taken from the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (ed. by J. Waterworth.):

On the Sacred Books of the Church: “If any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate version, and knowingly and deliberately contemn the traditions of the aforesaid: let him be anathema...Moreover, the same sacred and holy synod,—considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic,—ordains and declares that the said old and Vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many years, has been approved of in the church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever.” (P. 19).

In other words, a translation, the mistakes in which have already been publicly admitted, e.g. by the fact that an official revision has been ordered by the Roman Catholic officials, is declared to be the authentic text, a declaration which is simply untenable.

On Justification: “Canon IX. If any one saith that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema.” (P. 45)

“Canon XXI. If any one saith that Christ Jesus was given of God to men as a Redeemer in whom to trust, and not also as a legislator whom to obey: let him be anathema.”

Here we have a direct contradiction of the teaching of the apostle Paul in Rom.3:28, Ephesians 2, and elsewhere.

On the Sacraments: “If any one saith that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed (*ex opere operato*), but that faith alone in the divine promises suffices for the obtaining of grace: let him be anathema.”

On Transubstantiation: “And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under this species of the bread to be truly His own body, therefore it has ever been a firm belief of the church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that by the consecration of the bread and of the wine a conversion is made (*conversionem fieri*) of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the Holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called transubstantiation.” (P. 78)

This declaration directly contradicts 1 Cor. 10:17 and the words of institution as recorded, e.g. in 1 Corinthians 11.

On the Eucharist: “Canon IX. If any one saith that, after the consecration is completed, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are not the admirable sacrament of the Eucharist, but are there only during the use, whilst it is being taken, and not either before or after, and that, in the host, or consecrated particles, which are reserved or which remain after the Communion the true body of the Lord remaineth not: let him be anathema.”

Here again we have the false doctrine of transubstantiation.

“Canon VI. If any one saith that in the holy sacrament of the Eucharist Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external, or the latria; and is, consequently, neither to be venerated with a special festal solemnity, nor to be borne about in processions, according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of the Holy Church, or is not to be proposed (*proponendum*) publicly to the people to be adored, and that the adorers thereof are idolaters: let him be anathema.”

So a second false doctrine involving a direct transgression of the First Commandment is coupled with the first, this making a strong indictment of the Roman Catholic sect.

It was thus that the kingdom of the Antichrist was definitely established; it was thus that the Roman sect was born. And we could continue to quote from this compendium of blasphemy for pages upon pages, particularly also from the section entitled “On the Sacrifice of the Mass”, “On the Invocation of Saints” etc., but to do so would make this discussion too long. Every Lutheran theologian is familiar with the fact that Martin Chemnitz, in his *Examen Concilii Tridentini* has so completely demolished the papal, that is, the Antichristian declarations, resolutions, and decrees of the Romish sect that the veriest tyro in the field of sound theology must admit that Antichrist, the papal system with its visible head, the Pope of Rome, has been fully exposed on the basis of unassailable Biblical arguments and proofs.

But the objection has been raised that there have been further manifestations of a definite deterioration in the papal system since the Council of Trent, and that since other antichristian phenomena may still come, therefore our argument as to the identification of the Antichrist is weakened. But the very opposite is true. If men were not yet satisfied with the manner in which the Antichrist was exposed during the period of the Reformation, the Lord, as it were, brought further evidences of the unspeakable corruption of the papacy. This is precisely in line with the apostle’s statement that Lord would bring the Antichrist to an end at the time of his *parousia*. The inquisition was a terrible thing, but far worse is the enslavement of souls by teachings which take away the honor due to God and Christ alone.

Without speaking in detail of certain incidents in the struggle between the Vatican and several of the European countries, notably France and Germany, let us look at three phenomena within the last century. The first is the decree concerning the immaculate conception of Mary as promulgated by Pope Pius IX in 1854, the document bearing name *Ineffabilis Deus*. Its most significant sentences read as follows; “Since we have never ceased in humility and fasting to offer up our prayers and those of the Church to God the Father through His

Son that He might deign to direct and confirm our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost after imploring the protection of the whole celestial courts and after invoking on our knees the Holy Ghost the Paraclete, under His inspiration we pronounce, declare, and define unto the glory of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity, the honor and ornament of the holy Virgin, the mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Christian religions, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul and in our authority that the doctrine which hold the blessed Virgin Mary to have been from the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Christ Jesus the Savior of mankind preserved free from all stain of original sin, was revealed by God, and is therefore to be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful. Therefore if some should presume to think in their hearts otherwise than we have defined (which God forbid), they shall know and thoroughly understand that they are by their own judgment condemned, have made shipwreck concerning the faith, and fallen away from the unity of the Church; and, moreover, that they by this very act subject themselves to the penalties ordained by law, if by word or writing or any other external means, they dare to signify what they think in their hearts.” (See Huggenvik, *An Outline of Church History*, P. 309 f.)

