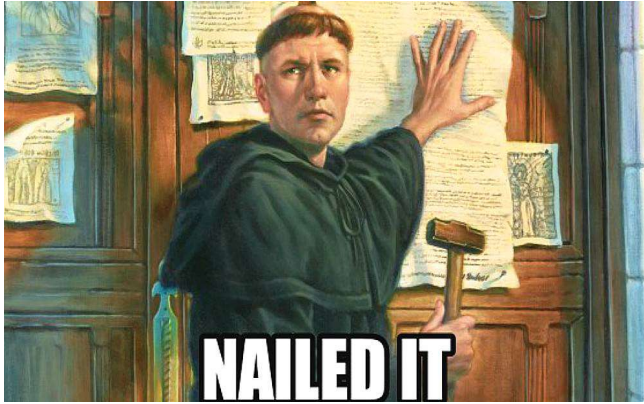


Reformation day! October 30, 2017, the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses up on the church door! To celebrate, I wrote "the last 5 theses" to make it an even 100, and got it published at <http://ipatriot.com/last-five-reformation-theses/>



The Last 5 Reformation Theses?

Martin Luther didn't finish his list of theses, since he only listed 95, and everyone knows when you get that close to 100 you need to come up with 5 more before your list will be considered complete. It would seem Luther left his list unfinished in order to invite others to help finish it. So here are 5 more:

96. Jesus begs us, and our churches, to crawl out from under our safe, non-controversial "bushels" to where it is darkest, and shine the "light", of what God says about Darkness across the whole "city". Matthew 5:13-16. But American churches excuse themselves with Noninvolvement Theologies which rename the most grievous "darkness" as "politics", and "shine your light"

as "don't get involved", resulting in America's Light darkening.

97. Occasional sermons inside the "bushel" shed a bit of light, inspiring "bushel" members to "put feet to" those sermons by lobbying government, 1 Timothy 2:1, in order to strip the Darkness of its government support so Christians can live in peace, 1 Timothy 2:2. But then those Noninvolvement Theologies are invoked to stop members from reasoning together on church premises how to apply God's Word to the details of public issues, and from strategizing how to publicly expose the Darkness, Ephesians 5:11-13. Not enough light in those occasional sermons leaks out from under the "bushel" to substitute for members' discussion and action and stop America's slide.

98. Driven out of their "bushels" to shine into the Darkness the light hidden there, "bushel" members, now called "activists", take "political positions" which they *assume* are appropriate applications of Bible principles to today's issues. But they leave their "swords" back in their pews: almost never do Christian activists declare publicly the Scriptures which are the real reasons for their convictions, in those public forums where citizens decide whether to pattern our laws after the principles of Heaven or of Hell. Even less often do they debate together the proper application of Scripture to double check their application, and to

avoid opposing each other

99. God guarantees success to people who discuss and act together, not to audiences who listen to one man speak with no verbal interaction allowed, even if he speaks about action. Proverbs 15:22, Matthew 18:19-20. American churches strangle action-focused discussion by (1) making uninterruptible sermons the heart of primary meetings so that the most important service is ruled by one man's views and priorities, (2) welcoming insufficient deviation from the preordained Subject to agree on any serious action in secondary meetings, and (3) having almost no goals outside the bushel requiring members' consensus-building discussion.

100. American churches make an uninterruptible "sermon" the defining feature of "worship" even though the ritual is nowhere described in the Bible, but the opposite: vigorous, penetrating, inspiring verbal interaction – a forum open to all present – is canonized by God as the essence of Worship. Reasoning was the "manner" of Paul, it is what "preach" meant then, and six of seven of Jesus' messages involved verbal interaction, which He never discouraged.

Martin Luther introduced his 95 theses: "Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther...intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them...." Similarly, I offer below some

defense of the preceding statements.

#96: What is darkest: which day you go to church and which words are said while you are baptized, or murdering unborn babies while strange men share public bathrooms with our daughters? What is darker than these government projects?

Where is it most urgent that we shine the Light of God's Word? Where it is darkest and most hazardous, or just a little dark and much safer?

Martin Luther said "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Wherever the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that one point."

