

AN ANSWER TO SEVERAL QUESTIONS ON MONASTIC VOWS

*A Very Comforting Message to All Who Are
Leaving the Priesthood and Monastic and
Conventual Orders*

In my book about monastic vows¹ I have adequately discussed this topic. There I show in a thoroughgoing way why the monastic life is to be condemned. Since, however, objections have been raised on the basis of specific passages of Scripture,² I offer my answer in Christian love.

First, everyone ought to know that Moses and his law have been abrogated by Christ and are not binding on us Christians. Paul says this, "I have died to the law and live to Christ," Galatians 1 [2:19]; "Christ is the end of the law," Romans 10 [:4]; "The brightness of Moses faded," and, "The letter kills," II Corinthians 4 [3:7, 6]. Christ himself says, "The law and the prophets are valid until the time of John," Matthew 11 [:13], and again, "I have come to fulfil the law," Matthew 5 [:17]. Therefore anyone who wants to keep a single law of Moses as though he were obligated to do so must keep them all. He must have himself circumcised and become a Jew. This is what Paul says in Galatians 6 [5:3], "Every man who receives circumcision . . . is bound to keep the whole law." Or on what basis could anyone say that one law is binding and another law is not, for they have all been given by the one God through one and the same Moses?

However, these laws do serve us through the verifying witness they bear to our law, that is, the gospel. This is what Paul

¹ *The Judgment of Martin Luther on Monastic Vows* (1521). LW 44, 243-400.

² Cf. pp. 151-154.