Stripped of all its bombast this decree declared that the Virgin Mary, who in all simplicity and sincerity declared herself to be in need of a Savior (Luke 1:47), is elevated to a position which places her on a level with the Redeemer Himself. This cannot be said to be anything but downright blasphemy.

The second decree which showed the depths of corruption in the papacy was that of the Vatican Council of 1870. There we are told: “We teach and define, the Holy Council concurring, that it (namely the teaching of the infallibility of the Pope) is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, when in discharge of the office and pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal Church, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer will that His Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith and morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the ChurchBut if any one, which God may avert, presume to contradict this our definition let him be anathema.” (See Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, II: 270ff.)

In this connection the following resolutions were adopted.

“Canon I. If any one says that the holy Apostle Peter was not appointed by the Lord Christ as the prince of the apostles and as the head of the entire Church Militant, or that he had received this primacy only as an honor, and not as including a true and proper jurisdiction from our Lord Jesus Christ by direct and immediate action, let him be anathema.”

“Canon II. If any one says that it is not Christ’s institution that the holy Peter has continual successors in the primacy over the whole Church or that the Roman Pope is not by virtue of divine right the successor of Peter in that primacy, let him be anathema.”

“Canon III. If any one says that the Roman Pope has merely the office of supervision or guidance, and not the full and highest power of jurisdiction over the entire Church, not only in matters of faith and morality, but also in the discipline and rule of the Church extending over the entire world, or that this his power is not a regular and immediate, embracing the sum total of the churches or individually as over the shepherds and the faithful in a body or individually, let him be anathema.” (*Lehre und wehre*, XV 1870, p.213 f)

Hence the Pope, as vice-regent or vice-gerent has been placed on a level with Jesus Christ, the one and only Lord and Master of the Church. It is another proof of the fact that the Pope in now sitting in the temple of the Church as a God, claiming the rights of God. 2 Thess. 2: 4.

As for the most recent blasphemous declaration of the Roman curia, it was merely the culmination of a movement which was noticeable in the teaching of the Antichristian element in the Roman Church (then still the Canon-Catholic Church) since the sixth century, namely the teaching of the “assumption of Mary” which was two years ago, made a dogma of the Papal sect. Several teachers of the sect had already deplored the fact that the doctrine taught for so many centuries had not yet been raised to the dignity of a dogma, that is, an article of faith which it was incumbent upon all members to believe, on pain of losing their soul’s salvation. Any one who examines such books as *Communion Devotions in Union with Mary* will undoubtedly be shocked by the glaring blasphemies which are there taught and that in the prayers proscribed for the use of the faithful. We quote: “O heavenly Virgin, Queen of my heart at this moment I renew from the depths of my soul the perfect consecration which I have made to thee, of all that I am and have. I belong to thee entirely, but thou also dost belong to me...Thou O good mother, must receive Him in me and be to Him a dwelling-place...I offer to thee, O my merciful mother, the King of angels and of men. Through Jesus and in Him I am enabled to honor, love, and thank thee worthily for the many graces and mercies thou hast shown me during life.”

In the Catholic magazine *Ecclesiastical Review* of May, 1941 we have a long article entitled “The Relation of the Eucharist to the Blessed Virgin”, from which we quote “We cannot honor the Holy Eucharist without honoring Mary...Like the Eucharist, too, the blessed Virgin is a compendium of our religion ...We can do nothing less than to recognize that Mary has a great share in this ineffable gift of the Holy Eucharist...Mary, the new Eve, offers us a food too, the most Holy Eucharist, which is the food of life..Holy Mary is our Co-Redemptrix....The Blessed Virgin acts in the sacrifice itself; proximately by offering together with Christ, the High Priest, the very same host; remotely administering the matter of the sacrifice itself Now, with the sacrifice of cross being perpetuated in the Holy Eucharist, we must admit that Mary continues in the sacrifice of the altar the office she accomplished with Jesus, through the redemption of men on Calvary....In her office as mother of God, she is intimately joined with Jesus Christ, the Redeemer; she can do everything; in her capacity of mother of men, in the beatific vision, she known our necessities....It is therefore proper to exclaim: Of His fulness, through Mary, we have all received (of. John 1:16).”

There is more, much more, in the article, but we need not write down the blasphemies which are uttered as a confession of the leading Roman Catholic theologians. In view of what we have quoted we can well understand why the Roman curia did not hesitate to pronounce the teaching concerning the assumption of Mary a dogma of the Anti-Christian Church.

As a result of this study we now offer a summary of the judgments which we are forced to reach:

1. Romanism is a system personified in its head, who is thus a representative person. We do not single out any individuals although some Popes were in their own persons more representative of the system than others. Every new Pope simply inherits the system and is an exponent of the system, quite frequently also its spokesman.
2. The movement which culminated in the papal system had its origin about 50 A.D. when the first indications of a hierarchy with more or less oxidant powers began to appear. Passages like Acts 20:30 are prophetic as well as descriptive.
3. Romanism arose in the very midst of the Church of Jesus Christ, its very bishops being the ones who fostered the idea by their hierarchical aspirations and their gradual assumption of more power.
4. As long as the Roman Empire, with the emperor at its head, was in power (the Christian Church not being a *religio licita*) the aspirations of its hierarchy could not come to fruition.
5. When the Christian religion at the time of Constantine was acknowledged by him, the outward organization of the Church could be built up practically without hindrances and this factor became still

more prominent with the energetic efforts of Leo I to establish the throne of the Papacy. The end of the Western Empire (476 A.D.) was merely an additional factor favoring the rise of the Papacy. From the end of the fifth century onward the true character of the Papacy as the Antichrist was revealed more and more.