Jesus warned, Matthew 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Is Jesus' calling only for individuals, and not for whole churches?

Help! Half of America's Christians vote Democrat, doing things to America like killing babies and letting men into girls' bathrooms which send souls to Hell.

The other half votes to keep “the stranger” (immigrants) unwelcome, which Matthew 25:41, 46 warns is another road to Hell! Especially since the most promised tool for driving out “the stranger” is Mark-of-the-Beast tracking technology (Real ID, updated into E-Verify) which is the Bible’s *surest* road to Hell! (Revelation 13-14)

The response of “church”? Don’t allow members to pass voting information, in “church”, that might be “controversial”!

Can you help me find a CHURCH where it isn’t “controversial” for members to shine where it is darkest? If you can’t, will you help me start one? Let’s Shine!

#97: Does God call churches to exercise their influence to reduce oppression and deliver its victims? Is this part of the mission of every church? When churches won’t, what should Christians do?

God told the Ephesian church, through Paul, that their mission was to “reprove” the Darkness. He told them that to expose evil is what He means by shining His Light on darkness: Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

Hebrews 11 is a list of heroes of faith held up as examples for us to follow. All of them were political leaders or they influenced political leaders.

Abraham was a “mighty prince”, Genesis 23:6. Sarah his wife birthed nations, v. 12. Isaac was “mightier than” a king, Genesis 26:16. Jacob was a terror to “all the cities round about”, Genesis 35:5. Joseph was the defacto world ruler, Genesis

41-50. And on and on. (See the whole list.) <http://saltshaker.us/Salt/GodsPoliticalHeroes.pdf>

1 Timothy 2:1 is often cited by churches to say we should pray for our rulers, but to pray only – at least on church premises. But the verse lists four distinct activities which God calls churches to do. They are designed, according to verse 2, to get government to stop harassing Christians. This will make it easier for “all men to be saved” according to verse 4. Which is God’s will according to verse 3.

The four distinct actions we are called to take are supplications, prayer, thanksgivings, and intercessions, as the KJV translates them.

* (δέησις) Supplications and (προσευχή) prayers: Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon compares the two: “(δέησις) [prayers are]...limited to prayer to God, whereas δέησις [supplications] may also be used of a request addressed to man.

* (εὐχαριστία). Thanksgiving is certainly owed to God, but it is also a powerful political tool, to thank a ruler for whatever good he does. In Acts 24:3 it describes thanking a man.

The word also means joy. It is used in Luke 15:5, where the lost sheep is found. Mat 2:10 the star is seen. James 1:2, Acts 5:41, and Mat 5:11-12, joy at being treated like the prophets! (Tortured.) Your faith that your prayers will be answered and your actions will succeed gives you joy. Joy is the opposite of fear. It is a magnet. It makes you a good salesman. It helps you succeed. It converts.

* (ἐντευξις) Intercessions. An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon says “intercessions” aren’t only with God: it means “a lighting upon, meeting with,

converse, intercourse, **with a person**,...[or] a petition,...intercession for a person....”

The Louw Nida Greek lexicon says it means “to speak **to someone** on behalf of someone else”. ‘who also intercedes on our behalf’ Ro 8:34. ‘for it is made acceptable to God through...your intercession’ 1 Tm 4:5.1”

ESL defines it, “1 a falling in with, meeting with. 1a an interview. 1a1 a coming together. 1a2 to visit. 1a3 converse or for any other cause. 1b that for which an interview is held. 1b1 a conference or conversation. 1b2 a petition, supplication.” (Although ESL, under synonyms, says that when the context makes it mean prayer to God, it means “childlike confidence, by representing prayer as the heart’s conversion with God.”)

So it is true that all four words, by themselves, can mean communication either with God or with man, so depending on context, they *could* mean merely four kinds of “prayer” to God.

But there is a huge danger in assuming there is nothing here to challenge today’s Noninvolvement Theologies.

James 2:17 says “faith without *works* is dead”. What are “works”? According to the example given in verse 15 it means “our own action”. Verse 15 describes a kind of prayer – a spoken expectation that God will accomplish the goal described – without the speaker’s own *action*. Is a prayer, without action, prayer?