6. The Antichrist was exposed by Luther and in the Lutheran Confessional but he recovered from the blow, due chiefly to the divisions in the Protestant ranks and the Jesuit Counter-Reformation so that he has continued his pernicious activities to this day.

7. As early as the year 445 A.D. Valentinian III, a monarch controlled by Pope Leo I, issued the infamous decree: "The primacy of the Apostolic See having been established by the merit of St. Peter, its founder, the sacred Council of Nice, and the dignity of the city of Rome, we thus declare our irrevocable edict that all bishops, whether in Gaul or elsewhere, shall make no innovation without the sanction of the Bishop of Rome; and that the Apostolic See may remain inviolable, all bishops who shall refuse to appear before the tribunal of the Bishop of Rome, when cited, shall be constrained to appear by the governor of the province." The incident of Pope Gregory VII and the Emperor at Canossa is presented in practically every book of history. And it is just as generally known that the Popes since his time have never given up their claims to earthly power and dominion, many of their demands being based upon the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, and that the present papal state, though very much shrunken, is just a logical culmination of developments consistent with the claims of the papal hierarchy.

8. The doctrine of Romanism apparently lays great stress on the sect's adherence to the three Ecumenical Creeds, by which the confession of the three persons of the Trinity seems to be safeguarded. But a confession of the lips which seemingly agrees to the Biblical statements concerning the persons of the Godhead but takes away from these very same Persons the divine works and the peculiar honor demanded by Scripture, is a hollow mockery. God the Father can be approached, even understood, only in and through the Son and through Him alone. Every organization, therefore, that takes from the Son any part of the honor due Him as demanded by the Bible is anti-Christian in character, and the sect which places these false teachings on its banner is the very Antichrist. The case against Romanism is well put in a recent book by a layman (Mauro, *Of the Things Which Soon Must Come to Pass*, 107 f.), from which we quote: "With diabolical cleverness the Romish hierarchy systematically present Jesus Christ, not as the Son of God but as the Son of Mary. In all its doctrine, in all its ceremonies, in all its liturgy and books of devotion the false Church of Rome, with most consummate and satanic craft and with most deadly purpose, exalts Mary, making her the compassionate one, the efficacious intercessor on behalf of sinners, the real mediator between God and men, and exhibits Christ in a position of subordination, the effect being that the millions who are thus deluded and blinded by the 'god of this world' are led to put their trust in Mary instead of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ... Notwithstanding the orthodoxy of creeds and formularies, the maintenance professedly of the doctrine of the Trinity (though truly it is denied in practise), and all that, the Christ of Romanism is "another Jesus".

9. The presumption of Romanism in the field of liturgies and the outward form of worship was apparent almost from the beginning. Although every bit of historical evidence denies the primacy of Peter, and in particular the alleged twenty-five years of his Roman bishopric, and although there is no evidence for the so-called Petrine Liturgy as being the product of Peter's studies, yet all other liturgies were eliminated in the course of the centuries (the Ephesine-Gallican, as continued in the early British and the Irish, the Mozarabic, and others) so that only parts of these ancient forms are permitted upon occasions while the Roman Liturgy has been forced upon all Roman Catholic churches throughout the world. This

means that the abomination of the Mass, the adoration of a small piece of bread, and similar idolatrous practises are found wherever the Roman Church has been established.

10. The deceptions practised by Romanism in the field of doctrine are by no means confined to the doctrine of the Mass (where the blessing of the priest is supposed to effect the transubstantiation of the bread into the physical body and of the wine into the physical blood of Christ), the primacy of Peter, and the denial in fact of the Son and the Father; in fact there is hardly a fundamental doctrine of Christianity left which has not been contaminated. The situation has actually reached the stage where it is difficult for the average members of the Roman Catholic Church to hear enough of the truth concerning their salvation that they may find the way to heaven.

11. According to present indications there is no prospect whatsoever of changing the Roman Church for the better, since it is entrenched more firmly than ever behind its wall of falsehoods. The opposition is weakened by the fact that only a relatively small number of churches at this time have the courage to point to the collective person of the Roman Pope as the Antichrist, and that even in certain parts of the Lutheran Church a dubious attitude is taken concerning the question. Also in this respect the trumpet is giving an uncertain sound, so that men are no longer preparing themselves for the battle.

But as for us, nothing can be clearer than that the words of the Lutheran Confessions are true:

PAPAM IPSUM VERUM ANTICHRISTUM ESSE!