Here are the verses: James 2:15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? 17 Even so faith, if it

hath not works, is dead, being alone.

According to that principle, if we merely “pray” that God will relieve oppression, but we take no action ourselves to “put feet to” our own prayer, then our prayer is useless, and our faith is dead.

But even if 1 Timothy 2:1 did call for prayer to God alone, without action, Matthew 18:19 says one of the keys to answered prayer is Christians not praying against each other. “...if two of you shall agree...as touching any thing that they shall ask...” requires discussion of what those two want God to do. Christians wildly differ in their vision of what government ought to do, making it impossible for God to answer their contradictory requests, which is one of the meanings of James 1:6-8. Discussion of disagreements is called “controversial”.

James 2 says if a child in your church is starving, you give him food. If he is taught that he is an animal, you witness to schools. If he is slain before he is born, you stop abortion. If he is taken from a good home by child abuse bureaucrats, you fix juvenile court. If he is denied liberty, you heal immigration laws.

Ezekiel 3:18 warns that God transfers the judgment of sinners to any church refusing to warn them.

If you want a car, will you only “pray” and not also physically take action likely to satisfy your desire, for example, work? Will you physically work only for luxuries, and not souls or lives? Will you justify selfish apathy by saying souls and lives don’t belong on the busy church calendar because that is “controversial”?

Another possible problem with interpreting “intercessions” as “prayer without action”, making us intercessors

between God and other men, is a conflict with verse 5, “For there is one God, and one mediator [different Greek word but similar meaning] between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”. However, if this simply means that we are called to intercede with government on behalf of government’s victims, then there is no conflict. Humans routinely intercede for each other with other humans.

#98: Christian activists get nervous around other Christian activists who get “too bold” with Scripture out in public. which is why we virtually never hear a successful politician explaining publicly the Scriptural basis for his positions. Activists instead give every other reason for their positions than the one that actually persuaded them. They say “Don’t talk about Jesus. It will wreck your credibility. Just hold back so you can get elected. Then you can do some good.”

When even Christians think there is shame in naming Jesus, no wonder America is sliding away from God and away from the morals, laws, freedoms, and rights founded in His Word and in no other religion or thought system!

“There is POWER in the blood!”
Hebrews 4:12 The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart. (GNB)

#99: God guarantees success to people who discuss and act together.

But churches have almost no goals outside their bushels which require members to build consensus through discussion, about whether to

act – whether action would be right - and how to act together.

The occasional food and clothes giveaways, medical clinics, immigrant assistance, car shows in the parking lot, etc. are partial exceptions. Partial, because although they fall into the category of “helps”, one of the Holy Spirit Gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12, they are seldom harnessed as vehicles for broadcasting darkness-shattering Light into the community. And they are seldom controversial enough to require consensus-building discussion among members whether they should be done, or complicated enough to require the wisdom of “a multitude of counsellors” to succeed.

Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. (TLV) KJV: Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.

A “multitude of counsellors” and “many advisors” is a way to describe a forum where everyone's ideas are considered.

The goal of shining our Light in the Darkness will be reached through such forums, God promises: these “plans” will “succeed”. This “purpose” will be “established”.

Matthew 18:19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered

together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

#100: The Bible's most detailed description of a worship service is in 1 Corinthians 14, which describes how to conduct an open forum where "all", it says in seven verses, should participate verbally. Seven times, in verses 1, 5, 12, 24, 26, 31, and 39, the chapter calls on "all" of us to not just listen, but talk. The result vs. 24 tells us to expect sounds like a good description of Revival.

Most translations call this verbal interaction "prophecy", the alliteration of the Greek "propheteuo", but the universal meaning of the word – the meaning that fits all contexts – is "give a message to God". Faithful to that definition, GNB translates verse 1 "the gift of proclaiming God's message" and God's Word says "the gift of speaking what God has revealed."

In verse 3 the word is defined for the context of that chapter: to exhort, edify, and comfort, according to the KJV. An excursion through Greek lexicons indicates the three words encompass challenge and correction. Which is also described in Hebrews 10:24-25, which pastors often quote to get us to attend church, but which also tells us what kind of church to attend: one with real depth of verbal interaction where we can challenge each other to be better – to be "all that we can be".

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke [*Greek: incite, or dispute*] unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,

as the manner of some is; but exhorting [*the meaning of the Greek is not limited to a relaxed, polite, politically correct appeal*] one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Christian conversation is most likely to "proclaim God's message" in a group that acknowledges God, and in an atmosphere of desire to be open to God's leading. Of course we are human so we stumble, but God helps groups gathered in His Name by often speaking to us through each other. Prophets corrected each other in the OT, 1 Kings 13, 2 Samuel 12, and 1 Corinthians 14 says the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.

"Dialog" was how Paul "preached". Reasoning with others in church was the "manner" of Paul. 1 Corinthians 14 isn't just what Paul told Christians to do: it is what he *did*. That was Paul's "manner", Acts 17:2. In other words, that is what Paul did routinely.

When Paul spoke in synagogues, in church, or in court, he did not give sermons (lectures which no one could interrupt or even discuss together afterwards), as we do today. He "reasoned" with people who disagreed with him. He "engaged" people. He addressed objections. (1 Corinthians 14:29, Titus 1:9)

He had "dialog". Our English word "dialog" even comes from the Greek word for what he did: *dialogos*.

He "reasoned" in Thessalonica (Acts 17:2), Athens, (Acts 17:17), Corinth (Acts 18:4), Ephesus (Acts 18:19 and 19:8-9), at Caesarea when he was on trial (Acts 24:25), and in Troas in church (Acts 20:7, 9 - KJV says Paul "preached" there, but it is

the same Greek word).

“Dialog” was how Jesus “preached”. The recorded teachings of Jesus were not uninterrupted sermons, but verbal interaction. Of the 146 situations in which Jesus taught, He was reacting to others, answering questions and addressing criticism, in 126 of those situations - 6 out of 7 times. Only 1/7 of the time, in 20 situations, no verbal interaction or interruption was recorded.

But even in some of those 20 times, counted as “no verbal interaction” because one of the gospels reports a teaching without reporting verbal interaction, another gospel reports the same teaching *with* verbal interaction. For example, Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7 are called “The Sermon on the Mount” by later church leaders (even though the word “sermon” is not in the Bible.) They are a collection of teachings reported without any verbal interaction. But Luke reports several of those same teachings *with* verbal interaction.

So at most, only one seventh of Jesus’ sermons were *not* answers to questions or charges, and were *not* interrupted. Interaction was the rule, and NEVER discouraged, so it would have been welcome the other 20 times too. God was happy to dialogue with humans even farther below Him than laymen are below pastors.

“Preach” didn’t mean “give an uninterrupted sermon” in Bible times, the way it does today. The Greek words *euaggelizo* and *kehrusso*, usually translated “preach” in the KJV, are used in Luke 8:1 to describe Jesus’ ministry, and Paul was the only New Testament figure called a “preacher” in the New Testament, (1

Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11), showing those words should not be translated as an uninterrupted sermon.

Other than this context clue, the words are not defined in the New Testament. In other Greek literature they describe representatives of kings who travel the kingdom negotiating with the people – addressing complaints along with dictating conditions – a process impossible without a lot of reasoning and two-way communication. (For an exhaustive study of the relevant Greek words, see <http://www.saltshaker.us/salt/Preachers-in-the-Bible-did-not-do-Sermons.pdf>)

God’s way is to reason with people who disagree, 1 Peter 3:15, but the world’s way is to silence disagreement.

So we displace God’s ideal worship service with our own tradition: uninterrupted “sermons”. We make this man-made ritual, an institution added to the Bible, the principal thing we “go to church” for – the defining element of whether we are “going to church”. See Jesus’ judgment in Matthew 15:6-9 against displace the commandments of God with our own traditions.

How about cell groups in a few churches where sermons are discussed by a small group? Does that satisfy the call of 1 Corinthians 14 for robust verbal interaction by “all”?

If the pastor isn’t even present, then there is still no opportunity to correct or clarify anything for anyone, beyond making a few guesses, much less for the whole group. Another limitation faced by such groups is

that if they don't meet immediately after the sermon they will struggle to even remember what they are talking about. Considerable research [<http://www.saltshaker.us/salt/Sermons-Dont-Work.pdf>] documents that only 5-10% of sermons are remembered even a few days later, compared with 90-95% when participants are involved in the reasoning, and in actions authorized and/or inspired by that reasoning.

In God's system, correction is invited even in the middle of a presentation, when every detail of what is corrected is remembered by everyone and needn't be argued about.

But the main objection God has to uninterrupted sermons, in my understanding, is not that they are quickly forgotten and are for that reason inefficient tools for discipling, but because they utilize only 1% of the available brainpower – in a group of 100. It is “In a multitude of counsellors” that “purposes are established”, Proverbs promises. That is what God wants for CHURCH: action. *Successful* action!

Successful action in, for example, shining the Light of what God says about Darkness across the deepest Darkness.

<http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>

Luther's original 95 Theses

Out of love for the truth and from desire to elucidate it, the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Sacred

Theology, and ordinary lecturer therein at Wittenberg, intends to defend the following statements and to dispute on them in that place. Therefore he asks that those who cannot be present and dispute with him orally shall do so in their absence by letter. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

1. When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, “Repent” (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.
2. This word cannot be understood as referring to the sacrament of penance, that is, confession and satisfaction, as administered by the clergy.
3. Yet it does not mean solely inner repentance; such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh.
4. The penalty of sin remains as long as the hatred of self (that is, true inner repentance), namely till our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
5. The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.
6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring and showing that it has been remitted by God; or, to be sure, by remitting guilt in cases reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in these cases were disregarded, the guilt would certainly remain unforgiven.
7. God remits guilt to no one unless at the same time he humbles him in all things and makes him submissive to the vicar, the priest.

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

9. Therefore the Holy Spirit through the pope is kind to us insofar as the pope in his decrees always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.

10. Those priests act ignorantly and wickedly who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penalties for purgatory.

11. Those tares of changing the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory were evidently sown while the bishops slept (Mt 13:25).

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

13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties, are already dead as far as the canon laws are concerned, and have a right to be released from them.

14. Imperfect piety or love on the part of the dying person necessarily brings with it great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater the fear.

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

16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ the same as despair, fear, and assurance of salvation.

17. It seems as though for the souls in purgatory fear should necessarily decrease and love increase.

18. Furthermore, it does not seem proved, either by reason or by Scripture, that souls in purgatory are outside the state of merit, that is, unable to grow in love.

19. Nor does it seem proved that souls in purgatory, at least not all of them, are certain and assured of their own salvation, even if we ourselves may be entirely certain of it.

20. Therefore the pope, when he uses the words "plenary remission of all penalties," does not actually mean "all penalties," but only those imposed by himself.

21. Thus those indulgence preachers are in error who say that a man is absolved from every penalty and saved by papal indulgences.

22. As a matter of fact, the pope remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to canon law, they should have paid in this life.

23. If remission of all penalties whatsoever could be granted to anyone at all, certainly it would be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to very few.

24. For this reason most people are necessarily deceived by that indiscriminate and high-sounding promise of release from penalty.

25. That power which the pope has in general over purgatory corresponds to the power which any bishop or curate has in a particular way in his own diocese and parish.

26. The pope does very well when he grants remission to souls in purgatory, **not by the power of the**

keys, which he does not have, but by way of intercession for them.

27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.

28. It is certain that when money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased; but when the church intercedes, the result is in the hands of God alone.

29. Who knows whether all souls in purgatory wish to be redeemed, since we have exceptions in St. Severinus and St. Paschal, as related in a legend.

30. No one is sure of the integrity of his own contrition, much less of having received plenary remission.

31. The man who actually buys indulgences is as rare as he who is really penitent; indeed, he is exceedingly rare.

32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

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

34. For the graces of indulgences are concerned only with the penalties of sacramental satisfaction established by man.

35. They who teach that contrition is not necessary on the part of those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessional

privileges preach unchristian doctrine.

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

37. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.

38. Nevertheless, papal remission and blessing are by no means to be disregarded, for they are, as I have said (Thesis 6), the proclamation of the divine remission.

39. It is very difficult, even for the most learned theologians, at one and the same time to commend to the people the bounty of indulgences and the need of true contrition.

40. A Christian who is truly contrite seeks and loves to pay penalties for his sins; the bounty of indulgences, however, relaxes penalties and causes men to hate them -- at least it furnishes occasion for hating them.

41. Papal indulgences must be preached with caution, lest people erroneously think that they are preferable to other good works of love.

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

43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.

44. Because love grows by works of love, man thereby becomes better.

Man does not, however, become better by means of indulgences but is merely freed from penalties.

45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.

46. Christians are to be taught that, unless they have more than they need, they must reserve enough for their family needs and by no means squander it on indulgences.

47. Christians are to be taught that they buying of indulgences is a matter of free choice, not commanded.

48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting indulgences, needs and thus desires their devout prayer more than their money.

49. Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.

50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St. Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.

51. Christians are to be taught that the pope would and should wish to give of his own money, even though he had to sell the basilica of St. Peter, to many of those from whom certain hawkers of indulgences cajole money.

52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the

indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.

53. They are the enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid altogether the preaching of the Word of God in some churches in order that indulgences may be preached in others.

54. Injury is done to the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or larger amount of time is devoted to indulgences than to the Word.

55. It is certainly the pope's sentiment that if indulgences, which are a very insignificant thing, are celebrated with one bell, one procession, and one ceremony, then the gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.

56. The true treasures of the church, out of which the pope distributes indulgences, are not sufficiently discussed or known among the people of Christ.

57. That indulgences are not temporal treasures is certainly clear, for many indulgence sellers do not distribute them freely but only gather them.

58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the saints, for, even without the pope, the latter always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outer man.

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

60. Without want of consideration we say that the keys of the church, given

by the merits of Christ, are that treasure.

61. For it is clear that the pope's power is of itself sufficient for the remission of penalties and cases reserved by himself.

62. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.

63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last (Mt. 20:16).

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

65. Therefore the treasures of the gospel are nets with which one formerly fished for men of wealth.

66. The treasures of indulgences are nets with which one now fishes for the wealth of men.

67. The indulgences which the demagogues acclaim as the greatest graces are actually understood to be such only insofar as they promote gain.

68. They are nevertheless in truth the most insignificant graces when compared with the grace of God and the piety of the cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of papal indulgences with all reverence.

70. But they are much more bound to strain their eyes and ears lest these men preach their own dreams instead of what the pope has commissioned.

71. Let him who speaks against the truth concerning papal indulgences be anathema and accursed.

72. But let him who guards against the lust and license of the indulgence preachers be blessed.

73. Just as the pope justly thunders against those who by any means whatever contrive harm to the sale of indulgences.

74. Much more does he intend to thunder against those who use indulgences as a pretext to contrive harm to holy love and truth.

75. To consider papal indulgences so great that they could absolve a man even if he had done the impossible and had violated the mother of God is madness.

76. We say on the contrary that papal indulgences cannot remove the very least of venial sins as far as guilt is concerned.

77. To say that even St. Peter if he were now pope, could not grant greater graces is blasphemy against St. Peter and the pope.

78. We say on the contrary that even the present pope, or any pope whatsoever, has greater graces at his disposal, that is, the gospel, spiritual powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written. (1 Co 12[:28])

79. To say that the cross emblazoned with the papal coat of arms, and set up by the indulgence preachers is equal in worth to the cross of Christ is blasphemy.

80. The bishops, curates, and theologians who permit such talk to be spread among the people will have to answer for this.

81. This unbridled preaching of indulgences makes it difficult even for learned men to rescue the

reverence which is due the pope from slander or from the shrewd questions of the laity.

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

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

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

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

86. Again, "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build this one basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?"

87. Again, "What does the pope remit or grant to those who by

perfect contrition already have a right to full remission and blessings?"

88. Again, "What greater blessing could come to the church than if the pope were to bestow these remissions and blessings on every believer a hundred times a day, as he now does but once?"

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

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

91. If, therefore, indulgences were preached according to the spirit and intention of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved. Indeed, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace! (Jer 6:14)

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

94. Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace (Acts 14:22).